

# THE AMITY TRIDENT

LXXV-No. 2

Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

December 18, 2020

## Hybrid Learning Continues as COVID Second Wave Hits

by Aadya Wijsekera '23

As the second wave of COVID-19 approached in mid-November, the Amity community experienced an increasing number of cases. The district determined that the majority of cases resulted from non-school related activity. In order to ensure the health and safety of students and faculty, Amity switched to full remote learning on Monday, November 16th.

The closure was put into effect for all school programming, including extracurricular and athletic activities. Students and parents were notified of this change on Friday, November 13th via email. This closure continued through Thanksgiving Break until Friday, December 4th.

Principal Anna Mahon said, "While I much prefer to have students in school, I completely understand the need to switch to the fully remote model based on the community transmission."

During full-remote learning, students all had very different experiences. Isabella Sicignano '24 said, "Remote learning was great because I could just do school work from home and be relaxed." Others, like Karishma Bulsara '23, said the "help of [her] teachers and friends who supported [her]" were crucial to navigate this

transition. Nina Florkiewicz '23 opted out prior to this switch and faced challenges with learning during the hybrid model. She, like many, struggled with the lack of social interaction, difficulties keeping track of work, and trouble separating school life from home life.

However, Florkiewicz remarked that having everyone in one place allows every student to "get the same treatment."



Students work in ceramics class during hybrid learning.

Students also faced the downsides of remote learning. Staring at computer screens for the hours of the school day proved to be a challenge for many. Students also had problems with focusing on school work while being in

the home setting.

Jacob Silbert '21 commented that he had "a tough time motivating myself when staying home all day." This is similar to the problems opt out remote students faced prior to this transition.

The Amity school district had consultation with the Orange Health Department and Quinnipiac Valley Health District regarding the status of COVID-19 in the district. As Amity is committed to providing in-person learning to the greatest extent possible, students returned to hybrid learning on Monday, December 7th.

In order to promote safety and provide in-person learning for as long as possible, cooperation is essential. The district is taking multiple mitigation measures such as asking the community to report any COVID-19 symptoms, staying home if you have any of these symptoms, and communicating with the school nurse regarding COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or positive test results.

Everyone is also reminded to avoid large gatherings, wear a face mask, wash face masks, wash hands, and continue practicing social distancing.

"We've navigated this crisis since March," said Mahon. "We can handle whatever we need to until the pandemic gets under control."

## Alumni College Panel Goes Virtual

by Izabela Kurpios '23

Esposito '19 talked about how her college, Saint Joseph's University, provided a program and major of autism behavior studies, explaining how this ultimately defined her decision. Esposito said, "We have a center on campus that works with individuals with autism, so I knew it was going to be a really good experience."

The panelists also discussed the transition into the college environment. Tara Laugeni '19, who plays women's basketball for Endicott College, explained that it is very important to get out as much as possible and meet new people. Laugeni said, "My whole mindset was networking. Say yes to everything, never stay in your room because everyone else is in the same position." Other panelists also recommended going to school events and joining study groups in order to find friends and people to trust.

With many of the changes of COVID-19, panelists also focused on what to do in place of the tra-

dition. Benjamin Martin '21, the moderator, asked several questions to all of the panelists to answer. The first question was why each panelist chose their college. and if they had to choose again what would they factor in differently. Each panelist expressed their love for their college, discussing factors like location, financial aid, and the social environment which influenced their decision. Cailey

and ... appreciate them," Collins said about the importance of the compilation. Teachers have been thrown for a loop this year, having to rethink their normal teaching styles for everyday lessons. Wendy Zhang '21 is appreciative of their ability to adjust lessons in favor of engagement of both remote and hybrid learners. Not only are students appreciative of their flexibility, but Peter Berganross '22 said he understands that many of his teachers have been "working extra to create new assignments for those at home [while also] figuring out how to get as many people as possible using the equipment [for hands-on activities]."

Luke Chang '24 described his teachers as tech-savvy and creative as they generate more online work and make efforts to redesign annual assignments to be doable online. Their effort to help students through these new challenges is visible to and appreciated by Chang and his

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## Student Government Thanks Teachers

by Emily Paolozzi '21

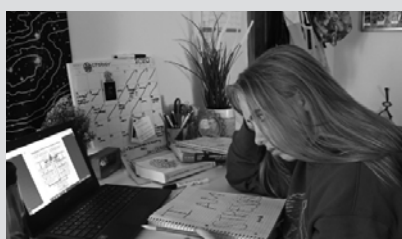
Amidst one of the most unpredictable years for teachers yet, Amity Student Government reminded them just how important they are to their students. A video compilation sent out on November 22nd featured many Student Government members thanking Amity educators and faculty for their continuous hard work and dedication to their students.

The video, similar to the one traditionally presented during National Teacher Appreciation Week in early May, "was moved up earlier because of the special situation this year ... to make sure teachers know that we understand their difficulties," explained Student Government representative Jenny Liu '21.

One of the opening speakers of the video, treasurer Melita Collins '21, started by thanking her teachers for the enthusiasm and encouragement they continue to show students. "I think it'll show the teachers that we care for them

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## Virtual Alumni College Panel

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ditional in-person college visits.

Jayson Huchinson '20 explained how trips to the open campus helped him choose to go to the University of Rhode Island. Hutchinson said, "Just driving through does a lot; you can try to picture yourself there."

