

MMS TIMES

Memorial Middle School - 1 Memorial Dr, Middlebury, CT 06762

“You may be wondering, why is this year’s inauguration anything out of the ordinary? Would considering this inauguration a historical milestone be a stretch? To this, I say absolutely not. The inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris is a massive change in the United States for Americans of both major parties.”

See what Emma Bona has to say about the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on page 5.

“Over 1 million Uighur Muslims are being held in detention centers in the far western province of Xinjiang, China.”

See page 6 for more on this!

The MMS Times has declared the winner of our Drawing Contest. Turn to page 15 to see who won!

“Ever since Covid-19 cases began spiking in November and sports programs started to shut down, everyone became anxious about what the CIAC would say about winter sports for early 2021.” *Find out more about the CIAC’s thoughts about winter sports on page 7.*

“The once endangered brown pelicans are coming back. Back in the 1950s, there were hundreds of brown pelicans all along the coast of Louisiana.”

Find out more on page 4.

“[She] brings me out of my shell, she enlightens me, and I don't know what I would do without her, to be honest. She brings so much positive energy to the classroom, has playful ways to make our learning environment even better, and you can just be yourself around her. Everyday, when (I) am walking through the hallway, I know she will wave, and be (the) approachable teacher that she is. She makes science so interesting and fun, and she is always so cheerful. I really hope she wins, because she deserves to be (T)eacher of the (Month).”

Who is this month’s Teacher of the Month? Find out by turning to page 12!

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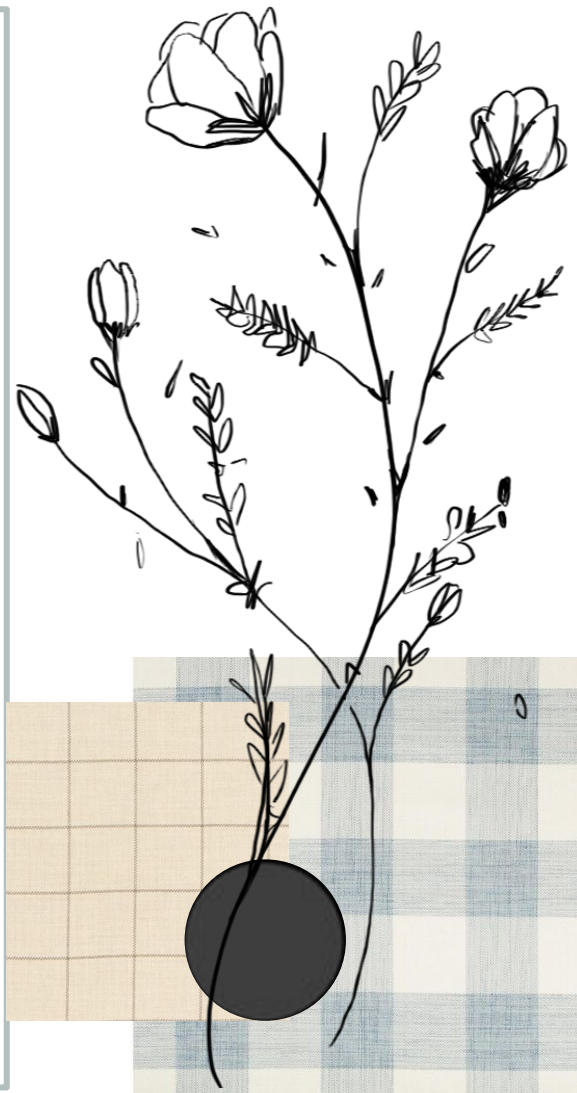
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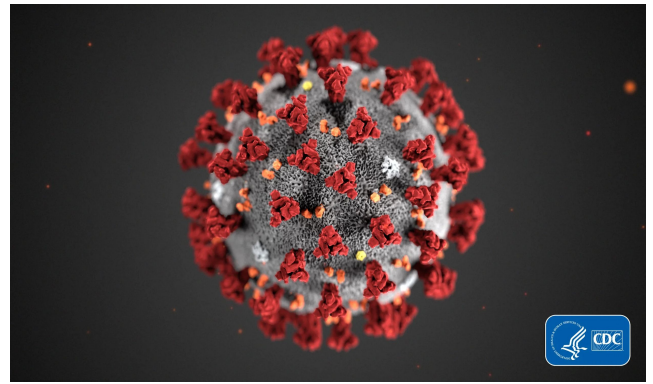
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Covid Update for MMS **By Jasleena Thind (Grade 7)**

After, being sent home in March 2020 due to the pandemic, the whole eighth grade was sent home again in December. After the winter break, once again the whole school was remote for another week. Now finally, we are back in school with some students learning remotely. The good news is that there haven't been any cases spread in MMS because the staff has been tracking it down and sending children home immediately. MMS is continuing to take precautions and doing their best to keep students safe!



Google Meet



ANWR Up For Sale **By Caitlin Overhiser (Grade 7)**



The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is one of the last large expanses of wilderness left in the U.S., covering over 19 million acres of land in northeastern Alaska. The ANWR is home to many varieties of animals such as polar bears, caribou, migrating waterfowl, buffalo, and many others. Though it sounds great, the Trump administration has put it up for sale to help their oil company allies. Although, congress has unsuccessfully tried to start oil drilling operations in the ANWR countless times, *The Hill* reports that this time it will most likely be successful and become law.

