

# THE AMITY TRIDENT

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Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

January 12, 2018

## Political Cartoonist Shares Work with Students

by Sydney Reiner '20 and Ella Marin '20

Bob Englehart, a modern political cartoonist, visited Amity on Wednesday, December 13th. The event was funded by the Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation and was offered to the arts and journalism classes at Amity.

Englehart is currently freelancing because he likes to have control over his ideas and what he is able to draw. However prior to this, he worked at the Hartford Courant for 35 years, where his cartoons were heavily edited before being approved to be published. Now, his political cartoons fully showcase his opinions. He recognizes that opinions and the subject of his cartoons are controversial topics, but said to Amity students, "These are my opinions, you may differ."

Some of the topics his cartoons cover include the many recent incidents of sexual harassment, the Alabama Senate election with candidates Roy Moore and Doug Jones, and all things related to Trump.

Englehart stated that Trump is his "favorite person to draw, but not his favorite president." Englehart has very strong views against Trump, and these views are relayed in his everchanging caricatures of Trump. He says that his depiction of Trump changes the more he "loathes Trump."

His vehement feelings for the president can be most clearly seen in his political cartoon on the day Trump was elected, in which he drew an American flag upside down, a well-known distress signal.

Furthermore, Englehart has strong views against the second amendment which he features in many of his pieces.

He believes this is the root of all of the mass gun shootings in America. His cartoon that most effectively displays his views is his recent one of a zombie holding a gun with the words "second amendment" across the zombie.

When a student asked Englehart if he became a political cartoonist for the art or the politics. Englehart replied "both." He then went on to explain that when he was growing up and becoming an adult in the '60s, there was a lot of global political action and events. He wanted to be a part of it. His path eventually led him to becoming a political cartoonist.

"Bob Englehart is one of the most experienced editorial cartoonists in the U.S. We are fortunate to be able to invite him to Amity," said Robert Musco, one of Amity's librarians.

"I think his presentation is really useful to students because it gives a very clear idea of what editorial cartooning is, and how it differs from other kinds of journalism. I really enjoyed seeing him take an idea about a current event, and show how he approaches creating a visual commentary."

Another question Englehart answered was about the kind of criticism he received from his cartoons. He said that although he had been sued for the controversial topics of his art, he has never received any death threats. However, he said there are many lines he would cross to get his point across, which relates to his choice a few years ago to work freelance so his ideas wouldn't have to be censored.

Overall, Englehart was an example to Amity students of a man who "went the distance" in terms of making a career out of a passion and finding a way to fully express himself through art.

## JSA Attends Fall State Convention

by Payton Grande '19

Approximately thirty Amity students attended the JSA (Junior Statesmen of America) Fall State trip to Boston from December 9th to 10th. At the convention which was held at the Boston Park Plaza, students were able to debate and hold discussions with other delegates from schools across the Northeast. JSA members from Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey gathered to discuss political and criti-

cal issues.

Junior Rachel Crow said, "This convention was full-on friendly yet competitive debating, and was a great opportunity to meet new people."

The weekend began early on December 9th as students departed from Amity on a 5:00 am bus.

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Richard Papa '19 and Sam Farbman '19

Photo by Nitya Bhattari '18

## Amity Community Welcomes Chinese Delegates

by Niha Irshad '19

Educators from the Guangdong Province of China visited Amity Regional High School on Monday, December 4.

The goal of their visit was to gain insight into the teaching and learning styles practiced in the United States. This visit, organized by Elena Sera-piglia, Chair of the World Language Department,

allowed twenty delegates to shadow fourteen Amity students to various classes from Modern American

History to AP Calculus AB.

Principal Anna Mahon said, "The purpose of this visit was for the educators to see what instruction is like in a comprehensive American high school."

The Amity staff pre-

pared to welcome Muhang Huang, the Associate Dean of the School of Professional Development and

Research on Primary and Secondary Education, who led the delegation along with other educators who teach at middle schools and high schools, in the meeting room by the Cafeteria where they were served snacks and drinks. Each of the fourteen selected students introduced themselves and began bringing a couple delegates to two of their classes.

"My experience working with these delegates was quite interesting. There was more of a cultural barrier than a language

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Photo from Dr. Dumais' Twitter

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# Amity Talks, We Listen

by Sam Farbman '19

Four members of the Amity community talked about how their passions affect our greater community on December 19th in the black box theater as part of Amity Talks and Listens, a series of hour-long sessions in which students and staff members discuss their interests and how they change the world through them.

Jeremy Gustafson '18 opened with his story of how he wrote to a Canadian politician and was surprised to receive a handwritten and personalized response, prompting him to reevaluate the government-citizen relationship that is present in the United States.

English teacher Jeni Bonaldo shared her newfound love of storytelling and how going out of her comfort zone led to greater success and confidence.

Reflecting on the current situation of sexual harassment, Marissa Proto '18 gave a passionate speech about how our use of language and societal views about important issues can shift our ability to fully combat the injustices in our world.

Finishing off the thought-filled hour was Sam Farbman '19, who used humor and the 2018 election as a way of showing that every person matters in the bigger picture, and that going the distance doesn't mean doing the impossible.

Amity Talks and Listens elicited a very positive response from audience members as well.

Senior Ananya Kachru, who attended the talks, said, "I thought it was very well organized and thoughtful. The talks were diverse and each speaker had different stories which all related to 'go the distance.' Amity Talks is such a perfect venue for people to share

their backgrounds, ideas, stories, and I look forward to another event soon."

Junior Alisa Glenbovitch expressed similar thoughts when she stated, "It was amazing to hear the various stories and the passion each person had behind them. It's very interesting to hear the ideas of fellow classmates and teachers."

All four speakers did a great job conveying important ideas to the audience and hopefully inspiring others to find their own path and change the world through their own passions.

Sophomore Rhea Dey agrees.

After listening to the talks, she said, "It was so interesting to see kids [her] age speaking so passionately in what they believed in. It really felt like [she] was sitting in the audience of a TedTalk."

When Amity talks, Amity listens.

# JSA Attends Fall State Convention cont.

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Once they reached Boston, students debated a wide variety of topics including policy and law which mold the talks.

Additionally, during the first day, students attended an activism block that spoke about issues on women's rights, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. The day finished with night time activities such as a dance and games where students were able to bond over things besides politics.

Sophomore Evan Kindseth said, "JSA is a perfect balance between learning and fun. The debates are a great way to hear many different perspectives, and the overall experience is so memorable."

The weekend was made especially "memorable" because of Amity's own

senior Nitya Bhattarai, the Northeast State (NES) Photographer. Bhattarai, known as @brownboywith-acamera on Instagram, was able to perfectly capture some amazing moments of the convention.

The second day of the convention also consisted of debates and a mock Supreme Court trial where Amity students Patrick Burland '18, Ryan Anastasio '19, and Helen Lenski '18 served as justices.

Throughout the weekend, Amity students really stood up for their beliefs and showed their true passion for activism in government. The snowy weekend in Boston ended with seven Amity students being awarded with best speaker gavels.

Said Sophie Anwar '18, "I can't wait for Winter Congress."

# Administration Works to Enforce and Improve Drop Off Policy

by Ryan Anastasio '20

Amity Regional High School has had the same drop off method for parents since the school was renovated in 2007. In the morning, all vehicles must enter the high school through the back entrance, and stay in a single file line in the student drop off area on the side of the school. Then, parents may proceed to exit through the the front entrance. Parents cannot enter

the front road entrance during the morning drop off as it is reserved for faculty members and buses.

Recently, there have been issues with this policy not being followed. Principal Anna Mahon said, "The administration and security team felt there was a need to reiterate the procedures as many students/parents have been attempting to drop students off in the front parking lot between 7:10-7:40."

The policy was made to

make drop-off easier and safer for buses, students, teachers, and parents dropping students off to school.