Another focus of the panel is how to respond if you get sick in college. Sam Martin '19 suggested asking for notes from a trusted classmate or emailing the profes-

sor about the class.

A few other tips of advice, like having an emergency contact with your roommate's guardian and knowing where the nearest health center is, were additionally discussed.

Now during COVID-19 times, some of the panelists stated that students who test positive are sent to quarantine housing for two weeks.

The virtual Alumni College Panel was filled with advice for students who are looking to attend a university or college.

## Student Government Thanks Teachers

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peers. As a freshman, getting to be a part of this event showed Chang how "easy going and friendly" the Amity community is.

Teachers like Jennifer Pascale appreciated this video and expressed their gratitude.

"It's been very hard to ad-

just. The appreciation video from the students was very welcome in these difficult times," as it reminded her "how wonderful [the students] are," Pascale commented.

Although school looks very different this year, one thing remains true: Amity students love their teachers.

## Peer Tutoring Adjusts to Remote Learning

by Peter Berganross '22 and Grace Lodewick '22

allows students to receive extra help from fellow students who have been trained as tutors. When Amity transitioned to online learning last March, peer tutoring was forced to adapt to remote programming.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic, peer tutoring occurred on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Career Center where students were able to request help on any subject. When the program transitioned to remote, it continued to operate with the same ideas through Google Classroom where students could request help and then virtually meet with a tutor.

This switch to an online platform allowed students and tutors to meet on any given week day. Students seeking help fill out a Google form to request a meeting with a tutor, and once a request is submitted, it is posted to available peer tutors who then arrange a time to meet with the student. Peer tutor Liam Tassiello '22

Peer tutoring is a program at Amity Regional High School that

said, "Although it was definitely a different experience, remote peer tutoring has gone very well. The freedom to zoom anytime, share a screen, etc. has actually made it very efficient."

Alison Staak and Lynn Cocco, the counselors responsible for organizing and running the program, shared similar beliefs. They said, "While we are sad to not be offering the 'Homework Help Center' here at school, the virtual Peer Tutoring Program has seen an increase in the requests for one-to-one tutors". Staak and Cocco additionally shared that "We feel the Zoom format allows for more flexibility with scheduling and more privacy than meeting in the Career Center or library" and that they were overall impressed by how well their peer tutors have transitioned.

The change from in-person peer tutoring to remote is just one of the many changes Amity has seen throughout its transitions between hybrid and remote models. Although the program looks different than it has in past years, remote peer tutoring has continued connecting tutors and students seeking extra help. The program seeks to continue to offer help in ways that are productive for both the students and the peer tutors.



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# Hybrid Learning Shows Success

by Jack Ranani '21

On Friday, March 13th, we began lockdown and suspended school, with little knowledge of the novel virus infesting our communities. Friday the 13th struck again when the Amity community got word that we were going to full remote in November. Many saw this as an inevitability in the context of skyrocketing rates of infection.

As a result, students and teachers stare at a screen for at least five hours (7:34 to 12:47) each day, not taking into account homework and grading. This is not conducive to an enriching or successful learning experience for students or a fulfilling experience for teachers. However, as we have often been

forced to grapple with during this pandemic, health and safety should come first.

Clearly, we should not prioritize our screen-strained eyes when faced with the possibility of widespread infection, hospitalizations, and deaths in our community.

Decisions such as these hinge upon the possibility of infections, so what does the data say about how often COVID-19 is spread in schools? Enric Àlvarez at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Spain conducted research that showed that reopening schools did not lead to a substantial increase in cases.

These findings were from schools which strictly enforced mask wearing measures. Amity has been extremely diligent with their social distancing and mask

wearing, and very little of the transmission of COVID-19 has been inside the school building.

However, cases in Connecticut are increasing and show no signs of slowing down, especially after Thanksgiving with the weather getting colder. Admittedly, it is a tough decision to make. The coronavirus has forced us to place possible infections on a balance with a subpar education.

I think that the minimal spread in school indicates that we should return to hybrid for the time being and continue to be diligent with social distancing and mask wearing at school.

In the end, the adherence to these two measures will determine our community's success.

# The Great Lie of the American Two-Party System

by Ian Glassman '21

American politics has stirred up much contention, but one discussion that gets brushed behind is that surrounding the two-party system. As we know it, there exists the liberal Democratic Party on the left, and the Grand Old Republican Party on the right, leaving little room for third parties on center stage.

Humans naturally dichotomize the world for simplicity's sake. The reality is, naturally recurring phenomena are much more complex than "left and right." People have boiled down politics to this stale, outdated model which begs the question: why do we restrict the entire political realm to an x-axis, and what exists beyond the limited scope we hold dearly?

The answer is, anything that isn't blind faith in capitalism. That's right. Both Democrats and Republicans, who are seemingly polar opposites, will unite against any anti-capitalist sentiment in a heartbeat; preserving capitalism is the one force that drives both parties together. Put simply, the United States has two right-wing political parties.

Under capitalism, the bosses control the means of production. It is no coincidence that the working class is disproportionately made up of minorities, whereas the ruling class has historically been composed of white men. It is equally disingenuous and foolish to pretend that these correlations are not correlated; doing so comes at the expense of minorities.