The argument to sell it believes that it is a great economic opportunity for the U.S. and Alaskans. According to Columbia University, proponents of the bill say that it could create thousands of new jobs and 1.1 billion dollars over the course of a decade. It could also help the United States become more independent with its energy sources.

The argument against selling it believes it could have a large negative impact on the environment. They also, worry it could affect the indigenous people who rely on the caribou and other natural resources to survive. Adding on, there may not even be any oil in the ANWR, since the information people are using is extremely flawed and was taken in the 1980's. Drilling the land is a danger to the many common and endangered species who live there to.

About one and a half weeks ago, the Trump Administration started an auction to lease off plots of land on the ANWR. The auction took place on January 10th, and was not as successful as some had hoped. According to Teagan Hanlon of Alaska's energy desk, "The sale received a striking lack of interest. About half of the area up for lease got no bids at all." The lack of enthusiasm is tributed to public pressure and the large expense it would be to transport the oil, among other things. Thanks to that, we still have the pristine ANWR. (for now.)

The Covid-19 Vaccine

By Luke Bevilacqua (Grade 6)

Everyone remembers that bright red banner across the Region 15 website in March: “All region 15 schools shut down till April 20th.” Only weeks later, schools were closed for the rest of the year. For the past nine months, everybody has been asking the same question, “When will this be over?” Now only a few weeks into 2021, two vaccines have finally been cleared by the FDA, which are the Moderna and Pfizer/biontech vaccines. Finally, after almost a year, do we have a solution to this virus that has taken over four hundred thousand lives in the U.S.?

Pfizer is a multinational pharmaceutical corporation that is based in America. To begin, the Pfizer/Biontech vaccine has a 95% effectiveness rate, only .9% more effective than the Moderna vaccine. These are pretty good statistics for a vaccine, but is it safe? Well, like all vaccines there are some common side effects; which include a rash or itchy skin, a scratchy throat, fever, and mild respiratory symptoms. The CDC says that serious allergic reactions to the Pfizer vaccine are very rare. Also, only people 16+ can get the pfizer vaccine. So all in all, the Pfizer vaccine does seem safe with only rare serious side effects.

Moderna is an American biotechnology company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Its main focuses are drug discovery, drug development, and vaccine technologies. The moderna vaccine is almost as effective as the Pfizer, with again only a .9% difference in effectiveness. Like the Pfizer/Biotech, vaccine it requires two doses. So, what are the side effects of the Moderna vaccine? There can be fever, chills, tiredness, and a headache. Also, the CDC says serious side effects are very rare from it too. Lastly, only people 18+ can get the Moderna vaccine. In the end, both vaccines do seem safe.

Right now you, me, and pretty much everyone is waiting and hoping for something to change. Thankfully, it looks as if we are going in the right direction to hopefully finally say goodbye to masks and social distancing. Once all this is over, remember that phone call, or when you saw that bright red banner across the region 15 website. Could this be the beginning of the end of a long exhausting journey...?



Soldier getting vaccinated.

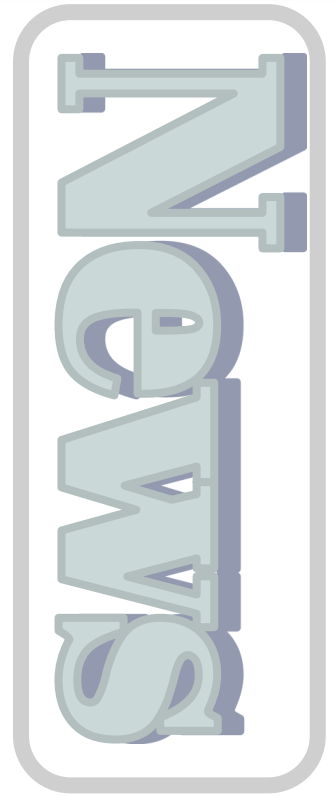
An Interview with Mrs. Martland About the COVID-19 Vaccine

by Emma Demiraj (Grade 8)

By now I'm sure that many of us know that the COVID-19 vaccine is being distributed, but what we might not know is the process on how to get the vaccine, what happens when you get it, and is it safe? I talked to one of our teachers, Mrs. Martland, who was lucky enough to get the vaccine since she met the requirements. When I asked her how she felt when she first learned that she and a few other teachers from our school were given the option to get the vaccine, she told me she felt like “Willy Wonka, who had just won the golden ticket.”

I asked her to walk me through the process of getting her COVID-19 vaccine. She told me that after she made her first appointment for her first dose, Mrs. Martland went to Pomperaug High school to receive her vaccine. When she walked into the gym, she signed in at a table and pulled out her insurance card. After checking in, she got in line and waited for a nurse to come and get her so she could take her vaccine.

Another question I asked Mrs. Martland was if she had any symptoms and what happened after she received the vaccine. She said, “After we got the vaccine, we (others who also got the vaccine) were put in a room and were held there under observation for 15 minutes to make sure nobody had any immediate side effects. Thankfully, nobody showed any. During this time people that were being held under observations also made their appointments to receive the second dose.”



