



*Inside the Issue*

## HUMANS OF AMSB

Meet Dr. Jason Tracy, AMSB principal. Janet Fan and Drew Garfinkle sat down to get to know Dr. Tracy, swap some stories, and share sage advice.

## POP CULTURE

The AMSB production of Disney's *Moana Jr.* was a big success and very profitable for the school. See page 2 for more.

## SPORTS DESK

The boys' and girls' basketball season has continued through the winter. Michael Mordecai reports on the team's record and players.

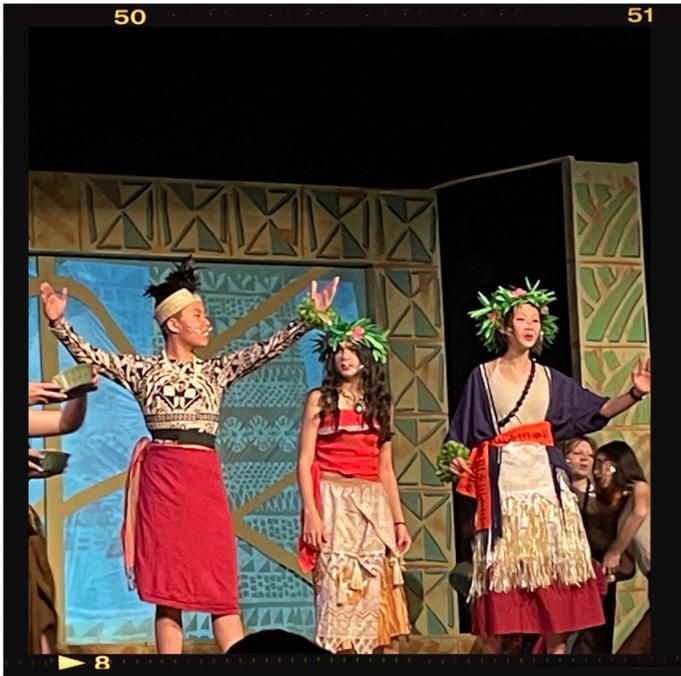
# FOR AND AGAINST A FOUR DAY SCHOOL WEEK

*by Abigail Zamir and Olivia Cummings*

There is still too little data on the effects of a four day school/work week to know for sure whether or not transitioning is a good decision, as the idea has only really been talked about for about a decade. Both sides of the argument have recognizable pros and cons, so it could really sway either way.

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The cast performed on November 12 & 13, 2021 in the AMSB Gymnasium. (L to R: Brayden Zhang as Chief Tui, Grace Millard as Moana, and Janet Fan as Sina

## "FOUR" OR AGAINST (CONT'D)

BY ABIGAIL ZAMIR AND OLIVIA CUMMINGS

PRO	CON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility to schedules</li> <li>• Increases student attendance</li> <li>• Increases student awareness and focus</li> <li>• School districts save money</li> <li>• Easier to recruit employees</li> <li>• Less monotonous</li> <li>• Increases students' positive mindset about school</li> <li>• School more enjoyable when less</li> <li>• Leaves time for more creative thinking/activities</li> <li>• More time with family &amp; friends</li> <li>• Students can branch out with more athletic activities</li> <li>• "Reset" and complete assignments</li> <li>• Teachers have more time to plan for classes</li> <li>• Easier to hire employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low income families would be negatively impacted</li> <li>• Could end up costing more for school districts and families</li> <li>• Academic performance is not necessarily positively impacted</li> <li>• For some students school is a safe space</li> <li>• Increase in juvenile crime</li> <li>• Special needs, and minority students may not fare well</li> <li>• Increased length of school year</li> <li>• Ties school/work schedules too closely</li> </ul>

**"Kids need time to work on independent projects, and experiential learning such as volunteering or outdoor education. Learning outside of school can help kids develop a sense of responsibility, for example if the student gets a job or volunteers on their off-day. School can be intense and a four day week would take some of the stress away."** -AMSB community member

## Moana Jr

BY TOMMY FRANCESE

A total of 612 tickets were sold for the Friday and Saturday productions, and brought in nearly \$6000. The production of *Moana Jr* was a good sight after two years without a show. Based on the numbers of ticket sales, the audience agreed. Grace Millard, grade 7, led the production as Moana with support from Michael Mordecai as Maui. Dr. Smolinski and Patrick Laffin of Square Foot Theater directed with Mrs. Marinaccio as choreography and Mrs. Nall on production.