This system is constructed so the people do not question capitalism, but this is just a ploy to keep the ruling class in power. For instance, every pride month, corporations sell rainbow merchandise as a performative gesture of LGBTQ+ acceptance, but we must ask ourselves: who is this truly benefitting? Does wage-enslaving a foreign sweatshop worker to needle rainbow TD Bank Flags mean equality for all?

More and more, the Democratic party has been appealing Republicans at the expense of marginalized people. This past summer, the DNC allowed Republican John Kasich to speak. I do not have a problem with letting Republicans speak (labels are evidently meaningless), but it certainly becomes a gray area when the Democratic party is compromising their values for someone affiliated with a party that politicizes human rights.

The 2020 Republican Party platform explicitly states that they intended to overturn the landmark 2015 ruling Obergefell v. Hodg-

es, which federally legalized gay marriage. Politics was never supposed to be about politicizing human rights but about how to best go about guaranteeing human rights.

One cannot claim to be "socially liberal but fiscally conservative" because social programs can only exist through fiscal funding, and at the end of the day, this assertion values capital over human lives. Accepting minorities is an unconditional practice.

While Democrats have leaned on the side of advancing minority protections and platforms, the party believes equality is achievable under the current system. For instance, Senator Elizabeth Warren, a far-left progressive to Democrats, claimed to be a "capitalist to [her] bones" in the 2019 Democratic primary debates.

The people need bold, systemic changes through social programs like Medicare For All, a Green New Deal, and complete reconstruction of the criminal justice system for effective change. Anything less is treating symptoms, not the cause. In a staunch capitalist society, it sounds like a revolution, but even under this system the workers would not own the means of production.

While the United Kingdom is by no means perfect, their left-leaning Labor Party advocates for increasing funds for public healthcare, whereas the right-leaning Tories still advocate to fund the medicare program, only less. In the United States, our most left-wing party does not even entirely support Medicare for All because there is "no way to pay for it" despite the trillions of dollars spent on revitalizing the COVID-struck markets, half-a-trillion on the military, hundreds of thousands to equip municipal police departments with military grade weapons, and tax cuts given to the top one percent, such as Jeff Bezos, who made \$13 billion in one day this past summer. Yet, no one bats an eye. Does this not seem forged against the working class?

Socialism, by definition, is the workers owning the means of production. This is not a bad thing; public libraries, schools, transportation, the USPS, and even the military are all social programs. It's dangerous that our academic curriculums do not teach us this, and maybe this is intentional. Why do we fear leftism so much and use it as a reference point to steer away from? It's past time we question the two-party system's deceitful narrative that puts property over people, upholds systems of oppression, and further disenfranchises those already deeply marginalized.

## the TRIDENT

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# WRITE FOR THE TRIDENT!



# Fun Desserts to Make During This Holiday Season

by Adithi Wijisekera '22  
and Megan Wu '22

The holiday season is upon us! Although this winter (and year) is nothing like the last, one thing stays the same: the delightful aroma of something sweet baking in the kitchen. Whether it's for your own indulgence or to impress your friends, baking holiday treats is appreciated by everyone. To help you kickstart your baking marathon, we have compiled a list of scrumptious desserts for you to try!

Cookies are a classic sweet and loved by all! Three factors that make sugar cookies such a fan favorite are the minimal amount of ingredients, short baking time, and decoration opportunities. If you are planning to use cookie cutters to create certain shapes, you should consider chilling your dough to make it easier to work with. Popular cookie cutter designs include snowflakes, candy canes, snowmen, stars, and reindeer. After baking the cookies in the oven, the real decorating magic can begin. Whether you want to use icing that matches your cookie cutter design or come up with your own design, there is no wrong way to decorate sugar cookies. Other popu-

lar toppings include sprinkles and edible eyes. No matter how you choose to decorate your sugar cookies, they will look and taste fabulous! Additionally, due to their smaller size, sugar cookies are perfect for a cookie swap or even to just pass out to your friends.

Besides sugar cookies, another classic holiday dessert that we all know and love is pie. Whether you like apple, pumpkin, cherry, or key lime, there is a pie out there for everyone. Although many people are intimidated by the seemingly long and complicated process of baking a pie, it is actually quite simple. One of the biggest hoops to jump through is making the crust, but there are a plethora of videos online with easy-to-follow directions. If those are still too complicated, store bought crust is nothing to be ashamed of. After tackling the crust, the rest of the dessert will be a breeze. There are so many different filling options out there, and you can really be creative with it—butter-scotch pie, peppermint and white chocolate cream pie, chocolate eggnog pie, and so much more. If you walk into Christmas dinner with a unique pie that no one has heard of before, I promise you that it'll be a big hit!

Hot chocolate is a staple drink of the winter

season. Although the Swiss Miss hot chocolate powder is effortless, a more creative alternative is hot chocolate bombs. These chocolatey spheres of deliciousness are placed into cups of steaming milk and then dissolved, allowing the contents to flavor the drink. Unfortunately, hot chocolate bombs can be difficult to make so it may take a few tries to perfect this dessert. You will need sphere molds to allow your chocolate to cool in, hot chocolate powder, and other toppings you would like in your drink. The center of your hot chocolate bomb will be filled with the powder and your garnishes. Popular ingredients to place inside the bomb are marshmallows, chocolate chips, and sprinkles. Some

even drizzle white chocolate on top of the chocolate bomb as embellishment.

