

RUNESTONE

JUNE 2019 First Edition



Comic by Mina Stevens

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WHY RUNESTONE?

Letter from the Editor

There is always significance behind why a name has been chosen. For us, Newspaper Club, we wanted the name of our school newspaper to represent the abundance of Viking spirit present at Mendon, and as a result, Runestone was selected. Although it is not of common knowledge, runestones often contained the engraved names of warriors who passed on during Viking voyages to honor them. Sometimes there were messages written, or a poem. Most importantly, however, was the ability of these runestones to connect Viking society. Recognizable all around the world, the Viking spirit continued to be passed down from generation to generation, and its messages of strength in unity and spirit are still relevant at MHS today.

~Izzy He

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Staff Interview

Featuring Ms. Julian

*Interviewed by
Izzy He and Abby Schwartzman*

Over the summer, our new MHS principal, Ms. Julian, gladly accepted the invitation of a get-to-know-you interview. Upon arrival, we were pleased to find that she has the attitude anyone would want in a principal—hardworking, social, and determined. With the following questions, we were able to learn her backstory, as well as hopes and dreams for our school.

Were you born in NY?

I was born in Utica, New York, about two hours from here. When I was about eight, my family moved to Syracuse, New York. I went to school at East Syracuse Minoa before attending Syracuse University for college. I graduated with both an undergraduate and master's in education. I later received my certificate of Advanced Study for Administration from SUNY Oswego. Before I became principal of MHS, I was a principal at Cicero North Syracuse High School. Having been intrigued by the high rankings Pittsford schools have received in the past, I took a job position here as a Technology Director.

What was your dream career as a child?

When I was a kid, I wanted to be a teacher, not a principal, since, growing up, they were seen as someone who sat in their office and did not interact with the students, which wasn't appealing to me. As my perspective has changed over time, I want to be a principal that changes this stereotype. In my opinion, however, I do believe that a principal is a teacher, since I get to work with students and staff on a regular basis. And as an

educator, I am always learning and growing my knowledge-base.

What extracurriculars did you participate in during High School?

You could say that I dabbled in a lot of activities in high school; I played the trumpet and was in band, as well as performed in school musicals. For sports, I played soccer. I took lots of technology and computer classes as well. Because of all my activities, I made a lot of different friends in different grades. This was awesome because I got to know many people and make a lot of connections. Having all of these different friends also allowed me to see a wide variety of perspectives that I may not have seen myself.

What kind of teacher were you?

I was an English teacher who taught 7th-12th grade English. I loved teaching the content because of how creative and open-minded of a subject it was.

What are your goals/changes you would like to make at Mendon?

My main goal is for students to feel welcome in the community and accepted by everyone. I want everyone to be connected in some way so that people don't think of Mendon as just a place to learn, but also a place to have fun, be themselves, and be with their friends. I want each and every student to find and follow their passions at Mendon, to reach their goals in life, and to love and feel proud of what they have accomplished. This is what I believe is the embodiment of our shared spirit as a Mendon Viking. In addition, I also want everyone to have close relationships with all their peers. I plan on adding a student cabinet to give me advice. Another possibility may involve inviting students to come and have lunch with me to share their thoughts about the school and

changes they might want to see happen.

What challenges do you foresee as a new principal?

I always refer back to the question: are we doing what's best for our students? I want to make sure that we are all comfortable at school and not struggling so that every student can succeed, while at the same time teaching students when to have fun and when to be serious about academics. I really enjoyed my high school experience, connecting with my friends and a variety of different groups. I want to focus on how to make connections with everyone and not just be the person who "lives" in my office. I will try my best to get to know every person at Mendon and make sure that everyone is supported, including staff.

What advice would you give high school students from your own experience?

Have fun and do things that you are passionate about. Try something different and take risks because you may fall in love with something that you have never done. Before you know it, this may be something you do for the rest of your life, even if it's not going to be a part of your profession. Start something new. Get involved and be active with the community to make memories that you will love.

Where do you see Mendon High in a few years?

I know Mendon will continue to be a top school academically in the nation. Students and staff will remain committed to academic excellence. I believe that families and kids will have a voice and feel that they are being heard here. Everyone will be connected and support one another. People will build each other up instead of bringing them down. We will continue to make a difference in peoples' lives, even without ever knowing it, and that's all I can ever hope for.



A Blast from the Past- Homecoming Highlights

Carrie Kandall

Homecoming: An event that occurs each year, as well as a great way to end the first month of school. Last year, September 27-29 marked this special time, including events such as the bonfire, pep rally, football game, and dance.

