

THE AMITY TRIDENT

LXXIV-No.4

Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

December 14, 2018

Amity Addresses Antisemitic Acts

by Niha Irshad '19 and Ella Marin '20

On Monday, November 12, the Board of Education began their monthly meeting as usual; however, this meeting was anything but usual. Over 50 parents and students were crowded into the district presentation room to discuss the antisemitic acts displayed by a group of students towards other students throughout Amity Regional High School.

Actions such as the drawing of swastikas on notebooks and bathroom stalls were becoming increasingly prevalent, and an overall feeling of hate became palpable to many students. They issued their concerns to the Board of Education, ending their

speeches with the poignant phrase, "I do not feel safe here." Parents also spoke about the vandalism of their houses and their desire for action.

Taking students', parents', and board of education members' words into consideration, Amity's administrative team came up with an immediate action plan the following day. It consisted of meetings throughout the day where students would have the opportunity to discuss what was happening and give suggestions on what could be done to resolve the issues at hand.

Principal Anna Mahon said, "We have to get to the hearts and minds of our Amity community. School is no place for hate."

As administration is doing
Continued on page 2

Region 5 Welcomes Dr. Byars as New Superintendent

by Evan Hollander '20

Following Dr. Charles Dumais' departure as Superintendent of Schools for the Amity Regional School District at the end of last school year,



the Amity Board of Education voted unanimously on Wednesday, September 26th, for Dr. Jennifer Pallon Byars to lead the district. Dr. Byars, previously the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Ledyard Public Schools, began

her tenure on November 15th.

Regarding her goals, Dr. Byars said, "Amity is a top ranked district[...] in providing excellent academics, extracurricular activities, and career paths for our students. My goal is to continue that work [...]. My goal is certainly to have every student leave Amity with the skills and knowledge to be successful, be it in college, the military, or a vocation. I also want students to have the confidence and resilience we all need when facing a challenge."

After Dr. Dumais left to become the Executive Director at CES, a search consultant was hired to locate a new

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Photo courtesy of E. Hollander '20

Student Government Holds Another Successful Homecoming

by Caroline Chen '21

With music pulsing and people dancing, Amity Regional High School's auditorium was filled with enthusiastic students on Homecoming night, November 16, 2018.

With over 700 tickets sold and more than 660 students in attendance, this year's dance was a big success.

Though the popularity of Amity's Homecoming has skyrocketed, the outcome of the event has not always been as strong. In past years, student turnout was significantly lower and high levels of student enthusiasm were lacking.

Len Marazzi, the Student Government advisor, said, "When I took over as advisor, Homecoming was popular but averaged only approximately 200 to 250 students. My goal was to change [this] culture."

This year, appointed committee chairs Marty Gnidula '20, Lani Beaudette '19, and Katie Barretta '20, took charge of organizing the event.

Gnidula has chaired the event two years in a row and finds taking this leadership

position "a fun experience [that is] really rewarding."

In deciding to chair the past two years, Gnidula hoped to give Amity students an "actual high school experience" by improving the dance.

Student Government did, in fact, bring the "high school experience" to students. Be-

coming was even bigger and more fun [than past years]. So many people came, and there [were] even more food donations showing that as student government continues to host this event, it only gets better."

Camilla Bautista '21 said, "Homecoming was very fun. I think it was a bit better than last year because of music choice and food selection."

Each year, Homecoming becomes better, and Student Government continues to improve the event for attendees. Even after this year's success, Student Government has more ideas for the future.

Marazzi said, "In the future, I would love to see some sort of parade."

Also, Gnidula has more ideas for the future.

He said, "One thing I want to change is to make it more of a massive school involvement and [so] people really look forward to it."

Homecoming 2018 was a success. The dance will bring students together for a night full of music, dancing, food, and excitement in the coming years.



Students at Homecoming.

Photo courtesy Maddy Ciskowski '19

yond such a high turnout at the dance, students agreed that this was the best Homecoming yet.

Maddy Ciskowski '19 said, "I think Homecoming was super fun and [enjoyable] this year. This Home-

Seniors Learn from Alumni Panel Talks

by Payton Grande '19

On the half day before Thanksgiving break, Wednesday, November 21st, underclassmen participated in activities in the gym, while the senior class listened to a group of students from the class of 2018 talk about their college experiences thus far.

Grace Kosh '18, spoke about her experiences on the UConn club hockey team. She talked about what it is like to live at UConn and be just far enough away from home. Additionally, seniors heard from alumnus Grace Whitman '18 who shared her experiences at Providence College this fall.

The speakers did their best to respond to questions regarding what to expect starting your first year of college. Some of the topics they discussed were freshman orientation and what it is like to live away from home for the first time. They shared their experiences with getting sick on campus, and how different it is when you have to completely take care of yourself.

Marc Chodos '19 said, "I

liked how the alumni were personable and told us the truth about how it has been for them. They relieved a little bit of the stress I was feeling because just last year they were in my shoes."

The panelists knew each other well, and that was clear to the audience. They played off each other and related almost everything to one another no matter what school they came from. All of their experiences and involvement on campus seemed similar.

Amelia Taddei '19 said, "I think they should've described more about their college experience than the stuff you can read online. All of the questions pretty much ended in the same response from everyone."

Brittany Gambardella '19 said, "I was hoping to see more variety from alumni in different grades. It would've been interesting to hear from alumni who graduated two or three years ago that had a little more college experience than a few months."

Overall, there were mixed reviews from the senior class on their thoughts

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Seniors Learn from Alumni Panel Talks

of the panel. Some said they benefited from hearing the alumni, and others said they left without learning anything different than before. More audience involvement and an open mic might have assisted in driving the conversation to be more helpful. Additionally, seniors felt that the panelists at times were not concise and very general. This left audience members with questions about workload and free time, for example, unanswered.

Claire Degennaro '19 said, "If the panelists were more diverse, I think we could have gotten more out of it."

Although almost all of

the panelists go to school in New England, they provided valuable feedback for the class of 2019.

Some topics that students expressed they would be interested to hear about in the future included study abroad experiences, what it is like to live a plane ride away from home, what type of internships students have experienced, and how their Amity experience relates to their college life.

While improvements could be made to the alumni panel event, it effectively gave the senior class insight into college experiences that many will have next year.

Spirit Week Unites Students

by Nicole Grosso '22

Spirit Week took place during the five school days leading up to Thanksgiving break with themes including USA Day, Pajama Day, Meme Day, Stronger Than Hate Day, and Class T-shirt Day.

Each day during lunch waves, students could get their pictures taken to be in the running for a prize for the most spirited. Students could also submit pictures via a Google form. The winners received a movie or candy basket, a parking pass, or a Starbucks gift card.

Ella Marin '20 was one of the three chairs of the com-

mittee which planned Spirit Week. "I was impressed with the enthusiasm and spirit from a variety of different students!" she said. "Also, I was pleasantly surprised by the ease of which we were able to incorporate Stronger Than Hate Day. It was inspiring to see that although the theme was last minute, the school seemed more spirited and united than ever on Stronger Than Hate Day."

Stronger Than Hate day, originally Twin Day, took place on Tuesday, November 20th. However, due to the anti-Semitic events and the awareness that spread throughout the school, it was decided that the day would be dedicated

to the theme "Stronger Than Hate" to unite as a school community.

Grace Lodewick '22 said, "Though I wish there was more participation, I thought it was a very fun experience."

The five prize winners were Ben Schiff '19, Sam Martin '19, Ariyanna Orosco '22, Chantal Gibson '21, and Rhian Alsgaard '21.

Avital Sutin '19, Student Government President, said, "It's so much fun seeing everyone having such a good time at school during Spirit Week. My friends and I go all out and it's so awesome!"

Spirit week demonstrated the passion of Amity, uniting the school before everyone parted ways for the break.

Amity Fall Pep Rally 2018

by Nicole Grosso and Audrey Marin '22

Amity held its annual pre-Thanksgiving break pep rally on Wednesday, November 21. Students participated in a variety of activities, including a relay race and a cheer-off led by the six seniors on the state champion volleyball team. The pep rally also featured performances by the school band, dance team, cheer team, chamber singers, and choir, which were joined by audience members for the last song.

Sydney Reiner '20, a member of the dance team, said, "It was super enjoyable to see the whole school come together and be involved with many different aspects of our



school."

The event was arranged by Billy McKeon '19 and Maddy Ciskowski '19, representatives of Student Government.

"Working with Maddy and our awesome committee to organize [everything] was a lot of work," McKeon said, "but we would both agree it was all worth it. I learned a lot about how I work with other people and figured out new ways to be the best leader I could."