To me, nothing signifies the beginning of the holiday season like the smell of peppermint and pine. Although pine might not be the best flavor for a dessert, peppermint sure is! Besides sprinkling candy cane bits on hot chocolate, making peppermint bark is a great way to create a sweet and minty dessert. All you need is chocolate, candy canes, and a little bit of coconut oil. Simply melt the chocolate with the oil (this makes the chocolate ultra smooth and shiny), and pour it on a flat baking tray covered in parchment paper. If you want to be extra fancy, you can swirl a little melted white chocolate in to create a marble ef-

fect. Chop up candy canes, sprinkle over the chocolate, and you're done!

The smell of gingerbread always reminds me of the holiday season. The dough is simple to make and can be used for a variety of desserts. If you are interested in making cookies, grab a gingerbread cookie cutter and some frosting to create a cute gingerbread family. Give the gingerbread men some eyes, mouths, and clothes with frosting. And don't forget that every family needs a house to live in! To make a gingerbread house, you will need four square pieces of gingerbread for the walls and two more for the roof. You can attach the components of the house together with a thick vanilla frosting. Decorate your gingerbread house with peppermint, gummies, chocolate, and other candies. For a little holiday fun, have a gingerbread house competition and award a prize to the best decorated house!

As we shift into the holiday season, keep these fun dessert ideas in mind. Baking is a great way to bond with family or friends, and disastrous failed attempts will always be an endearing memory to look back on. Even though this season will be like no other, the familiarity of something normal may bring peace and comfort. Happy Holidays!



Photo by iamafoodblog.com

Hot chocolate bomb

fect. Chop up candy canes,

## Risen Sun

by Abby Ball '22

scattered slices of crimson peach rays blend mix merge until they dissipate with the setting star that's grappling with its demise

it descends towards reckless abandon down underneath the cobalt orb where the sky lies flooded in a haze of faint cumulus clouds

the nocturnal world stirs alive the sense of dread sets in the crescent ascends like a burgeoning branch gradually rising high, higher on the jet black canvas soon to be sprinkled with radiant white specks miles away

the moon's pale silver light shines on the earth beneath it casts an ashy glow onto the resting faces that are devoid of any lingering desolation

the freeing tranquility of hushed darkness pervades them it appeases their eternally bustling, fretting minds

but this precious peace begins to vanish as the star creeps back up thrusting itself into the black serene world

it splashes the faces with bright beams of golden light

awakens them from slumber drags them back to reality

with the light comes their most undesired thoughts that haunt and lay ruin their broken faces reminded that the sun has risen again

their transient lunar bliss is once again ravaged by the impending day

it is yet another day to wake and remember that the sun always rises that their anguish will continue awaiting alleviation

## Umtr Club Spreads Awareness and Positivity

by Ava Gross '22

Umtr is a national organization comprised of young adults trying to change the suicide, bullying, and depression narrative to one of positivity and love. It began as a response to a student's suicide at Winston Churchill High School in Montgomery County, Maryland and grew to be a nationwide educator. To foster communities of support, Umtr empowers students to break the stigma around mental illness through education. Across the nation, there are tons of chapters at different schools where students spread this message. Umtr was brought to our school five years ago by Sarah Milner '20 and Saunder Saffran '20—now graduates of Amity High School—who saw that there was a deficit in our suicide, bullying, and depression education.

During their time as club presidents, they used the Umtr platform as a way to teach students about identifying their emotions and the signs and pathways of depression. Currently, the club is run by senior Olivia Greco '21 and advisor Karen Waterman. Before Olivia became president, she was in charge of Umtr's social media and dou-

bled as the vice president. Active since her freshman year, Greco cares deeply about suicide, bullying, and depression education. She kept coming back to the club because, as she states, "After the first meeting, everyone was so welcoming and it kept me coming back for four years." The current vice president is Daniela Abreu '22, who also joined the club her freshman year and expressed the same sentiment, saying, "All the club members were so welcoming and it really helped make me feel like I was taking an active role in my community."

Before the pandemic, Umtr held yearly basketball and volleyball tournaments as fundraisers. These would also double as ways to spread awareness about the club's mission. Because education is one of the main facets of Umtr, club members also visited freshman health classes to teach about depression and suicide. By raising awareness early on, signs of depression can be identified quickly. In recent years, club members have also added the Five Signs of Depression poster, which clearly identifies the accumulative signals that someone is experiencing depression, to every classroom at Amity.

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WISHING YOU  
**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**  
AND A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR

Continued from page 4

Not only do Umtr members educate the community, but they also paste sticky notes with positive messages such as “you are worthy” or “you are valued” on doors, in bathrooms, and throughout classrooms as small

reminders to everyone that they are important members of the Amity community.

Olivia Greco '21 truly believes that, saying, “All of our small acts of kindness and activities are part of an attempt to bring closer a community that is already united.” The only way to change the narrative on

mental health is to make this education accessible to everyone. Through Umtr’s education, the stigma is slowly being broken, one member, one poster, and one sticky note at a time.

Text umtr to 741741. Trained counselors are available 24/7 for you or if you know someone in trouble and need advice, text the hotline.