Starting on a Thursday night, Mendon hosted the annual bonfire outside in the parking lot and near the tennis courts. Even though it was cool outside, like the weather typically is in Rochester, there was a large turnout. Students admired the huge fire and enjoyed the easygoing feel of the night, and the line for the Abbott's food truck never seemed to shorten. On the 28th – the 'big day' – Mendon students brought more school-spirit to the pep rally, where orange, green, red, and maroon took the stands. With each class cheering louder than the last, everyone watched the teacher-student dance-off with amusement, cheered on the fall season Varsity teams, and acknowledged each class' most spirited for the first year ever. The Class of 2021 was also announced as the mural-winners for the second year in a row, to the dismay of the seniors. Regardless of the pep rally competitions, everyone still came together at Sutherland High School to watch the renowned Homecoming Game. The bleachers were crammed with Pittsford students, full of overflowing support for the Pittsford Panther's football team. They took an early lead, and every time they scored a touchdown, the student sections exploded with cheers. Finally, when the buzzer went off, all that could be heard were celebratory shouts from the stands. To everyone's delight, the Pittsford Panthers had won another game. This excitement was contagious among students and was carried into the night. Finally, to sum up another Homecoming weekend, many students attended the Homecoming Dance in the commons on the 29th. Getting to hang out with friends and other students was a fun and relaxing way to end homecoming. Not to mention, many students got to go home with awesome raffle prizes, including gift cards to various local stores and restaurants. This dance marked the end to another fun homecoming weekend.



There are so many events during Homecoming weekend that bring the school community together. Although it came and went very early and quickly this year, any student, including me, can look back fondly on these good memories and be truly excited for Homecoming next year.

The Holidays: A Postcard from Afar

Nik Kabel

As many of you have heard, our school got the amazing opportunity to host the French exchange in October of this school year. Whether you hosted or not, we found that these amazing friends were similar in many ways.

The holiday season is the time for love and joy; it transcends religion and culture, as well as language. The idea of traditions being celebrated by others from afar shows how similar we are. During her stay, I had the opportunity to meet and speak with one of our French exchange students Lucie Gaidier. She explained to my surprise that, “in France, we celebrate holidays about every two months and they always last two weeks”. So, if anyone thinks that the holiday season is hectic here in America, imagine having at least six! Gaidier also informed me that during the winter in France, a light dusting of snow is more common than the many feet of snow we may see here. Whether you get snow or not, those who celebrate Christmas believe that Santa needs to travel to everyone’s house to deliver presents. However, as he gets to France, his stops become more numerous as Gaidier told me that homes are smaller and are closer together, and many more people live in apartments than they do here. She also remarked that “everything seemed bigger, and was quite impressive” here in the U.S.



A traditional-style apartment in France



Buche de Noel, meaning “Christmas’ Log”

I learned that American food is quite famous in France, especially hamburgers and donuts. When they think of us, fast food is one of the first things that come to mind. Regardless of your traditions, you may be familiar with some of the French dishes that are quite popular during the holiday season, such as Buche de Noel, a popular cake shaped like a log, Roast Goose, and Stuffed Turkey with Chestnuts. French tradition is very similar to most in that they enjoy spending the holiday at a place of worship and then dine late on various lavish foods. Food plays an

important role during the holidays in most areas around the world, such as Latkes for Hanukkah and even the Ukrainian Mushroom Soup my family celebrates with at Christmas Eve dinner.

Many MHS students participated in the foreign exchange and visited their guests last April in France. Special thanks to Lucie Gaidier for letting me interview her for this French perspective on our lives!

March Madness Ends

VIRGINIA WINS FIRST D1 BASKETBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Jude Kukla

The end of the school year is busy, and sometimes we get too caught up in the stressful parts of high school life. It's fun to give ourselves a taste of chaos, of madness. Spurred on by the now distant memory of Mendon Madness, we've entered another kind of madness.

Yes.

I'm here to talk about March Madness.

Your involvement in the madness, if you were involved at all, may have ranged from playing out mascot battles in your head (The Anteaters? Really?) to setting up a 9-screen 4-pizza viewing extravaganza with your fellow college basketball fanatics. For all I know, you could have been Kyle Lowry, who once interjected commentary into his postgame interview, i.e. "oh yeah," "that's a charge," distracted and dazed by the madness on the locker room TV.



Even if you didn't feel compelled to follow March Madness, well, it happened. And it was mad.