The Brown Pelican Is Making a Comeback

By Emma Sander (Grade 7)

The once endangered brown pelicans are coming back. Back in the 1950s, there were hundreds of brown pelicans all along the coast of Louisiana. 15 years later, the only pelicans left were the ones on their flags, and the pelicans were officially put in the category of endangered. In 1983 they finally made up plans to help and bring back these brown pelicans. Due to the ban of DDT, a pesticide that brought down the population of these birds, brown pelicans started to pop back up all over the place, leading people to remove them officially from the endangered list in 2009.

On January 28, a brown pelican was found on the verge of death on the coast of Essex, VT, about 1 hour out of our Middlebury and Southbury community. Brown pelicans are southern animals and are not originally from Vermont, so scientists believe that this one was brought in by the recent storm. An article from eyewitness news says “The bird was found in Middle Cove on the Connecticut River. It was huddled against a floating dock. One of the members of the Audubon Society said the bird was listless at a time of day when it should have been feeding energetically.” The bird, afterward, was brought to A Place Called Hope, where it has been making an amazing recovery in a matter of days.

Right now they are trying to find a good rehab location in the south for the bird to continue on with it’s rehabilitation. By the look of things now, this bird is going to be just fine.



Photos from: CT Audubon Society and A Place Called Hope

The Capital Riot

By Emily Daukas (Grade 7)

“A skirmish with police.” That’s what people are calling the storming of the capital. But, what really happened? On January 6, 2021 a very large mob of Trump supporters invaded the US capital. They stormed down to the Capitol building and entered forcefully. Sadly, there were five deaths and more than 50 injuries. The supporters who stormed the capital believe that the election was stolen from Donald Trump.

They stormed the Capitol to protest Joe Biden getting more electoral votes, becoming President Joe Biden, and some other reasons. They stormed the Capitol when congress was officially counting the electoral votes. Two suspected pipe bombs were found that are suspected to be placed by a few of the capital protesters. Many protesters that were at the Capitol have lost their jobs and now face federal charges, some have been identified by the clothes they were wearing. Just a few days ago, a man got accused of being at the Capital riot because people he knew recognized him by the clothes he was wearing. Even a past olympic swimmer, Klete Keller, was at the storming of the Capitol, and he was one of the many who made it into the Capitol building. He was recognized because of his USA swimming jacket, now he faces three federal charges. The storming of the Capital has led to other events in many different states including the state capitals of Michigan, Ohio, Oregon and Texas.

In over twenty states, the national guard was sent to their capitals because of the storming of the U.S. capital in Washington D.C. Right in Hartford, security is tight as protests are beginning to fizzle. Our state capitol has a National Guard protecting it. All 50 states are warned to be on the lookout, and be prepared for more protests in the following days. Over 25,000 National Guard troops were sent to the inauguration of Joe Biden.

The Capitol storming on January 6, 2021 will go down in history. Many people will look back at the day and some might believe what they did was right but most will not agree. However, everyone can agree that history will forever be changed, but for good or for bad?

politics and opinion

The Historical Significance of This Year's Inauguration

By Emma Bona (Grade 8)

You may be wondering, why is this year's inauguration anything out of the ordinary? Would considering this inauguration a historical milestone be a stretch? To this, I say absolutely not. The inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris is a massive change in the United States for Americans of both major parties.

Historically, this will be an inauguration to remember when it comes to the diverse background of Vice President Harris. According to The Washington Post, "Harris, 54, now a U.S. senator and 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, would be several firsts in the White House: the first woman, the first African American woman, the first Indian American, and the first Asian American. The daughter of two immigrants — her father came from Jamaica — she would also be the second biracial president, after Barack Obama." This is a huge accomplishment and this representation is exceptionally important for younger generations to see. Diversity of all kinds is what our world needs to see more of and embrace. Our youth is growing up in a generation where there's a growing sense of acceptance and diversity- having our first woman and African American Vice President goes to show that a person's race has no effect on what they are capable of achieving and it's time that we beat this normalization within society.

As of 2021, Kamala Harris is the first woman to have a position in the White House. However, before 2020 only five other women have reached the major party's primary stage including, Shirley Chisholm, Carol Moseley, Michele Bachmann, Carly Fiorina, and Hillary Clinton.

What's significant about America electing Joe Biden is, in his own words, "We have won with the most votes ever cast for a presidential ticket in the history of this nation — 81 million." Biden won in electoral votes with 306 of them from 22 states, and in the popular vote. As of January 22nd (Biden's 2nd day in office), he has already signed 38 executive orders and has made many promises for his first 100 days in office. For example, Biden plans to enact the Equality Act which would give LGBTQ+ people protection from discrimination under civil rights laws. This act would forbid any form of discrimination based on a person's sexuality or pronouns they go by.

Throughout Biden's campaign, he promised to rejoin the Paris Agreement which helps prevent climate change and reduce the number of greenhouse gases emitted into our atmosphere. On Biden's 1st day in office, he faithfully rejoined this agreement.

