

STRIDENT (strīd'nt), *adj.* Conspicuously and offensively loud; being sharply insistent on being heard

LXX- No. 7

Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

April 1, 2019

Nervous Fervor Builds as NEASC Details Emerge

By Ryan Anastasio '20

It has been ten years since the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accredited Amity as a certified school. This year, teachers have been preparing for a visit from NEASC in the fall of 2019.

In a newly discovered document, leaked to *The Strident*, the details for the visit have emerged. *The Strident* has been able to corroborate the details, but the administration has remained silent when pressed for comment.

As Superintendent Jennifer Byars and Principal Anna Mahon left a closed-door meeting with staff members, a reporter from *The Strident* pressed the two for an explanation on the matter but was silenced and detained by the principal and superintendent's security detail.

This has people such

as sophomore Tobias Ramsbottom asking, "Why do they need a security detail?"

Over 1,500 people from NEASC will ascend on the high school for an intense monthlong review. One person will be assigned to each student and will follow them feverishly throughout the month. Representatives from NEASC will remain with the student the entire month and are legally bound to follow the student wherever they go. In partnership with GoPro, NEASC will mount a GoPro on each student and will allow the students day to be livestreamed on YouTube.

This has many parents such as Thaddea Bloomington, mother of Cornelius Bloomington '21, ecstatic. In a four hour exclusive, Thaddea said, "Now I can make sure Cornelius stays on task all day." Cornelius was not available for comment and is believed to have fled to

Mexico.

Asked for comment on the upcoming visit, NEASC Deputy to the Associate Communications Director Arthur Appleseed said, "What is wrong with examining every aspect of a student's life and following every step of their day?"

As people wait, they built a bell tower to warn people when NEASC arrives. If you hear three simultaneous bells, it means NEASC has arrived.



NEASC officials follow a student.
Photo from Psychology Today.

Amity to Transition from "BOW" to "OW"

By Ella Marin '20

The Amity Region 5 district, as many know, is composed of the three towns Woodbridge, Orange, and Bethany. However, many of you may not be familiar with the town of Bethany. Bethany is used to describe a vast and rural land where horses and cows outnumber the people.

In the land of Bethany, residents often travel far and wide for various resources, though the recent installation of the gas station has helped tremendously with that issue. Typically, Bethanians tend to own farm animals and enjoy activities like tractor riding. At the core of Bethany culture is their famous, historic airport and the world-renowned song "B-town," which was originally created in 2007 when *Connecticut Magazine* deemed Bethany the number one small town in which to live.

Despite the vibrant

culture and nature vibes that Bethanians bring to the Amity community, it appears that due to factors out of Bethany's control (their rural landscape and likelihood to get hit by storms), Amity is slowly but surely exiling Bethany.

On May 15, 2018, a tornado whipped through Connecticut. Naturally, Bethany was hit the worst out of the three towns, while Orange had little to no damage at all. When school was cancelled the following day, students from Orange were genuinely confused.

Ardwin Potts '21 said, "Everyone keeps talking about what a warzone Bethany is, but when I look out my window, I don't see anything! The Post Road is totally clear. How far away is Bethany anyway?"

The day after that, school resumed but under one small condition. Bethany would not be getting buses. Of course, buses were not

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Operation Amity Blues The Scandal of Amity's Side Door Is Uncovered

By Olivia Gross '20

In the midst of the nationwide college admissions scandal, the Woodbridge Police Department along with *The Strident* launched an investigation dubbed "Operation Amity Blues."

All of Connecticut's top high school administrators were suddenly worried that they too might be educating students who plan to get into college using deceptive test scores or other devious means. The total cost of the operation was just over twenty million dollars, and well worth it, because destroying the towns' budget and any possibility for another surplus led us to a truly shocking discovery that will change the lives of those in the Amity community for the foreseeable future.

Operation Amity Blues uncovered this minefield: Amity has three doors through which students enter each morning.

Here is a little background to clarify why this news is the biggest to hit the Amity community since we found out that Principal Anna Mahon participated in the Olympics. The metaphor of the three

doors was coined by William Singer, the schemer behind the college admission fraud scandal.

Singer defined "the front door" as the door in which the majority of students enter, these students being the honest and hardworking students who got into the college based on their true merits.

He spoke of the "back door" as the one where the children of multimillionaires enter, a door that only opens when a new building shares their name.

The "side door," however, is the most deceptive and the only illegal one of

records, and pay enormous bribes. The parents of these children are determined to make their children's lives as easy as possible, and to gain a diploma simply for the prestige of a fancy name on a resume.

The Amity doors work a little bit differently. The front door, which actually consists of eight different doors, is the primary entryway for students. They lumber off their buses in the morning and glance at the "Amity High School" sign which is emblazoned across the main entryway in large letters. These students are the true Spartans, the children who have grown up listening to cheers (and sighs) from the football games and are striving to live up to the widely successful alumni. These students are the ones who have studied to pursue their futures, and who bear the Amity name with pride and with triumph.

Our investigative team then spent several months with an undercover group of detectives focusing on a door that was found to admit students who have an easier journey to

school: the back door. These students arrive in cars that were bought for them. The Jeeps, Teslas, and Maseratis zoom into the parking lot with an air of superiority, these cars being their claims to fame. These students may also be the children of families who have begged Amity to allow them to gift new bookcases and desk chairs in exchange for some favoritism for their child.

The final door, the most peculiar and the one to claim focus of this entire operation, is the side door, and this required a full six months of subtle but highly effective observation that would have made any journalist proud.

You may know this door as the one in which security watches over each morning. Through this door, students are practically fanned on their way in. They slide out of their parents' vehicles each morning, grasping their freshly printed homework from their tutor who is stationed in the backseat, always ready to receive word of a new project to complete or correct an in-class assignment that the student was forced into

doing themselves.

These students are not aware that every other student has a life any different and



Students enter through side door.
Photo from KissPNG.

would not be able to fathom what a grade under a 99 looked like. These students, however, may be oblivious to the deceit.

Operation Amity Blues has provided us with a lot to think about. We are quite confident that this has triggered such conversations that next year's OBOA book will be solely about this unusual incident.

So, only one question remains- which door will you enter through tomorrow morning?



Amity's honest front doors.
Photo from NHRegister.

the three. This door is the entrance for students whose parents are utterly desperate and willing to submit falsified test scores, fake athletic

Region 5 to Transition from “BOW” to “OW”

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able to get past the array of downed wires, trees, barns, tractors, scarecrows, cows etc. Yet, Bethanians were still encouraged to come to school.

Ronda Iliads '19 was outraged and said, “Amity won’t send us buses but is still encouraging us to come? Have they seen what a wreck our crops are? Amity clearly chose Orange and Woodbridge over us, and I think we get the hint.”

Further, right before midterms of 2019, a blizzard swept across the state. Yet again, Bethany was hit the worst out of the three towns. On January 21, the night before the first day of midterms, 100% of Bethany was without power. Most regional school districts would cancel school for the next day at

this point, but at 6:30 pm, Amity still had not cancelled.

Instead, Amity had advised that students who were severely limited in their study abilities by the storm contact their administrator to make up their exams in the afternoon.

Leonardo Flute '20 said, “Make up my exams? No way, I have been sitting in the dark in my farm house with nothing but a wool blanket and my horse Peaches to keep me warm.”

Pressured by the Bethanian backlash, Amity decided to cancel the next day of school. Orange residents were again confused by the need to cancel school, seeing very little damage in their own town.

Evidently, there is a clear separation among Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge when it comes to the weather. Sadly, it looks as though

Amity has chosen its favorites.

Students are on both sides of the debate. Olivia Otis '19, a Bethany resident, feels that perhaps breaking away from the BOW would be for the best.

Otis said, “Perhaps it is for the best if we leave. Our unpredictable weather can get tiresome.”

On the other hand, Louise Smith '20, an Orange resident, claims that she “would be so upset if Bethany left! Bethanians add so much to our school community, where else would I get to learn to feed chickens? They can’t control the fact that the power always goes out; they just have so many trees!”

Ultimately, time will tell who will stay and who will go, and if Amity can handle the wildness that is the town of Bethany.

Wraps of Amity Food Critic of the Century

by Kate Yuan '19

A new food critic has taken Amity by storm. Austin Gilbride, better known by his fans as @wraps_of_amity on Instagram, has risen to fame in only a couple of months. This account has gained 1.6 hundred followers over only two months, but the recognition is very well deserved.

Every day (sometimes multiple times a day), Gilbride posts wrap reviews from the one and only Amity cafeteria, which only narrowly missed receiving a Michelin star. With a wide variety of meat, veggie, and condiment options, the permutations of wraps seem endless. This is what keeps his fans captivated—no one ever knows what the next day will bring.

this wrap seemed to be made from the gods themselves. It was hard to accept that this was the same cafe that made his wrap yesterday. At that moment, he decided he had to share this beauty with the rest of the Amity community.

What he did not expect was how quickly this would spread and how important this content was to people, especially beyond the school itself.

The statistics speak for themselves, but fans will testify to Gilbride’s notoriety. Sophomore Morewraps Please said, “The wrap reviews are the absolute highlights of my day. It absolutely kills me when the wrap is not posted until C lunch, but I know how hard Austin works, and I appreciate anything I can get.” We

Amity students who have been in the middle of it all say that Gilbride will go down in history surpassing the greats like Gordon Ramsey and Frank Bruni. What sets Gilbride apart from his peers in the food review industry is his dedication to the fans. By popular demand, he facilitated an intense multi-bracketed tournament to determine and crown the ultimate meat in the Chartwells cafeteria.

After a close battle, turkey ended up victorious, just narrowly edging out buffalo chicken. Gilbride manages to maintain a high prestige in the serious quality of reviews while also bringing spunk and spontaneity to create a refreshing lightheartedness to what can be an otherwise cutthroat environment.

Additionally, Wrapsfor Dayze said, “I submit my wraps every day to this guy. On March 7th at 12:07, I got the best Instagram notification of my life: ‘wraps_of_amity has tagged you in a post.’ My life is literally complete now.”



Connoisseur Gilbride’s wrap.
By Austin Gilbride '19.

Gilbride said that the inspiration for this account came one day as he ordered a wrap from the Amity cafeteria. Since the cafe is usually known for their top-notch quality, Gilbride was completely appalled by what he received.