After the show, 7th grader Emma F. reported, "I loved it." Adelina A., grade 7, followed up, "Grace has such a great voice. Every cast member and crew was like a puzzle piece that all fit together." Olivia C. (grade 8) offered, "Everyone had different talents that worked together to create an amazing show!"



## *Boys' Basketball*

THE AMITY MIDDLE BOYS' BASKETBALL HAD A GREAT SEASON. ALTHOUGH THEY LOST THEIR FIRST 2 GAMES BY AT LEAST A 10 POINT MARGIN TO BOTH GUILFORD AND SHELTON, THEY DID SEE THE START OF A COMEBACK THIS SEASON. THE BOYS FOCUSED ON TIGHTENING THEIR DEFENSE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THEIR SEASON. THE BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM ENDED THEIR SEASON AT 4-8 AFTER BEATING WEST HAVEN, EAST HAVEN, AND AMITY MIDDLE SCHOOL ORANGE IN A BLOW OUT OF 67 TO 46. THE STARTING FIVE HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY ALEX FORMICA, ETHAN VILLACIS, MILES SPODICK, SHANE GROGAN AND AIDEN THOMAS. SOME OTHER NOTABLE PLAYERS ARE LUKE CUSHING AND LUKE BENANTO. GROGAN REFLECTS "FOR PLAYING SUCH A SHORT TIME TOGETHER, WE LEARNED EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES VERY QUICKLY." FORMICA PLANS TO WORK ON "HUSTLING MORE ON DEFENSE" NEXT SEASON. GREAT JOB, GUYS!

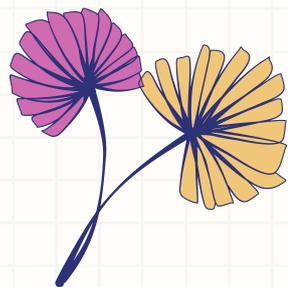


## *Girls' Basketball*

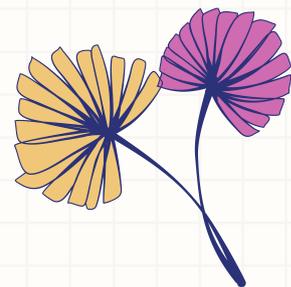
THE GIRLS' TEAM, LED BY QUIN COHEN, CLAUDIA LENSOLD, HOLLY KRANZ, TESSA FLEMING, AND TRESSA MONTESI, HAD A SUCCESSFUL SEASON WITH A LOT OF LEARNING. THE TEAM KEPT A "POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND FORMED SOLID FRIENDSHIPS," ACCORDING TO 7TH GRADER, EVE MARIN. THE PLAYERS HOPE TO "IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS & CONFIDENCE NEXT SEASON," ADDED ON SARINAH ZAMIR AND SARA FROEHLE. WELL DONE TO THE LADY SPARTANS!



## *In the spring...*



BASEBALL  
SOFTBALL  
TRACK & FIELD  
BOYS' VOLLEYBALL



If you are interested in joining these teams, listen for announcements and get your forms into the school nurse.



# GET TO KNOW... DR. TRACY

BY JANET FAN AND DREW GARFINKLE

**Is there anybody that you can attribute your success to? Do you have any people that you look up to? If so, why do you hold them in high regard?**

There's a lot of people that I can point to, at different points in my career, and in my life, but the number one person that helped me to become the person I am today is my father. My father was an amazing guy. He was great with kids. He was a coach all through me growing up, through elementary school, with sports. He was always around. He taught us about golf. He taught us about football and baseball and all those different sports. And he taught us a lot about life. I had a lot of conversations with my father in the car. My father was a real kind of guy's guy.. He was a mechanic, and then he was a school janitor. And he...he had a lot of insight. He had a lot of insight into people. He was really good with people. He was kind of like a mini Mayor. Everywhere he went, he was known. He was very, very friendly. My father passed away about 13 years ago, now. And, just the legacy that he left behind, of a lot of wonderful kids that were coached by him, and a lot of people that were mentored by him as a mechanic, and in the custodial field. It was really overwhelming to see just what an impact he had on a lot of other people's lives also. But the greatest impact for me, in my life, by far, was my father. Is my father.