Another huge achievement that people of both parties can acknowledge is Biden's plan to (according to <https://joebiden.com/healthcare>) "Build on the Affordable Care Act by giving Americans more choice, reducing health care costs, and making our health care system less complex to navigate."

During Biden's presidency, he intends to grant the federal government the ability to fund mental health and substance abuse services and research on the matters.

Another point he had brought up during his campaign was his responsibility to take action in fighting the pandemic that has ended the lives of over 410,000 US citizens. He aims for covid testing to be easily accessible and free for every citizen and urges governors from each state to implement mask mandates or to ask citizens to take precautions wherever possible.

Admittedly, these are huge goals and the list goes on. But if Biden can carry out such plans, it would be a considerable achievement for our nation and a progressive change in America.

The Genocide of Uighur Muslims

By Emma Demiraj (Grade 8)

Over 1 million Uighur Muslims are being held in detention centers in the far western province of Xinjiang, China. According to The New York Times, there are 380 detention centers across Xinjiang, China. At least sixty-one of these camps are still expanding. From July 2019 until July 2020, fourteen of those sixty-one camps were *still* expanding and holding more Uighur Muslims captive. Many of these Muslims in the camps are being fed a starving meal of rice, steamed buns, porridge, and little or no meat. They are being forced to drink alcoholic drinks and eat pork which is strictly against the religion as stated in the Quran.

China is a country located in southeast Asia. In China there is only one political party in power. The government controls everything and not every citizen has the right to vote or elect officials. China is an Atheist and Communist country. Atheism means you don't believe in any God or higher power. People who speak up against the government are persecuted, detained, tortured, and even murdered.

When escaped detainees were asked by PBS what it was like in these Nazi-esque camps, they said that it was "like a zombie in the camp, who had lost their mind." (Meaning that they were so sleep deprived and starved so much to the point where they had no energy.) They also said that "if you exceed 2 minutes on the toilet, they hit your head with an electric pod." Detainees were also beaten, tortured, and verbally abused. Many of these detainees also ended up committing suicide.

What is happening in China reminds us of the terrible crimes against humanity that occurred in the Holocaust. People are dying and are being forced to give up their religion, just like Hitler and the Nazis did with the Jewish people. Even though all these terrible things are happening the news isn't covering any of it. Recently, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared the murder and torturing of the Uighurs in China a Genocide. The reason as to why I wrote this story is to educate people. This is torture and nobody deserves it. Please, educate yourself and share this story with others. Put an end to this before it really does become the next Holocaust. Go to stopgenocide.org to end this!

Covering the Capital Riot

By Sean Archibald (Grade 8)

The inauguration of the President of the United States happens every four years. This year it occurred on Wednesday, January 20. This will always be remembered as a big event in history, but there were even bigger events that happened beforehand. One of them being the Capital Riot. This attack on the Capital was an act of insurrection that was not justified.

On January 6, a mob of Trump supporters surrounded the Capital. This started as just a protest but then rapidly turned into something else. The supporters started breaching the police barriers. In a matter of seconds, "These rioters occupied, vandalized, and looted parts of the building" (*Business Insider*). Many assaulted police and tried to get to the congressmen so that they could destroy the electoral votes. This was one of their many ideas, allegedly provided by Trump. Another was that many of the Trump supporters believed that Pence was wrong to say that the election was not stolen from Trump.

Police evacuated all of the representatives from the building. According to the Washington Post, the rioters were less than 100 feet away from Pence. After several hours police forced the rioters outside the building after the governor of Washington placed curfew to help move people away.

In conclusion, there is no justifiable reason for these supporters. Many people still think that this was still just another protest but this was much more than that, it was an act of insurrection.

SPORTS

NBA Covid Precautions

By Sports Section Staff

Although most major professional sports leagues are still able to continue with restrictions and little to no fans, that doesn't mean these superstar athletes are invincible when it comes to the virus. Famous athlete Seth Curry of the Philadelphia 76ers found out he tested positive mid game against the Brooklyn Nets on January 7th. Just days before, Nets star Kevin Durant was put in quarantine following potential coronavirus exposure. The NBA has done a decent job with being strict about covid rules and expectations, but the things they let slip through the cracks could be deadly. *(Continued on page 8.)*



CIAC Winter Sports Decision

By Sports Section Staff

Ever since Covid-19 cases began spiking in November and sports programs started to shut down, everyone became anxious about what the CIAC would say about winter sports for early 2021.

After a meeting on January 8th, a decision was put out from the CIAC (Connecticut interscholastic athletic conference) and it states "the CIAC winter season may begin no sooner than January 19, 2020, unless determined otherwise.

The risk level of sports (low, moderate, high) that will be able to play will be based on DPH guidance. The CIAC's low risk winter sport is swimming.

CIAC's moderate risk winter sports are basketball, ice hockey, gymnastics, and indoor track. CIAC's high risk winter sports are wrestling, competitive cheer, and competitive dance." For most athletes, this is great news.

After months in the beginning of the pandemic with no sports, this decision is hopeful for the future.

Although games and practices won't be completely normal (you can read more about the restrictions at <https://ciacsports.com/site/>) the approval of winter sports is a glimpse into a covid free life, which seems so far away at times.