McKeon added, "I couldn't have asked for a better partner in crime than Maddy Ciskowski. She was a non-stop supply of positive energy me, along with the entire school, loved to be around [everyone]. I think every committee could use a Maddy Cisko!"

The choir put on quite a performance after the chairs asked them to prepare a song to bring community and unification to the school after

Volleyball team leads cheeroff.

Photo courtesy of Ms. Toto

the recent anti-Semitic acts at Amity. McKeon and Ciskowski believed that the choir really stepped up to learn a difficult song with barely any time to prepare.

Band Director Phil Dolan and the band played some songs from their fall performance, Music and Motion, and working with the dance team during the song "September," which was a fun twist.

McKeon said, "[The] dance team was thrown a curve ball when they were about to perform and the band played 'September,' but they worked through it with ease and handled it like true professionals."

Ciskowski said, "We think that it was really cool to have fun and organize the event and bring the community together and get everyone pumped."

All in all, the event was full of energy and enthusiasm, and students enjoyed performances and activities before Thanksgiving break.

New Superintendent

superintendent, which resulted in the selection of Dr. Byars.

After earning many degrees in the field of education, Dr. Byars began her career in 1996, where she taught science and coached at Wilson Memorial High School in Virginia. Next, she became an assistant principal at Broadway High School in Virginia, after which she served as assistant principal at Gales Ferry & Juliet W. Long Schools in Ledyard, Connecticut. She then served as principal of Gallup Hill Elementary School.

Before becoming the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Ledyard, she served as principal of Deep River Elementary School in Connecticut.

She emphasized how important collaboration will be among staff at Amity who have a better understanding of the district to successfully implement change.

It is impossible to ignore that Dr. Byars started her new

position only three days after the November 12 Board of Education meeting, during which students spoke about antisemitism at the school. She said that this meant she had to get straight to work.

"It's not like you ease your way in. You start on day one," Dr. Byars said. "So I knew right from the beginning that I'm responsible for running the district."

However, the administrators had already begun resolving the issues, so she said, "I had to come on board and get up to speed and think of ways I can help."

"I am very excited to be working with Dr. Byars," said Principal Anna Mahon. "I am confident Dr. Byars will help lead [Amity] to even higher achievements."

As for the students, Dr. Byars has some advice.

"Be joyful. Find what makes you happy. If you can, the path to success becomes not necessarily easier, but certainly more joyful."

Amity Addresses Antisemitic Acts

Continued from page 1

their part in finding solutions for this situation, many students around Amity are also spreading awareness.

Clubs like Diversity in Action are taking the initiative in getting students involved in such an important cause. During meetings, Ania Washington '19 and Kobi Spence '19 lead conversations where students discussed their personal thoughts and stories in relation to the recent events that had taken place.

Students feel all these actions are increasing awareness of issues at Amity. "I was astonished to experience this type of hate at Amity," said Sydney Reiner '20.

"However, I do believe that it has brought much-needed awareness to our community, not only in relation to anti-semitism, but also in regards to many other issues, and I was impressed with how

the administration handled it, ensuring our voices were thoroughly heard."

Many are eager to know the administration's plans to further address this issue in the near future. Mahon has given a statement saying that she and the administrative team, as well as the entire staff of Amity Regional High School are committed to training and also said that plans in cooperation with the Anti-Defamation League are in the works for the upcoming year.

Mahon said, "[We] are exploring ADL's 'No Space for Hate' movement. We're in the preliminary stages and there is a lot involved, but we are committed."

Though there are still issues to be resolved, the faculty, administration, and students are constantly working and advocating for a better, more inclusive and safer future at Amity Regional High School.

Students Work to Prepare for Academic Decathlon

by Tracy Lu '20

Academic Decathlon had its first scrimmage to prepare for next year's competition, on November 29 during periods 4, 7, and 8.

Students took tests on science, math, literature, and music. All were related to this year's theme: "The 1960s: A Transformational Decade." Compared to previous themes, this topic was more tangible to all students on the team.

Neha Sudhir '19, co-president, said, "In previous years, we had studied India and Africa, which we had less exposure to in school. It's awesome because we have a lot of students who know a lot about this era from history class or their music tastes and are enthusiastic to share that knowledge or learn more!"

The competition works to include students of all backgrounds and academic achievements, encouraging all to expand their knowledge on diverse subject areas and topics.

Having studied the various topics since the summer, the scrimmage gave students a chance to test their knowledge.

Danielle Lee '20 said, "The scrimmage was a great opportunity to assess where we're at. Now I know what to be looking for while studying in terms of difficulty or specificity."

Wendy Zhang '21 said, "I think that the scrimmage will help us know what to focus on for preparing for the real competition."

The scrimmage results will be used to help structure future meetings.

Mounisha Anumolu '19, co-president, said, "We had

more freshmen than ever participate in the scrimmage this year, so as founder of the club and captain over the last four years, it's just really exciting to see our team grow and change with time."

Sudhir '19 said, "The theme the year we started the club was India. As someone of Indian origin, I felt like it was a great opportunity to learn and teach my peers more about my heritage. In the years following, we built a community of people excited to learn more about the world around them from new perspectives."

As for the future, Sudhir said, "We've been getting better every year, so this year, the goal is for us to get our team to nationals. We have a lot of work to do, but based on our scrimmage scores, I think we have a really good chance!"

Administration Gets an “A” for Handling of Antisemitism

by Adam Ginsberg '20

As many people may know, throughout the past few weeks there have been numerous cases of anti-Semitic acts committed within our school, and it is a common belief that the administration has done little to nothing to handle the situation. In my opinion, this is, without a doubt, false. They did their best, and are continuing to do their best, to help provide each and every one of us with the accepting community we deserve.

It's understandable within a classroom setting, that in times of great tension, we may lose faith in our superiors (in this case, the administration). This mainly stems from the school granting the public limited access to detailed information on how specific situations are handled.

With a lack of information comes a lack of trust, which leads to the false assumption that if nothing is being said, nothing is happening. Although this thought may be prevalent, we should remember that, by law, the school cannot openly disclose punishments given to individual students. Although we may

not be hearing about consequences for actions, we should not simply assume that ramifications are not taking place.

Nonetheless, it's important to look at all the things our administration has done for us in the past few weeks following the events. They worked alongside students and built one of the largest support networks Amity has ever seen. Guidance counselors and administrators alike canceled their duties for days on end in order to provide a meaningful way for teens to express their emotions throughout such difficult times.

It shouldn't go without being said that the administration wanted to see change as much as the students did. More importantly, they wanted to know what we wanted to see changed. To me, that is the most important thing they could have done. Sure, Mrs. Mahon could suspend some kids here and there, but in the end, what's that going to accomplish? By punishing kids we are merely finding a temporary solution to a long-term problem. That's why over the course of several periods administration ran a program where students

could explain what type of change they want to see.

In addition, Mrs. Mahon, along with several other administration members, sat with small groups in her office for extended periods of time listening to our concerns and what we want the future to look like. They cared enough about what we had to say that they, alongside the ADL, wrote up two plans: one short-term and one long-term. These plans consisted of ideas that will build the community we want to see.

Overall, I can honestly say that the student body came running with fear and sentiment, and it's our administration that truly took us in with open arms, respecting that we wanted to be heard.

With that, Amity, it's important to remember that going forward, we should never keep our mouths closed. We are strong enough to get through anything, but we must keep in mind that hate cannot drive out hate. If we only focus on ostracizing people we deem as hateful, we are no better than the very people we are trying to stop. People can change and if we don't allow that, we are not improving the future.

Ivanka's and Hillary's Emails: A Comparison

by David Sugarmann '20

To supporters of Donald Trump, “Lock her up!” has been a rallying cry since 2016. This, of course, was in reference to Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. The scandal dominated headlines for many months and may have been a primary factor in her loss of the presidential election. However, now it appears that the shoe is on the other foot; ironically, it was recently revealed that Trump's own daughter, Ivanka, has used a personal email account multiple times in 2017 to conduct government business.

With only three simple words, Clinton's hopes of becoming president were dashed. Voters looked past her progressive policies and plans, merely associat-

ing her with the email scandal. One might expect that consequences of a similar caliber would follow Ivanka; however, it has been quite the opposite. Clinton has quietly faded into the woodwork after the presidential election, but anti-Hillary rhetoric and chants calling to incarcerate her still remain among Trump supporters. The subject of Clinton's emails has magnified into one of the largest political controversies in recent years, while the scandal surrounding Ivanka has barely been written about. This is a testament to how quickly American politics move: Although this is, for all intents and purposes, equivalent to Clinton's email controversy, it was reported far less than Clinton's scandal and now seems to be forgotten. There are clear parallels

between the two events: All of the emails were captured and preserved, both Clinton and Ivanka responded to requests for further information, and no emails were initially deemed classified.