**What is one thing, or a few things, that you wish that more students knew about you?**

Although I might look big and bald and scary, I wish that more people knew that before I became a school administrator, I was a school counselor. And so, I come from a very different background than most people who are principals. I have a very *affective* side, I think. Which is not "effective," it's *affective*-- very caring, and kind. I care a lot about kids, I care a lot about their experience here in the school, and I care a lot about how kids feel about being in this building. We're here to set you all on the course for life, for whether it's high school or beyond. but what I really wish the kids knew, and I think the kids who do get to know me figure it out fairly quickly, that although "that guy" might look a little intimidating, looks aren't always what they seem. And I think that that's a good lesson for kids to know for their whole life. I'm also, I think, pretty funny. I mean, a lot of dad jokes, so, my own teenager at home thinks I'm not *very* funny. But I love to laugh. I love to, you know, talk about silly things. And I think one of the main reasons I do this job is because I'm just a big kid. Like, I mean, I'm an adult with adult responsibilities, but I think a lot like a kid. I love to laugh. I love to get you guys to laugh, because I think so many times, there's *so* much stuff in your life right now that just seems so serious, And it's like, you just have to be so *serious*, 'cause you have to work so hard, but you also have to laugh. You have to have to be a kid. And I think sometimes, kids forget that.

## THINK FAST

**Does pineapple belong on pizza?**

Dr. Tracy: If you live in Hawaii, maybe.

**And we also wanted to know, what is your opinion on bubble tea?**

Dr. Tracy: On what? \*laughs\* Bubble tea? Stay tuned for part 2 when I try bubble tea.

**Favorite color:** Blue.

**Favorite food:** Chicken parmesan, even though I'm not Italian.

**Favorite TV show:** Any kind of sports. Baseball, football, basketball, soccer...or bowling, golf, car rally racing, and cricket. (Ask him about it next time you see him in the hallways!)

"I love this TV show. It's called...(The Curse of Oak Island.) It's these guys that are searching for treasure...and they never seem to find anything. I probably watched, like, three years of this show. And I don't know what keeps me coming back because they literally have never found anything, and it's just like in every show, they're like, "Wait on the next show!" But they still don't ever find anything."

**Favorite Movie:** Funny movies, pretty much anything with Will Ferrell in it. Dramas aren't my favorite...I deal with drama during the day...so at home when I'm relaxing, I like to watch a comedy. I'm a dad and so anything that has to do with Disney or any kind of animated whatever, I love those shows. I've probably watched all those with my kids over the years and everything from *Toy Story* to the *Cars* movies to *Moana* to the princess movies.

# EVERYDAY BY DAVID LEVITHAN

by Janet Fan

As a general rule of thumb, I stay away from books where the center of the plot is romance, mostly because reading them usually ends with a ton of cringing on my part. But, this subtitle was catchy, and the plot sounded unique, and I was like, "You know what, I'll give romance another try!" As a forewarning, I might be a bit biased with my review. I'll try my best to be honest, but not scathing.

Anyways, let's dive into it, shall we? I wanted to give this book a fair trial, so I decided I'd write down my first impressions, then go back, re-read, and reconsider. 'Cause, you know, what if I'm wrong?