NBA Covid Precautions (continued from page 7)

Due to Covid-19, the NBA has had to make some new adjustments in order to have a basketball season. One of the changes they had to make was to have 72 total games per team instead of 82, which is 10 games fewer than normal. The players and staff members also have to do daily testing, that began on December 1st and will continue. Any player who tests positive, even if he or she is not symptomatic, must wait 10 days and then be monitored in individual workouts for an additional two days before returning. Team traveling parties will be limited to 45 people, including 17 players, as they make their way around the country to play a home-and-road schedule in NBA games. If any staff member does not follow the rules they will be reported.

Jaylen Brown, Boston Celtics: “COVID is still around and still lurking in certain areas. So that's something to be aware of. I'm not sure about how that's going to necessarily work as we start to travel in certain places and things like that. Will the season be stopped? Will it continue to go on? Well, will there be a stay-at-home order at some point during the season? I'm not sure. Some of those variables might work out.”

LeBron James, Los Angeles Lakers: “We listen to the experts and what's going on with the climate as far as COVID, and keep your family in a mask when we leave the house or whatever the case may be. And be cautious where we travel to, be cautious who we are around. Right now you just try to do everything that you can to try to protect your family. And hopefully you can stay safe and stay healthy. I think that's the most important thing, the main thing.”



Previewing Super Bowl LV (55) By Sports Section Staff

The Super Bowl will be different this year. There won't be big crowds of loud cheering people, but football still goes on no matter what. Sunday February 7th the Superbowl will take place. The teams who made it to the last few playoff games are Kansas City Chiefs, Buffalo Bills, Baltimore Ravens, Cleveland Browns, Green Bay Packers, New Orleans Saints, Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Los Angeles Rams. For super wild card weekend Ravens won to Titans 20 to 13, Saints won to Bears 21 to 9, Browns won to Steelers 48 to 37, Bills won to Colts 27 to 24, Rams won to Seahawks 30 to 20, and Buccaneers won to Washington 31 to 23. The Kansas City Chiefs are coming in first ranked Contenders for the Super bowl and the Cleveland Browns are coming in last for the rankings.



“Every experience, good or bad, you have to learn from” -Patrick Mahomes

SPORTS

HERE @ MMS

Meet Your New Health Teacher

By Emily Daukas (Grade 7), former Section Editor

At the start of this school year, MMS welcomed a new health teacher, Miss Chicano! Many of you might want to know more about her, so here's your chance!

Q: Why did you want to become a health teacher?

Miss Chicano: "When I was deciding where I wanted to go for college before I graduated high school in 2016, I also had to start thinking about what I wanted to do. I had always worked with kids, ever since my first job when I was 15 and I loved it. I also was always so good with kids, so I knew I wanted to be a teacher of some sort. The health and PE aspect came from always having a love for athletics growing up. I was constantly running around and staying involved in sports and athletics - and I understand the importance of being healthy and active!"



Q: How is it being a teacher for the first time?

Miss Chicano: "Being a teacher for the first time is the best feeling. It's definitely a bit surreal that I am fresh out of college and we are currently in the middle of a pandemic - so I feel as if I'm learning new things I was never taught, but I love it! I enjoy being in the school system and meeting new teachers and learning new things. I feel like I learn more and more every day, which can only continue to make me a better teacher. There really is no better feeling than walking into school everyday and getting to see everyone's faces - masks or not."

Q: How has the year been so far?

Miss Chicano: "This year has been a bit crazy for me. I started off as a part time physical education teacher in the district, so I was going between Long Meadow, Middlebury Elementary, and Gainfield. Then I began teaching at Memorial as the full time health teacher - but I also teach at LMES AND MES still for kindergarten and 1st grade health! So the changing of the schedules is definitely something I was trying to get used too but now that I am - I enjoy it so much. I also love how I can work with middle school aged students, but also elementary students. Middle school is the only age I did not have experience teaching so it's so fun getting to know everyone and learn all about each grade. Everyone is so much fun."

Q: What are some things you would like to share about yourself?

Miss Chicano: "Some things to know about me is that I absolutely love my 2 German shepherds. Those who have me in class this quarter, learned a little bit about them when I started! I absolutely love going outside and being active, and I also love to be involved. So if you are ever looking for a teacher to get involved with a sport, a club, or anything along those lines - definitely reach out to me because I love to get to know my students! I look forward to getting to know all the students and the amazing staff at MMS. I thank everyone who has already welcomed me - I feel at home already."

We are so excited to have Miss Chicano be a part of our MMS community!

HERE @ MMS



Meet Your New Gym Teacher

By Emily Bevilacqua (Grade 8)

As many of you might already know, Mr. Schumacher is the new PE teacher at MMS, so we decided to interview him!

Q: How do you feel about teaching P.E. at MMS?

Mr. Schumacher: “I feel grateful to be teaching PE at Memorial Middle School and in Region 15. I taught for 14 years in Region 15 at every school with the exception of Memorial and Gainfield Elementary. I also taught in Colorado for the past 2 years. I really enjoy teaching Middle School PE and I'm excited to be back and teaching here at Memorial.”