## When It Comes to Fun, DeMeo Is the Way to Go

by Melita Collins '21



Photo by Scott DeMeo

### Scott DeMeo

December is finally here and 2020 is coming to a close. Freshmen are nearing the end of their first semester of high school and seniors are quickly wrapping up their college applications. With all of this end-of-the-year chaos, students are still greeted with the smiling faces of Amity teachers and staff.

A familiar face, math teacher Scott DeMeo can be seen in the math hallway every day. DeMeo is best known for his Calculus and Statistics lessons, along with being one of the five awesome Link Crew Coordinators.

DeMeo graduated from Siena College in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics. He later went to Southern Connecticut State University, where he received a Master’s Degree in Mathematics, along with his certification for secondary mathematics. Much of his knowledge about life and mathematics came from his father and grandparents, respectively.

Due to his background, it is safe to say that DeMeo is quite well versed in mathematics, but did you know that his favorite class in high school was actually European History? His class consisted of no notes and only stories, and he learned about Rome, Carthage, Paris, and Cairo in a way that made him feel as if he were a part of the stories.

In addition to teaching at Amity, DeMeo has been filling the role of a professor at Quinnipiac University, where he has taught Precalculus and Calculus for the past four years. Inspired by his father, who also happened to be a math teacher, DeMeo’s joy of working with children can be seen through his teaching.

However, DeMeo didn’t always know that teaching was a career path that he wanted to pursue. In fact, DeMeo initially wanted to work in the field of actuarial sciences—an application of probability and statistics to assess financial risks in insurance and finance—but ultimately decided that teaching was the way to go.

Amity students are overall quite happy that DeMeo decided to become a teacher. Current AP Statistics student Adarsh Kongani '21 stated, “Mr. DeMeo is a great teacher. He’s always ready to help. In freshman and sophomore year, he helped me with my science research projects and taught me how to use the 3D printers in his room. He was also the advisor for Science Olympiad and he stayed after long hours so we could be prepared for the competitions.”

Though DeMeo has been immersed in class instruction—including in Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, Precalculus, Statistics, Calculus, Year 1 Science Research, AP Computer Science, and Discrete Mathematics—he is equally as involved in many extracurricular activities.

Currently, DeMeo is one of the five Link Crew Coordinators. Along with this, DeMeo formerly advised the Science Olympiad Club.

Sophomore Aanchal Poddar, a Science Olympiad member, expressed her experience with DeMeo as an advisor last year, stating, “He was very supportive and guided us through any problems we had. Last year, I was building a bridge for Science Olympiad and he helped me and my partner brainstorm ideas.”

Outside of Amity and Quinnipiac, DeMeo can be seen at the golf course. As a matter of fact, he has been working in the golf industry for the past twenty five years. From spring to fall, DeMeo works at Lyman Orchards as a greens keeper and irrigation specialist. He enjoys this job because it allows him to connect with a myriad of people and play unlimited golf.

DeMeo can also be seen with family time and time again. You may or may not know that DeMeo is married to beloved math teacher Deborah DeMeo. The father of twin girls Molly and Brooke and owner of twin cats Stoney and Grayson, DeMeo also enjoys spending his time at home preparing meals for his family.

Overall, DeMeo has been a great asset to the Amity community with his teaching and involvement in after-school activities. When asked about teaching during COVID-19, DeMeo stated, “It has been a challenge. I think part of this is related to specifically teaching math and part of this is how I like to teach. As for the first part, the classes that I teach are very content and skill driven.

“Students don’t generally learn math from group discussions or independent exploration. So, having to deliver content has proven to be challenging these past few months,” he continued. “The technology needed to teach this properly has made it difficult, especially when we were not allowed in the school back in the spring.”

We can rest assured, however, knowing that students have persevered through online learning. DeMeo said, “What has been very reassuring is that my students have really tried hard to make the situation work. I am so impressed with the effort that they are putting in, under less than optimal conditions.

“I recognize that not all students learn well under the majority of the learning models we are being asked to use and I appreciate that they have tried their best,” he added.

As we move into 2021, the Amity community continues to express its appreciation for DeMeo. His commitment to the community and genuine joy working with us can be seen each and every day.

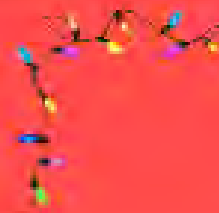
## WAYS TO BE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

By: Ahigail Carritelli '22 and Raegan French '24



### BUY A REAL TREE

- Real trees are a renewable, recyclable source.
- Artificial trees contain non-biodegradable plastics and metals.



### LIMIT YOUR CHRISTMAS LIGHT USAGE

- The energy generated from decorative seasonal lights in the U.S. could run 14 million refrigerators!



### DON'T CHOOSE TWO-DAY SHIPPING

- Emissions from rapid shipment methods tend to be extreme in comparison to slower methods.



### GIVE EXPERIENCES RATHER THAN GIFTS

- To prevent waste from gifts, give experiences such as online craft classes or donate to a cause that you know is meaningful to your recipient!



### OTHER WAYS TO WRAP UP PRESENTS

- Package the gift in something that can be reused, such as a flowerpot, a mason jar, or a reusable bag!

## Happy Holidays!

by Natalie Wang '21



# Rhythmix Group Dives into New Year of A Cappella

by Nina Carmeli '23

Amity Rhythmix, the school's a cappella group, welcomes new and previous members to another exciting year of singing led by club co-presidents Annie Driscoll '21 and Bethany Qian '21. Though 2020 presents many challenges, the club has persevered, holding auditions and planning for the future.