Mahon added, "Buses use the bus drop off lane and students have to cross in front of buses if they are dropped off in the faculty parking lot." Crossing in front of buses can be an issue as dozens of buses are trying to drop students off.

Starting on the week of December 18th, a new method for student drop off was introduced. Am-

ity's security guards stood outside instructing students to get out of their cars at the top of the sidewalk instead of at the very front of the line. Instead of the singular door opening to the culinary hallway being unlocked, all three side doors were unlocked. The goal was to move cars more efficiently to stop the buildup of cars.

"The new system was a little confusing for the first few days because I hadn't heard anything about it," said junior Daisy Brown-

field. "Now that everyone knows what's going on, I think it works a lot better than the old system."

Students and parents have complained that they try to move through the drop off lane but are slowed by traffic from those parking their cars. Administration said there is no way to fix this as the driveway is not wide enough. While the school has all of these measure in place, they recommend students utilize transportation is provided by the district.

# Amity Responds to the PACT and PSAT

by Alicia Myung '20

Amity sophomores took the practice ACT on October 11th, while the juniors took the practice SAT. The order of the new tests came as a change; this year, the two grades took separate tests while, in the past, both were given the PSAT.

In order to further prepare the Amity student body, the PACT was given to the sophomores. When asked, Principal Anna Mahon said that the reasoning behind the switch was because the "ACT has updated their practice test. A large number of our students take the ACT in addition to the required SAT as part of the college admissions process. Many students feel the ACT is a better match to their skill set, and we want to support all avenues for post-

secondary planning."

And even before this switch, the sophomores had actually taken the practice ACT up until around two years ago.

The scores for both tests were released to the two grades this past December. Mahon has said that the switch will remain permanent until further notice for reasons such as restricted availability of the tests due to costs.

When asked on whether the switch has had overall positive results, as Mahon said "While it is a little too early to have any definitive data, this experience will certainly benefit those students who wish to explore the ACT option as juniors/seniors."

Students had mixed responses to the tests. Sophomore Rhea Dey spoke of her experience with the PACT, saying

"I felt that this test gave me a great idea of what the questions for the real ACT would look like. I feel like I'm ready and can prepare more."

Sophomore, Ella Marin, said "Although the PACT was long and stressful, I knew it was an overall good thing. Getting my PACT score well in advance of when I would need to take the actual test was actually very helpful in that it indicated what I need to do to further prepare. Now the test doesn't seem so foreign."

When it came to the PSAT, junior Tara Mohseni said, "It was definitely more challenging than the actual SAT with its obscure readings."

At the end of the day, students ended up with exposure to tests that will prepare them for the college application process.

# Amity Community Welcomes Chinese Delegates cont.

*Continued from page 1*

one. I could communicate with them in Chinese, but there were so many aspects of our school that confused them," said Sam Zhang '19. "They asked me things about lunch, about how students find our classes because most schools in China have their teachers walk from class to class. The experience also really pushed me to speak only in Chinese and learn how to properly converse to them."

Because all the visiting delegates were teachers, they focused more on teaching methods

"I had a physics teacher who went to a Level I Physics class, and it was very interesting because the delegate I worked with talked about how advanced and complex our work is!" said Ananya Kachru '18. "He really appreciated how

involved students were within each class, too."

The educators claimed to have learned new educational approaches and seemed very engaged in each of the classes that they visited. Many students noted that during the class, delegates took photos and listened attentively to the lesson being taught.

Junior Diane Meng, who worked with the educators commented, "[They] took lots of pictures and seemed very interested when I took them to my AP Calculus and AP Government and Politics classes."

The experience for both the Chinese delegates as well as the students and faculty at Amity was stress-free and effective. Many delegates said that they were grateful that several students took out their time to tour them around the high school as well as explain certain practices that were new to them.

# With 2018 Comes a Contentious Race for Governor

by Ryan Anastasio '20

At the start of 2018 many people are looking forward to the year and many have formed New Year's Resolutions. Many people in the state have the same New Years Resolution; they want to be Connecticut's next Governor. With the election coming up on November 6, over a dozen candidates are already campaigning for the state's top office. The election can be won by either party and polling has shown that voters in Connecticut are split on if they want a Republican or a Democrat as their next Governor. On the republican side there are many candidates.

Some of the Republican candidates are: Former US Comptroller David Walker, State Representative Prasad Srinivasan, Shelton Mayor Mark Lauretti, and former Trumbull First Selectman Tim Herbst. These are just some of the declared candidates. There are still other republicans with exploratory committees. This means that they are considering a run for Governor and can receive campaign contributions. However, they are not official candidates. House Minority Leader Themis Klarides and New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart have not announced their intentions yet. It still is an open race on the republican side and there is no clear frontrunner.

The Republican State Convention will take place in May. At the convention, delegates will select who they want to be the nominee. The convention will endorse a candidate for the nominee, but anyone who receives over 15% of

the delegates vote will qualify for a primary in August. The winner of the primary will be the nominee for the republicans for Governor. Last year, Governor Malloy announced he would not seek reelection to a third term. This opened up the race on the Democratic side. Candidates on the Democratic side include Middletown Mayor Dan Drew and Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim.

Both of these men have had a lot of controversy. Joe Ganim is on his second stint as Mayor of Bridgeport. He was elected Mayor again in 2015 after serving seven years in prison for corruption as Mayor of Bridgeport. He will not be able to participate in the State's citizens election program because he is a convicted felon. This program gives millions of dollars of taxpayer money to candidates who raise \$250,000 in contributions of \$100 or less. Dan Drew also has had a lot of controversy when last year who sent letters to city employees asking them to donate to his campaign. Many have said the Mayor abused his power as Mayor and should not be in the race.

While there are not a lot of official Democratic Candidates, there are many people exploring a run. This list includes Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, former Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection Jonathan Harris, and hedge fund manager Dita Bhargava. Potential candidates also include New Haven Mayor Toni Harp and businessman Ned Lamont. The race is wide open on the Democratic side with no clear frontrunner. The Democrats will go through a

similar process as the Republicans with the convention and primary. Last time Connecticut had an Independent Governor the state income tax was implemented. The persons name was Lowell Weicker, the former Senator was able to win as an independent because of his many years in the US Senate and his name recognition.

One man, businessman Oz Griebel, is running as an independent. He has served as the CEO of the Metro-Hartford Alliance but very few people know who he is. He is running a an independent because he says it gives him more time to talk directly with voters. As an independent, he does not have to deal with a convention process. Democrat and Republican candidates spend a lot of their time speaking to the parties town committees. Griebel does not need to that, but he needs several thousand signatures to appear on the ballot. I would say he has a slim chance but would not rule anything out. Connecticut has voted for independents in the past, but they had name recognition.

The race is going to intense for Governor. It is going to be very close and it is very likely groups outside of Connecticut will be involved in the race. Governor Malloy, a Democrat, is very unpopular right now which gives a slight edge to the Republicans. However, Governor Malloy will not be on the ballot. Democrats are going to say the Republican candidates are Trump supporters. The President is not popular in the State. Either way, it is going to be an election to watch that anyone can win.

# THE TRIDENT

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# The Republican Party Must Discard Steve Bannon

by Patrick Burland '18

To those who think this is preaching to the choir: The choir is becoming increasingly small, distracted and quiet. There must be a strong rejection of Bannon and the direction he aims to move the Republican Party and the country. I write this not as a snowflake, a liberal, or an ignorant blogger, but as a conservative activist who feels increasingly the

black sheep in a party that is losing its roots and values.

The Senate Special Election in Alabama to fill Attorney General Jeff Sessions' seat is just the most recent installment in a string of electoral losses for the GOP. The fault for the loss lies not with the Republican Party, its voters, the President, or even the Democrat who won the election. While some have pointed to the loss of a Senate seat in ruby red

Alabama as evidence of an energized liberal mass, to credit Democrats with the defeat of Roy Moore would be very misleading and incorrect. The sole individual who is responsible is Steve Bannon, former special advisor to the President and executive chairman of Breitbart.