“It looked like it could have come from a Steven King novel. It made me squirm,” said Gilbride.

The following day, against his better judgment, he decided to give the wrap line a second chance. He was shocked and in disbelief as

Despite all this fame, Gilbride has been on a hiatus from his account, much to the dismay of his fans. Sometimes, fame is just too much to bear, but in this case, it is due to religious reasons as he gave up all forms of social media for Lent. The community is counting down the days until they can view wrap reviews once again.

WTNH Roasts High School over Spartan Logo

by Rosie Du '19

Students and staff at Amity Regional High School were shocked by local news headlines last weekend.

On Saturday, March 23, news station WTNH broke a late night story, “Amity’s School Logo a Cause of Concern,” voicing the lack of uniformity in the school Spartan logo and its color differences in various parts of the building, as well as sports and other club apparel.

Many people in BOW have not expressed concern over the mix of outdated logos with newer signs as

Joe McFlow '22 said, “It’s absolutely pathetic. I mean, I agree that our logo sucks, but we didn’t have to go on WTNH for it. Although, I like a bit of notoriety. It gives me something to talk about with my friends from other towns!”

The WTNH story cited several Amity students who came forward with their opinions on the logo and claimed that all three students, who wanted to go by the names Thing One, Thing Two, and Thing Three, were completely heartbroken by the logo. The students allegedly stated that the school did not even seem to care about

they choose to break this story?! I would rather be reading about the debate on turf fields or the bathroom debates.”

Others, however, agreed with WTNH. Lucy Furr '19 said, “The Spartan logo is truly not appropriate. I mean, when have we ever seen anyone dressed like a true Spartan? This isn’t Ancient Greece here!”

Amity administration says that they are trying their best to accommodate everyone’s opinions. They are open to meetings with students and staff alike and will stay after school to discuss changes needed.



Amity’s contrasting logos.
Photos from Orange Live.

they walk around the halls.

Merry Strickland '20 said, “I’m usually hurrying to get to class between periods, since I have to go from gym to government, so I never noticed the Spartan logos around the school. I don’t think it really matters, since it’s not like anyone understands why our mascot is a Spartan anyways.”

Others thought since WTNH has not broken a story on Amity in a while, this is what they came up with.

the completely different sizing, coloring, and designs of the school logo that have been inconsistent in various contexts, such as throughout the building, sports events, and musicals, over the past few years.

Students voiced their outrage at the story. Some were disgusted by the preposterousness of the article.

Gilman Bartlesbee '21 said, “Are we a joke to them? Out of everything happening at Amity,

The logo will be examined extensively, from the specific Pantone hues to the pose of the Spartan head on each uniform and apparel from Amity. The uniformity of the logo across sports, music groups, and overall clothing must be one and the same.

Clearly, this is a story that has affected students, parents, and staff as the year moves forward. Everyone is divided on how the logo must look pristine, and we will see how administration handles this problem.

Amity Watches Clock for Byar’s Next Tiktok

by Sydney Reiner '20

With the new superintendent arriving, all the students at Amity were quite weary of the new changes Jennifer Byars would bring. And while there have not been monumental changes, one particularly stands out: her announcements of snow days. Amity’s previous superintendent, Charles Dumais, religiously used Twitter as a platform to announce days off. However, Byars has implemented a new tradition, the use of TikTok to announce no school.

She began using this technique on Amity’s first snow day, by releasing a video called “In My Pajamas,” under the account, “yoitssuperintendentbyarz.” Within this video, Byars recreated the “In My Feelings Challenge,” dancing and then explaining that students could stay in their pajamas, as there was no school the next day.

Pamela Peabody '19 said, “I was absolutely outraged when I heard that there no longer would be the use of Twitter to announce

countless videos, all including creative and trendy ways to announce snow

with Byars replacing “go,” with “snow.” Another video showcased Byars’ impressive dabbing abilities.

One of the videos, that could be considered a fan-favorite, featured Amity principal, Anna Mahon. Mahon and Byars learned the complicated handshake from the movie, The Parent Trap. The choreography was extremely intricate, leading one to believe that it had been practiced for hours. The video served as a method of announcing Spartan Seminar the next day, and immediately went viral, receiving over four million views.

Overall, the new implementation is an extremely creative way to make announcements, and students and faculty are certainly not disappointed, all anxiously waiting for a notification informing them that “yoitssuperintendentbyarz” has released a new video.



days off; however, upon discovering yoitssuperintendentbyarz, I was immediately relieved. Once again, we have a cool superintendent.”

Since then, Byars has created



Superintendent Byars Opts for Tiktok over Twitter.
Photos from TNW, Milford-Orange Times, and Wikimedia.

days, delays, as well as necessary school information. One of them featured the hit song, “Let It Go,”

In regards to the dabbing video, Mandy Wandy '20 said, “I’ve never seen a better dab form. I am tremendously impressed.”



THE AMITY TRIDENT

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Woodbridge, CT 06525

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Standard Groups Assess Amity's Curriculum and Instruction in Preparation for NEASC

by Caroline Chen '21

As the date of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation visit approaches, Amity faculty has been preparing with vigor.

Since August 2018, teachers and staff have been divided into seven groups. These standard groups each focus on one standard for accreditation highlighted by NEASC.

Standard group two evaluates the written and taught curriculum. This evaluation is based on seven main indicators: purposeful design, format, emphasis on understanding and application, consistency between the written

and taught curriculum, coordination between departments and schools, staffing levels and resources, and district provisions. Faculty chairs Tasia Kimball and Danielle Norris and their group have been working to assess Amity's success in this standard.

Norris said, "We're looking at the written and taught curriculum in all the classes across the school in all departments [to see if] it has certain standards of curriculum, essential questions, and units. We are assessing where we stand as a high school with the NEASC rubric."

This standard encompasses many areas, and communication between Amity departments has been cru-

cial. Kimball said, "We have a cross section of every department in the building except for performing and fine arts. But everybody else we have represented. It's been a lot of input from different departments and people's different experiences which seem to be a broad school experience."

Thus far, standard group two has completed their standard report, which includes an assessment of whether NEASC indicators were met.

Norris said, "We talked about across departments, how we are doing, [and] if we are following what NEASC sets apart in our standard. We discussed funding and budget for curriculum writing in the summer [and] how the school's supplies support us

in teaching and implementing the curriculum."

Standard group three, with LeeAnn Browett as the faculty chair, focuses on instruction.

Browett said, "The group asks, 'Is there instruction lined up with our core values and beliefs and what the NEASC group thinks 21st [century] learning is?'" The group has completed a self-reflection and evaluation of the school's instructional performance.

"In general, we found that Amity teachers are very strong," Browett added. "They really do a lot of the skills that were looked at. They definitely have formative assessments, look at results, [and] make decisions based

on that."

Thus far, the group has done all research and completed its standard report. This report is comprised of both strengths and areas for improvement. Improvements include more interdisciplinary lessons and stronger efforts to look at work from students in other teachers' classes.

Moving forward, standard group three will be presenting the instruction standard report to the faculty to determine if teachers agree or disagree with the group's findings.

In the coming weeks, standard groups two and three will complete their evaluation of where Amity stands with NEASC's curriculum and instruction accreditation standards.

Spanish Honor Society Hosts Annual Salsa Night

by Audrey Marin '22

Members of the Amity Spanish Honor Society held their largest annual fundraising event, Salsa Night, on March 1st from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. During the event, Amity alumnus and professional salsa dancer, Alisa Bowens, taught students the art of salsa dancing in a series of fun

ety members provided cultural cuisine including burritos and, of course, chips and salsa!

All students from Amity were strongly encouraged to attend. The Spanish Honor Society members advertised by handing out reminders during lunch waves and talking students throughout the school day. The event not only opened students up to cultural diversity but also encouraged students to try new things and participate in their community.

Ashley Dorais '22 said, "I thought it was a really fun experience. I would definitely go again and the food was really good. Alisa did a great job teaching the salsa class and making sure that the dances were easy enough for everyone to do. It was a great activity because no matter how experienced you were at dancing, you could still participate and have fun."

Salsa Dancer Alisa Bowens, who owns Alisa's House of Salsa in New Ha-

ven, has been dancing on the professional level for over a decade. Her technique was pristine, and she did a great job allowing students to express themselves in a non-conforming fashion.

Members of the Spanish Honor Society were ecstatic at the massive attendance and

"I thought it was a really fun experience. I would definitely go again and the food was really good," said Ashley Dorais '22.

enthusiasm from students.

Danielle Grosso '19 said, "Salsa night was very fun! We had a good turnout, and it was great to see everyone trying something new and perhaps out of their comfort zone. I think that it offers an exciting opportunity to interact with a culture that many of us study in class."

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Academic Decathlon Students Compete

by Weiss Yuan '21 and Kabir Khwaja '21

This past month, on Saturday, February 23, 2019, the annual Connecticut Academic Decathlon States Competition was held at Trumbull High School. This year's United States Academic Decathlon theme was "The 1960s: A Transformational Decade."

The Academic Decathlon Competition has 10 total events that everyone participates in. These include Art, Literature, Economics, Mathematics, Music, Science, Social Science, Essay, Speech, and Interview.

In addition to these testing events, the competition also tries to create an inclusive environment. Schools send a diverse team of members with a myriad of individual strengths. To achieve this diversity, a complete team must consist of members in three different divisions: Honors (3.750 - 4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.00 - 3.749 GPA), and Varsity (0.00 - 2.999 GPA).

Awards are given based off of the top three scores

in every division, as well as overall, with Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals. In addition, schools are able to send Al-



Scholastic Division Participates in the Super Quiz.

Contributed by Mo Anumolu '19

ternates who have their own division in which medals are handed out. At the end of the competition day, when tests, speeches, and interviews are completed, there is a "Super-Quiz" where schools send team members from the different divisions to solve multiple choice challenges in front of a live audience that is cheering them on.

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Students at Salsa Night.

Photo by Ningxin Luo '20

moves.

The Spanish Honor Soci-

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Spanish Honor Society Hosts Annual Salsa Night

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Students who prove exemplary in the Spanish language are admitted into the Spanish Honor Society at Amity. It is a national organization devoted to spreading Spanish culture in local communities. Their motto is “¡Todos a Una!”, meaning “All in one!”