During the week of October 19 to October 23, Rhythmix auditions were held over Zoom, and many students competed for a spot in the selective singing group. Co-President Qian was extremely delighted with the audition process and the new possibilities for the upcoming year.

Qian expressed, "I have loved singing a cappella arrangements for years; there's a sense of pride and unity associated with every successful performance. Trying to virtually manage a group of singers has certainly proven itself to be difficult. We can't really rehearse at all, so we just have to rely on each other's accountability. Work-

ing past all the hurdles so far has actually been kind of fun and super rewarding though. I was very happy with the auditions we got this year, and I'm very pleasantly surprised by the group that Annie and I have put together."

When using Zoom, it can be particularly frustrating to line up voices and try to create a uniform sound because of technical lag, especially for an a cappella group that solely relies on the blending of voices. Though obstacles persist, Rhythmix has found ways to resolve and work around these setbacks.

Qian continued to describe the club's plan for the foreseeable future, stating, "We're hoping to record our performances and promote/upload them through social media in addition to the resources offered through the school. It is kind of nice to not feel rushed into a performance; we can learn the music, edit our videos together, and release the finished product on our own time."

"Even though this year presents unique challenges for a performance based club, I'm proud of

how we've been able to adapt and continue to do what we love!" she said.

Additionally, new members are also ecstatic about the opportunities of Amity Rhythmix in 2020. Marin Korenaga '23, a new member, described the enthusiasm of the leaders of Amity Rhythmix, and her transition into the club as a first-year participant.

Korenaga explained, "[During the audition], the co-presidents and [Mrs. Rizzotti] were super nice and so welcoming and full of smiles! It made my whole month, really. Being in Amity Rhythmix has been delightful so far. It's my first year being in this group, but I know that it'll be like my family in the foreseeable future — our advisor, Mrs. Rizzotti, and the others in the group are the sweetest people on Earth."

When asked what the group is doing amidst many challenges, all members of Amity Rhythmix will continue to spread joy through song by performing, though in a new unorthodox manner, and instilling a sense of assurance during these difficult times.

## Movie Review

# No Country for Old Men

by Amir Jarad '22

No Country for Old Men is an action thriller that debuted on November 9, 2007. The movie was a masterful demonstration of time, place, character, moral choices, immoral certainties, human nature, and fate.

This movie won 164 awards while being nominated for 139 other awards. This includes 4 Oscars: best picture, best adapted screenplay, best supporting actor, and best director. The film takes place in western Texas during the 1980s.

Protagonist Llewelyn Moss (played by Josh Brolin) is a former Vietnam veteran who stumbles across the scene of a Mexican standoff without any survivors while out hunting. He finds a briefcase filled with 2 million dollars in the remains of the

standoff. Llewelyn takes the money and becomes the target of a notorious hitman, Anton Chigurh, played by Javier Bardem. While Chigurh chases Moss, a small-town sheriff, Ed Tommy Bell, played by Tommy Lee Jones, tries to catch the two by following their trail of destruction.

Many of the scenes in No Country for Old Men are so flawlessly constructed with amazing acting. You want each scene to simply continue. This flawless combination of skill and creativity creates an emotional suction drawing you to the next scene.

The icon of the film is the antagonist rather than the protagonist. Javier Bardem has one of the greatest acting performances of all time. Chigurh embodies the angel of death; he wears an eerie grin that evokes fear. He is emotionless but with a moral code. He cares not for money, but feels it is

his duty to chase his prey. But most of all, much like death, he operates under the invisible hand of chance, deciding his victims' fate through a coin flip. Chance is seen as a major theme in his film with each character taking their chances and living with what fate gifts them.

Another interesting aspect of the film is that it doesn't have any music whatsoever. The only sound present is the sound of the environment, which in most cases is wind, acting as a middle ground bridging the viewer to the film. Background wind is the only consistent score throughout the whole film, adding to the immersiveness.

In my opinion, this is the best film I've ever seen. I would recommend this film to everyone because I believe this film is more than a motion picture; it is a depiction of fate on screen.

# Amity Creative Theater Reinvents the Classic Cabaret

by Zola Kneeland '22

Many students who are active in the school's theatre program, Amity Creative Theater (ACT), look forward to the monthly showcase of talent called the cabaret. Usually, these cabarets are done so that performers and peers alike can watch a self-rehearsed night of star quality on display.

However, due to the limitations of COVID-19, ACT has had to adjust their usual night of fun. Instead, the department

personally became so involved with the club, so continuing them through these times and promoting the loving and supportive environment that they create was incredibly important to me." Alsgaard, like many other frequent cabaret performers, is heavily involved in this transition.

Most people who are a part of this newer experience have expressed that they are more interested in submitting a video than doing their first cabaret in person. It has helped students with stage fright feel



Recent Cabaret on Google Classroom  
Photo from Amity Creative Theater

is utilizing Google Classroom to have students submit their videos.

In surprising success, ACT has received more submissions and participants with this socially-distanced style of learning than ever before. An exciting record of 17 sign-ups beats last year's maximum.

The virtual concert format allows for people who may have anxiety about performing live to ease into the fun. ACT is very happy to be able to accommodate anyone's needs.