No Democrat has won a statewide race in Alabama since 1992 when former Democrat, now Republican, Richard Shelby was re-elected to

the U.S. Senate. To point to Doug Jones as a unique candidate that overcame tremendous political odds to win election to the Senate is not accurate. Jones did not so much win, as his opposition lost. And to be clear, Jones' opposition consisted not of the GOP, but of the Alt-Right and its crown Prince, Steve Bannon. The Republican Senate Election arm, the NSRC fought hard to defend incumbent Luther Strange who had been

appointed to fill the seat after President Trump appointed then-Senator Jeff Sessions to be his attorney general. But Steve Bannon, seeing an opening to begin his war against the Republican Party, gave perennial candidate and State Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore a tremendous amount of financial and public support. Under the guise of helping enact President Trump's popu-

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# The Republican Party Must Discard Steve Bannon

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list agenda, Steve Bannon sought to increase his influence by trying to elect someone in his own image. Intent on waging a war with establishment Republicans over control of the party, Steve Bannon's reckless actions have led to an accused child molestor being nominated, a Democrat

winning in Alabama and a more divided party than ever.

While Bannon's many disciples agree with the rhetoric that he spews, those who backed Bannon's Moore ticket in the Alabama Primary are in the dark on the Alt-Right's true intentions.

What the primary voters who delivered Moore

the nomination didn't know is that Bannon is not concerned with advancing policy, but rather elevating himself. He is unconcerned with promoting good governance, American values, or a more unified country.

If Republicans can take one lesson away from Alabama, it should not be that their party is doomed

in 2018, it should be that Steve Bannon is wrong for Republicans, wrong for decency, and wrong for America.

If he continues to peddle influence and be trusted by conservatives, then far more will be at stake than control of the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives. The very institutions themselves could

be irreparably damaged by the Bannonites who the Alt-Right are desperately trying to push over the finish line in primaries across the country.

With that, I urge fellow Republicans to reject Steve Bannon's bigotry and nationalism, and instead embrace American values and conservative values.

## Crossword Puzzle

### ACROSS

1. Chemistry and PE extraordinaire
9. Type of tree
10. People are often asked if they're a dog or \_\_\_ person
11. House renting company
13. \_\_\_man Empire
14. Red Teletubby
15. Young kids sometimes have this speech impediment
16. This Academy is in Annapolis
18. Name of one of Beyonce's children
20. Delicious (often sweet), spongy dessert
21. Common term used by high schoolers; fires or candles are \_\_\_
22. \_\_\_ or Hers
25. Things like WALL-E
27. Connecticut writer \_\_\_ Clemens
32. Slang for "No"
33. Pen name of 27-Across
35. Store computer files in documents or on the \_\_\_\_\_

### DOWN

1. Popular online advertising company
2. JFK, BDL, LGA, ORD
3. Truncated "honey"
4. In the movie series that Ella Marin wrote about in the Features section, this character is a powerful gangster
5. Alaska postal code
6. 1 followed by twenty seven 0s (1\*10^27)
7. Hang from trees, caves, etc.
8. *The Trident* is holding a bake sale at this supermarket on January 28th!
12. Name of Obama's first dog
13. Famous Disney snowman
19. 2 in Roman numerals
23. Way to say "in reality" while texting
24. Synonym for "therefore"
26. Teacher's Assistant
28. Root beer brand
29. APs, proms, SSLP
30. Company that provides power for parts of the BOW
31. Antonym for "start"
34. A-\_\_

1		2		3	4	5		6	7	8
				9				10		
11			12					13		
		14						15		
				16		17				
18	19							20		
21				22	23	24				
				25					26	
27	28	29	30	31				32		
33								34		
				35						

**If you correctly complete this crossword puzzle, email a picture to [amitytridentnewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:amitytridentnewspaper@gmail.com).**

**The first person to send us a correct puzzle will receive a prize (likely a gift card).**

**Submissions start at 3:00 p.m. Correct submissions before 3:00 p.m. will not be counted. Previous winners cannot win again.**

# Coping with Midterm Stress

by Arielle Lavi '19

With midterms rapidly approaching, the stress of these exams can become overwhelming for many students. It's certainly not uncommon for freshmen to find these tests stressful, as they're new to the structure and expectations. However, even if you feel overwhelmed right now, there is no need to panic. Take a deep breath, and realize there are ways that you can take control and prepare yourself. Here are a few tips that will help you feel more at ease and ready to tackle our upcoming midterms.

## 1) Study in advance.

It is beneficial to start reviewing ahead of time, even if it is only for a small amount each day. With the end of quarter two quickly approaching, it may be difficult to find the time to study while balancing a busy schedule. However, making an effort to will greatly benefit you overall. You won't find yourself cramming the night before, and you'll feel more confident and at ease when taking midterms.

## 2) Be organized ahead of time.

Organization is key when it comes to these exams. Having all of your old tests, handouts, and notes from class in one place will help you study more effectively and feel better prepared to tackle midterms.

"I regret not organizing beforehand when studying for previous midterms," says Sarah Sudhoff, '19. "Waiting until the last minute is never

effective and I found that it helped me a lot more when I was prepared ahead of time."

Furthermore, Math teacher Scott Ranani said, "another key component in preparing ahead for midterms is re-doing your past assessments and being ready for your exams, such as putting new batteries in your graphing calculator."

## 3) Reach out to others if you are struggling and form study groups with peers.

If you find yourself struggling in a certain subject, reach out to others who are in a position to help you, whether it be your teachers, peers, older siblings, or parents.

One of the most fun and rewarding ways to prepare for midterms can be to study with your peers. It allows you to relay ideas and refresh your memory, along with the opportunity to learn something that you didn't know beforehand. They'll be happy to help you achieve your goals. The Homework Help Center is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 3:30.

## 4) Manage your time effectively.

When studying for these exams, prioritize your time. "It's really important to manage your time," says Maddy Mackay '19. "It helps if you plan out what you what to study and for how long." If your time is limited, focus your energy towards the areas with which you struggle. That may help you feel more confident and ready to take on these tests.

## 5) Find and utilize quiet areas.

Finding a quiet place to study is an important factor in effectively studying for midterms. Your local library (or the nearest Starbucks) is great if you're looking for a place that has less distractions and temptations around, so you can stay focused and on-task. However, if you don't have the time to head on over there, make sure that your study area is organized and clutter-free, in order to ensure effective studying.

## 6) Practice healthy habits the week leading up to exams.

As midterms are quickly approaching, it is best for you to keep yourself healthy and well-rested so that you can be productive. Eating and sleeping right, along with proper exercise, will help ensure efficient study habits and good health.

Joseph Sugarmann '18 said, "The important thing is to pace studying like you would a race. The all-out sprint is only beneficial at the end. If you pace yourself when studying, not only will you have a stronger grasp on the material, you will feel more confident on exam day."

## 7) Keep midterms in perspective.

Remember, even if you don't do as well as you hope on these exams, this is only the first semester. You can use this to your advantage to reflect on how you're doing, in order to be more successful during the rest of the year. Life goes on, and so will you.

# Unified Sign Language Club Unites Amity Students

by Elana Bershtein '19

Throughout this school year, the newly formed Unified Sign Language club has been quite successful in uniting the Amity community. Students with and without disabilities come together once or twice a month to learn sign language, hang out, and most importantly, have fun. Cailey Esposito '19 created the club and is delighted to see the success of the meetings.

For the past four years, Esposito has participated in Summer Sidekicks, a summer program that works with special needs students. She was inspired to incorporate aspects of this program during the school year and introduce members of the Amity community to her passion. One part of this program that she particularly enjoyed was learning sign language with the students with disabilities.

"I thought it would

much as possible because they are very good at the signing."