Grosso ’19 said, “My experience has been incredibly rewarding, and the Spanish National Honor Society has afforded me numerous opportunities to meet new people, enhance my understanding

of culture, and improve my language skills. I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished this year in our visits to the Fair Haven school, our collection drives, and our fundraisers.”

Evidently, Salsa Night opened students up to culture



Señoras Mirci and Potter dance away.
Photo by Ningxin Luo ’20

and new experiences, providing leadership opportunities to seniors in the Spanish Honor Society.

Marine Biology Club Spreads Awareness through Sculpture

by Evan Hollander ’20

The Marine Biology Club has been awarded a substantial grant to undertake a project which will spread awareness about the need for recycling. The grant, which amounts to \$1000, was given to the club by the Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation and presented by Mr. Fred Hulley.

With the funds, a roughly four- or five-foot sculpture will be fabricated out of recycled plastics, such as bottles, lids, and bubble wrap. The figure will be supported by a mixed wooden and wire frame, which has already been constructed.

The sculpture will depict a sea turtle, to call attention to the plastic pollution in the world’s oceans, which can be deadly to marine animals. The plastic recyclables will form the details of the animal, namely the flippers, head and face, tail, and shell.

Harrison Blume ’19, who takes the Marine Biology Course taught by Valerie Cournoyer, is excited about the project and believes it will teach about a critical issue. “If you eat seafood, you’re going to be eating plastics, because it’s in our fish,” said Blume.

Cournoyer, a Marine Biology teacher and faculty advisor to the Marine Biology

Club, said, “Students will work on the figure during class periods as well as during after-school sessions.” All Amity students are also invited to help the construction on Thursdays after school in Room 271, through April 25. The first meeting, which was scheduled for March 21, was designated for planning.

Once the large sculpture is completed, it will be put on display during outreach events at the high school. Students and staff may soon see the sculpture at STEAM Day, the Art Slam, and on Earth Day.

The creators hope to engage the community to help the environment and prevent further pollution by reducing, reusing, and recycling plastic packaging. They were inspired by the Washed Ashore Project, a non-profit organization which, according to their website, is dedicated “to educat[ing] our global audience about plastic pollution in our oceans.”

The organization constructs plastic-waste figures, like the one the Marine Biology Club is planning. These are currently on display at Disney’s Epcot and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, as well as other venues.

The Marine Biology Club is also hoping to host a Plastics in the Ocean Awareness Week, which, pending approval, will take place April

22-26—coinciding with Earth Day. That week, the club will be holding activities and have products, like reusable shopping bags, recycled products, and stickers for computers. There will also be educational activities to teach about alternatives to single-use plastic and how ocean currents, known as gyres, transport oceanic garbage to garbage patches, which are large floating bodies of debris.

Sydney Reiner ’20, another student in Cournoyer’s class, said, “The plastics issue is one [with] detrimental impact to everyone on this planet. Our goal with this project is to spread awareness and encourage people to take initiatives.”

Reiner also worked with Cecilia Livingston ’20 and Hanna Brochinsky ’20 to raise awareness of reusable bags instead of plastic ones.

“We held an art competition for artists to send us a drawing/painting that spreads awareness about the plastics issue, and we will put the winning piece on our community-wide reusable bags that we will be selling,” Reiner said.

Thanks to the financial support of the Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation, The Marine Biology Club’s sculpture will help educate the Amity community about the growing concern of plastics in our oceans.

Academic Decathlon Students Compete

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Amity’s Academic Decathlon Club was founded back in 2015 with Ananya Kachru ’18, Samantha Fleischman ’18, and Mounisha Anumolu ’19. Since then, Amity has attended the annual Connecticut Academic Decathlon State Competition every year. Anumolu is currently co-captain of the club with Neha Sudhir ’19.

Anumolu said, “As a co-founder and captain of Academic Decathlon for the last four years, it’s been really cool to see something that I helped build from the ground up grow into an amazing organization with so much passion and talent from the kids involved.”

At this year’s state competition, Amity sent 15 students, six of whom were on the team, and nine of whom were Alternates. In total, Amity students won 48 of 140 medals awarded there.

Wendy Zhang ’21 said, “There’s always something for everyone at [Academic Decathlon]. There’s so many different subjects and skills to learn about and improve upon, which is why I enjoyed the competition. This year’s theme was the

Arnav Paliwal ’21 and Nikhil Mali ’21 both found the competition fun, though stressful at times. They felt that even though it took a lot of preparation, the results were definitely rewarding.

Eveleen Jiang ’22 said, “The experience was fantastic and fun, and [the competition] was a great way to experience all the different subjects and better my public speaking skills.”

Jiang added that the various speeches helped her to understand how important it is to be unafraid of putting yourself in front of people and expressing your ideas.

Danielle Lee ’20 found that along with having fun, she met a lot of new people that she wouldn’t have gotten to know otherwise.

Lee said, “It was the competition that we were looking forward to all year, and thanks to everyone’s hard work, we did well.”

She especially felt that Academic Decathlon let her meet freshmen and share her experiences to help them.

Amity practiced and prepared for this year’s State Competition since the previous



Students at the competition
Contributed by Mo Anumolu ’19

1960s, and I look forward to next year’s theme.”

Many of the students who attended this year also through it was a great experience and really value how there are so many subjects that everyone participates in.

Allison Su ’21 said, “To do well in the tests, a lot of studying has to go into it, but you don’t have to study for all seven of them. It’s best to choose two or three to focus on.”

summer and created study guides for the club, participated in presentations to teach other club members, and worked together to help learn the material.

Next year’s theme will be “In Sickness and in Health: An Exploration of Illness and Wellness,” and the club is always looking for new members and encourages anyone willing to pursue knowledge and fun competition to join.

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Woodbridge, CT 06525
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Brooksidefm@gmail.com



Changes Needed in Math Department Leveling Guidelines

by Ryan Anastasio '20

When I was recommended and registered for the comp level of math in seventh grade, I did not think much about it. I had always enjoyed math, but it was certainly not my best subject. The middle level was a good option for me as I was able to learn at an easier and slower pace.

However, what I did not know at the time was that in high school I would be a year behind many of my peers. The students who took advanced math in seventh and eighth grade took Geometry as freshmen, while I took Algebra 1 as a freshman. Those placed in advanced math in middle school took Algebra 1 in eighth grade.

If I had known that by taking Advanced Math in middle school I would be in Geometry as a freshman, I would have challenged myself and signed up for Ad-

vanced Math.

There was no communication by the teachers and administration from both the elementary and middle schools about the effects of math placement. Many students register for levels and courses without knowing the future impact on their education. While middle school level placements do not substantially affect courses such as English and social studies, their impacts on math and science can be dramatic.

I commend the high school for dealing with the impacts on science courses. With the elimination of the Earth Science course, all students now take chemistry as a sophomore. In previous years, students were forced to take earth science as sophomores because of recommendations.

Not taking as many higher level courses can also hurt a student's college prospects. Many colleges like to see Pre-

Calculus and Calculus on the transcript of a student, especially if they are a science or math major. While it is not stated directly by colleges, it is apparent that colleges prefer students who have taken more advanced courses such as calculus.

Being in a class such as Algebra 2 as a junior can hurt when students take standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT. Some of the concepts on these tests are not learned until the end of Algebra 2 or even during Pre-Calculus. This results in the student having to teach themselves skills. I ask the administration and math department to take a serious look at this issue.

Whether it is improving communication and better informing incoming middle school students about the future impacts of the level placement or by making changes to the curriculum, change is needed.

Diversity Shown in Packed Democratic Presidential Field

by Zachary Garfinkle '22

Many Democrats announced their candidacies for the 2020 presidential election. With regards to policy platforms, ideological predilections, race, and gender, there is plenty of diversity. This election offers a plethora of candidates, making it all the more difficult to choose. As such, there is no perfect candidate that fits everyone's hopes and expectations.

Beto O'Rourke's recent announcement of his candidacy, though relatively unsurprising, is a subject of great interest. He does not appear to be too extreme, favoring more moderate views and stressing bipartisanship and unity in comparison to some of his more progressive competitors. In a world where image is often more important than policies, he is certainly charismatic enough. A considerable issue for O'Rourke, however, is his inexperience. He has never made any significant decisions, passed any legislation, or enacted any

executive policies in a government position. One might recall Donald Trump's lack of experience in politics. This could steer voters away from O'Rourke; after years of enduring Trump's America, liberals may well want stability and assurance that their president knows what he is doing. His ultimate success may rest on the extent to which he is able to flesh out his broad policy views regarding immigration, healthcare, and economic inequality.

Joe Biden may be an incredible candidate in today's political climate. He has far more name recognition than any other Democratic candidate, due to his two terms as vice president and his decades of experience as a leader in the U.S. Senate. Additionally, those nostalgic for Obama's presidency will associate Biden with those successes. Biden has a great deal of experience in politics. Unfortunately, in his nearly forty years of public service, his past is rife with controversy. One such significant event was his dismissive treatment

of Anita Hill, a woman who was allegedly sexually harassed by a future Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas. During hearings on Capitol Hill in the 1980s, he harmed her case by not allowing key witnesses to testify. Controversies far more plentiful and shocking than this inexplicably had little to no effect on Trump's campaign; in all likelihood, however, the same leniency will not be afforded to Biden. If Biden decides to run for president, his past will come back to haunt him. But, if he can overcome that obstacle, he will win the votes of many Democrats and Independents and be a formidable rival to Trump in a general election.

Bernie Sanders is a candidate of interest as well as a person of great controversy. To some, he is the Democratic front-runner and the harbinger of a better, fairer America. To others, he is a joke at best and an overly idealistic socialist at worst. He may not be a viable option for the presidency; his identifica-

Continued on page 4

THE TRIDENT

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CORRECTIONS

In the February 2019 issue of *The Trident*, the author of "Trump's State of the Union: A Step in the Right Direction" was written by Ryan Anastasio '20, not David Sugarmann '20.

For any corrections or tips, please email amitytridentnewspaper@gmail.com. To sign up to write or take photographs for *The Trident*, contact the Editors-in-Chief, Mrs. Clark, or email amitytridentnewspaper@gmail.com.

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An Examination of a Packed Democratic Presidential Field

Continued from page 3

-tion with socialism make him too much of a target from other candidates on both sides of the aisle. He is too far to the left to win over anyone with even mildly conservative economic views, and some of his broad ideas are completely unrealistic and unattainable.