To start, if you filled or considered filling out your very own bracket, you probably heard "1 in 9,223,372,036,854,775,808" as your odds of achieving perfection. Well, maybe not that exact number, but that's beside the point. In short, predicting the outcome of March Madness is like predicting what sort of weather you will see upon opening your curtain on any Pittsford morning. Another year has passed where no one has had a perfect bracket, but that's the reality of March Madness. If you're curious, the person who filled out the perfect first round bracket didn't even pick a winner. It was a joke!

Perhaps March Madness was too mad for President Trump, who promptly ended the 8-year tradition of the President filling out his own bracket. We all know that he would have picked Trump University to win it all, of course, with the help of some foreign friends.

The first round of the tournament was jam-packed with excitement as Virginia won their first round matchup. At the losing end of that game was North Carolina's Gardner-Webb, making one



of only two first appearances in the tournament. Perhaps the upset of the first round was the No. 13 seed UC Irvine defeating Kansas State, bringing a first tournament back home to the coastal Anteaters. Upstate New York was adequately represented in the tournament, but neither Syracuse, Buffalo, nor Colgate made it past the second round.

All eyes were on the South No. 1 seed Virginia, who was seeking a first national title, as we progressed from the second round through the sweet sixteen and elite eight, eventually narrowing the field down to the final four. From the East, West, South, and Midwest, we had Michigan State, Texas Tech, Virginia, and Auburn. In the battle of the coasts, Texas Tech cruised to a victory over fan-favorite Michigan State, but the South and the Midwest was a nail-biter. Virginia squeaked by Auburn by just a single point after a controversial call on a contested 3-pointer with 0.6 seconds left in the 4th quarter. In fact, if one was a seasoned fan-spotter, one could observe Auburn fans celebrating in the streets, wrongfully thinking they had won. Virginia's Kyle Guy hit 4 free throws to pull off a miracle for his team, ultimately shocking Auburn: 63-62.

Following this dramatic ending, the Virginia Cavaliers had a determined energy about them entering the championship game. It was a first championship game for both teams, an opportunity for history to be made on both sides. Virginia, in their rhythm, took an early lead and maintained it until the final minutes of regulation. Despite Virginia's seemingly unstoppable momentum, Texas Tech started to score point after point, taking the lead with a minute to go. Fans threw tortillas onto the court, bringing a Texas Tech football tradition to basketball. As the tortillas flew, the magic that we saw in Virginia's last game appeared again. They tied the game to send it into overtime. In a remarkable display of high-energy basketball, the Virginia Cavaliers strode to a valiant victory in their last game of the season: 85-77.



This tournament was a great one to watch. Winning in style, Virginia won their first National Championship one year after fanbase heartbreak, thus paying back their loyal fans after losing to No. 16 seed UMBC last year.



Now that the college basketball season is over, it's time to get studying for next year's tournament. It's obvious that we can't create the perfect bracket, but we can at least try. Go hoos!



The Problem with Earth Day

Johanna Merkel



This past April marked the occurrence of the 71st Earth Day in our nation’s history. First celebrated in 1970 by millions of Americans, the event brings people together on a global scale as a way of peacefully demonstrating in favor of environmental reform. This year, on that otherwise ordinary 22nd of April, I could not even count the myriad of Instagram stories and posts I saw of picturesque scenery, naturally accompanied with the lauding of our planet, saying how our Earth is beautiful and must be protected.

I agree with these statements, of course; our planet is our home, and it is deceptively delicate. So, it was not these proclamations that bothered me, but rather the pictures that went with them. Each one epitomized what any normal person would think of as “nature”—vast landscapes overlooking grassy terrain or gushing waterfalls; fields composed of a symphony of colorful flowers or sunsets so vibrant and so beautiful you could not tell where heaven ended and the earth began. And this certainly is nature, in and of itself. But our world is dying. Sea levels are rising at drastic rates.

is in disarray and millions various forms of human hunting, deforestation, or argue as many as a dozen We are in the midst of the our planet’s history, caused by an asteroid by humans.