The members of Unified Sign Language had a successful performance before Winter Break. They signed "Let It Snow" in front of family, administration and teachers. Unified Sign Language will perform again at the end of the school year.

The club has been very successful in attracting new members and increasing participation in meetings. Hannah Hayes '19 was especially interested in the club.

"I was initially attracted to the club because my mom is a Special Education teacher in Bridgeport, and I have always liked working with her students," said Hayes. "Also, I have always wanted to learn sign language so when a club arose that combined the two, I knew I had to join."

Hayes has been an active member and has loved each meeting. She says, "I love working with all the members of Unified Sign



The Unified Sign Language table at Club Day.

Photo by Cailey Esposito '19.

# The Force Awakens in 2018!

by Ella Marin '20

*Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, was released on December 14, 2017. The series is not only beloved by kids and teens today, but also by adults who grew up watching the original Star Wars films. With every new episode release, fans swarm the theaters and hope to watch a satisfying, exciting movie that furthers the plot of the fantastical galaxy of Star Wars. Whether or not the movie achieves that expectation is widely debated by fans and critics.

On December 19, online critic Jon Arvedon said, "Although it's only been in theaters for less than a week, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* is already driving a massive wedge between fans of the franchise."

In this eighth episode, Luke Skywalker's peaceful and solitary existence gets interrupted when Rey, Jakku scavenger and main character, comes to his island, seek-

ing lessons about the ways of the force. Luke, however, has very little interest in helping Rey and believes that the Jedi should die out. Meanwhile, Kylo Ren and General Hux lead the first order in an all out assault on the Resistance in hopes of gaining supreme rule of the galaxy.

Sydney Reiner '20



Photo from starwars.com.

saw the movie over winter break and was very pleased. "I thought it was an overall fantastic movie. It was very thrilling and lived up to my expectations. I appreciated how they seamlessly incorporated Luke Skywalker back into the story," Reiner '20 said.

Many fans were indeed very excited for

Luke to return and have a prominent role in the movie again. However, some fans had issues elsewhere. Alicia Myung '20 said, "I really enjoyed the film and thought that it was visually stunning. I did take issue with how the director seemed to falter in developing the characters [of] people of color. I feel as though he sidelined and trivialized their role in the story."

Some fans liked Luke's prominent role, while others felt as though more attention should have been put around the other emerging and perhaps culturally different characters. While some were unhappy with the authenticity, many were refreshed with a new and unique episode.

Overall, the Star Wars movies are typically based on one's personal preferences and expectations. While many thoroughly enjoyed the new episode, others were shockingly disappointed. Amity fans anxiously await to see how the saga will end!

be really cool if we could continue doing sign language during the school year. I realized how much it helped the students' with their speech, and they are so good at it. I really wanted to show off their skills!" Esposito said.

At each meeting, students work on learning and practicing sign language. Specifically, they focus on basic greetings and songs, building up to a final performance. The signs are taught in a manner which highlights the students with disabilities' talents and ability to help others.

Esposito says, "I will continue to teach that and then I will have some of the students with special needs come to the front and help to teach the rest of the group. I try to have them lead as

Language and watching how well they are able to do it. It's been really interesting to learn another way of communication."

The Unified Sign Language Club continuously encourages new students to join, regardless of proficiency of sign language. "If you are interested in sign language or helping people this is a great club for you! You do not need to know any sign language to join. We will learn the signs together. The students really enjoy when new people come and help too, so new members are always encouraged!" says Esposito.

If you have any questions or are interested in joining, please email cailey1301@gmail.com.

# SEMESTER ONE IN R

Twenty-seventeen was a successful year for Amity clubs, from the creation of new clubs to the continued success of others. *The Trident* talked to a few of Amity's growing clubs to learn about some of their accomplishments in the first semester, as well as their goals for the future.

Amity encourages students to find and follow their passions by joining clubs, and the newly formed Club Council at Amity furthers this goal. This idea of creating a student group originated after discussing the inconsistency of some clubs at Principal's Council last year. They noticed that there was often a disconnect between clubs and thought that integrating them through a common organization would prove successful. Co-founders Samantha Fleischman '18 and Ananya Kachru '18, in collaboration with the administration, established Club Council at the beginning of this school year, in order to integrate Amity's many clubs.

Meetings focus on unifying clubs, discussing

methods of increasing club membership, and planning events, like Club Day in September. Additionally, Club Council is currently working with Mikenna DeMorro '20 to organize events and fundraisers for Logan Testa, a student at Beecher Road School suffering from multiple brain tumors. In the spring, the Council also hopes to partner with the Amity Relay for Life club and to organize workshops. They plan to hold two workshops: one for teaching underclassmen how to start new clubs and one for current sophomores or juniors looking to hold club leadership roles next year.

This year, Club Council's first meeting focused on ways to improve Club Day. They did so by creating a color-coordinated

map which was displayed on a monitor at the front of the school.

The council meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 am in the Lecture Hall. There are typically 20-30 club representatives present at each meeting. Alongside Mr. Baretta, Fleischman and Kachru created a webpage that can be accessed at <https://www.amityregion5.org/amity-regional-high-school/students/club-council>.

"I think we're having success so far. It's been a little slow, but we made our website, which I think will help. And students who come to our meetings really seem to think it's important," Fleischman said. If your club is not represented, email [arhsclubcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:arhsclubcouncil@gmail.com).

The Amity Welcoming Committee was established at the beginning of this school year. Comprised of around 20 students representing all four grades, the committee seeks to ease the transition for students new to the high school. The Amity Welcoming Committee works directly with the counseling department to pair every new student with a committee member that guides them through their first few months at Amity. On the transfer student's first day, they receive a tour of Amity and a welcoming kit prepared by the committee. Each kit includes a passport, a Go The Distance bracelet, an assignment pad, and a personal handwritten note from a Committee member.

"What I like about the Welcoming Committee is that we are able to help students who are new to the school," says committee

member Natasha VonBeeden '22. "It is important to assist transfer students so they can quickly adapt to their new home here at Amity."

The Welcoming Committee also hosts monthly luncheons for the transfer students, where both the new students and the committee members discuss the transferring experience, offer advice, and get to know one another. The committee is currently planning their upcoming January luncheon.

Adaiah Stevens '20 is one of many transfer students who has benefited from the committee. "The Committee made me feel very welcome at Amity," she shared. "I've met many people and learned a lot about the school and what it has to offer. I hope this is something Amity will continue to do in the future for other new students, because it helps a lot."



The People Leading Against Homophobic Discrimination (PLAHD) Club raises awareness of some of the issues LGBTQ students face around the world today. The club participates in the National Day of Silence, National Coming Out Day, sponsors the Stonewall Speakers, and receives invites to PRIDE days at local minor league baseball and hockey games. So far, they have done all of this and annually take a field trip to the largest GSA/LGBTQ youth conference in the country.

"Like most GSAs, PLAHD functions in three ways: as a social group, an educational space, and an activist space," says English teacher Tasia Kimball. Meet-

ings can be purely social, with the club participating in Movie Nights and GSA roundtables with other schools and having student and alumni panels converse with both students and faculty. The club also educates the Amity community on issues facing the LGBTQ community.

Ms. Kimball got involved in 1993-1994 when the former faculty advisors were retiring. "[When I first started], it was very common for students to hear negative comments and gay slurs from both students and teachers," she said. However, Kimball says she has "seen a great deal of change, both within the group's membership as well

as within the Amity community."

The club has been invited to see David Sedaris, a well-known American comedian and author, perform for free at Yale. The club will also continue to participate in National Coming Out Day, the Day of Silence, and other important forms of activism.

"I love that PLAHD is a space where students can come to have support from other queer and allied students," said PLAHD co-president Jess Foster '18. "Hopefully, future PLAHD presidents will continue to encourage anyone and everyone to join the club and provide a warm, welcoming space for all students."