Sanders is what some might call a “one-trick pony,” as he almost obsessively focuses on one issue—economic inequality.

During the 2016 Presidential Election, he faltered when asked about foreign policy, which is quite telling about his priorities and plans for the presidency. His fixation on the economy has taken priority for him, and he evidently has not put nearly enough thought into other vital issues.

The president must be well-rounded and have plans for all important issues, beyond only domestic economic matters.

There are certainly

Democrats who desire radical change but are uncertain of Sanders’ ability to lead. For these voters, Elizabeth Warren may be the best choice. Many would agree that out of all of the presidential candidates, she has the most detailed, thought-out, and bold policy ideas.

Her ideas are intriguing and well-developed. Her ideas for strong corporate regulation and a wealth tax are new and exciting, though easily criticized by traditionalists

for that very reason. If she plays her cards right, she may be able to find common ground between many Democrats.

Worryingly, some popular Democratic candidates share key aspects of some of Donald Trump’s worst qualities as president.

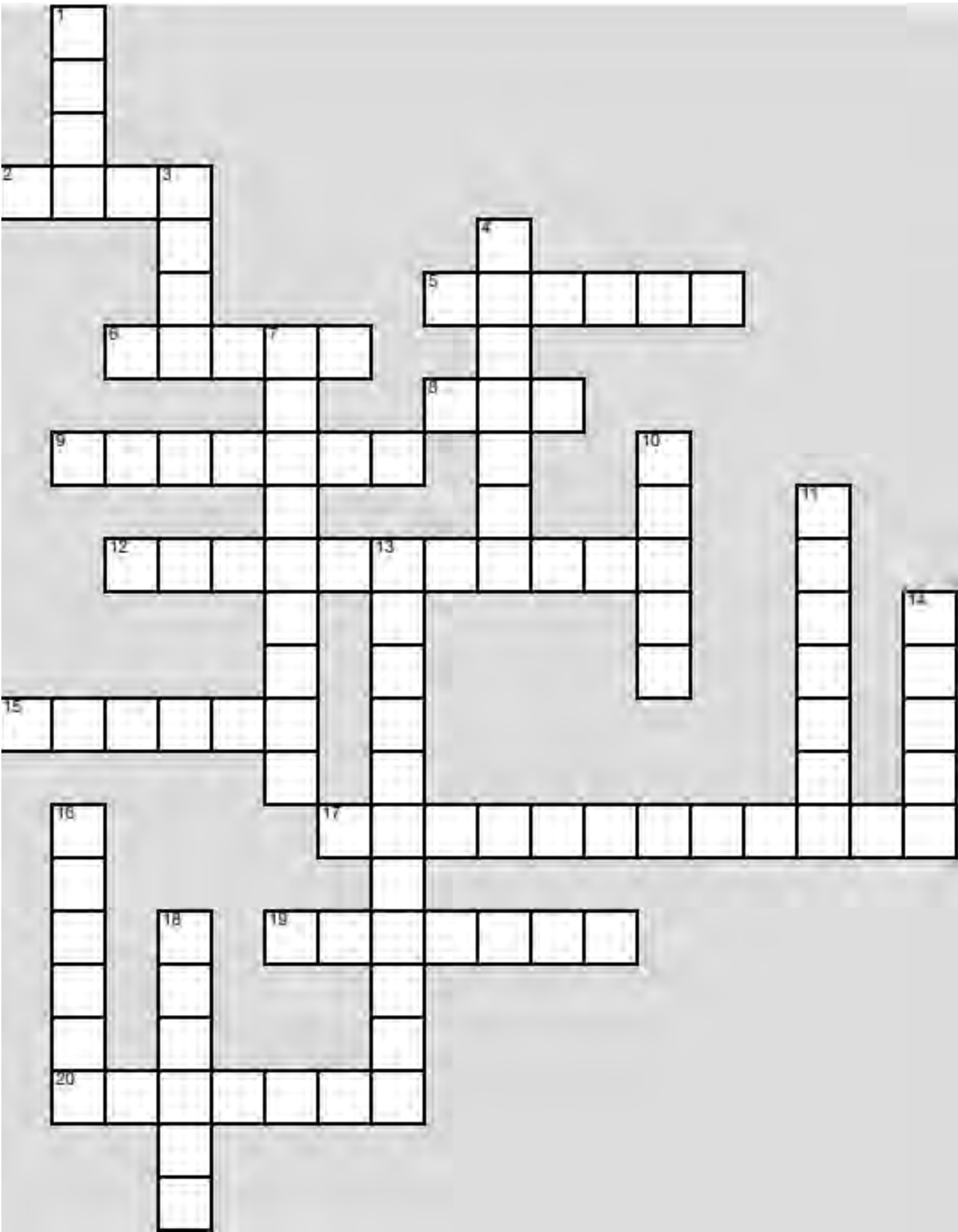
In his long career as a politician, Biden has made many mistakes for which he is yet to apologize.

O’Rourke may be too inexperienced to be the leader of the free world.

Sanders is incredibly focused on policies that would not be effective or feasible.

Of course, one must not forget that there are a multitude of Democratic candidates for this upcoming election, as the aforementioned people are not the only options.

No candidate is without faults, but Democratic voters must not be divided as they were in 2016 if they hope for a president who will represent their values and beliefs.



Across

- 2 Trump GOP Challenger
- 5 Jonas Brothers' New Hit Single
- 6 Madness Month
- 8 A-Rod Fiance
- 9 April Showers Bring May _____
- 12 Logic's Newest Album
- 15 1/1000th Native American
- 17 College Admissions Scandal
- 19 Former Texas Congressman Running for President
- 20 Democratic Socialist for President

Down

- 1 Connecticut Ivy
- 3 "Explorer is Her Middle Name"
- 4 Bob _____ just released a report
- 7 Odell is going to _____
- 10 _____ Me If You Can
- 11 Pokemon Sleuth
- 13 Final Four City
- 14 April _____ Day
- 16 CA Senator for President
- 18 Endgame Villan

This month’s crossword puzzle was made by Matthew Aferzon ’20. Thanks to him for making this incredibly difficult puzzle, and good luck to all of our readers!

Congratulations to Billy McKeon ’19 and Matt Sturtevant ’21 for being the first to complete the February 2019 crossword!

Students MaPP Pi Day Competition

by Allison Su '21

Pi Day is extremely exciting to those who are familiar with the irrational number. Twenty-four students from Amity participated in Southern Connecticut State University's Mathematical Puzzle Programs (MaPP) Competition. This competition was held on March 14th.

Amity students brought three teams, each of which was comprised of eight people. These teams competed against fourteen other teams from various local high schools.

This competition involved eleven math-related puzzles and logic challenges which were unlocked when students went to specific places on SCSU's campus, much like a scavenger hunt

Julie Fleischman '19, Amity's math team captain, helped organize this event in conjunction with Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Society) advisor, Joycelyn Romero.

Fleischman said, "I thought there might be interest beyond Mu Alpha Theta, so I went into calculus classes to try to convince people to come, and I advertised it at math team as well."

In the end, she was able to get enough people for three teams. Amity made their way to the top of this competition when the team of eight seniors, including Fleischman '19, won.

They received a plaque and t-shirts. Another team, consist-

ing of sophomores, including Wendy Zhang '21 and Arnav Paliwal '21, placed third in the competition.

"My favorite part was when we were trying to find the solution to the hidden puzzle," said Fleischman. "We finally discovered a secret solution which told us exactly what the answer was. It was a completely shocking and incredible moment."

Similarly, Paliwal expressed that he enjoyed that moment where his team would discover or realize an answer to a clue they had been working very hard on.

"We solved math questions based on ideas in college math, like graph theory," said Danielle Lee '20.

"I loved how they incorporated college math ideas into the problems in an approachable way, not involving terrifying math jargon... I thought it was really interesting that they incorporated a physical portion for a math competition," Lee added.

MaPP was a unique experience for Amity's math students and unlike any other math competition, such as the AMC 10 and AMC 12. Those math competitions are much more standardized and are completed individually.

This competition was more interactive and engaged students from all different grades. Fleischman also suggests, "Even if you don't consider yourself a classic 'mathy' person, this is a different type of team problem solving that's really fun."

Science Bowl Club Attends Tournament for First Time

by Tracy Lu '20

Amity Science Bowl Club recently competed at the annual Science Bowl tournament at UConn. This is a buzzer competition where groups of five students try to be the first team to answer questions on biology, physics, earth and space, energy, chemistry, and mathematics. The tournament was held on March 3rd.

The club meets weekly to read textbooks on various topics, take notes, and conduct practice rounds.

This is the first year of the club's existence at Amity High School. Many of its members participated in science bowl in middle school, which is why they were inspired to continue this activity in high school by starting the club.

All of the students' preparation is for the annual tournament. On February 22, the team had a scrimmage to prepare students before the competition.

The club advisors are Catherine Piscitelli and Deborah Best. The teachers have both had several of the club's members in the past, and Piscitelli is the Science Research Program advisor.

Amity brought two teams comprised of sophomores to the event. After having breakfast at UConn, teams competed in five rounds of question answering. Students collaborated within their teams in order to answer accurately and quickly.

"It was challenging since we were some of the only sopho-



Amity's Science Bowl Club members at UConn on Tournament Day

Photo courtesy of Catherine Piscitelli

mores there, but the competition itself was exciting," said Wendy Zhang, a student that attended. "In the first few rounds, we were hesitant to buzz in, but we got more comfortable and confident as the day progressed," said Wendy Zhang '21.

In the afternoon, the competition held the second round of questions where the top 16 teams competed to win a spot at nationals. Neither Amity team made it to this round, but the students are determined and

optimistic for next year.

Co-captain Peter Scully '21 said, "I really enjoyed the competition, even if we didn't do the best, it was a great experience and we're already preparing for next year."

Another club member, Allison Su '21, added that questions on content taught in AP classes were difficult for the team, and said that they hope to do better next year as many of them will be taking new and different science courses.

For their first time competing, our teams did a great job and I believe they learned a lot from the experience and watching other teams competed," said Piscitelli.

The club is currently planning fundraising events to make future improvements to the club, such as purchasing new buzzers for practices.

"Science Bowl is really fun even though it's also hard since it covers all topics of science and includes topics we aren't taught in class, like astronomy," said Su.