Q: How has Covid-19 affected you and your teaching this year?

Mr. Schumacher: “The biggest change this year has been limiting equipment and sharing of equipment in PE. We are also without a gym this year and teaching PE in the cafeteria. My plan for PE is to be outside as much as possible due to limited space in the cafeteria.”

Q: What do you like about teaching P.E.?

Mr. Schumacher: “I mostly like that I have the opportunity to teach every student in the school at the Middle School level. I also like that our Region 15 PE Curriculum was designed to teach students how to be physically active and healthy and allow students to have activity choices in class.”

Q: How has teaching here been different from what you have done in the past?

Mr. Schumacher: “Teaching at Memorial is not much different from teaching at Rochambeau because we use the same curriculum and the PE teachers at both schools collaborate on PE lessons. Teaching in Colorado was vastly different because the school I taught at was so small that high school and middle school students were combined for PE classes.”

We look forward to welcoming Mr. Schumacher into our MMS home!

Winter Poll Results

By Ryan Murray (Grade 6)

Happy winter everyone! If you didn't already notice, we at the “Here at MMS” section of the MMS Times previously released a poll all about winter and surveyed through December and early January. We received a total of 207 responses from both students and teachers! Thank you to everyone who responded and if you did not, make sure you join the MMS Times Google Classroom page for your grade so you don't miss any of our upcoming polls. Make sure to get a copy of all our latest issues and check out the results of our poll on the next page!!!

HERE @ MIMS

(cont.d) Q: What is your favorite winter activity?

- 19.3% - Winter Sports (Skiing, snowboarding, ice skating, other etc.)
- 19.3% - Sledding/Tubing.
- 15.5% - Spending time with others.
- 14.5% - Holiday Baking (Cookies, Cupcakes, etc.)
- 9.7% - Decorating for the holidays.
- 6.3% - Tie between Watching Seasonal Movies and Building with Snow.
- 2.4% - Consuming holiday food & drinks



You can find Maddie and Zoe sledding on the weekend!

Q: Snow or No?

- 90.3% - Snow
- 9.7% - No Snow

Q: What is your favorite winter drink?

- 60.9% - Hot Chocolate
- 13% - Eggnog.
- 8.2% - Tea.
- 7.7% - Coffee.
- 5.3% - Apple Cider



Lucas *digs* the snow.

Honorable Mention: We also had several custom votes for water.

Q: What is your favorite season?

- 37.7% - Summer
- 28% - Winter
- 23.2% - Fall
- 11.1% - Spring



Q: Which holiday(s) do you celebrate in the winter (if any)?

- 201 votes - Christmas
- 11 votes - Hanukkah
- 5 votes - None
- 1 vote - Kwanzaa



Bryce and Keldon enjoy a good hot chocolate.

Honorable Mention: We also had several custom votes for winter birthdays.

Once again, thank you to everyone who participated in this poll! Have a wonderful winter!



Nora LOVES Christmas!

HERE @ MMS

December/January's Teacher of the Month

By Somya Nog (Grade 8)

Hello everyone! It's that time of the month again; time to announce who December/January's Teacher of the Month is! Drumroll please Without further ado, this issue's Teacher of the Month is none other than **Mrs. Grieder**, who teaches 6th Grade Science! Congratulations to her! She won with 27 votes out of 160, which is approximately 16.9% of all of the votes. It is evident that this achievement is one that is well deserved. This is because, according to her current and former students, she "is so energetic and fun", "is always so nice and make(s) class fun", "works hard", and is the "best teacher ever". Here's what one student had to say about her:

"Mrs. Grieder brings me out of my shell, she enlightens me, and I don't know what I would do without her, to be honest. She brings so much positive energy to the classroom, has playful ways to make our learning environment even better, and you can just be yourself around her. Everyday, when (I) am walking through the hallway, I know she will wave, and be (the) approachable teacher that she is. She makes science so interesting and fun, and she is always so cheerful. I really hope she wins, because she deserves to be (T)eacher of the (M)onth."



As one of Mrs. Grieder's former students, having her for science in 6th Grade, I can profoundly verify all of these statements to be true. To commemorate this accomplishment, I reached out to Mrs. Grieder and asked her a couple of questions regarding her teaching. Her responses follow:

Q: How does it feel to be December/January's Teacher of the Month?

Mrs. Grieder: "It feels great to be the teacher of the month! Thank you for the title!"

Q: What is your favorite part about being a teacher/teaching at MMS?

Mrs. Grieder: "Before teaching at MMS, I taught third grade for ten years years at Gainfield Elementary School in Southbury. I loved everything about teaching third grade - I got to teach every subject including science and social studies, I loved having parents in as helpers, and I loved doing plays and performances with my kids throughout the year. But, after ten years of third grade, I was ready for a change. I had originally wanted to be in a middle school, so that is where I ended up....right in the very same middle school I attended as a student! I love teaching science - I have a great department and a terrific sixth grade team. My favorite part about teaching sixth grade is being able to build connections with my students. I love when kids tell me in the beginning of the year that they really don't like science, and then at the end of the year they tell me that they loved it!" *(Continued on page 13.)*

(cont.d from page 12.)