The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) focuses on cultivating the passion of future entrepreneurs. The club's purpose is to make and sell products to the Amity community, providing its members with experience in marketing and business. The Career and Technology Department receives the profit, allowing Amity students to further learn these career-specific skills.

The club meets every Tuesday after-school at 2:30pm where they usually keep tabs on products that need to be shipped out, refine their products, and discuss ways to improve their business. "We've made

a significant jump in sales since last year," says project manager Andrew Johnson '18. As project manager, he ensures that all their products are being made and shipped on time.

The club recently came out with a catalogue of their products which they hope will boost their sales. They attended the Bethany Harvest Festival and sold to local residents. In the upcoming year, the club hopes to expand on their accomplishments. "We [also] hope to get some more name recognition around the school," says Johnson. "We make some really great products and what we've done so far has been fantastic."

#### Photos:

Left Side (clockwise starting at top right): Successful Club Day. Photo by Sophie Baum '18; Metal work made by Andrew Johnson '18, project manager of FBLA. Photos contributed by Andrew Johnson '18; Amity Welcoming Committee cards. Photo by Ali Hagani '18; Co-President of PLAHD Jess Foster '18. Photo by Sophie Baum '18; PLAHD Club Day table. Photo by Sophie Baum '18. Right Side (clockwise starting at top left): Ceramic bowls made by Amity students, displayed at Empty

Bowls. Photo by Hannah Rappaport '18; Amity students and faculty along with Fair Haven administrator in front of minivan full of cans for the Fair Haven School. Photo contributed by Claudia Mirci, Spanish teacher; Amity Unified Team in 2016. Photo from Amity HS Athletics Twitter; Poster made by the Fair Haven School, thanking Amity for our help in the Thanksgiving food drive. Photo contributed by Claudia Mirci, Spanish teacher.

**Centerspread Writers:** Alexander Cadelina '19, Olivia Gross '20, Jack Tajmajer '20

# VIEW: AMITY CLUBS

The goal of Unified Sports is to allow all Amity students, regardless of ability, to participate in athletics. The team has three sports seasons — soccer, basketball, and volleyball — which typically include three tournaments. The tournaments are large, sometimes with more than a dozen teams representing the high schools of the SCC.

Practices are held on Mondays and Wednesdays until 3:00, and include skill development and scrimmaging. The team just started their basketball season after a very successful soccer unit.

“Soccer is a great sport because the game

keeps going if a mistake is made,” shares faculty advisor Betsi Grace. “They did very well. We have some very strong athletes.”

At the conclusion of the basketball season, the athletes will begin their final unit: volleyball. This sport, according to Mrs. Grace, is likely the most difficult, but with some modifications, such as a lighter and bigger ball, the team succeeds! The volleyball season typically ends in May.

Mrs. Grace has been one of the faculty advisors for 14 years. “What I give to them, they give me more,” she said. “Everybody wins. Everyone leaves feelings good. Parents are happy. I’m happy.

The kids are really happy. It’s an extremely positive activity for these kids to be involved in. These athletes are much more intuitive than I would ever have imagined,” she said.

The support from the Amity community has been important to the team; in fact, the football team came to a recent soccer tournament before their practice to cheer for the Amity athletes. “We get lots of support at our tournaments here. The kids love it, just like anybody loves fans.”

At the spring sports award — which the team attends annual — they receive a huge applause and a standing ovation.

The National Latin Honors Society has had an extremely successful year of promoting the importance of Latin within the Amity community! The group’s biggest event was a trip to the Amity Bethany Middle School where members gave current eighth graders a quiz on the Roman gods to interest them in taking Latin for their first year of high school. Now, in 2018, the NLHS will continue to help students excel in the language.

“I’ve really enjoyed being able to share Latin with other people and show them how it can still be relevant even though it isn’t actively spoken today,” says co-

president Erin Barillier ‘18. Meeting up every other Friday to discuss ideas for future projects, the passionate NLHS students have committed themselves to showing the entire student body how influential Latin can be in each person’s life. The society is hoping to plan a joint movie night with the other language societies, as well as to start an email tutoring service for Latin students.

Barillier says her favorite part has been getting to know the members: “Since it’s such a small society, we’re all really close. I’m really proud of what we’ve done for our school, and I hope that legacy continues!”

The Umtr Club is a section of a national organization that strives to help prevent bullying, depression, and suicide. Club coordinator Marty Gnidula ‘20 describes Umtr as “a program meant to spread awareness of mental health and suicide prevention in the school, and to help build a community that makes everyone feel included and that they matter.” This past year, the club has participated in many meetings with the faculty to spread awareness of mental health and to inform them of some of the common signs of poor mental health. In addition, the faculty assisted with some school-wide activities, including distributing inspirational notes to students.

Gnidula describes a typical meeting as “very relaxed.

We start off with a few inspirational quotes, then discuss what we can do to help the school as well as plan events. It is a very relaxing and accepting place.”

Gnidula explains that their next goal is to “help fund speakers and events to promote school-wide community. We are also trying to work with multiple departments in the school to gain more members.” The club received many members since its establishment in the fall of 2016.

“Umtr is important because it focuses on positivity in the school which is really useful and underrated,” says Gnidula. “As the club continues to grow and spread awareness, we hope that Umtr continues to help bring awareness to Amity in a fun, interactive way.”



The National Art Honor Society is a club aimed towards bringing together those passionate about art, while giving them the opportunity to learn and grow artistically.

Anna-Maria Marinescu ‘20 got involved after her teacher recommended her. She loves the club because “everyone shares this passion for art and how it is a huge deal for so many people.” The club features a wide vari-

ety of art styles and features digital art as well as hand-drawn pieces. Tracy Lu ‘20 also enjoys the club because it “gives me the opportunities to showcase my work and learn from other really good artists.” The meetings are very “welcoming, but at the same time it’s efficient and stuff gets done,” said Marinescu.

So far, the society has hosted two exhibitions, as well as an event called “Empty Bowls,” which

helped raise money for a soup kitchen. The main hallway at Amity is also being used to feature an “Artist of the Month.”

The club is planning to host more exhibitions and events similar to those that they held in 2017.

While no details have been finalized, Marinescu ‘20 recommends going because “everyone puts their heart and soul in their art and all of it is really breathtaking.”

La Amistad is Amity’s chapter of the National Spanish Honor Society. It serves to bring together students interested and passionate about the Spanish language. Teddy Criscuolo ‘18, the co-president of the society, discusses some of the events the club has done so far this year: “We have tried to stay true to the great success of our predecessors and keep some of our old traditions going while expanding in our own right.”

The Honor Society has had a strong partnership with Fair Haven School (Kindergarten through 8th Grade) in New Haven. The society, along with several seniors taking Spanish, take quarterly

trips to spend their day with students, many of whom are bilingual. The annual food drive before Thanksgiving was extremely successful: Amity sent over a thousand cans to the Fair Haven families. La Amistad worked with the Fair Haven School to give a gift to each student there. “We have also fundraised for relief in Mexico City and Puerto Rico to do our part in helping to rebuild from those [hurricane] tragedies,” Criscuolo said.

The meetings vary because of the students’ busy schedules, but when they do occur, snacks usually intersperse the discussions. Criscuolo says he enjoys being a part of the society because

“we are able to make an active choice to try to do outreach both locally and globally. We could be a club that only meets a few times just to throw the award on our resumes, but instead we use our position to make a difference. That, to me, is pretty special.” Going forward, La Amistad hopes to continue to build on the club’s traditions. They are beginning to plan one of their biggest fundraisers, Salsa Night, in late February or early March.

The group also hopes to collaborate with the other world language societies to create a literary magazine that can expose Amity students to their respective language and cultures.