Hypocrisy, often a staple of Trump's administration and most devoted supporters, is rife in conservative discussions involving Clinton's emails. Donald Trump, the man who began the infamous “lock her up” mantra, defended his daughter when her scandal first arose. Conservatives that condemned Clinton for her emails grew quiet once Ivanka found herself in the same predicament. President Trump is a primary offender. Having defended Ivanka for an act for which he ruthlessly bul-

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Ivanka's and Hillary's Emails: A Comparison

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-lied Clinton is the epitome of hypocrisy. President Trump likely did not care about Clinton's emails; rather, he simply used the controversy to gain an edge over his political opponent.

Meanwhile, Ivanka Trump refuses to accept the blame for her actions.

She perplexingly said that she was "not familiar with some details of the rules."

This is nearly impossible. Perhaps second only to "make

America great again," "lock her up" was one of the most memorable and repeated catchphrases from Trump's campaign.

As Donald Trump's daughter, a senior advisor to his administration, and a witness to the outcry over Hillary Clinton's emails, it would be unfathomable that Ivanka had no idea that using a private email account for government work was not permitted.

Ivanka Trump has repeatedly stated that there was "no equiva-

lency" between her email use and that of Clinton. Perhaps the true non-equivalency lies in the political partisan divide.

Over and over again, the Republican party continues to pounce on any such perceived weakness or foible exhibited by political opponents on the left.

Exag-

gerations, "affirmative facts," and outright lies are a part of the Trump Republican Party's platform. The actions of the Trump

administration speak for themselves: There is no behavioral or moral equivalency on the left side of the aisle.



George H.W. Bush: An American Icon and an Extraordinary President *America Says Goodbye to "41"*

by Timothy Belcourt '20

George H. W. Bush was born on June 12th, 1924 in Milton, Massachusetts. He was first educated at the Greenwich Country Day School in Connecticut and then attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

His leadership skills were shown all the way back to his high school career where he was his senior class president and the secretary of the student council. He was also captain of the baseball and soccer teams.

Six months after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and immediately following his graduation from high school, Bush enlisted into the U.S Navy where he became

a naval aviator. After completing a ten-month course, he became one of the youngest naval aviators in history. In his time as an aviator, he flew several missions, including a bombing run that resulted in his plane crashing into the ocean.

After waiting on an inflated raft for hours, Bush was eventually rescued by a U.S submarine and was taken back to San Jacinto. He then continued to participate in operations in the Philippines until his squadron was sent home.

After Bush was discharged from the military, he married Barbara Pierce, who he had six children with. He enrolled in Yale University where he received a degree in economics. He lived in a house on Hill-

house Avenue in New Haven and gave birth to his first son and future President George W. Bush in New Haven. After receiving his degree, he moved to Texas and became an oil equipment salesman.

Bush then quickly climbed the political ladder in Texas. He won a seat in the US House of Representatives in 1966, a position which he relinquished in 1970 in order to run for Senate. Bush easily won the Republican Primary but lost the general election.

President Nixon noticed Bush and appointed him as the ambassador to the United Nations. Following his service as the ambassador to the United Nations, he became the chairman of the Republican National

Committee from 1973 and 1974. Even though Nixon was the one who had appointed him to this position, he showed no bias towards Nixon during the Watergate scandal and even called for his resignation.

Bush held several other positions in the six years leading up to his campaign for the Presidency in 1980, including the head of U.S. Liaison Office in China and the Director of Central Intelligence.

Bush served as President Reagan's Vice president from 1980 to 1989 and, around 1985, started planning his 1988 presidential campaign. After receiving the Republican presidential nomination, he went on to give his "Thousand Points of Light" speech at the Republican national convention.

He endorsed things such as capital punishment and gun rights, and he strongly opposed abortion. Bush became the first vice president to be elected president in over a hundred years.

His presidency was

nowhere near perfect. Dealing with a Democratic majority at the time, Bush was forced to raise taxes, which decreased income rates and employment.

However, he managed to reform American education for the better and passed several bills into law including the Civil Rights Act of 1990. He successfully signed a treaty with Mikhail Gorbachev that reduced the number of nuclear weapons held by the U.S and the U.S.S.R by roughly 35% and the amount of intercontinental ballistic missiles by 50%.

Early on, Bush's presidency was not appreciated, and it took until 2008 for the majority of Americans to rate his presidency positively.

His actions in the Gulf War caused overwhelming bipartisan approval, and the stock market rose a staggering 60% under Bush in four years.

George H. W. Bush died on November 30th, 2018. After lying in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda for two days and being memorialized in both Washington and Texas, he was buried beside his wife at his presidential library in College Station, TX. He will be missed by many and remembered as the great President that he was.

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Holiday Traditions: A Melting Pot of Culture and Religion

by Lexi Halstead '19

As the last of colorful leaves fall off the trees and cool gusts of wind begin to blow, this means that Thanksgiving and all the wonderful pumpkin and cinnamon flavors of turkey season have come to an end. But, this also signals the beginning of a new season: the holidays!

The month of December is always one filled with tradition here at Amity from the annual food and clothing drives to the school play. December

is also a month of celebration across the world.

Australia, Canada, England, and Ireland celebrate Boxing Day, where employers give money, food, clothes, and other valuable items to their employees.

The Swedish celebrate St. Lucia Day to honor the young martyr that brought Christianity to their country. African nations celebrate Kwanzaa to honor their heritage and culture, while Mexicans celebrate the Fiesta of the Virgin Guadalupe to praise the encounter of the Virgin Mary.

The Japanese celebrate Omi-soka to bring in the new year. In America, two of the most well known holidays are Hanukkah and Christmas. Amity students shared their own holiday traditions.

Kabeer Kumar '20, a foreign exchange student from Pakistan, recounted the holiday celebrations back home.

"Eid is mainly about doing your praying, getting together with family and eating lots of food. It's kind of similar to Thanksgiving," he stated. "Other than that, as I belong to the religion of Hinduism, we have Diwali, where we light firecrackers and eat lots and lots of sweets. It's actually based on the history that when the God of good defeated the God of evil and came back to his village, people greeted him by lighting fireworks."

The Jewish community at Amity celebrates Hanukkah in December. The town of Woodbridge honors its Jewish population with a Menorah displayed near the town center. A new candle is lit each night.

"My family lights the Menorah every night. Also, we usually have a large gathering with my extended family to celebrate and exchange gifts. I'm always excited to catch up with my cousins and eat all of the great food," said Philip Jonah London '21.

Elana Bershtein '19, who also celebrates Hanukkah, said, "What I really like about Hanukkah is how it brings my whole family

together. We are all so busy and are rarely all home at the same time, but during Hanukkah we always take time to have family dinners and gather to say the prayers. We also sometimes FaceTime my brother from college, so it's like we're all together again."

Christmas is one of the largest and most popular holidays celebrated all

year. Due to different cultural and religious backgrounds, the holiday has taken on all forms and very rarely are two families' holiday traditions the same.

Taylor Dillon '22 spends her holiday

in New Jersey. "One of our favorite things to do is Secret Santa. We have a bunch of different games going on at once with everyone in the family. We also love to bake cookies and watch movies to get everyone in the spirit!"

Napoleon Stardellis '19 is Greek Orthodox and shared, "I honestly don't do anything really different than Catholics for Christmas. I go to church on Christmas Eve and at the end, we sing Christmas carols. We eat lamb, too, but that's every holiday."

Sebastian Gonzalez '19 is a Colombian American with a very unique tradition. "We do something called the Novena which starts the 16th. We pray and eat during those 9 days until the 24th. Then we open presents at midnight, party, dance, and everything in between."

The Amity student body also has a rich multicultural background. "I'm half Hindu and half Muslim," said Sana Pashankar '19. "My family celebrates Diwali which is a Hindu Festival of Lights. We go over to our family friends' houses and do pujas (prayers) and then eat and get gifts. The timing of Eid, the Muslim holiday, changes every year because it's based on the lunar calendar."

Half Jewish, half Irish Catholic Lindsey Kupcho '19 said, "It's cool to be able to experience the blend of cultures and traditions that come with having parents of different faiths."

One thing's for sure; the holidays are a time of celebration, no matter what faith you practice. There is no lack of partying or dancing, but it's so much more than that.

It's not just about the presents, it's also about the people who surround you. This time of year emphasizes just how important family is for everyone. It is a time to be thankful for everything we have and the year we are leaving behind.

Happy Holidays!



Summer Schaaf '19 decorates her tree and mantle in seaside fashion, adorning the tree with seashells and starfish.