Q: Is there anything you'd like to say to your students?

Mrs. Grieder: "Be nice and be you! Don't be afraid to speak up for yourself. And - as many of my students have heard me say before - be inclusive...not exclusive of others!"

Q: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Mrs. Grieder: "I always wanted to be a teacher! When I was little, I had a chalkboard (old school!) in my "classroom" at home. I used to use all my old workbooks and extra copy papers from my own teachers, and I would play school for hours. I still tell my younger brother that I taught him everything he knows (he was always forced to be my student). I (did) say that 'when I grow up, I want to be a marine biologist', because it is definitely a passion of mine."

Q: Anything else you'd like to add?

Mrs. Grieder: "Thank you to the MMS Times for the honor. You're doing such a fantastic job with the newspaper this year!"

Once again, congratulations to Mrs. Grider on being this issue's Teacher of the Month! A special shout out goes to our first and second runner ups, Mrs. Bronson, who teaches General Music and Chorus, and Mrs. Debe, who teaches 7th Grade Science, respectively. The former received 15 votes, or 9.4% of all votes, whereas the latter received 12 votes, or 7.5% of all votes. Awesome job to all of the teachers who were nominated! See you next issue!

Interview: Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

By Katherine Vongsouvanh (Grade 8)

As you probably know, the COVID-19 vaccines are being distributed worldwide, and that's a lot of people to vaccinate. Even so, people are getting vaccinated at an amazing rate; you probably know someone who's immune! Learn a little bit more about what it's like to get the Pfizer vaccine from the viewpoint of Marie Vongsouvanh, an ICU Nurse.

Q: How would you describe your overall experience getting the vaccine?

A: Of course, in the beginning, there's a lot of uncertainties, but for me I was actually almost relieved as an ICU Nurse, that at least I would have some kind of defense when I take care of COVID-19 patients. I've been hoping and praying that the vaccine would come as early as possible, considering my experience with the pandemic.

Q: Did you experience any side effects after taking the vaccine, and do you know of anyone who did?

A: In my personal experience as far as side effects, I had very minimal, I just had a sore arm after the vaccine for at least maybe 12 hours. In the second round, I had the same side effects. With my colleagues, those that had had COVID would get sick with flu-like symptoms, depending on the vaccine. For the second dose, even people that had never had COVID could have side effects like fevers and chills for at least 24 hours. We were told to try not to take any medicine, and let our immune system fight it out for this time frame. After 24 hours, you're pretty much back to normal. Again, these side effects were expected, and we were warned about that.

Q: What impact do you see the vaccine making, and what are your hopes for the future now that we have the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: We don't see it just yet, just because it's very early. I've seen the numbers are improving. My hope is that we do eradicate this pandemic. In time, we hope that we will see the result. There are more than 2 vaccines, so I believe that we will be able to help everybody in the long run.

HERE @ MMS

Arts & Culture

Abandoned Places in Connecticut

By Kassidi Houck (Grade 7)

When you think of Connecticut, you may not think of “abandoned,” but really you could take a road trip and see 5 different abandoned places.

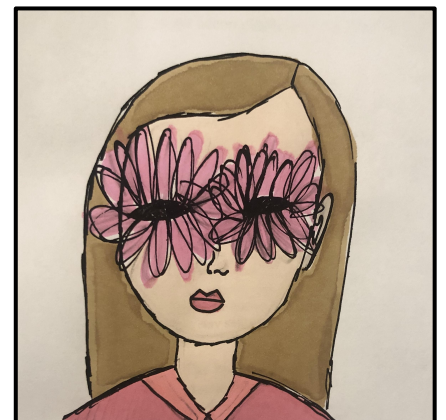
The first is Heatherstone castle in Danbury, it is more than 120 years old and has a secret passage from the kitchen to the study. All of the wood in the castle was imported from Italy.

The second spot is Holy Land USA in Waterbury. In the mid 1960s there were 40,000 annual visitors to explore the city of Jerusalem. If you visit you will find bible quotes, arches and a myriad of crosses.

Next is Shade Swamp Sanctuary in Farmington. Shade Swamp Sanctuary is actually an abandoned zoo, this place housed injured birds and then branched out to breeding raccoons and housing rare and endangered animals.

After that is Mansfield Training School in Mansfield. The training school is now considered part of the University of Connecticut’s Depot Campus but several of the remains are still untouched. This place actually has a haunting story of people claiming to have heard children running; it is now being investigated for paranormal activity.

The last place on our list is Gunyswamp in Groton, this place dates back to 2,000 b.c. and is known as the cliff of tears because visitors recall feeling and overwhelming waves of sadness.



Drawings by Nora Santoli (Grade 7)

The MMS Times First Ever Drawing Contest



By Arts and Culture Section Staff

Throughout the month of January, *The MMS Times* held our first ever drawing contest, open to students in all three grades here at Memorial Middle School.

We were blown away by the amount of entries we received! Our school is filled with talented and creative artists, and it was extremely difficult picking one winner.

But, we did, and the winner is...

Katherine Dean (Grade 8)

Congratulations to Katherine!