Arnav Paliwal '21, co-captain, shared that this club provides a great opportunity to explore the sciences. Overall, the competition gave the students a chance to learn new concepts and demonstrate their scientific knowledge.

Amity Freshman Wins Writing Award

Story To Be Published in Connecticut Student Writers (CSW) Magazine

Zachary Garfinkle, a freshman at Amity, submitted his original short story, "Matthew 5:17," to the Connecticut Student Writers (CSW) Magazine.

His piece was selected for publication in the 31st issue of the magazine. The submission was judged by volunteer teachers across the state.

The piece was chosen from over 1,800 entries throughout Connecticut and will be published by the Connecticut Writing Project (CWP) at Storrs.

Printed below is the first half of "Matthew 5:17." Congratulations to Zachary!

Matthew 5:17

Jacob was fated to open the door the moment that bullet entered his father's skull. On the night of reckoning, he was full of the same righteous anger that had fueled him for over two decades. The fury had kept him faithful and tethered to his daunting goal. No earthly force could have prevented him from achieving his aim; his hunger for vengeance transcended all natural obstacles in life. Jacob wondered incredulously if he could be under the protection of a god that had seemingly long abandoned him.

His father had been a pious man. *A lot of good that did him,*

Jacob thought bitterly. Though Jacob had been young when his only parent was murdered, he had vivid memories of clasping hands in prayer between rows of pews. He had always felt welcome in the Church of New Brunswick; the congregation had cared for Jacob like a second family, especially after the loss of his father. He felt a guilty pang in his stomach, remembering his abandonment of the church. Despite their fervent efforts, the churchgoers could not restore his faith in a god who let his most devoted followers die young, and he decided to leave for good.

As he gazed at the house, Jacob longed for what had been his. The dilapidated porch creaked under Jacob's feet. To his surprise, the front door was unlocked. Stepping inside, he was greeted by the unwelcoming buzzing of nocturnal insects. Jacob hesitantly tiptoed across the shifting floorboards and into a dimly lit room.

His eyes immediately moved toward an elderly man slumped in a blood-red armchair. The object of Jacob's focused hatred sat there sleeping without a care in the world.

"Merkis," snarled Jacob. The old man awoke with a start, his eyes darting around the cluttered room wildly in an attempt to locate the source of this sound. His eyes focused on Jacob and

widened fearfully in recognition. He pointed a shaking finger at Jacob.

"You're his child," Merkis stated undoubtedly, though Jacob noticed the tremor in his voice. The old man had likely been dreading this moment for decades, always having to look over his shoulder. *Good*, thought Jacob.

"Three hundred dollars doesn't get you very far, does it?" sneered Jacob, barely containing his anger. He clenched his fist. "Was it worth it?"

The old man, now standing, shook his head submissively. Jacob irritably wished that he would talk. In Jacob's mind, his father's killer had been preserved at forty. It felt strange to antagonize an old man. Merkis' hair was as white and thin as the cobwebs that overlaid the walls.

Despite his rage, Jacob felt disconcerted, gazing upon his surroundings. Jacob's apartment, infamous for its roach problem, seemed heavenly in comparison to Merkis' living arrangements. Numerous wine bottles were piled haphazardly in the corner. Merkis evidently lived alone, accompanied only by his roommates of the rodent variety.

Both feared to bridge the empty silence. Though Jacob had planned and eagerly anticipated this moment for decades, he felt lost and unprepared. Both men

blinked anxiously and rapidly at each other as if they were communicating via morse code during the silence.

"After all these years, I finally found you," said Jacob. Merkis' hands shook uncontrollably as the stress inflamed his arthritis. Jacob paced agitatedly around the room.

"I still can't believe you weren't convicted," Jacob began to rant. "You walked free while my father paid the price. For what? A few hundred bucks?" Thinking back to his days in Bible school, Jacob was reminded of the story of Jesus' death; like Judas and Jesus, Merkis had orchestrated a good man's death for a small sum of money.

"I'm sorry," Merkis apologized feebly and ineffectively. To Jacob, Merkis' sincerity was questionable at best.

"The rodents in this house should be disgusted that they have to share a home with vermin like you." As if his own hateful words were exacerbating his rage, he became overcome with anger and he spat in Merkis' face.

The old man flinched initially, and then quietly wiped the spit off of his cheek. Jacob's expression of loathing morphed into one of confusion. There was no retaliation, no indignation; Jacob realized that all of Merkis' pugnacity

had been long gone. He was a broken-down shell of his former reckless, criminal youth. Jacob was now approximately the age Merkis had been when he killed Jacob's father; the murderous cycle continued to turn.

"Have you kept the murder weapon?" interrogated Jacob. Merkis nodded meekly. At Jacob's orders, he walked over to a cabinet in the kitchen. He removed a small, cold metal safe, dusty from disuse, and placed it on the counter.

"Open it," Jacob demanded, deliberately staring intently at a spot on Merkis' forehead. Jacob feared that if he made eye contact, his mission would be impossible. He felt his resolve weaken with every passing moment. The old man regarded him with a look of pity. This infuriated Jacob, temporarily vanquishing any feelings of sympathy; how dare Merkis pity him? He was in no position to do so.

"This won't bring your father back," Merkis told him mournfully before inputting the code. "Take it from me... this will only bring ruin." Jacob forcibly shoved him to the side to grab the pistol.

The remainder of this piece will be published in the May edition of The Trident.

HUMANS

Drawing inspiration from a project based out of New York created by Brandon Stranton entitled “Humans of New York,” the Humans of Amity project has been taken up by Payton Grande ‘19. This effort displays diversity and shares stories in our community. The project is run entirely through an Instagram account, @humansofamityhigh, where she posts images captioned with an explanation of the specific person or people from the Amity community who is pictured. Originally, the account began under another student, but once they graduated, it was revived by Grande.

Offering insight into members of the school community whom others may not know, these simple captioned photos allow individuals to speak their mind and share comments with the general public. The Humans of Amity project has brought people together by allowing peers to see a snapshot into the lives of those who may be complete strangers to us; it allows us to remember that despite all of our differences, we are all human.



“The Amity community inspires me that there are always people there who have your back. I came from a society where there weren’t many people who inspired me. Being here changed my mindset and I can see myself being successful.” - Devanio Wheatley ’21



“I get to see students all the way from 9th grade to 12th grade, figuring out what they want to do with their lives, figuring out their careers, and seeing the growth. It is really rewarding to see that I’ve helped them shape their future.” - Courtney Campbell, school counselor



“I love working with the students, it’s that simple. I’ve been here almost 30 years now. I’ve worked in the main office, the district office, and even the career center for a short while. I like being here in the library helping students, I enjoy coming to work everyday, and I work in the nicest room in the building!” -Sue Criscuolo, administrative assistant



“We weren’t close prior to this year, but now we’ve become closer. Since the third week of school, we’ve gone every A day during early dismissal to grab lunch at Blue Check and talk in Sam’s car. We’ve helped each other talk about colleges (Indiana U and Colby) and everything else. We are happy to have become better friends.” - Jack Pletter ’19 and Sam Scheps ’19

OF AMITY



“Amity has given me many opportunities to find what I’m interested in. I joined science research and found my passion in science. I’ve met people who share the same interests and passions as me. It has always been a supportive community for me, and I get to have some real lab experiences and am exposed to the life of a researcher.” - Jody Liu ’20



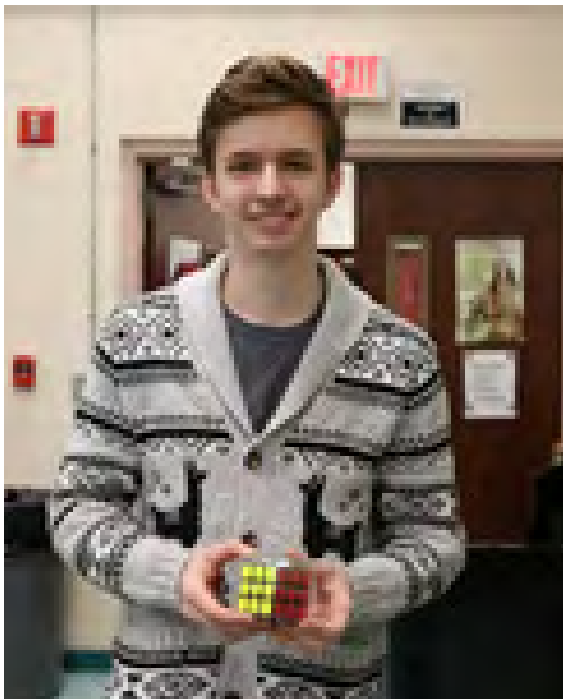
“First we did ski team together, and now we see each other almost every day at pit orchestra. We’re good friends even though we’re three grades apart.” - Liam Tassiello ’22 and Jared Beltz ’19



“I’m at Amity because I really like it here. It’s a very welcoming community. All of the teachers have been really nice even if I don’t know their names. I think the students are incredibly polite, and I’ve been in the teaching business for a very long time. That really struck me.” - Beth Heiss, testing center



“I like working at Amity because it is a comfortable working atmosphere. Everybody that I work with here gets along. I’ve been here for nine years, and I’ve never seen an argument between any of us. There’s a lot of mutual respect between our guys.” -Bogdan Amenda, custodian



I have two Rubik’s cubes that I use normally, and my brother has two that he uses as well, and we have around thirty other Rubik’s cubes which we use for teaching others. I like solving Rubik’s cubes because it teaches me to concentrate and think faster than I usually need to. My record time to solve one is 14.724 seconds. I think my favorite part of solving Rubik’s cubes is getting better at fixing yourself after messing up because that’s important especially when solving Rubik’s cubes- because if you mess up, you’re not going to get very far.” - Andrei Alexandrov ’21



“My favorite quote is ‘Success isn’t owned. It’s leased. And rent is due every day’ by J.J. Watt. That’s what I live by daily.” - Cameron Luciano ’21



“Have you ever heard the quote, ‘Friendship isn’t about who you’ve known the longest. It’s about who came and never left your side’”? Because this is about us! We all met each other at different times, but we got really close this year in Marine Biology! So since Marine Bio started we all now have each other and we are super grateful that we took this class. We could not have been luckier to have made a bond that will last for so long!” - Sydney Reiner ’20, Hanna Brochinsky ’20, and Cecilia Livingston ’20



“I love the way the entire Amity community supports our incredible unified program.” - Besti Grace, physical education



“The bonds you make with teammates last a lifetime.” - Mason Beaudette ’22 and Shyam Viswanathan ’21



“Amity means friendship for a reason!” - Emma Lindskog ’22, Audrey Marin ’22, Ava Chomiak ’22, and Ava Gross ’22

A Backstage Look into Catch Me If You Can

by Jessica Miner '20

Amity Creative Theater is in the midst of preparation for their spring musical, *Catch Me If You Can*. The show will premiere April 5th, at Amity High School, and will be performed for a special five nights.