"Every day a new body  
Every day a new life  
Every day in love with the  
same girl"

David Levithan has written a lot on the topic of gender and sexuality inclusivity, and many of his other books (think, *Two Boys Kissing* and *Boy Meets Boy*) include diverse characters along the LGBTQ+ spectrum. I think that this book has a lot to say when it comes to this topic, though maybe in a more nuanced way as opposed to his other books. A, as a being in themselves, doesn't really have a biologically assigned gender. Depending on the day, A is male or female. I don't think that A really has a gender identification preference. They admit that, sometimes, they feel more masculine or feminine than other times, but that they have grown used to, and even favor, this situation of not feeling particularly like either. Maybe they are non-binary, which is rare to find in books, especially when the character is so accepting of their identity and celebrated to have superhero abilities like A. I've seen quite a few books with same sex or non-cisgender relationships, but few include characters that were non-binary. So...it gets points for diversity and for making real life people feel elevated. A and Rhiannon's relationship is interesting. A mentions that Rhiannon is less affectionate towards them when they are in a female body— which adds a layer of complexity to their relationship that is applicable to conflicts we might see in the real world. (Makes me think of LGBTQ+ rights and the campaigns for LGBTQ+ acceptance within society....?)

During the book, A is discovered by a boy that he took over who claims he has been "possessed by the devil." (By "devil," he means A.) Nathan pulls in a religious leader, Reverend Poole, who only adds to the fire by spreading more melodrama on the media about how the world is going to hell and that "why wouldn't the devil just walk right in?" During a really intriguing conversation between Poole and A, Poole says, "Why do you think you are the way you are? Don't you feel that it could be the devil's work?" (Leviathan 387). This brings up the really interesting parallel, where we can see in society today people deeming anyone else they perceive as unlike them as carrying the "devil" within them. Especially those in the LGBTQ+ community have been historically and presently hit with many different forms of religious abuse.

On a different note, I really liked seeing windows into all the lives that A inhabits. Super, duper cool. It's like a "buy one character, get 60 characters free" deal.

THE ENDING. Regardless of everything else I disliked about the book, I LOVED the ending. It was tied together so perfectly and completely unexpected. And I got my happily ever after without all the cringy sappiness.

Comparatively, my list of cons is pretty short. I wish that the depth of Rhiannon and A's relationship went deeper than just this ambiguous "love at first sight feeling" that each of them have. Like, okay, I get it, most YA book romances play out like that...but, I find these kinds of plotlines insanely boring and eye roll inducing. I find it a bit strange how Rhiannon starts out being weirded out and annoyed at A for impersonating her boyfriend (then continuing to intrude on her life, even after A has moved into different bodies)...but then suddenly forgets about all that and "realizes" she is in love with A. Then, A, on the other hand, falls madly in love with Rhiannon after spending a few hours with her....and I would really like it if the author could give more warranting for this love than simply that A finds Rhiannon physically attractive and that A has this "meant to be" feeling. It would make A's philosophical monologues about love and life, meaning and purpose so much more believable and much easier to understand. Like, after a while, it just started getting annoying and overly flowery, and so, I'm gonna admit, I skipped a few pages. This might just be a matter of preference, but I find plots like those in *Six of Crows* by Leigh Bardugo and *Gregor the Overlander* by Suzanne Collins much, much more interesting— ones where there is conflict and confusion and lots of human aspects to the love story....

# WHAT'S UP

FEB  
2022

## AMSB?



This month, Addie asked,

### "WHAT IS YOUR PET PEEVE?"

We all have little things that annoy us; many are sensory-based. Here at AMSB, a cornucopia of pet peeves were collected.

Check out some notable examples...

When students ask  
"What's the homework?"  
[even though it's  
always posted in the  
same spot.]  
- Mrs. Goldstein

*When squirrels walk...*

- Mrs. Nall

**NAILS ON A  
CHALKBOARD!**  
- EVERYONE

*Little Kids*

- Elijah C.

Improper use of the  
Oxford comma.

- Her Majesty,  
Mrs. Camera

When people  
chew with their  
mouth open.

- Kylie B.

It's so frustrating when  
someone leaves a mess  
and doesn't clean it up.  
- Dr. Smolinski

**I HATE WHEN PEOPLE  
BREATHE SUPER LOUD.**

Colleen R.

**I HATE WHEN WATER  
GETS ON MY SLEEVES.**

Jaron D.

**WHEN PEOPLE  
MISPRONOUNCE WORDS.**

Jacob M.