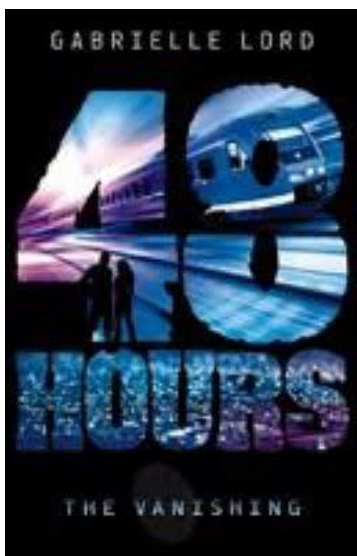
Stay tuned for more contests and ways to engage with our school newspaper. And of course, if you have any ideas or suggestions, we are always willing to listen. Please reach out to one of our newspaper staff or speak to Mr. Gaipa.

Again, thanks to all for submitting!

Review: 48 Hours by Gabrielle Lord

By Kassidi Houck (Grade 7)

This issue's book review is on 48 hours *The Vanishing*. This book has lots of twists and turns and is very interesting. When I first started reading this, I got creeped out and my stomach turned. But the second day I read this I couldn't put it down; it was so interesting and made me hold my breath. It is about a girl who's best friend gets kidnapped and she must enlist the help of her enemy to solve the crime and get her friends back. I had an assumption on something in the book and I was blown away by the reality. Once you start reading you won't be able to put it down, trust me.



**Book
Corner**

Comics & Games

Animal Word Search

E P Y K T F J K I C B P O H E
 J Q K Q X V H L S Y T V W R R
 Q W K G B L X T Y W T P H L Z
 L O B U Y N U K Z I E H K E V
 K U S B J P K Y E K N O M M G
 E G W Y G F K A S B H S O B T
 S P I D E R V O G O A T M Q O
 L A N A B D U C D Y H T T F R
 L Q H L Q U Y A B Z V T G O R
 A D N A P R C H I N Y F O M A
 M L A Y B A I E Y H D Z A C P
 A I P R A E J G K J M N K U S
 K T C R A B F E M B N T Q L Z
 N O I L U P J A G U A R E E D
 P M M C E B B W T U X E M U Q

BEAR
 CRAB
 DEER
 GOAT
 JAGUAR
 LADYBUG
 LION
 LLAMA
 MONKEY
 PANDA
 PARROT
 SPIDER

Q. What can you NOT eat for breakfast?

Q. I go all around the world but never leave the corner

Q. A bus driver was heading down a busy street in the city. He went past three stop signs without stopping, went the wrong way down a one-way street, and answered a message on his phone. But the bus driver didn't break any traffic laws. How?

“A Missed Opportunity”

A comic submitted to The MMS Times by Maria Bueno



See last page of newspaper for answers

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The MMS Times
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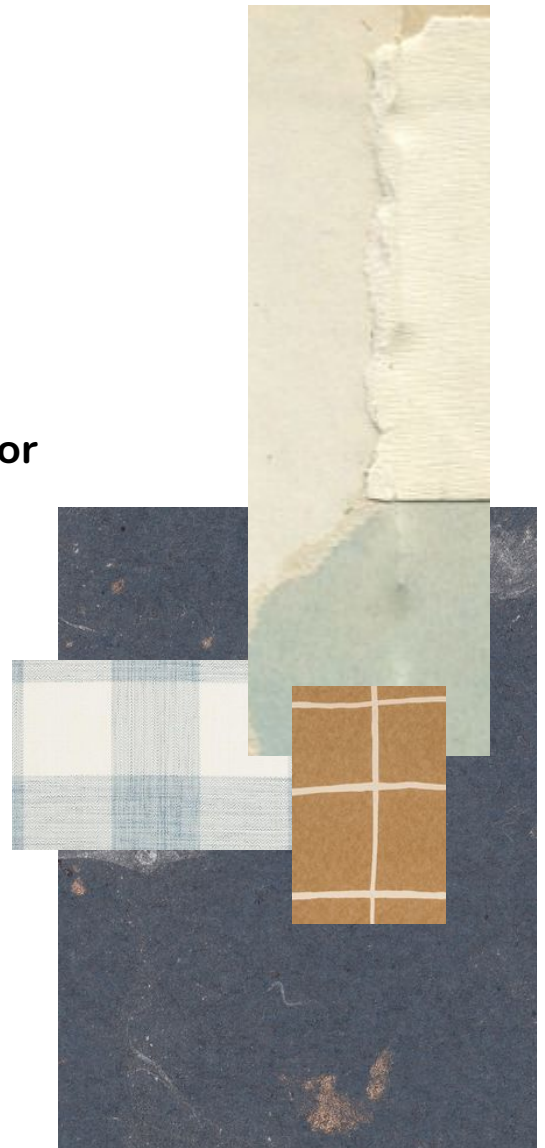
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MMS TIMES

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Do you want digital access to the newspaper?
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Join the MMS Times Google Classroom Page!

To join, use the following code:

222r6p3 - 6th Grade
tsf6s2a - 7th Grade
ukfjdpf - 8th Grade

Answers for the riddles on page 16: 1.) A: Lunch and Dinner
2.) A: I’m a stamp 3.) A: He was walking and not driving