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# Star Wars Review: “The Last Jedi” Fails to Deliver

by Nico Sagnelli '19

*Star Wars: The Last Jedi* has been one of the most highly anticipated films since *The Force Awakens* released back in December 2015. While that movie was initially praised upon release, over time, mixed feelings crept in as it bore an extreme amount of resemblance to the 1977 *A New Hope*. This left audiences anxious for a refreshingly original take on *Star Wars* from new writer and director Rian Johnson. The film delivered on that expectation.

the tense stillness of the salt planet Crait, or the heartwrenching destruction of ships battling in space, the work was not visually lacking. The music and sound design of the film continues *Star Wars*' long reputation of unique and awe inspiring sounds. Whether it be that of a lightsaber, the millenium falcon, or the continued brilliance of John Williams score, as an artwork of sight and sound, Rian Johnson does a remarkable job.

While the film succeeds in that department, people have been taking issue with the film for a different reason: the story. It is by no

his story, causing it to feel utterly disconnected from the previous movie and like a terrible setup for whatever comes next. Rian Johnson wanted to subvert all expectations so that he can go in a bold, daring, and unexpected new direction, but that's not what happened. He did not treat these moments like the twists he wanted. The way he used them felt more like dropped storylines than surprising turns of events. Dropping a storythread does not leave the audience excited and invigorated, it leaves them feeling disappointed. And just to add to that feeling, the



*The Last Jedi* promotional poster. Image Courtesy Rbrn.com.

However did it in a way that lacked the certain *Star Wars* charm that fans had so desired. Anyone theatergoers looking forward to another film up to par with the rest of the famous franchise will be disappointed with the most recent effort.

To start with the more technical aspects of the film, it is simply fantastic. This could be some of the best cinematographic work in the franchise; filled with beautiful, wide open landscape shots that showing off the serene calm of Luke's island,

means a bad story. It may lend the same structure of *Empire Strikes Back*, but it varies enough of its story beats and has enough new and different plot elements that it loses the originality present in the *Force Awakens*. This time the plot is more character driven, allowing for great performances from Adam Driver as Kylo Ren and Carrie Fisher as General Leia Organa. So where did it go wrong? While good on its own, it feels as if Rian Johnson was only concerned with telling

movie is way too long and spends too much time on pointless subplots that fail to give satisfy.

All the elements of this film are great. It is a visual marvel, written well, and contains fantastic performances, but it misunderstands what fans want and utterly fails at achieving the response Rian Johnson had hoped for. While a great film on its own, it feels so disconnected from all that came before that it will leave anyone with high expectations feeling disappointed.

## New Haven Pizza Debate: Sally's Takes the Crown

by Benjamin Lodewick '18

New Haven, Connecticut is known for its brick oven style pizza. People come from all over to try the city's famous pizza, and locals partake in the storied debate over which place is best. This argument is usually between two restaurants on Wooster Street, but Sally's surely has my vote.

Standing in a line outside the restaurant with the unforgettable scent of their pizza in the air was quite the tease.

With each passing minute, I thought about changing the plan and going to one of the numerous other pizza places around. However, the chitchat in the line kept me determined to stay.

It seemed as if everyone there was talking about the pizza with excitement in their voice. One man said to a first timer that the wait was absolutely worth it and that it's the best pizza in the world.

As the line got shorter and I got closer to going inside, I really hoped it lived up to the hype. I looked inside and saw that it was quite unique. Random pictures lined the walls and a waiter in a Hawaiian shirt, shorts, and clogs walked around taking orders. That's when he waved us in.

As I entered, the restaurant was smaller than I had imagined and looked like it had gone unchanged since its opening. We sat in a booth with cracked seats and a broken jukebox next to us. My dad ordered three large pizzas for the five of us. Now, that may seem a like a lot, but the number one rule at Sally's is that you can never over order.

It was a long wait for the pizza, but oh boy was it worth it. After sinking my teeth into that first piece and savoring the flavor, I realized I had never eaten a piece of pizza faster. In fact I have never eaten that much pizza in one sitting in my life!

If you are on a diet, I do not

suggest going here because once you have that first bite, you will not be able to stop. There are no words to describe how good this pizza is; you seriously need to try it for yourself.

A large plain, pepperoni, and white clam were all gone with a few pieces of burnt crust sitting on the greasy trays. Everyone at the table quietly agreed, in a post-Thanksgiving-like trance, it was the best pizza we have ever had.

We sat there with black stained fingers from the burnt crust of the pie. It took quite a lot of the poor quality napkins they have there to get the remains off, but we managed nicely. The check came relatively quickly and we were off, very satisfied with our dinner.

Next time you're craving pizza, head to New Haven's Wooster Street and visit Sally's Apizza for the best pizza you will have ever have the pleasure of eating.

## Amity Fills Up During Empty Bowls

by Sophia Wang '20 and  
Kayla Morgan '20

The Empty Bowls event at Amity High School took place in the cafeteria on December 14, 2017

for talented students to connect. The Empty Bowls event is such major event for the National Art Honor Society since members have been working in conjunction with the ceramics members to create bowls since the beginning of the year.



The Amity NAHS created a hand drawn poster advertising their bowls. Photo by Kayla Morgan '20.

before the annual Winter concert. It was hosted by the ARHS National Art Honor Society and the Culinary Department in association with the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation. With a donation of \$10 to local soup kitchens in New Haven, students could receive unlimited soup and bread as well as a handcrafted bowl made at Amity.

The Empty Bowls movement is an international project that fights hunger with the help of young, local artists. The Amity and Greater New Haven communities have recently gotten involved in the project. The mission is especially significant in December as the holidays near

When asked about the event's purpose, attendees Tracy Lu '20 and Anna-Maria Marinescu '20 thought it was a "good way to tie art to doing good" and to "bring your family and friends to hang out."

Kelsey Morgan '18 explained that the National Art Honor Society hosts a variety of events throughout the year to "[contribute] to the community through art."

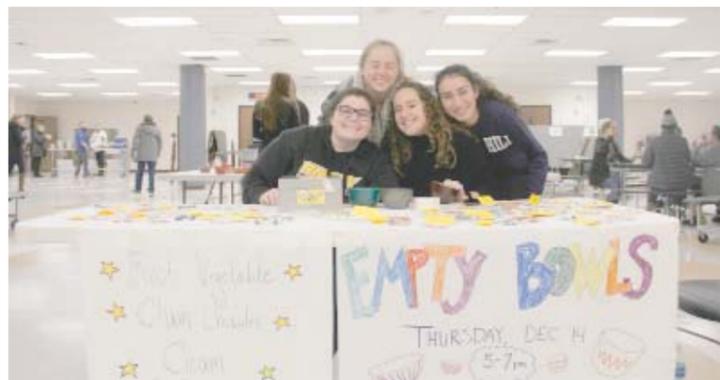
As a group of enthusiastic art students, the group serves as a place

Caelan Watson '20 thought that the bowls were of "great quality," crafted with "really nice red clay," and glazed specifically for consumption purposes. The effort in creating the bowls was clearly displayed in many aspects, especially the quality of the materials.

Many members of the National Art Honor Society participated in the event. The price and quality of the event was reflected by many members. The ten dollar donation includes unlimited soup as well as a handmade bowl.

Marinescu laughed, "some-one took the time to make you (the bowls), so yeah, it's a pretty good price to pay." Further, Watson raved that participating students had a blast "hanging out... after school eating a ton of soup and bread."

Marinescu commented that perhaps getting "more people on board to make it a bigger thing" would be effective in raising more money to local soup kitchens to improve the event. After this year's success, the Amity NAHS surely will work to host a similar event in the future.



Above: NAHS members Mckenzie Mcdermot '18, Veronica Pisano '18, Taylor Martin '18, and Kayla Abreu '18 pose at the welcome table.

Below: Lu, Watson, and Marinescu enjoy soup together. Photos by Kayla Morgan '20.