Vice President of ACT's Board Rhian Alsgaard says, "Cabarets... are the main reason I per-

more comfortable with joining the cabaret crew. ACT has a large community, and the participation of its members is vital.

The growth in involvement will be exciting to watch as more cabarets continue to happen monthly. It will be interesting to see so many new faces and such a wide range of talent. The goal of cabarets will be to continue to surprise the viewers and make it inclusive fun for everyone.

The transition from stage to screen is targeted to be seamless, but the outcome should hopefully be dazzling. This is truly a feat in such a trying time for the arts.



Poster of No Country for Old Men  
Photo from pastposters.com

# Girls Volleyball Team Wins SCC Championship

by Jacob Silbert '21

For student athletes across the country, this

to rest and mentally prepare for the games ahead. That extra time paid off as the SCCs continued and the team's success only grew.



Amity Girls Volleyball Team Celebrates Win

Photo contributed by Sydney Pitter '21

past fall was unlike any before. The Amity Girls Volleyball team was not

In their semifinal bout, the Amity girls faced off against Foran High



Team members are crowned SCC Champions

Photo from GameTime CT

immune to the changes.

As COVID-19 cases began to rise, the team had to follow strict safety guidelines such as practicing in alternating cohorts, sitting six feet apart on the bench, and playing without parents in attendance.

"This last year was definitely my most challenging year," said Sydney Pitter '21, who has played volleyball at Amity for the last four years.

Despite being served numerous challenges, the team dominated the regular season. The team finished with a remarkable 9-3 record and entered the SCC playoffs as the number one seed.

As such, the team received a bye in the first round of the tournament, automatically advancing without the need to compete. This gave the Amity players some time

School. The Spartans came out on top, earning themselves a trip to the SCC championship.

Their final opponent was Shelton. Both teams were highly qualified, so the match was intense from start to finish. However, with just enough of an edge, the Amity girls obtained the victory and were crowned SCC champions for the first time since 2016.

"Although this volleyball season wasn't exactly normal, as a team, we all still made the best of it," said Antonia Tzezos '21. "We always tried to be optimistic, keeping in mind just how lucky we were to even have a season."

If there is one takeaway from the team's triumphant journey, it is that teams can still have successes amidst the pandemic.

# Cross Country Girls Shine in SCC Divisional Race

## Sophomore Nell Grant Excels

by Grace Cavallaro '24

On November 4, ten girls ran in the SCC Girls Cross Country divisional race. It was an eventful day, and it finished off with the Amity Girls Cross Country team being crowned the champion of the division.

Nell Grant '23 was the real champion, as she won the race. She explained how winning the race was very challenging but also a lot of fun.

"Every second I was ahead of the other teams, I felt like I could run even harder," Grant said. She had a fantastic season, and she beat all of her previous personal records.

"Our team was really strong this year, so I think

head to head with Guilford in the ... SCC Championship, we made it really far to be able to go to the division and be with a team of amazing girls."

Overall, Garay was happy with her experience as captain this year, although she was forced to take on a little more responsibility with a little less fun.

"The only thing that was really different was [not] being able to have pasta parties and do more team bonding," she said.

Garay also added that the coaches relied on the captains more this year than before, making the captain's role more difficult but also providing her a little more freedom. Finally, she summed up her experience on the team: "I think I left AGXC on a very positive note. We

Gagnon also stated that she had her fastest season yet and had no regrets about the season.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the divisional race was when one alternate, Emily Gu '24, was chosen to run in the race at the last minute. She attended the race as an alternate without expecting to have to run in the big race, but another runner on the team twisted her ankle in the mud.

As the team was walking to the start line, Gu was told that she'd have to run in the race. Gu stated, "I didn't prepare to run at all, so being chosen was a great surprise! I was quite nervous because it was such a major meet, but in the end I was happy that I at least was able to participate in divisionals."



Girls Cross Country Team Celebrates the Win

that being in an environment where everyone was challenging each other was very beneficial," she added.

She also said that she didn't think becoming a champion would have been possible without her teammates and coaches.

Ariana Garay '21, one of the captains of the team, also ran in the divisional race. She had a stellar performance in the race. Garay was proud of her team's performance; however, she was a little disappointed that she didn't have the opportunity to compete with some of the better teams.

Garay said, "It feels really good to be divisional champions. Even though we couldn't go

were able to get through the whole season without too many problems, and no one on the team came down with the virus."

Brigitte Gagnon '21, another team captain, also discussed her experiences on the team this year. Though she did not get an opportunity to run in the divisional race, she was still proud of the team for making it so far.

"I couldn't be prouder, especially since everyone worked so hard and all that effort and determination really paid off," Gagnon said.

"Being a captain has been different this year as we had to pick up some new responsibilities concerning safety with COVID-19."

Gu also pointed out an important social dimension of sports today: "I think that COVID-19 made me value cross country even more because it was a way that we could connect via a sport despite the pandemic."

Overall, the Amity Girls Cross Country team had a stellar season. They finished with an 11-0 record for the season as well as the title of Division B Champions.

Even though COVID-19 made the season a lot more difficult than usual, the girls on the team still managed to work hard, become successful, and make countless new memories and friendships in the process.

# CIAC Pushes Back Start of Winter Sports

by Ben Martin '21

The sports scene is the strangest we have seen in recent years. The NFL is playing at the moment, but cases of COVID-19 are causing teams to shut down and even

of sports. It's better to take every precaution we can to stay safe now and have the chance to play later on than act recklessly and ruin our chances all together."