Instant Decision Days Provide Relief to Prospective Seniors

by Allison Su '21

For most seniors, November and December bring the height of college application season.

On November 30th and December 3rd, many seniors took part in the Instant Decision process for Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) and the University of New Haven (UNH).

Throughout the school day, prospective students met with the assistant director of admissions from the school of which they were interested.

The UNH associate director, Caitlin Locke, explained the Instant Decision process.

"Amity students submit their Common Application to the college," she said, "and then the student's guidance counselor sends his or her transcript and letters of recommendation to the college."

After reviewing each student's application, the assistant director of admissions visits the school to meet with everyone that applied for Instant Decision and lets them know the college's decision.

Carla Flynn, the assistant director from Southern Connecticut State University, said, "The search for college is stressful, and the college application is personal."

"It can be daunting, so Instant Decision is a good opportunity for students to see who reads their application," Flynn added. "The process is also more personable. Here at Southern, we view every person as an individual, and Instant Decision allows us to get to know students better."

UNH's associate director said that Instant Decision is a unique opportunity for students.

"Usually, decision comes by email or a letter. In person, the process is more exciting. We can use this time to ask questions and get a lot of great information about students."

The two assistant directors came to Amity because of great interest from students. The event is often full. SCSU's assistant director stated, "The students are well-prepared and friendly. I have great conversations with them, and I leave Amity in a good mood."

Both college representatives described their favorite part of the Instant Decision process. They enjoyed meeting the students and learning about their unique stories and experiences.

SCSU's representative asked students, "What is one thing I wouldn't know about you after reading your application?"

Because she was able to ask these questions, students opened up more, and she learned more about who they are.

For example, she received some book recommendations and learned about photography, swimming, and pets. Instant Decision is more open than Early Decision and Regular Decision in that it allows colleges to learn even more about students.

Students who took part in Instant Decision Day also greatly enjoyed the process, partly because of the convenience.

Sam Martin '19 said, "It was nice to talk to somebody who has gone over your application because they can give you direct feedback on your application and

give you ideas about what you may like to do at the university."

He is interested in SCSU because of their Special Education program.

Another reason he is interested in SCSU is its Honors College which is designed to challenge students and encourage their growth.

"Not many schools offer Special Education as an Undergrad degree, so the fact that Southern does makes them high on my list," Martin noted.

Declan Kane '19 also applied to SCSU.

He said, "I found out about [Instant Decision] during my tour of SCSU. I decided to take part in it because my counselor, Mrs. Mozealous, wanted me to. I am interested in SCSU because most of my friends went there."

"Some of them are on the cross country team," Kane, added. "I would want to run when I arrive there."

Both students found the process immensely helpful. Overall, Instant Decision Day is beneficial for both the college and for the students.

Colleges get to know students better, and at the same time, students are able to find out if they are accepted the day they meet with the assistant director of admissions.

That in itself alleviates much of the stress that students go through during the first semester of their senior year.

Students also gain valuable insight on their application and the school which can be an extremely influential factor in whether or not they choose to attend a specific university.

New Beginnings Club Helps Local Community Shelter

by Arielle Lavi '19

Despite being new to Amity Regional High School, the recently formed New Beginnings Club is up and running - and it is showing no signs of stopping.

Founded by Eesha Acayara '21, the club works to provide donations to New Reach, a local women's shelter in New Haven.

Not only does the shelter offer housing for these women and their families, but the goal is to develop self-reliance in the women, which was something that stuck out for Acayara.

New Reach makes them prepare their own meals and gives them an incentive to find jobs by requiring them to leave the New Reach shelter after three months.

"I started this club because I always wanted to give back to people," stated Acayara.

"So many of these women have suffered abuse or experienced homelessness, and I really want to

help them in any way I can."

Other members of the club have a similar mindset and share this sentiment.

According to Vice President Claudia Lihar '21, "I joined New Beginnings because it seemed like a really great opportunity to give back to the community, and also because I love helping people."

After getting in touch with the director of New Reach, Acayara and the New Beginnings Club found their way to contribute through a drive.

Their recent collection of items including blankets, water bottles, toothbrushes, and clothing helped create care-packs for these women, which will be hand-delivered by club members on Saturday, December 15th.

As for going forward, Acayara says, "It's still being determined, but I want to do something that allows our club members to interact with the women. I'm hoping to have a book reading session with the

kids or have a bingo night."

Even though the New Beginnings Club is still in its early stages, its impact on club members is evident.

"I've come to realize that any change can make an impact," claims Lihar '21.

"Whatever you can offer for someone will definitely help in some way, even if it's just something small."

This even goes for our Amity community. Kindness can go a long way, whether it's in the form of a smile or wave in the hallway, or holding the door for the person behind you.

Little actions like these can make or break someone's day, no matter how trivial they may seem.

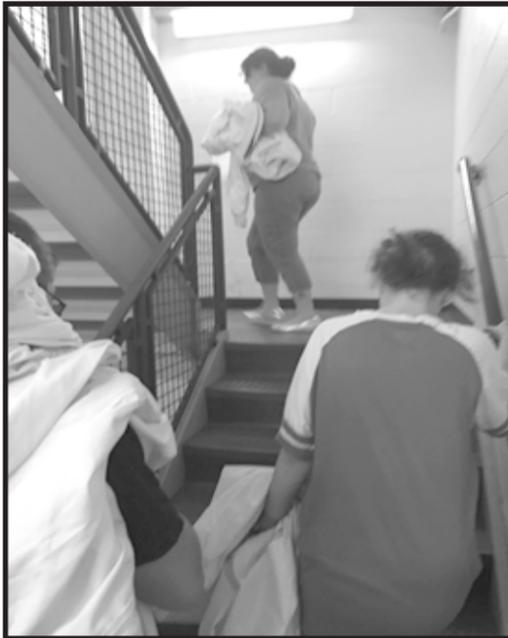
If you'd like to get involved in the New Beginnings Club, or learn more about New Reach, you can contact either Eesha Acayara, Claudia Lihar, or Caroline Chen.

You can also visit their website at the following address: www.newreach.org.

THE A-SCHOOL'S BEES

Story by Olivia Gross '20 and Gillianne Nugent '20
Photos and cutlines by Lillie Scanlon '20

Have you ever sat outside for lunch, enjoying the warm spring or fall weather with your friends, only to see a bee land on your sandwich? Few people know that many of these bees are actually residents of Amity. The flying insects are maintained in a colony on the school's roof, with the Alternative School Program at Amity charged with its care. Bee colonies, which are vital to human life and are soon to be endangered, serve an important purpose. Because they pollinate all of the food that we eat, as well as flowers, and produce honey, their demise would have serious repercussions. Lillie Scanlon '20 captured the experience of taking care of bees in this photo essay.



Students from the A-School travel up the stairs to the beehives to refill their sugar water, check health, mites and other issues. The custodians or a security guard unlocks the door for them.



There is a total of three hives for the bees to live in. The bee keepers built the structures. Everyone at the A-School helped paint and build the beehives.



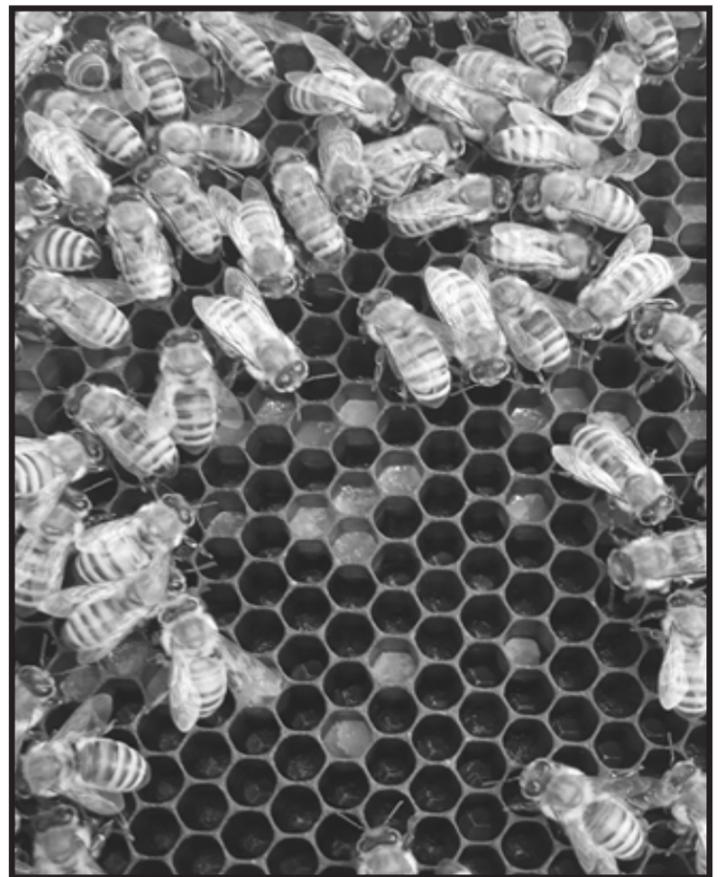
The beehives are kept on the roof of Amity High School as seen here. Bee keepers must be fully suited up to work with the bees.