# Artist of the Month: Carolyna Iff

by Tara Mohseni '19

An artist, a visionary, and a fashion-minded individual are just a few words that describe the Trident's January Artist Carolyna Iff '20. When asked about the roots of her passion for art, Iff explained, "Coming from

Amity's club community, founding her own club, Art Through Fashion. She hosted a fashion show through ATF, her crowning achievement. She described, "as a freshman... I certainly wasn't shy about my love for fashion. I always felt that fashion was a confidence booster and even though I couldn't sit down and splatter paint

through magazines and Instagram. "Believe it or not I still love the idea of magazines," Iff laughed. However, in order to stay current, she makes sure she "follow[s] fashion accounts on [her] Instagram that... help [her] to keep up with the trends."

Today, Iff enjoys the work of Kanye West and Karl Lagerfeld.



Iff's Art Through Fashion Club poses for a group picture. Photo courtesy of Tara Mohseni '19.

South American background there was always displays of Brazilian artwork and Peruvian abstract sculptures throughout my house. As a child, I was regularly exposed to a mature environment where the people around me could become frustrated or happy. For me, I always felt those things growing up but never truly knew how express all of it."

However, as Iff grew older, she began to be able to express herself more effectively. She explained, "Later in my life, came the canvas, the science projects, and the math class doodling." After finding little success articulating her emotion in writing, Iff "concentrated on abstract art, meaning splatter paintings and collaging." She continued, "Moving onto high school, I didn't take any art classes. I really just had what was left of my "art education" and a few plain t-shirts, and that is really where it all started."

Fashion unquestionably has held a central role in Iff's life. Fashion for many is expression through clothing. As Iff described, "Fashion is amazing. I can say this with ease because I know the type of smile a well-fitted dress can put on an insecure woman's face." She finds beauty in the effect and power clothing can have. Last year, Iff made waves in

across the canvas I could certainly get dressed in the morning and feel a sort of tie between the two."

Iff had powerful influences throughout her life as she "grew up learning dresses were for girls and t-shirts were for boys. Growing up with both of my parents being both fashionable and sophisticated, it really allowed me to see both sides of the spectrum." Her mother's expression through clothing helped define her as a strong female role model.

Living her life hyper-conscious of the art of her surroundings, Iff credits numerous inspirations for her passion. Most importantly, Iff values her mother's influence on her own fashion. Calling her mother's fashion preferences "anything from normal" it is evident Iff draws from a unique influence.

She also finds inspiration

Although she feels she is not yet experienced enough to work in the fashion industry, she envisions herself working in it someday. In the fashion industry, a vision is a fundamental



Carolyna Iff sports a Gucci bag. Photo from Iff's Twitter.

block of the whole overriding idea of fashion. A vision for what one wants to see. A vision for the location of ideas and the implementation of them. Fashion is what you make of it. Art is what you make of it. Carolyna Iff has certainly abided by these artistic laws.

# A Look into the Music Department's Winter Concert

by Olivia Gross '20

The 2017 Winter Music Concert exhibited a discernable difference from past concerts. After the success of the band's Music in Motion performance in October, with no costumes or choreography, the concert seemed simple. However, for the first time in the music department's history, a student stepped forward and asked to conduct a piece.

Phil Dolan, the band teacher, stepped aside and allowed Harris Andersen '18 to conduct composer Leroy Anderson's "A Christmas Festival." Andersen practiced with the band at least twice a week during the month leading up to the performance, and on the night of the concert, led the band through the difficult piece without a hitch.

The piece and Andersen received a huge applause from the crowd and the band itself. The Trident interviewed Andersen on his conducting debut, and spoke with Lucy Richter '18, the president of the band.

Q: Why did you want to conduct for this concert, and how was it different than you expected?

Andersen: I wanted to conduct this concert because I knew it would be a great first experience for me, in addition to just plain fun right before winter break. It's very different conducting in my room to a recording of the New York Philharmonic playing Mahler 5 than an actual group of one hundred high school students of varying abilities. As I see it, conducting is all about trying to bring everyone in the ensemble to reach for the same goal. All of the students have different conceptions of sound and tempo, and as a conductor it is my goal to find a balance and solution that is both practical and musical. So I guess in that regard, it was different than I expected in the sense that I lead but also react.

Q: When and why did conducting begin to appeal to you?

A: Conducting has been a dream of mine for many years now, but only recently has it seemed a plausible reality going forwards. Actually up at my residency at Tanglewood this summer was when I really got the confirmation that yes, this is possible and this is for me. Almost immediately following my first lesson at Tanglewood, my

teacher said, "You are going to be a conductor." This was without knowing anything about me, just how I played and reacted to her instruction.

Q: Did you teach yourself how to conduct?

A: I did "teach" myself conducting, although I can hardly say I taught myself anything. Having always been completely enthralled with all aspects of music, I regularly find myself attracted to the computer screen watching symphonies for hours on end or at the concert hall, both of which have allowed me to absorb the actions and attitudes of numerous conductors.

Q: In the future, do you hope to be a musician/conductor?

A: As of now, I plan to major in piano performance for my undergraduate studies and then continue... conducting in graduate school. However, it is tentative and only a plan; things definitely may change as my life works its way out. One thing's for sure, though: music will always be a part of my life.

Q: Is there a conductor or orchestra that you look up to?

A: On a personal and local level, I have utmost respect for my New Haven Youth Orchestra conductor, Tom Duffy, who has really shown me true musical direction and links to the professional music community. I still look up to many of the greats, including Valery Gergiev, Paavo Järvi, and Leonard Bernstein. Though in reality the list is endless.

Q: What was the band's reaction to Andersen's conducting debut?

Richter: From what I observed, everyone was excited to have a student as passionate and talented as Harris Andersen conduct.

Q: How have the band's performances this year compared to past year's?

R: This year we have a lot of eager members who want to improve in each performance. This eagerness, good sheet music, the great Mr. Dolan, and a truly talented student conductor have made these past couple of performances better than those of previous years.

Q: What are some of your hopes for the band in the future?

R: My biggest hope for the future is to get even more new members that are passionate about playing their instruments and being a part of the band.

# Open Mic Night Is a Winner!

by Sydney Reiner '20 and Ella Marin '20

Amity hosted its own Open Mic Night on December 15. The night consisted of students sharing and appreciating songs and poetry. Teachers and students had the opportunity to perform. The low pressure setting of the event provided the perfect setting for students to express themselves creatively.

Performer, Ali Hagani '18 said, "I was able to play with my friend and Mr. Gaipa, and it was a lot of fun! It was great to see people come out and appreciate both the arts and people's talents."

The night showcased a variety of students and teachers performing together, embodying Amity's goal of a unified community. When discussing the event's success, Hagani said, "I definitely think the event was successful be-

cause it sought to unify the Amity Community and allowed us to just enjoy other people's passions. I think the aim was definitely achieved."

Many of the performers and participants truly enjoyed the event. Talya Braverman '20 performed, and found it interesting to see both students and teachers perform alongside one another. Braverman said, "There was a nice atmosphere and it was really fun to see both students

and teachers perform."

Open Mic Night was a great way to provide the artistically passionate and creative students at Amity with a sense of community.

Due to the abundance of positive feedback, many participants are hoping for another installment of the popular event.

Right: The English Department hung posters to advertise its upcoming event.

Image courtesy of Timothy Gaipa.

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# The Audience Reviews The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later

by Neha Sudhir '19

In early December 2017, the John J. Brady Center at Amity Regional High School was abuzz with excitement for "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later," the play performed and produced by the Amity Theater Department. Closely affiliated with the theater program, the Jamie Hulley Foundation sponsored the show, donating a generous \$1,500. After months of preparation, the students of Amity were excited to see another spectacular production featuring various members of Amity's exceptionally talented theater department.

In the weeks leading up to the play, Spartan Seminar discussions were based around the themes of kindness and compassion. These ideas are central to both the Amity community and the play itself. Students were briefed on the events that inspired the play, based on the true story of the death of Matt Shepard in 1998 and its impact on the small Wyoming town ten years later.

The fall play at Amity typically serves as "the is-

ues play," covering an pertinent topic all the while educating students about a topic they may not have previously lent any thought to.