“We do not need to search far to find the extraordinary. We have it all right here on our small, blue planet”

The salinity of our oceans of animals die from interference, whether it be pollution. Some estimates species go extinct per day. sixth mass extinction in except this one is not or a heat wave, but rather

However, I digress. The point is, the natural world is changing. Imagine any national park, for example. You must think of pristine grandeur with birds softly chirping and the gurgling of a stream in the distance. However, the sheer amount of work that goes into making these parks that embody our ideas of nature is immeasurable. Fires are started, and fires are contained. Some species are killed, and some are introduced. To even get to these parks some of us have to drive hours (most likely emitting greenhouse gases via a car). They are something few of us will be able to experience. However, a solution is not out of reach. Simply, we must re-evaluate our concept of nature. We yearn to travel to the most remote places on the planet. We explore space and other stellar wonders. But we forget what’s right in front of us—the beauty in the everyday. As humans we have the unique ability to appreciate what no other creature can: what is around us. We do not need to search far to find the extraordinary. We have it all right here on our small, blue planet, swimming in an ocean of stars. So, it really is the simple things, whether that be the wind-induced motion of the oak tree in your backyard, or the family of birds residing in it. It could be the pungent smell of a magnolia in spring or the curious way light bends through the crystalline ice hanging from your roof. Nature will never stop changing. However, we can make the choice to let it prevail. We must work to protect this world we live on; it is the only one we have. But even then, by accepting that nature will inevitably change, we can teach



the next generations to find the beauty in the things around them. Make the choice to love and cherish the planet we have and the nature around you. The future is unpredictable. So sure, travel and eat good food and laugh and fall in love with people and places and take pictures and post them and love the earth we live on. I encourage it. Just make sure not to forget about what is right in front of you.

Points on Procrastination

Mina Stevens

Typically, when we don't want to do something, we don't do it. For example, if you don't want to play a sport, you're not going to, right? Well, the same applies to schoolwork. The only difference is that eventually you're going to have to finish it. Putting things off that aren't appealing is a completely natural reaction. However, the way we respond varies from person to person. I had 55 students at MHS fill out my "Procrastination Survey," asking if they had waited until the last minute to do an item of homework in the last week, if they regretted it or not, and for an optional explanation.

As suspected, the vast majority of the students surveyed said that they had, in fact, waited until the last minute. To be precise, 52 out of the 55 students said this. Of those 52, about 60% (31/52) said they regretted it and about 40% (21/52) said that they did not. This was of some surprise to me, for I expected far more people to have regrets. Looking at the points made in the explanation column, I can now understand why less people had regrets than predicted. Of those who had no regrets, five said that their procrastination did not mess up their grade, or they did just as well as they would have done if they did it right away. Eight said they did not care or that it didn't matter, as long as the piece gets done in time. One person said, "I got done what I needed to—that's all that matters."

Most of the claims made centered around the idea that if you wait until the last five minutes, you only have to do your homework for five minutes. The reasons made of those who regretted procrastination were the same reasons I had conjured up in my head beforehand. That included stress, lack of sleep, and the fact that their work was not their best. "I was up until two in the morning," said one respondent. Another stated that "it ended up being really hard." Something I found interesting was that a point was brought up between *both* groups—that they either had fun procrastinating or accomplished other needed tasks. Multiple said that they were practicing sports or music, which is always beneficial. However, there were also a lot of opposing statements made between the two groups. Of those who regretted procrastination, one said that they failed, but another aced their exam. Similarly, one respondent claimed that waiting until the last minute made them work harder, while another said that they were working too quickly and made careless mistakes.

This made me realize that for some people procrastination is a valuable tool, even if teachers and parents look down upon it, while for others it is a setup for failure. With both ideas in mind, it made me realize that one's experience with work depends greatly upon what kind of person one is. For example, some work better under stress while others do not. You have to experiment to figure out what works best for you, for schoolwork, chores, sports, music, etc. It's all based on how you react to a situation.

Why You Should Care About the 2018 Midterm Elections

Sophia Izzo & Remy Commisso

“Midterms”—the word gathered plenty of attention last fall. But what's all the buzz about, and what made 2018's elections special? Well, midterm elections are votes that take place around the midpoint of a presidential term, about two years after a presidential election. In 2018, they took place on November 6th. All of the seats in the House, 36 state Governor seats, 33 or 34 Senate seats, and many local positions are up for election. Voter turnout is usually around half of that of a presidential election.



Youth voter participates in the 2018 Midterm Elections

Presidential races every four years are often thought to be the most important, but that's not necessarily true. Often, midterm elections can turn the tides of political party influence in Congress and result in the passing of important legislation. This was demonstrated as early in our country's history as in the lead-up to the War of 1812 and as recently as in 2010 when the Republican Party gained the Senate majority. Midterms predict trends for the future and set the stage for changes. They have the possibility to shake up both local and national government.