Some of the students from Amity's Alternative School Program, including Lillie Scanlon '20, Makayla Moriarty '20, Skyler Boyle '20, Vanessa Capozziello '19, and Josh Snell '21, lead the beekeeping efforts with the help of teacher Sean Malloy. Every two weeks, these students travel up to the roof of the school to check on the bee colonies. They have to cover themselves in full bee suits which include mesh-covered helmets and thick gloves.

Then, the students have the responsibility of refilling the sugar water in the hives, checking on the cleanliness of the hives, looking for evidence of mites and reproduction, and checking for honey.



The honeybees thrive in their environment at Amity. Seen here are the frames that the bees use to follow their hive pattern when building the hive structure using their beeswax.



This photo shows the two different kinds of bees, including the drones and workers. Most importantly, it shows the bees reproducing. All of the bees bring pollen, and the larvas show the queen is alive and reproducing for the hive.

"My favorite thing about the bees is that we get to go up there and take care of them," said Lillie Scanlon '20. "I don't always like going because I am actually terrified of bees, but I can calm myself down by a little bit of singing or humming, so then I can stay calmer. Either way, I love taking care of bees because they are a part of nature. If we kill off one part of nature, then a chain reaction will happen and other stuff around us will die. We take care of them for many reasons: the honey they produce, they are good for the environment, and they take care of all the plants and flowers around the school."



Vanessa Capozziello '19 entertains a calm bee on her glove. This bee in particular is a worker honeybee.



This beekeeper is using a container that helps to check for mites. The mites are parasites to the bees.



Students in full body bee suit all have jobs that must be completed in order to take care of the bees. They includes refilling the sugar water, smoking the bees, and checking the hives for mites.

“My favorite part is showing people how great bees are,” said Makayla Moriarty '20. “Some people see bees and are like, ‘Oh! Here’s a bee. Why don’t I kill it?’ but they don’t understand that we need bees to survive. Bees pollinate our food and flowers. People just think that bees are going to sting them, but they really only sting if they are agitated.”

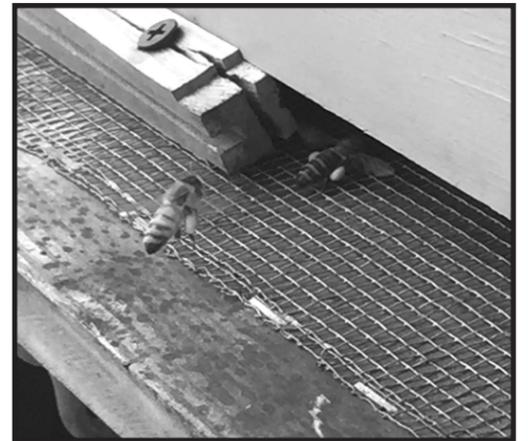
“I like learning about the bees and how to help them,” said Josh Snell '21. “I like the responsibility of having them.”



Above are the dead bees cleared out of the hive and used for testing if there are mites.

Sometimes, there are problems with the hives that the students must solve in order to keep the bees alive. Scanlon said. “We watched a video recently about how to cover artificial hives with black felt to keep them warm in winter. They all died last year in the winter.”

Another issue sometimes encountered with any beehive is mites. The students agreed this is typically the largest issue with maintaining a bee colony because they eat the honey combs and give the bees infections. A third issue the students face from time to time is yellowjackets. The students said that the beehive take care of them by killing them, but they still do find dead or live yellowjackets on occasion.



This photo illustrates the bees bringing in pollen into the hive.

“My favorite part is just sitting there and letting them chill on me,” said Vanessa Capozziello '19. “I just kind of pet the bees when they’re on my hands. It’s so cute.”

There are many tools that have been donated to the program, such as a honey extractor. Ted Jones, a professional beekeeper, comes by to give advice and help out with the hive. Malloy described him as, “Sort of our mentor, as he’ll come and teach us. He’s given us all sorts of supplies and advice. Every single year, we also go to Massaro Farm as a field trip to learn about all the bee stuff.”

The students have a tremendous amount of responsibility when taking care of the bees and have done a phenomenal job so far.

Annual Fall Play: Intricate and Emotional

by Audrey Marin '22

Amity's students came to the stage during the fall play, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," which is based off the novel by Mark Haddon. On December 6th, their peers flooded into the Brady Center to view the production.

"The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" is narrated from the perspective of Christopher John Francis Boone (played by Ryan Kennedy '21), an autistic 15 year-old boy living in Swindon, England. Christopher lives alone with his father, Ed (played by Marty Gnidula '20). At the start of the production, Christopher also proves to be strikingly smart when he announces that he knows every country and their capital city as well as every prime number up to 7,057. The story centers around the murder of the dog of Mrs. Shears (played by Macie Cox '22), Christopher's neighbor.

As Christopher becomes fascinated with the mystery, he conducts an investigation and interviews all his neighbors about the event. Later in the play, Christopher's father shockingly admits to killing the dog. Upon hearing this, Christopher goes to London to stay with his mother, but returns after complications with her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Shears, as well as his eagerness to take his math exam back in his home, Swindon. To end the performance, Christopher's father buys him a black labrador puppy,

to reconcile their shattered relationship, named Harold (played by Harold Swain).

The play was executed beautifully by the Amity Creative Theater. The set was extremely well done, including sophisticated and innovative backdrops to accentuate certain scenes. The technical departments' involvement was also very advanced, using strobe lights and overwhelming voices in various times of stress to help put the viewer in Christopher's shoes. The props used were very professional and original as well. To demonstrate Christopher's daily routine, for example, instead of having physical props, students were used to replicate the door, coat rack, key holder, couch, and various other items, proving to be a very creative touch.

Aside from the setting and props, the student actors were incredibly talented and prepared. Within only three months, the entire cast and crew were able to put together such an intricate, emotional performance. On top of the lines and memorization, actors and actresses spoke in British accents to properly portray the location and time period. Tayla Braverman '20 mentioned that she learned the nuances of the accent from watching British television and movies. Students also worked with Amity Middle School Bethany English teacher, Caroline Camera, who has a British accent and helped the students adjust their vocal inflection.

Ryan Kennedy '21, who played Christopher, took on one of the most challenging roles in the play due

to the immense amount of dialogue and behavioral nuances his character encompassed. Ryan had to appropriately demonstrate the mannerisms, actions, and attitude of a person diagnosed with autism without breaking character (he even had to memorize dozens of prime numbers). Ryan did a fantastic job and portrayed Christopher's character very accurately.

Marty Gnidula '20 took on another difficult role, seeing as he had to accurately represent the emotions of a single father of a child with autism. Marty says, "This play was a lot to tackle and it was really a challenge to put myself into the lens of a single father who has a son with autism, but really I believe this play came together with a lot of learning and patience to make a good representation of autism and life in general."

Grace Swain '21, the owner of the black lab, Harold Swain, was part of the crew for the production and operated backstage. She said, "I had a great time being in the production with my puppy Harold. It was a lot of fun and the cast and crew made it an amazing experience. Harold loves all the attention and I'm so happy that he got to be a part of Amity. I'm proud of him and everyone involved in this production."

Puppy Harold made an appearance at the end of the show when he was given to Christopher as a gift.

All in all, the Amity Regional High School Fall play was extremely well executed and definitely one worth seeing.

Juniors Secure Funds for Prom at Chipotle Fundraiser

by Jordan Klein '20

The Chipotle on the Post Road in Milford has been one of the most popular spots to hold an Amity fundraiser which the junior class has been doing annually for the past three years.

It is convenient for all students who live in Orange, Woodbridge, and Bethany, and is just off of I-95, thus serving as an easy location for dining.

On Monday November 26th, the Junior Class Council sponsored a fundraiser at this Chipotle location. The event lasted from 4 to 8 pm. Many students scrambled over to this hot spot for a night filled with food. With many delicious food options, this fundraiser could not be missed. Despite the rainy weather and high speed winds, the junior class pulled through.

Ella Marin '20 said, "I love Chipotle and I am excited for prom, so for me, the fundraiser was a win win."