Although many players and coaches saw this coming, athletes still feel devastated by the

back into it," she said. "We are also starting up competitive edge soon as well which will get all of us stronger and prepare us better for the season."

Governor Ned Lamont and CIAC Director Glenn Lungarini have said it is unlikely that contact sports will be happening this winter. This cuts out wrestling.

Regarding the current state of wrestling in the pandemic, Kyle Ciola '22 said, "I have not gotten any official word that it is canceled, but considering that I have not heard anything from my coach and that we would be starting now I would have to say it is canceled."

Many wrestlers across the state feel that the chances of them getting back on the mats this year is slim to none.

Varsity wrestler Andrew Coscia '21 stated, "I would love to start sooner rather than later, but me and my other teammates all understand that the nation needs to become healthy before it can happen."

It would be unfortunate to see this season not happen, due to all the work that the wrestling team has been doing over the offseason.

Coscia said, "I had signed up for many camps and I also went to a strong weight lifting program to come back stronger and faster, but as COVID got worse throughout the summer, the camps were shut down. In the last few months me and a few others from the team started going to a private gym to start out preparation for the season."

Coscia added that the team "has done and had the opportunity to do multiple online seminars about [their] mental aspect of the sport and how to be a leader inside and outside of the sport."

All of our athletes and sports fans want to see their teams back in action for a winter sports season in 2021. As of now, all we can do is hope that things will get better concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.



Glenn Lungarini, CIAC Executive Director

Photo from the Hartford Courant

change home stadiums.

The NBA finished its season by moving all teams into a bubble in Orlando, Florida.

The MLB completed a season in which many games were canceled because of the coronavirus. In correlation with the professional sports scene, high school sports schedules have been quite peculiar. Fall sports used a regionalized schedule, while fans watched live casts of the games from their couches. In addition, the fall sports landscape was also lacking its biggest attraction: high school football.

With cases of COVID-19 skyrocketing, CIAC director Glenn Lungarini decided to postpone the start of winter sports to January 19th.

Many of Amity's winter sports athletes agree with Lungarini's decision including Varsity Track captain P.J. London '21. He stated, "It's important to put the safety of the students first, so I think pushing winter sports back was the right call, especially with the spike in COVID cases."

Varsity Gymnastics member Riley Palazzo '21 agrees with London, saying, "As unfortunate as it is that we have to keep pushing back sports, I really think it's for the best. We are still in the middle of a pandemic here, and we can't just ignore that for the sake

news. Varsity Boys Basketball Sebastian Holt '21 said, "I'm crushed. I know me and the rest of the guys were all ready to get after it."

"Obviously, safety and health comes first, but I wish that there was something we could do to get us out there," he added.

Varsity Girls Track runner Emily Zielinski '21 agrees with Holt stating, "I am pretty upset because I miss track so much.... It's safer for everyone to start later, but of course I am upset about my season being affected by the pandemic."

Although pushing back the start of the season has our athletes feeling discouraged, it does give teams a longer time to prepare for when they do get back in the game.

Varsity Boys Hockey captain Jason Dittman '21 said his team "has been doing off-ice workouts and conditioning at Sports Edge fitness twice a week."

Much like the boys hockey team, girls basketball players have been taking advantage of their extended offseason. Varsity Girls Basketball Captain Mya Manzione '21 has been keeping busy in the offseason.

"I had a volleyball season which kept me in shape, but since it is over now, I have just been shooting outside and practicing just to get

# Boys Hockey Takes on COVID-19

by Amir Jarad '22

Hockey has been a staple that the Amity community takes pride in. This season, the team is going against its greatest opponent yet, COVID-19, and will be thrown obstacle after obstacle on the path to another trophy. With every obstruction comes an opportunity for leadership qualities, and captain Dylan Raver '21 does just that.

Raver said, "We make sure we are taking the right precautions to make sure we stay healthy. It's not always easy to be totally safe, but we do what we can to make sure we don't risk anyone's health while trying to prepare for

has been staying together during this time by having Zoom meetings with the players and coaches to make sure everyone is doing good and feeling good."

The players are doing everything they can to stay connected. They demonstrate that Amity teams are more than a group of players who excel in a sport. They form a brotherhood that supports its members no matter the circumstances.

The student section at Amity's hockey games is always full and loud. This season, since there might not be a student section, one question is how this might affect the team's performance.

Raver said, "The student section is much ap-



Student section at an Amity hockey game

Photo contributed by Dylan Gherlone '21

the season." Team members are working together to keep each other safe in a difficult environment.

The very concept of a team is individuals who come together to complete the same goal. With that being said, contact and fraternity is formed from daily practices, but COVID-19 has eliminated many of the team-building activity experiences. When two-time captain Justin Miller '21 was asked how the team is staying socially connected, he said, "The team

precipitated by everyone on the team and the section really helps set the mood of the game because of the energy it's bringing to the rink. Everybody on the team knows what happens on the ice is most important and we have a job to do regardless of if we have a section or not."

The hockey team is fully prepared to take on this season no matter what complications are present. Players are keeping their goals clear and are willing to take precautions necessary to achieve them.



Boys Hockey During a Pre-COVID Season

Photo contributed by Dylan Gherlone '21