The production gives students a creative outlet where talents can be showcased both on and off stage. Julie Chevan, a teacher at Amity, is working alongside director Robert Kennedy Kennedy, set and lighting managers, as well as volunteer students to create the costumes that will be worn in the show.

All hands are on deck to ensure audiences are able to take off with the crew in, *Catch Me If You Can*. While the performers are working each day to perfect lines, dances, and countless scenes, backstage volunteers are preparing lights, sets, and costumes to ensure that the musical runs smoothly.

Although audiences often overlook the intense work that is put in behind the scenes, Chevan reminds that, “without the backstage people, actors would

just be crazy naked people screaming in a dark room.”

She notes that costumes are an essential piece of a production that help tell the story. They determine who a character is, establish setting, and can even convey emotions or moods.

“A good costume helps the audience become involved in the world we are creating” said Blythe Reis '20, who has taken part in six school shows. She says that audiences would have a hard time determining which character is being played without them.

More than half of the costumes worn in each Amity musical are handmade by volunteer students. Barely any of the outfits are bought or rented, due to the committed artists who seek to showcase their talents off stage.

Managers must creatively envision what each character will be wearing, by noting the script, in order to determine what costumes will look like. “The costumes bring new life into the show and elevates the energy,” said Aoi Tischer '20, who is a part of this year’s musical. Colors and fabrics for the costumes are often discussed with set and lighting directors to find colors that

will create the best contrast between the set, the actors, and the lights. Chevan explains that the costume volunteers are very dedicated to not only crafting the costumes but also running the show. The students help with quick changes and costume organization backstage throughout the production to ensure the show will run smoothly.

Not only do costumes benefit audiences, but actors too. Reis explains that “being able to step into that characters world, especially by wearing the clothes they wear, is helpful to become that person.” Actors enjoy costumes just as much as the audience does. Costumes add to not only the character, but also the fun in the show. “When they come to their fittings they get so excited,” Chevan explains. “It just adds to them feeling like that character, it adds to the reality of the experience.”

As rehearsals end, the show begins to come to life. Tickets are on sale now for each of the five showings of *Catch Me If You Can*. To experience the music, the fun, and especially the costumes of the musical, come to the show! Join the world of performance with Amity Creative Theater this April.

Jake Halpern Finds His Passion

by Kayla Dixon '19

Jake Halpern, a journalist for the New York Times, spoke with students from Amity Regional High School about his career journey on Tuesday, March 12th, in the media center. He shared many stories about his first dream job, living around the world, meeting his great uncle who survived the Holocaust, and deciding his path in life.

In his presentation, Halpern told students that while in college, he had his mind set on being a lawyer. However, once he stepped foot in an LSATS Prep class, he realized he didn’t have a genuine reason for becoming a lawyer.

Halpern said, “I thought that’s what I wanted in life,” but he came to see that law school wasn’t for him.

After taking a job at a legal newspaper company and summarizing court decisions, Halpern found he was miserable.

Halpern commented that he “needed to get the hell out of th[at] place,” and he got a job teaching English at the American International School in Israel. He moved back to the United States a few years later and finally figured out what he wanted to do.

“I want to be a storyteller,” he said to students. While studying abroad in Prague and writing a screenplay in his 20s, Halpern explained how he was in awe of the culture, the scenery, and everything that surrounded him. During his time in Prague, Halpern discovered that his great uncle’s best friend, Joe Garra, was a Holocaust survivor. He flew to a small town in Slo-

vakia and met with him. After listening to Garra’s experience, Halpern said, “I was lit up inside from what I was told.” He realized he immediately wanted to tell that story.

In the fall of 2016, he learned about a family of refugees from Syria that was supposed to move to Indiana but ended up in Connecticut, giving Halpern an idea for a cartoon with a story about the refugee family. As he interviewed them, what he heard was devastating. The father, who had been sent to a detention center and tortured, wanted people to know the truth of what actually happened in Syria.

This cartoon, published in the New York Times, earned Halpern the Pulitzer Prize in 2018. Regarding how he gets inspiration for his books and his cartoons, Halpern said, “I always start with a story that catches interest. Something that someone would be interested in reading.”

He explained how he has to dig for more and more information until he gets the right information for the perfect story, adding that most of his stories come from word of mouth. Such stories have resulted in numerous novels and journalistic articles.

One piece of advice Halpern said he would give to a high school student interested in pursuing a journalism career is, “You have to tell stories in as many different formats as possible.”

Halpern explained that since technology is so popular now, using multimedia platforms will be useful for the career, and being skilled in different aspects will help students get to where they want to be. By exploring your interests, students can find their true passion.

Congrats to Shakespeare Winners!

On February 26th, after winning Amity’s Shakespeare Speaking Contest, Lilli Querker '19 and Talya Braverman '20 took the next step by attending the statewide Shakespeare Speaking Competition at Sacred Heart University. Querker performed a monologue by Luciana in *The Comedy of Errors*, along with Sonnet 94. She was awarded second place.

Braverman performed Joan of Arc’s monologue from *Henry VI Pt. 1* and Sonnet 113. Congrats to both of them on this wonderful accomplishment!



Lilli Querker (bottom right) and Talya Braverman (bottom center)
Photo by Julie Chevan

Unified Theatre Performs “Seasons of Us” *Students Showcase Success*

by Sydney Reiner ‘20

Crisp leaves, glittering snowballs, brilliant flowers, as well as the vibrant sun are all things one could find at the Unified Theatre Show. On March 1st, eager audience members herded into the Black Box at 6 pm, to witness this year’s production “Seasons of Us.” The performance was divided into four different sections, each one capturing the Unified Theatre members’ favorite aspect of each season. To begin, Unified Theatre member, Andrew Serrano ‘20,

introduced the entire cast, and kickstarted the event with a song. When he was asked about being in the show and having the opportunity to express his creativity Serrano said, “It was so much fun!” Within the performance, the actors took the audience through a whole year, transforming the black box into the specified season. The show was completely student produced, with all the cast members making the props as well as writing the script. The many elaborate props, included snowballs, a tv screen, a bright sun, and many other impressive items. Allyson Wuerth, an English teacher who co-advises the Unified Theatre Club along with fellow English teacher Jeni Bonaldo, said “I was really impressed with the level of student involvement.” The play concluded with a rendition of “Seasons of Love,” from the critically acclaimed musical, Rent, which the audience eagerly joined in to. Altogether, the production was one that is very impressive and gave students the opportunity to become leaders and actors, both on and off the stage, and truly sheds a light on all students’ ability to showcase success.



Open Mic Night: A Platform for Students’ Creativity

by Natalie Prinz ‘20

Last Friday night on March 22nd, the Amity community came together in the cafeteria to participate in open mic night. There was singing, musicians, stories, and even stand up comedy. Students and teachers alike got to showcase their variety of amazing talents. Countless brave students took the stage and released their creativity. One of the notable performances was English teacher, Christian Allard playing guitar, with his rendition of John Mayer’s “Why Did You Mess with Forever,” along with creative writing teacher, Jeni Bonaldo, who read a heart-breaking poem about her female students. Rhea Dey ‘20 attended the event and said, “It was amazing how all those kids were able to show their talents. It takes

a lot of courage to go up there!” As a bonus, the 2019-2020 OBOA book was announced during Open Mic Night! It was live streamed on the Amity Instagram, as students of the OBOA club read aloud a poem that ended with the big reveal: Dear Evan Hansen is the 2019-2020 OBOA book! The poem was sure to explain that if the book you voted for did not win, you can still read The Running Dream by checking it out of the library. Open Mic Night ended with a array of snacks. Summing it up, Ella Marin ‘20 said, “The night was an inspiring experience filled with incredible performances.” Open Mic Night was truly an amazing atmosphere of of encouragement and happiness that was accompanied by many talented and courageous acts.

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Girls Hockey: Miracle on Ice

by Jared Beltz '19

This year's team of the Blades, an inter-town club hockey team led by captains Andrea Delvecchio ('19), Shannon Reilly (NHHS '19), and Meaghan Hogan (CHS '19) made for a very developmental season. The growth throughout the season made it clear how perseverance can pay off and even result in an ending miracle. The Blades, going 0-7 their first seven games was not the best start by any means. These seven losses were met by numerous wins, leaving them at a 12-10-1 record by the end of the season. While not the greatest deviation between wins and losses, it was enough to fill the girls with confidence towards the end of the season. This record, along with hard work and determination to put their first seven losses behind them, drove the team towards the conference championships. After losses to the West Haven-Sacred Heart team previously this season, the odds were not completely in the Blade's favor. However, their turnaround from a not-so-good start proved contrary. The team, full of talented and hardworking players from Amity, North Haven and Cheshire, knew what was needed to beat West Haven-Sacred Heart, and they delivered it. Coming from behind, Hannah Sosensky '19 and Tess Csejka '20 helped to overcome West Haven-Sacred Heart. Csejka scored the first goal of the game followed by Sosensky, who scored one goal to tie it 2-2 in the second period. These subsequent goals led to a tie of 3-3 in the third quarter, and the final goal was scored with 3:30 left in the period