As such, it seemed that this play could not have presented to the Amity community at a more appropriate time. It was selected because the Amity Theater Department had performed The Laramie Project in 2007, and it was only fitting that the next part be brought back ten years later.

Beyond that, the play addresses an issue that remains very much apparent in the United States and the world today: the controversy surrounding the LGBTQ commu-

nity and their rights. Audience member Ananya Kachru '18 commented, "The idea of "compassion" was certainly magnified throughout the play, and I felt like it was an important story to understand in the midst of everything happening politically throughout the U.S."

The relevance of the issue was clearly felt in its full weight throughout the student body, as Keri Tenerowicz '19 also claimed that she felt that the play "addressed an issue that is still startlingly relevant today."



Above: Kane Woolard '19 and Dean Pocwierz '18 rehearse a scene together.

Left: Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation sponsoring the show. Photos courtesy Amity Theater Department Twitter.



She added, "In many ways, the world seems to change so much in ten years, but this play emphasizes that change doesn't come easily. We have to be the ones to create it."

Not only did the audience enjoy the plotline, but students were amazed by the talent Amity Theater Department displayed: "'The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later' was absolutely brilliant. The cast did such an amazing job portraying a complex story

and complex characters," said Kachru. "There were definitely times I was just in tears during the play, and I definitely thought the ACT did a phenomenal job, as always."

All in all, "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later" proved to be a wonderful experience for the Amity Community. The students were very receptive to the message of the play and extremely impressed by the quality of the production.

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# Another Win in the Books for Spartan Ice Hockey

by Jared Beltz '19

The Amity Spartans netted another victory on January 6th in a 4-1 rout of the North Haven Indians. Jordan Conn '18 started the game

The efforts of the team in their other games have not gone unnoticed; they've now gone 4-0 in their last four home games, with just one loss away.

Conn remarked on his

and team attitude.

The Spartan hockey team is looking to play out the rest of their season in high standings. Having forwards like Csejka, Conn, Blum, and Colin Hughes '19



Amity players celebrate a goal. Photo contributed by Jordan Conn '18.

off with a goal, lifting the spirits of the Spartans early on. Within the first 10 seconds of the next period, Jamie Blum '18 scored, followed by Jay Csejka '19 halfway through.

Csejka finished off the game scoring an empty-netter after the Indians pulled their goalie in the last minutes of the third period. Beside the success of offensive players, the Spartans could not have won without a strong performance by goaltender, Mike Holloway '18.

During the game, Holloway kept the Indians out of the net, saving 29 of the 30 shots he faced in a very impressive performance.

team's performance, saying, "We are very happy with where we are. We've seen a lot of improvement from last year. This team is a lot more driven."

Conn, who has been on the team since his sophomore year added, "[o]ur offense has improved tremendously, we are averaging more goals per game than we have any season I have been on the team. Also the leadership has improved. We have a team full of people that all want to be apart of something great."

Overall, the team has made many improvements on the ice and off, most importantly in technical skill

makes scoring a simpler task. Backing the star offense are two of the best goaltenders in the league, Holloway and Tyler Cole '18.

Conn said in a statement about the rest of their season, "If we continue to play how we have been, we will definitely have a good season. I believe in this core group of guys to lead us. The desire and the hunger is there, we just need to show it."

The Spartans have five home games left in the month of January, and are hoping for the continued support of the Amity Army that has propelled them to an undefeated home record at Bennett Rink.

# Amity Wrestles to a Winning Record

by Mai Chen '18

Amity is known for its large-scale athletic programs, including football, baseball, and track. These are not the only important teams, however - the Amity wrestling team has had an influx of promising young athletes.

Led by captains Matt Rothman '18, Shayna Goldblatt '18, and Christian Chadwick '18, the wrestling team has a full lineup for the first time in three years. The number of competitive participants sits at an encouraging 36 athletes on the roster. There are a lot of underclassmen and first-year wrestlers picking up

the sport quickly, with underclassmen filling 10 out of 14 starting spots in the varsity lineup. Having a lot of young talent is essential for a team's success to continue as seniors graduate. Without a doubt, the team will stay strong over the next few years.

Competition-wise, veterans Rothman, Chadwick, and Sam Keylock '18 have been on a dominant streak, setting a tone for the team. The Spartans placed top 3 in the past two tournaments while beating returning state place winning opponents in the process. With a 4-2 record against regional SCC opponents, and a recent 3-0 weekend tournament held

at home, the team looks to be in good hands.

Captain Shayna Goldblatt said, "We've been doing great this season bringing home big wins and placing at tournaments. We currently have won over 50% of our matches and are looking stronger each week."

A big part of the coaching staff's plan is to build up the youth programs in the three Amity towns. Ideally, athletes coming into high school would already have some experience wrestling.

"We don't want to just participate at the state level, we want to compete," said head coach Ryan Roddy.

# Boys Swimming and Diving Makes Waves in the Conference

by David Sugarmann '20

As the year begins, the swim team is giving their all to be victorious. With team captains Kevin Yanagisawa '18 and Collin Roy '18 leading the way, the team is a force to be reckoned with.

As of January 7, the Spartans boast a 3-0 record. On January 12, they will be facing Cheshire, one of their biggest rivals. Amity's lineup features a great deal of talent, and both teams are determined this highly anticipated matchup.

A demanding lineup ensures this potential isn't squandered. Over winter break, the team worked out twice a day, everyday, both in the morning and afternoon. All of this preparation culminated into the most challenging practice of the year.

At noon on New Year's Eve, they visited the Orange Town Pool and swam 100x100's, or 10,000 yards, on various lengthy intervals. This is a longstanding team tradi-

tion, and it was met with excitement rather than apprehension.

All of this training has prepared the team for their Cheshire meet, and ultimately the rest of the season. Coach Rainey has done an excellent job preparing swimmers for meets to come. He designs specialized workouts each practice that target specific aspects of swimming, emphasizing different techniques and forms. In addition, he places all of his swimmers into events that suit their individual strengths.

Team member, sophomore Ryan Anastasio '20, describes what he thinks are the keys to success for the team. He stressed the importance "for everyone to work hard, persevere, and to motivate your teammates."

He went on to explain, "Every swimmer is a vital part of the meet," and how "getting along as a team is what drives us to victory."

The Spartans hope their hard work will lead to success in the postseason.

# Spartan Basketball Lights up SCC

by Jordan Conn '18

The boys basketball team has gotten off to an impressive start to their 2017-18 season. Looking to prove to the state that they are title contenders, they have won their first five games of the year and are hungry for more.

The team is led by senior captains Tyler Thomas '18 and Jack Nolan '18, who have put on an spectacular offensive show so far.

Thus far they have outscored their opponents 300-214, and average 60 points per game. Other key members of the offense are Joe Benedetti '19 and the Chris Bierzowicz '18 with fan favorite Brian Curtain '18, a great spot up shooter, coming off of the bench. With a solid lineup, the Spartans show promise.

According to Quinn Burke '18, strong leadership has been instrumental in the team's success so far. "The seniors this year were ready to step up and take on new roles," says Burke. "The un-

derclassmen do a great job of challenging the older guys. Everyone is really competitive."

Another huge part of the Amity's success this year has come from the contributions of star player Tyler Thomas. Burke explains, "We have the best player in the SCC ... and one of the best in the state. [Thomas] is our leader and we all play off of him."

The Spartan's preseason preparation has built a chemistry necessary to win games playing a tough SCC schedule. Many team members played AAU basketball in the summer, and they all played together in the Hopkins Summer League and the Farnam Fall League.

Practice and teamwork are vital when making a championship run. The Spartans are ready to seize the opportunity. Team ambition is high, and the raw skill displayed this year rivals that of almost any competitor. The Spartans' attitude is ambitious, but confident.

As Burke says, "Our goal this year is a state title. We're hungry for a ring."

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