Altogether, the fundraiser made a total of \$115. Ameya Menta '20, a member of the Junior Class Council, said, "Even though we have done better, we are glad, as it's better than nothing. The junior class has been working so hard to have the best prom possible and we are happy that we were able to make some money from this Chipotle fundraiser."

With every purchase made, 33% of the proceeds are given to the Junior Class Council. In order to ensure a contribution, the customer must bring in the fundraiser flyer or tell the cashier that they are there for the Amity fundraiser.

Alicia Myung '20 said, "The Chipotle fundraiser was relatively successful. There were a few kids I recognized when I went."

Chipotle has been chosen year after year because of the turnout. The restaurant has always

been very generous to the Amity community, seen through student government's homecoming dance and other events.

With a tremendous variety of food options and speedy service, Chipotle was definitely the perfect spot for this event.

This fundraiser is great for anyone who loves Chipotle and wants to support Amity events. It is just a simple way to reach out to your community and support a great cause.

President of the Junior Class Council Marty Gnidula '20 commented on the outreach of the Amity community.

"One of the main goals as the class of 2020 for the year is to get school spirit and class participation in school events up, so we are working on this event to try and extend our mission outside of school," Gnidula said.

Rhea Dey '20 added, "It was a win-win. I got good food and the money went to a good cause. Who doesn't love eating food that will go towards supporting a fantastic junior and senior prom?"

Chipotle has been the chosen place for numerous school events throughout the years. This is the case because the great food attracts even more people to homecoming and student run events.

Additionally, the more money that the Junior Class raises, the less expensive the prom tickets will be for the Trumbull Marriott.

Not only this, but both junior and senior proms will be an even more enjoyable event because there will be great food, music, and decorations.

The fundraiser was an effective way for students to get more involved in school sponsored events while at the same time ensuring funds for the prom.

The Chipotle fundraiser is always enjoyed by many people and is a great way to have a fun night out with friends and family.



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Movie Review: Bohemian Rhapsody

by Payton Grande '19

In the beginning of November, 20th Century Fox released a breathtaking movie honoring Queen, titled *Bohemian Rhapsody*. The movie started off with the formation of the band, and went through the years following the story of Queen. The movie was enjoyable for all ages.

It featured the music we all know and love. Queen numbers like We Will Rock You and We Are the Champions were recreated on the big screen with actor Rami Malek playing lead singer Freddie Mercury. Malek truly embodied Mercury's spirit in the film, by mastering his mannerisms, studying dance moves from performances, and perfecting the British accent.

The movie serves as a tribute to the talented vocalist, along with his band members, Brian May (guitar), Roger Taylor (drums), and John Deacon (bass).

Part of the magic in *Bohemian Rhapsody* is how realistic the movie was. It recreated many iconic

Queen scenes, from writing songs, to signing with record labels, and the many performances around the world.

With an excellent wardrobe and makeup team, Malek looked extremely close to Mercury. Malek even wore fake teeth to impersonate the signature Mercury overbite. Actors took hours of music lessons to learn their instruments and make it look as real as possible.

Additionally, production took place on stages like Madison Square Garden to recreate concerts perfectly. CGI elements were even used throughout to recreate the audiences.

Filmmakers used live Queen performances and combined them with what the actors were performing to make almost mirror images of live concerts. The movie itself showed the miraculous journey of Queen.

However, it did contain some inaccuracies in the timeline. Critics commented that the film incorrectly showed a few details in Mercury's personal life, and the release times of tours, songs and albums. Regardless of the few im-

perfections in movie, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, blew away audiences worldwide.

Freddie Mercury's flamboyant personality shines bright in the movie. Viewers learn about his experiences being bisexual during the 80's, and his life-long battle with AIDS. Viewers got an inside listen to the making behind some favorite Queen songs. Another One Bites the Dust, Under Pressure, and Somebody to Love, were each featured in the movie.

The over two hour film is well worth it. The movie focuses on the incredible talent Queen shared with the world. Their music has transcended decades, and Queen has some of the most well known songs globally.

The film ended with the famous Live Aid performance at Wembley Stadium in England in 1985. Mercury came out on stage in identical costume, and played the song Bohemian Rhapsody for the crowd.

It concluded on this note, before the early death of Mercury, leaving viewers to remember the phenomenal accomplishments of Queen.

Winter Concert Highlighted Holiday-Themed Tunes

by Ava Gross '22

On Thursday, December 13th, the band, choir, orchestra, and chamber singers performed their annual production.

This year, it was filled with the classic songs many have grown up associating the holiday season with.

The band picked traditional holiday-themed songs that were easy to sing along and ignited the holiday spirit.

Rose Wegman '22 said, "People could try to see if they recognized certain phrases of the Hanukkah song." This could help them become a part of the concert.

Since the songs "Sleigh Ride" and "Twas the Moon of Wintertime" are such classic tunes, the entire audience was instantly transported to a winter wonderland filled with snow-capped chimneys and glittering lights.

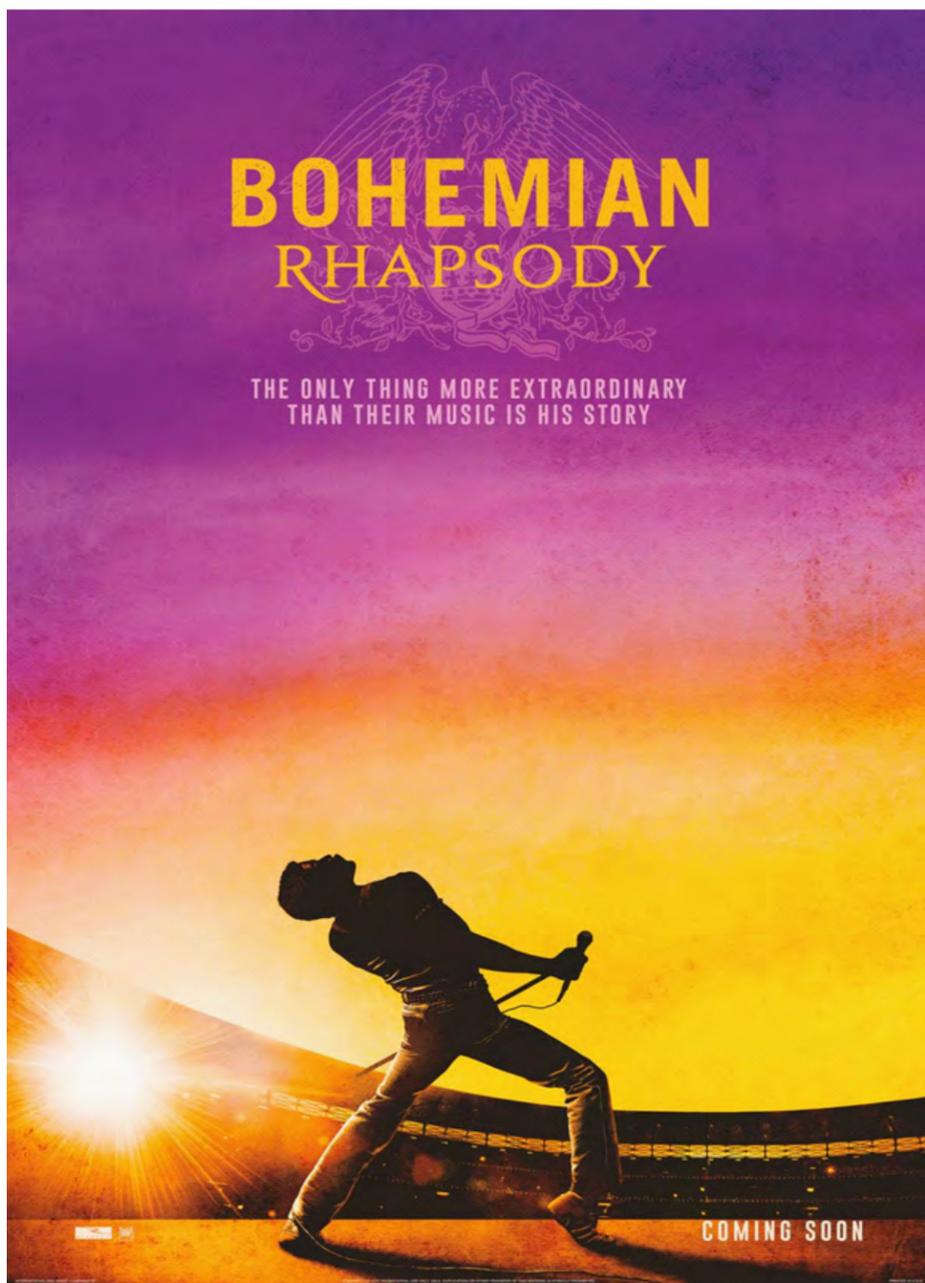
The choir also had some popular holiday pieces in-store for concert-goers. These are a little more modern but still equally as memorable.