that put Blades on top, 4-3, winning the SCC title for their schools. Subsequent to their win, Csejka was later named the tournament's outstanding player and commented about the drive behind the game. She commented, "We knew they would score in this game and we knew we needed to stay focused." The hard game was not unexpected for the team. Csejka continued, "We knew the game would be intense. We just kept playing hard, and we were getting our chances. On the game-winning goal, as soon as I hit it, I knew it was going in. It felt pretty good when I saw it go in." The goals scored are only a small fraction of the work that goes into the fight to win a game. More importantly is the development made. From their 0-7 start to an SCC banner, it is clear that there was a fair amount of positive development. Even more telling of this is the emotion felt by the players, watching their team grow and succeed. According to Shannon Reilly '19 from North Haven, "When the buzzer went off and we won, the feeling in my stomach was insane. There was so much energy. It was the best feeling I've ever felt, and I don't think I could be any more proud of my team. From where we came from, it's amazing." It isn't hard to be proud of a team with the turnaround like the Blades this season. Seeing a new team succeed once again with a second SCC title was an exciting moment for the players. To the underclassmen on the team, there really isn't any other way to teach the many ups and downs experienced in a developing team. The relationships that need to

develop, as well as the chemistry between players, is the most important aspect to a sport such as hockey. Executing plays and defense as well as the Blades did by the end of this season, along with winning a title, was a better experience than any other that a newcomer to a team could ask for. Freshman Paige Kergaravat '22 said, "This season was one I won't forget as the girls on the team seem like my family. We worked so hard to get where we were, and I wouldn't have wanted to do it with any other team." Just after this great first season of hers, it is clear how the guidance and work ethic of Kergaravat's older peers trickles down to the newer members of the team. The second SCC win for the Blades was all the more exciting for their coach, John Peschell, who was tremendously proud of his team this season. To Peschell, the team itself is, "all heart and desire and just a love for the game." According to Peschell the girls, "never gave up. Once the wins started coming, we just got on a roll. It's crazy. I've never been through a season like this. I can't imagine that many people have." The toughness of the Blade's season was only fought through the hustle on the team. "The biggest factor was their hustle. They really wanted it. They worked really hard, and they wanted it. You could see it in their faces. They dug a little bit deeper. They just wanted it a little bit more." The 2018-2019 season for the Blades came with lessons as well as accolades for the team: both their SCC title, and a learning point on how to become a well-equipped and collaborative team on the ice.



The Blades triumphant after becoming SCC Champions
Photo from GametimeCT.com

Amity E-Sports Changes the Game

by Jared Beltz '19

The wide array of Amity league athletics has now met the Internet. February marked the beginning of the Connecticut Esports CIAC league season, so far being one of the first and only states to offer such a program as a real sport. But what does this league consist of? In this sport, players take part in games of Rocket League and Smite, each team crafted based on which teammates play. Rocket League is comprised of three players playing soccer with rocket powered cars, simply put. Smite is a game comprised of teams of five, where players try to level up as quickly as they can to take over other team's bases. Rocket League is best of five, while Smite is best of 2. The inaugural season has been a great success for Amity's. Michael Decesare '20 explained,

"Currently, our Smite team and Rocket League team are undefeated, with our Rocket League being held at first in the state." Team practices are held once a week where Amity's players partake in games against other schools to work on teamwork strategies. On the other hand, team members also practice individually from their peers on their own time at home. Members can "put in as much or as little effort into practice as they want, as it is a stress-free, no judgment zone for anyone that joins," says Decesare. Currently the team holds events every Tuesday and Wednesday after school in room 147. They are hoping to grow the program to be one of the top in CT by 2020, and make the sport a more widely known team, with more games on their list. For any questions contact our Technology Director, Mr. Shaun DeRosa.



A professional E-sports team competition
Photo from studybreaks.com

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Umttr Basketball Raises Awareness for Suicide Prevention

by Sienna Wang '20

Umttr is a club at Amity that advocates for change regarding bullying, suicide, and depression. Around 28 teams participated in a basketball tournament fundraiser held by the club with physical education teachers refereeing the games.

The event was held after school on Friday, March 8th. First, second, and third place, as well as best costume prizes, were awarded.

By raising money through a bake sale, the event raised \$207.30. Club members used this event to spread knowledge on the issue of suicide in an interactive manner.

During the tournament, the team of Quinton Tilghman '20, Mike Skerit '20, and Cole Wissink '20 placed first, the team of Joe DiGello '20, Will Rotko '20, and Nico Semmonella '20 came in second place, and the team of Jon McNelis '19, Chris Bullers '19, and Marc Chodos '19 came in third. Jon McNelis '19, Chris Bullers '19, Marc Chodos '19, Jon

Schachter '19, Shaun Graham '19, and Tom Kergaravat '19 received best costume awards.

For students like Marc Chodos '19, the fundraising event provided an opportunity to become more aware of social issues.

The club used a unique avenue as a catalyst for change and conversation.

Chodos stated, "I thought it would be a fun experience for a great cause. It provided me with memorable moments, like a tying three-point floater to send the semi-final game into overtime as time expired."

Many gym teachers also helped referee the basketball tournament, like physical education and health teacher Diana DiGangi.

Digangi, spoke about her role in the tournament by saying, "As a teacher, I think it's important to support both the actions that Umttr are taking but also my students. I hope to promote the collaboration between the student body and teachers at Amity."

This event allowed for the interaction between students and teachers for

common causes, creating a common ground for students to more effectively communicate with not only each other but with the Amity faculty as well.

Club leader Sarah Milner '20 provided some additional insight on the event.

"It was not just a fundraiser but it was also a way to get students involved in an activity as well as offer an opportunity for someone who might feel lonely to come out and join us for the afternoon," Milner said regarding the event.

Umttr promotes the collaboration and inclusion of all students into the student life at Amity by providing opportunities like this basketball tournament for students, especially those who are not on the basketball team, to help raise awareness for suicide prevention.

Milner additionally said, "You never know what someone's going through and everyone is fighting their own battles—so reach out to help someone or get help yourself. We tell people that they aren't alone and that there's always something to look forward to."

Boys Swim Team Finishes with an Impressive Season

by David Sugarmann '20

Now that spring is upon us, we can officially say goodbye to 2019 winter sports. Looking back at their season, the Amity Boys Swimming & Diving Team should definitely be proud of the incredible season they have just finished.

Led by veteran Coach Todd Rainey and Captains Shiva Gouda '19 and Jared Sullivan '19, the swim team ended their regular season with a stellar record of 7 wins and 5 losses.

At the regular came to an end, this team was able to carry their momentum from the many regular season victories into the postseason. In the Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC) Finals, they placed 5th, a true testament to their hard work.

After SCCs, this squad did not slow down. Out of 22 teams throughout Connecticut, Amity placed 6th in the Class L championships. These achievements did not come randomly.

From the first day of practice to the last day of practice, every member of the team showed up with the same mindset: improving. Swimming thousands of yards in a pool everyday can be brutal. Unless one has an internal drive to get better, success will not come.

Raymond Lu '20 provided valuable insight into how the Amity swim team is such a successful program. He said, "[The] coaches... and teammates motivate

[me] to work hard and get better everyday."

Swimming is often seen as an individual sport, it is clear that the key to doing well lies in the comradery of the team. By seeing their teammates persevere and get best times, these Amity boys are inspired to put in the effort level required for greatness.

In all sports, the post-season brings out the highest intensity level. For swimming, both the SCC and the Class L championships are divided into trials and finals. Gearing up for a potential of four races is not easy.

If you underperform in any of the races, your season can be over in the blink of an eye. Underperforming is all dependent on your energy, the more you have the better chance you have at performing your best.

Raymond Lu '20 explained that to have the most energy, coaches "cut down [total yards] during practice to build up energy." To achieve this themselves, the athletes must focus on, "Drinking water, eating a lot, and sleeping early."

These multiple strategies are implemented in order for the Amity swim team to be at peak physical and mental strength during their races.

By having lighter practices and staying hydrated, they ensured that their muscles would be at full strength. Also, by getting extra sleep, the team was able to get into a winning mindset when it mattered most.



Ramond Lu '20 competing in a swim meet at the Orange Town Pool
Photo from Orange Live



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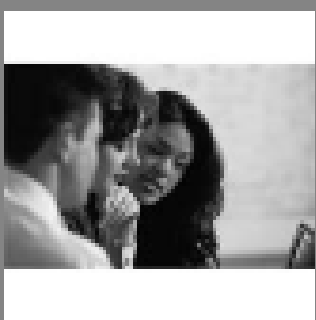
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Third Floor To Be Added to High School

by Sophia Wang '19

Following months of speculation, the Amity administration announced the unveiling of a third floor at the high school through a TikTok video uploaded on Friday, March 22nd.

In the video, Principal Anna Mahon is seen dancing throughout the floor while wearing a cowboy hat with the phrase “Yeehaw Third Floor” embroidered on it.

In the months preceding the recent unveiling, students have noted strange sounds coming from the roof of the school. One student noted: “One day, in my chemistry class, I heard whale sounds from the ceiling. I then heard what sounded like Mr. Barretta reenacting popular vines. My class was taking an exam, so it was quite distracting.”

Students have also been picking up on the increasing height of the high school building.

One freshman commented, “When I first came here in August, the school seemed shorter. I feel like it’s increased quite a bit, but then again, I may just be getting shorter.”

Details regarding the purpose of the third floor have recently been revealed through the Student Happenings News-

letter. During the school day, the third floor is to serve as a Social Media Management Office. After student outcry about the lack of Twitter usage, the administration has taken a bold move and is planning to use the new floor space as an office for Twitter and TikTok management.

Administrator Monica Kreuzer has advantageous plans for Amity’s social media accounts.

In a statement released through Snapchat, Kreuzer wrote, “Ideally, students should be able to access school delays or cancellations through Musically videos. We plan to have our Musically account up and running by next semester.”

During after school hours, the third floor will serve as a factory for making chocolate chip muffins. It is expected to provide a significant source of funding for the various departments at Amity. Students can apply for job positions at the factory and are required to sign five-year contracts to the school.

Due to state education budget cuts, Amity has taken several financial hits, which have not gone unnoticed by students.

One student said, “One day in my Physics class, our teacher took away all of our textbooks, and instead gave

us Angry Birds Comic Books. Apparently, because of the high cost of textbooks, this is a cheaper alternative to teach projectile motion.”

Despite the shocking nature of this revelation, it should be noted that this shift in curriculum has resulted in overall higher test grades, as students have been able to connect more with the material.

One AP Physics student said, “I can really see the real-world impact through these new books.”

Through the factory earnings, more materials can be provided for students and textbooks are expected to return by May of next year.

The third floor at Amity will be an undeniable hit amongst the student body. Students have been photographed in the parking lot holding signs in support of the new third floor.

Over five hundred students have applied for factory job positions, which has thus allowed the school to further drive down production and labor costs.

The factory is opening this April and the majority of laborers are AP students who are excited to begin work.

One worker noted, “This is what my education at Amity has led me to. I could not be more pleased with my future.”

Amity Puts Anti-Forgery Measures on Passports

by Jared Beltz '20

Over the last month here at Amity, staff on hallway duty have noticed a multiplicity of forged signatures on hall passes.

As the days go by, the numbers only get worse. So far, over 50 students have been taken out of class and questioned over what were believed to be forged signatures.

Teachers who had not known the difference between their colleague’s real signatures and forged ones have been falling victim to the scandal, which now has the attention of the state police.

Mrs. Butterworth of the Physical Education Department was one of these poor victims. She was bamboozled when she was approached by the police during the day, who were questioning her on the whereabouts of a student who was believed to have a forged signature on his passport.

“I was scared, appalled, and utterly flabbergasted to hear such a scandal was going on. I could not imagine the situation where my own name was forged. This is scary stuff!” Butterworth remarked.

Another teacher, Mr. Heisenberg, was very upset at this. “I have been teaching here for over 20 years. The thought that my most trusted students were faking my signature is enough to give me nightmares. I hope they receive the right punishment for this!” he exclaimed.

The police have not yet issued a statement of what will happen with these students, but they assured us they will be on the search for more of these cases.

“Forgery is not a joke. This is identity theft at its lowest level. These students are engaging in very sketchy business, I hope they realize the severity of this,” wrote Officer Buckingham, who was called in to research the cases at Amity.

“Forgery can land these minors up to one week in federal facilities. It is a very serious matter!” he added.

While the police and teachers seemed to find this a big issue, students seemed apathetic and even amused by this event.

“The fact that no one has found out yet is surprising. I have been faking passport signatures since my freshman year,” said Markus Roberts ‘19.

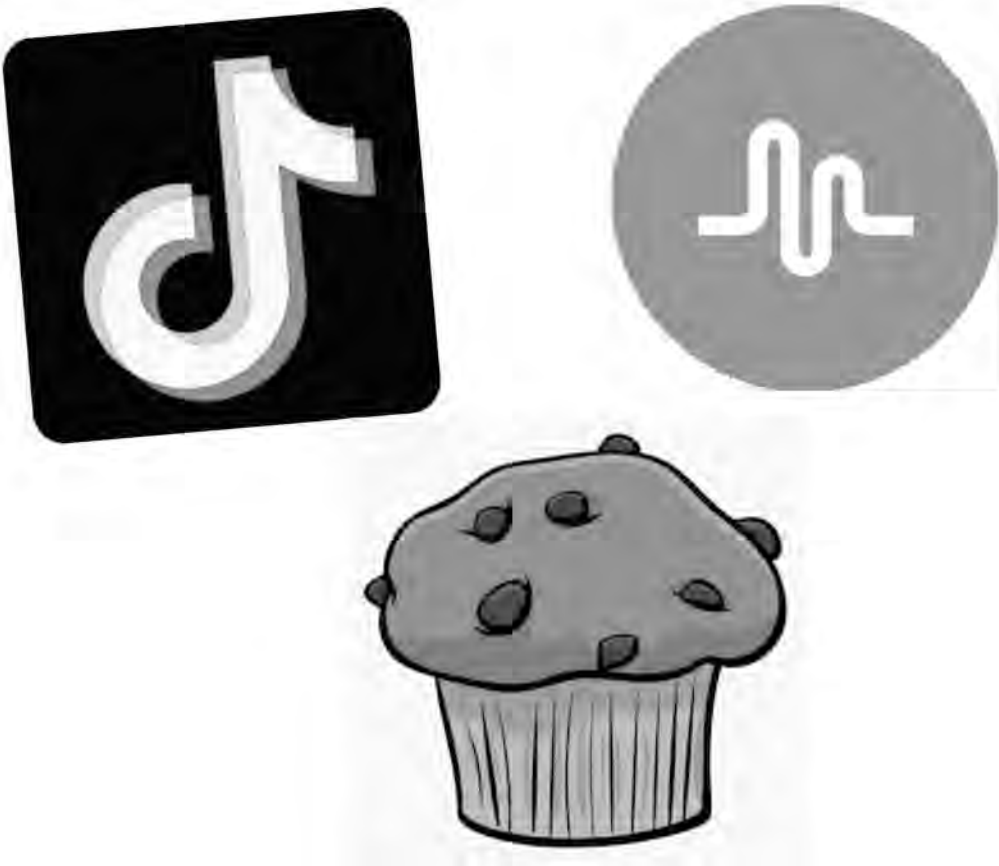
Another student, Axel Nimrod ‘22, said, “I don’t really see the big deal; we should have more time in between classes anyways. Forging a signature is not really a huge deal.”

We asked the director of the hallway monitoring agency his/her thoughts which included, “Passports should be disposed of anyway. They never guarantee where a student is going or whether or not it had been forged. To guarantee authenticity, special pens have been ordered for all of the teaching staff.”

When asked if he/she were surprised, he/she answered, “Yes, very. I always hold the stragglers in the hallways up to a high standard.”

Other members of the hallway monitoring agency believe the school should do away with passports altogether or enforce more rules between classes.

Stay tuned for more important updates to this developing story and to find out what the resolution will be!



A look into your future
Photos from shutterstock.com and Wikipedia.com



Administration Holds Seniors Back One Year

by Sana Pashankar '19

It's finally second semester for all us seniors. The air is laced with the sweet scent of apathy about education, and every day, Monday to Friday, I can't wait to reluctantly crack my eyes open at 6:30 a.m. with the incessant "brinnng" ing of my alarm that always gives me the slight urge to hurl my phone across the bedroom.

I'll admit, after the process of getting ready for school at the crack of dawn, I am ecstatic to see the zombie-like faces of my fellow classmates and the overexcited greetings from my teachers.

It's heartwarming how at 7:34 in the morning in my AP Psychology class, two kids are eager enough to be in class... (on a good day).

And when students do arrive, around 8ish, the dynamic environment of kids staring blankly at the board ahead would make any parent proud of their high school senior.

So it all but made sense to me, given the time I usually came into school, that administration decided to hold seniors back for one year due to the record breaking amount of tardies and lost credit of

the senior class in general.

Boy, was I familiar with this. Not only in senior year, but also sophomore year, I got a heartwarming letter from my very own administrator about how I should probably come into school on time, not to mention, the exciting trip down to the office as well.

And my parents, oh they totally understood it. It's not like they were irrationally angry and concerned over the letter, given that they didn't understand the school's tardy system in the least. No, not at all, in fact, they were pleased by the school recognition I was receiving!

Administration formally announced this news to the senior class through an email. "Due to the mass amount of tardies and lost credit by the seniors this year, everyone will be required to repeat senior year. No punishment will be given to a single person, instead one punishment will be given to all. Inform your colleges effective immediately. Happy Friday :)"

Minutes after this email was sent, there was an immediate buzz from the senior class.

One senior named Silencm stated "I am so so excited they are keeping us here another

year. Amity is just the best place, and I'm so excited to not go to college and stay in good ol' Woodbridge, Connecticut."

Another senior agreed with this idea. Knot Reelee stated, "This is definitely the right thing to do. I mean they tried everything they could. Having the school send a letter to parents first without addressing the student is the most effective way I can think of to handle the problem. So they needed to put their foot down."

Most of the seniors agreed that they were not excited to go to college, and were relieved at the chance to continue being treated like high schoolers instead of adults. It was a helpful and beneficial decision for the students, and overall, it was greeted by the senior class quite well.

I would have to say the same for me. My parents were amazed. They couldn't have been happier that the school liked me so much they decided to keep me for another year.

I look forward to another year of getting to school at 8 and letting information flow through one ear and out the next. I mean, that's what seniors are supposed to do, right?



PowerSchool Creates New and Easier App

by Gilliane Nugent '20

Remember when PowerSchool confused students and teachers all over with Unified Classroom? Well that wasn't enough for them, because this month, Powerschool Unified Classroom has announced the decision to merge with another website, Teacher Tech, in order to create Linked Learning.

Last year, Powerschool joined forces with another company to make what is widely recognized as Unified Classroom. However, the Powerschool Unified Classroom executives boast that their newly updated website, Linked Learning, will make both the lives of teachers and students much easier. The new format promises to somehow simplify accessing grades and class pages by making them more complicated.

If you're not confused enough with the current system, now you'll have to figure out how to get to your grades

by navigating three different websites all together.

Not convinced this is better? There will also be three new and different apps that can be downloaded on any smart device. Executives say that this innovation will lower stress levels, as students will be unable to access their grades easily.

"We here at Linked Learning care a lot about the mental health of students. That is why we have created a way to reduce worries about grades. That's just not what we're about."

However, many students and teachers have mixed opinions about changing the system once again.

"I don't really know how to use it now, so I'll just keep on keeping on" says one Amity teacher.

Another response from one junior was, "this is great, because then I'll have an excuse not to do my homework!"

All in all, the only way to find out the result of the site is by testing it out this spring when it is finally released.

The Strident:
Making Amity laugh for decades.
That's all for today, folks.

Several Cars Reported Stolen from Junior and Senior Parking Lots

by Niha Irshad '19

As of March 15th, 2019, the Amity Regional High School parking lot is under investigation after several cars from the junior and senior parking were keyed and stolen.

Surveillance has showed that a rather large animal is

responsible for this offense and the local police have began conducting their investigation. Administration is reported "baffled and confused" as to how this event could have occurred with so much security located around the parameters of the school throughout the school day.

Johnny Pepperwater '19 was one of the many seniors

whose car had gotten stolen.

He stated, "I was shocked and confused that my car got stolen. The only thing I was thinking was how I was going to break it to my parents that an animal stole my car."

Junior Sally Appleseed noted, "I remember walking in late to school that day and seeing a large, ferocious, fuzzy thing, but I didn't pay

too much attention to it."

Administration has reported to increase the security on campus and to have Animal Control on standby.

The head of animal control reported to us that she was "shocked" as to how big the animal was, but states that she is certain that her and her team will be able to catch the animal and prevent further

cars being stolen from the parking lot.

While many are curious to receive answers to their questions, the police department has revealed that the investigation will take more than six months to conduct due to other impending investigations, however, they are certain that answers will be found.