With the iconic song "Seasons of Love" from the Broadway play *Rent* on the setlist, it was sure to be a phenomenal show. Not only is it a fan favorite, but some of the performers love it too.

Mckenna Maxwell '22 says that it is her favorite part of the show "because it not only portrays the idea of our school motto but also perfectly displays the winter concert's theme."

She continued to explain that "the holiday times are indeed the seasons of love because they bring families together with love surrounding everyone."

The Winter Concert always includes everyone with the classic holiday songs that are irresistible to sing along to!



Bohemian Rhapsody Movie Cover
Photo by Cineman.com



A previous winter concert
Photo contributed by Rosie Du



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Flag Football Coach Makes Players His Top Priority

by Lani Beaudette '19

Rick Bourdeau, a psychology teacher at Amity, started his coaching career seven years ago. Taking on the task of teaching a group of 17- and 18 year-old girls how to play football would make many turn away.

However, this coach anticipates each year with excitement. Having played both football and flag football, Bourdeau says he brings to the plate over 10 years worth of first hand experience and wisdom.

"What I love about it is that it is essentially the same game I played," Bourdeau commented as he leaned back thinking of his own experience. "They learn the same plays and techniques that I did. The way they learn to grab the flag is the same way I learned."

With only six weeks of training available, Bourdeau says he has to crunch as many plays and lessons as he can in this short period of time. Throwing so much information at a group of girls with limited experience can be a handful. However, Bourdeau, with the help of the other coaches, is able to successfully accomplish this task each year.

Fellow coach Greg Twohill commented on how caring Bourdeau is when presenting this information.

"He has the girls' best interest in mind. Are we doing too much? Are we asking too much of them? All the time."

He then continued to say how Bourdeau takes the time to thoroughly explain all information presented while making sure they are enjoying

the practices. He stated that Bourdeau's main focus is to make sure everything is fair and fun.

Each year Bourdeau teaches the girls the basics of flag football and soon enough they are off and running. Through flag-grabbing drills and hitting pads, the girls prepare for action. The group he had this year caught on especially quickly.

"It's my best team I've had," Bourdeau smiled proudly, "They probably could have beat any other North Haven team, but this was also their best team."

While the team did not end up victorious, he said that this was not his main priority during the season.

In a school as large as Amity, Bourdeau says that some people may not even know each other until they begin flag football. With the rare opportunity Bourdeau provides, girls are able to come together and meet new people even in their final moments of school.

"One of the best things every year is how it brings the seniors together," the coach explained. "It breaks down the cliques. It's cross-pollinating parties."

The bonds may last through the year, but the season flies by quickly. However, Bourdeau understands the impact it has on each group of players in such a short period of time. He says he has many girls come back and explain how flag football was one of their favorite things they did in high school. This is what Bourdeau wants each player to feel: involved in an experience they've never done and walk away happy to have done it.

"He listened to me and cared about what I wanted

to do," commented senior Katie O'Brien. "You could tell he cared about us."

The former player continued to explain how Bourdeau even took time during practice to help O'Brien figure out what position fit best for her. Together they moved back and forth from offense to defense, until O'Brien settled down on the defensive side as a cornerback. O'Brien wasn't the only player to enjoy Bourdeau's coaching style.

Many of the girls liked how Bourdeau didn't make the game about winning. They enjoy his tactics to make the game both fun and competitive.

"He was always willing to truly teach us something new every practice," senior Catalina Bentancur chuckled as she thought about the season. "But then he still always wanted us to have fun."

Bourdeau made his players the priority. Whether it be helping them find their position or teaching them to push over a lineman, his main drive is for them to have fun and work together. It's not the intensity of the game that is the best part for him, it's the teamwork involved.

"Of all the sports I know, it is the most team involved," he commented. "Everyone has a job and the comradery of the teammates is a special bond."

While the six weeks leading up toward the game may cause Bourdeau stress, he always cherishes the time he spends each year with the team. His passion is teaching these girls to play and is rewarded with knowing they have had an experience they will never forget.

Athlete Profile Molly Cox

by Elana Bershtein '19

Throughout the entire fall sports season, Molly Cox '19 has repeatedly demonstrated what immense success looks like for the Amity Girls Swimming and Diving Team.

Cox's main event is the 100 yard backstroke. In the regular season, she has consistently placed first and second within this event, earning significant points for the team. She attributes her success to difficult practices and support from her teammates.

Cox commented, "I am motivated by my teammates to give 110% of my efforts in practice and compete my best within meets."

Her success is completed humbly as well, always supporting the rest of the team and not only herself.

Cox has also had continued success in the championship season. At the Southern Connecticut Conference Championships, Cox placed fourth in her individual 100 yard backstroke as well as fourth in the 400 medley relay in which she swam the 50 yard backstroke.

She proceeded to qualify for State Opens with an impressive time of 59.77 seconds, just

about one second off from the school record.

Throughout her Amity career, Cox's all-time best of 59.4 seconds has caused her to be the third fastest backstroker in all of Amity Girls swimming.

Not only is Cox one of Amity's most accomplished swimmers, but she is also a captain of the team.

Carly Silver '20 is continuously impressed by her captain's strong leadership abilities and qualities.

Silver says, "Since my first year on the team, I always knew that Molly was a great leader. This year, as our captain, she has really done such a good job in hyping up the team and motivating us to support one another."

Silver's response embodies the views of the rest of the team. From this, it is very clear that Cox's love for the sport and dedication is a contagious mindset flowing among the swimmers.

Cox plans to continue her swim career at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts in the fall of 2019.

She says, "I am super excited to swim in college next year. I love the sport so much and although I will miss my Amity teammates, I am excited for the next four years!"



Molly Cox swimming butterfly.

Photo by Robert Taylor

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

See page 11 for a story on these athletes who committed to colleges on Signing Day.

Back Row: Connor Visnic, Michael Shepa, Diego Rodriguez
Front Row: Abby Harbinson, Katelyn Blake, Madison Smith

Photo by Jared Beltz '19



Senior Lani Beaudette races with the ball at the North Haven game.

Photo by Jared Beltz '19

Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Amity Athletes Commit to College

by Evan Arovos '20

For a select number of senior athletes, putting pen to paper officially announces their commitment to college athletics on signing day.

These athletes have poured in lots of hard work and dedication over their high school career. There is a sense of excitement knowing that they can continue participating in their sport on a collegiate level.

In most cases, the student has to reach out first to coaches to be on the radar. It is the responsibility of the student to put themselves out there through emails, results, videos, and camps.

Katelyn Blake

Although horse riding is not offered at Amity, it did not stop Katelyn Blake '19 from landing a spot on the University of California, Davis Western Equestrian team. Without a High School equestrian team, Blake had been preparing to pursue her love for riding in collegiate education through private training and competitions from a very young age.

The offer by UC Davis came as a complete surprise, and was a very exciting moment for her. Signing day was an even more incredible experience for Blake, because beside her were her own classmates going through a similar, once-in-a-lifetime experience. Through competitions, camps, and creating highlight videos, Blake has been able to make herself known for horse riding.

Blake suggests that young riders should, "get in contact with coaches as soon as possible because the more contact, the higher chances they respond back."

Michael Shepa

On the opposite side of the sport realm, on the baseball diamond, sits Michael Shepa '19 who just landed a commitment with the University of Hartford. Shepa never gave in or lost sight of his goals for baseball.

The countless numbers of coaches that have worked with Shepa have been beneficial for him. Through Amity's well-known baseball program, as well as teams on the side, he had been given numerous opportunities to show his work ethic and his promise as a college-level athlete. Shepa said, "I felt

like all the hard work paid off. I would advise people to keep working and never ever give up on their dreams and goals."

Abby Harbinson

Additionally, Abby Harbinson '19, a skilled volleyball player, found her niche at Rollins College.

Harbinson described the day as relieving, saying, "Ever since sophomore year, I've been grinding through the recruiting process trying to find the best fit and it's so great to finally know where I'll be playing next fall."

Besides being apart of a state championship team, Harbinson also played club volleyball for the Connecticut Stars. Coaches associated with the club aided Harbinson in getting in contact with important people who recognized her talent.

Along with this, her hard work, and constant, relentless drive for excellence in the sport is what guided her towards continuing her athletic career.

Diego Rodriguez

Signing day for Diego Rodriguez '19 was one he will never forget. Making the decision to join the Division One Bryant University soccer team was not a hard one. After he officially signed, Rodriguez could sense the feeling finally sinking in. All the time spent on putting effort into soccer led to this lifetime accomplishment.

Rodriguez stated, "My parents, friends, neighbors, and teachers all supported me through the highs and lows. I always have those people in the back of my head every time I step onto the field telling me to keep going."

Constant dedication to the sport was his "in" to a collegiate team. Very few have had the success or level of dedication to the sport that Rodriguez has, which is the very thing that helped him find his calling. Rodriguez began the recruiting process early on in high school which allowed him options to find the perfect fit for him.

Madison Smith

Madison Smith '19 began playing soccer when she was young. Many years later, Smith would find herself with a commitment to the University of Texas at Dallas for the sport she loves.

All of the dedication

towards the sport culminated into a beautiful moment for Smith in both her initial offer and signing day. Smith 's love for the game defines her as a player and has shaped her progress.

Smith said, "Having fun with the sport should always be your number one priority because you'll get where you want to be by doing that alone."

At the end of the day, soccer is not just a sport to her; it is a way of life. Sustaining an ACL injury this past season did not stop Smith's dreams either. The set back will only be a means to fuel the passion she has for the sport.

Smith greatly looks forwards to continuing to overcome her injury and playing out her dreams on the field in Texas next year.

Connor Visnic

All of his accomplishments throughout high school has given Connor Visnic '19 an opportunity to run both cross country and track at Providence College.

The large number of hours Visnic spent running in high school was well worth it by senior year. Visnic said "it is imperative for any athlete to put the work in for his or her sport. Coaches want to see your dedication and will want you if you work tirelessly to be better."

His belief in hard work seems to be a commonality between all of Amity's signed athletes. Without it, it is clear that an athlete lacking the motivation and love for their sport may not be cut-out for a college athletics career.

Family, friends, and coaches have all been motivating Visnic to improve throughout his high school career, and he feels it was a successful moment when he received the offer. When it came to meeting all the deadlines for college, Visnic felt relaxed knowing he already had a foot in the door.

Amity Athletics was more than pleased to have six individuals who signed with a college on the first of several college signing days that remain this year. Their hard work, dedication and constant strides to better themselves and their game has made them the accomplished athletes they dreamed about for years.

See page 10 for a photo of the six Amity athletes on Signing Day.

Girls' Volleyball Wins It All

by David Sugarmann '20

After a long season of hard work, determination, and grit, the Amity Girls' Volleyball Team has secured its first Class LL championship in 15 years. The road to victory was not easy though. In order to get to the championship match, Amity had to defeat No. 3 Westhill and No. 2 Cheshire, who also happens to be their rival.

When the odds are stacked against you, some give up, but this amazing group of girls kept working until they achieved their goal—winning a championship.

One person cannot win a volleyball match for a team alone. Every member of a team must be mentally and physically prepared in order to succeed.

When Abby Harbinson '19, a team captain, was asked what the team did to prepare, she said it was important to focus on "what we needed to do individually" and "how we needed to contribute as teammates."

This mindset was clearly effective down the stretch of the tournament. When it mattered most, everybody on the team knew their role, and they all knew how to get the job done.

Not everything leading up to the being Class LL champs was pretty. In the SCC finals, Amity lost a heartbreaker to Cheshire. Instead of being discouraged by this, the team used it as motivation during the state tournament.

Harbinson explained that the loss to Cheshire ignited "a fire inside of us that no one could touch." And once a fire starts burning, it's hard to put it out.

Amity used this fire when they squared off against Darien in the finals. From the start, it was apparent that this was going to be a close match.

The first and second sets were especially close; each one was decided by two points. After Amity dropped the third set, they stepped on the gas and won the fourth set, which clinched the championship title.

Harbinson said that when they won that final point, "There was really no word to fully describe what winning felt like."

She continued, saying, "It was an all in effort. Knowing that made me so much happier."

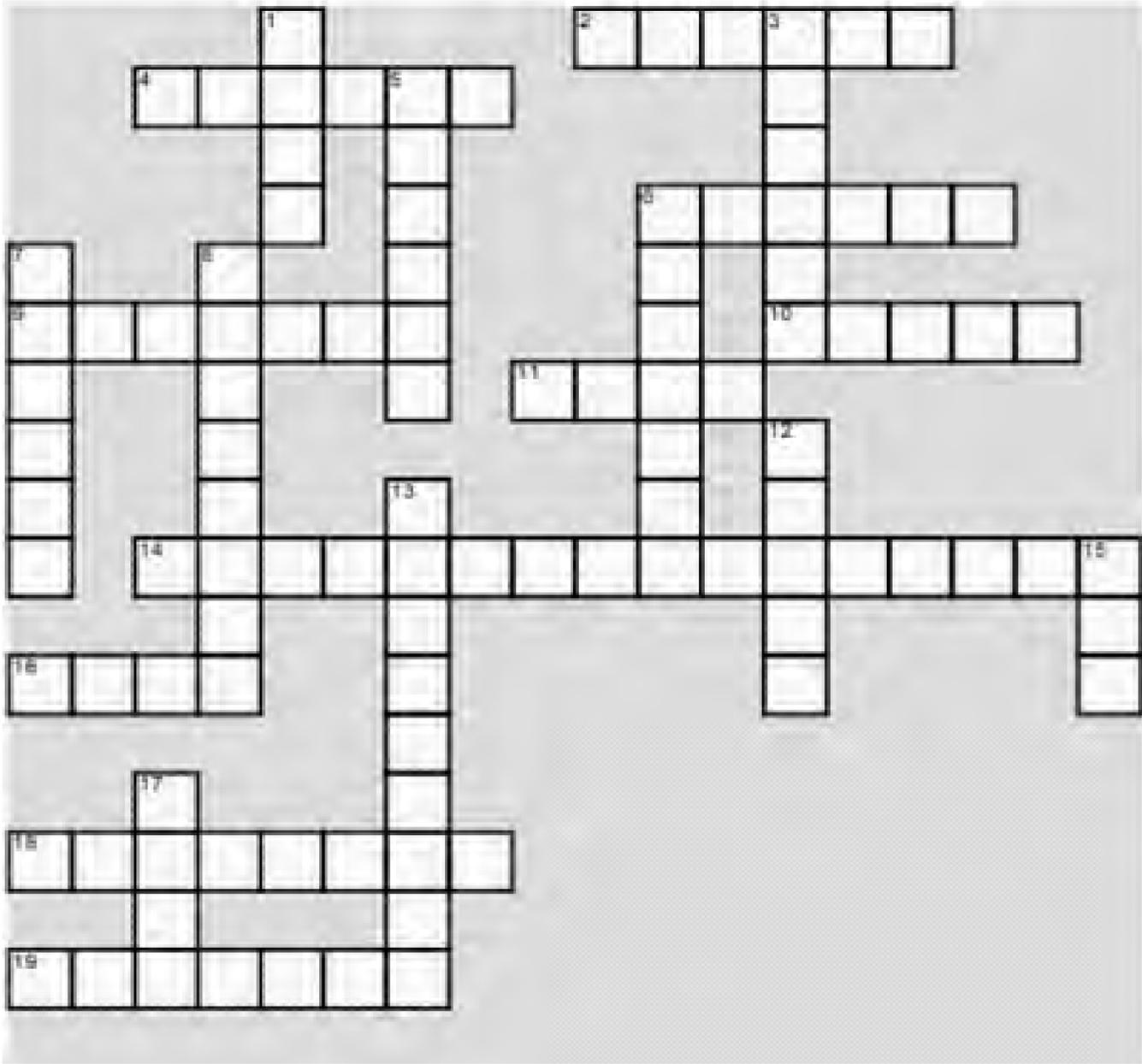
This excitement and pride shown by the Spartans was well deserved. They stayed focused and stood by each other, which ultimately led to obtaining the ultimate reward.



Spartans celebrate a point against Cheshire in a regular season game

Photo by Jared Beltz '19

December Crossword



Thank you to Ryan Anastasio '20 for making this month's Crossword puzzle!

Across

- 2. Presumptive Speaker
- 4. Seuss Christmas Character
- 6. Honors African Heritage
- 9. Don't eat this lettuce
- 10. 41's service dog
- 11. Jury that can't agree
- 14. 100 hours
- 16. Juniors received scores for the _____
- 18. 8 nights
- 19. _____ Incident of the

Down

- 1. Cheney movie
- 3. This big night lost their host
- 5. Oldest living president
- 6. Amity Teacher of the Year
- 7. England debate over the EU
- 8. Hotel data breach
- 12. Rocky Sequel
- 13. Time Person of the Year
- 15. Will Ferrel Christmas Movie
- 17. New AG



MON - WED, SAT 10 - 5
 THU 10 - 6
 FRI 10 - 7
 SUN 11 - 5



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