These implications worry some and excite others after the controversial 2016 presidential election. The results of the 2018 midterms, no matter how they ended up, will have a significant impact on President Trump's relationship with Congress and the states.

In New York State, all 63 State Senate seats were up for reelection. Pittsford falls within the 55th district, in which incumbent Republican Rich Funke defeated Democrat Jen Lunsford in a tight race. The neighboring 57th district was won by Republican Chris Collins, whereas Democrat Andrew Cuomo was re-elected as state governor with about 50-60% of the votes. Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand was re-elected as a New York Senator in Washington. In the State Assembly, which is held by a Democratic majority, Pittsford's 133rd district is represented by Republican Marjorie Byrnes. As you can see, New York and Albany are caught between parties.

Nationally, voter turnout was huge, setting a record of 113 million votes. Many Americans switched from being an independent to a political party, realizing how important it was to vote during the midterms (voters must be registered to a political party to vote in midterm elections). Democrats gained control over the House of Representatives with 39 new seats.



Ilhan Omar, the first Muslim congresswoman representing the state of Minnesota

Though this election wasn't exactly the blue wave some Democrats were hoping for, many called it "the year of the women". Ilhan Omar became the first Muslim congresswoman in Minnesota and Rashida Talib did the same in Michigan. Marsha Blackburn became the first female senator in Tennessee, and in Texas, Veronica Escobar and Sylvia Garcia are the first Hispanic congresswomen; Kristi Noem is the first female governor in South Dakota, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez became the youngest female in Congress at 29. The midterms were

also a huge victory for the LGBTQ community. Shanice Davids became the first gay and Native American woman to be elected to congress in Kansas. Jared Polis is now the first openly gay governor in Colorado, and in Oregon Kate Brown became the first bisexual female governor. Overall, this election proved to be very diverse. This diversity is perhaps the most controversial aspect of the vote, but nonetheless will provide new and previously unheard voices in the government.

So how does this election affect us? For one, gun laws will probably strengthen. A poll found that 97 percent of voters supported universal background checks and 67 percent support a ban on assault rifles. In addition, school funding comes directly from state and local coffers. So, depending on their focuses in office, schools may receive more or less money. If you are under 18, have a conversation with your parents about elections, and encourage them to register to a political party, so they can vote in any election. If you are 18 or over, register! Vote as often as you can because you should make your voice heard when the opportunity presents itself. The youth is the future, and if you don't care about politics now, when will you?

Practical Learning

Caroline Beer

There is a skill almost everyone will need at some point in their life, that schools can teach, but don't. School is supposed to teach us, the students, life skills, so why not learn self-defense? Self-defense is a practical, real-life skill that almost everybody will wish they had learned at some point in their life—not to mention that it could save your life. Teenagers often feel helpless going into the world, and this is even more apparent with females—especially with the current political situation. In a world full of Me-Too stories, what can we really do to help?

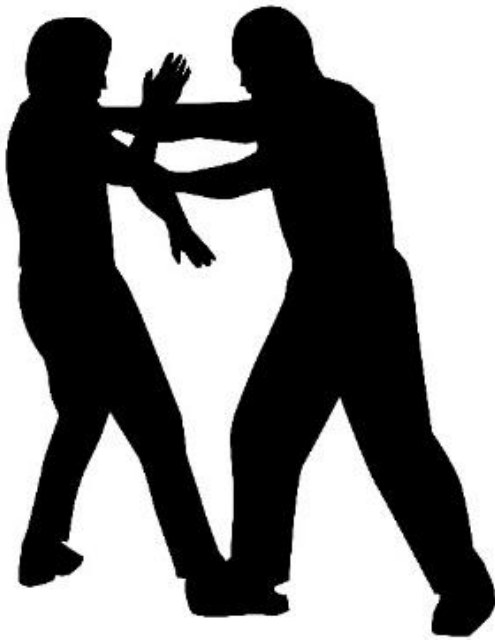


Learning self-defense at an early age is a good step in the right direction. Self-defense classes give people more confidence and the knowledge that they can handle themselves in a dangerous situation. Self-defense doesn't have to be violent, either. A common misconception is that defense must be inherently violent, but hitting someone is just part of it. Yes, it is important to know how to hit properly, but being able to say no in a high-pressure situation or learning how to handle someone threatening you is worth much more.

A needed skill is being able to deal with someone threatening you. Studies show that women are likely to be attacked by multiple people, or someone who is armed. In the *Now* article "Violence Against Women in the United States: Statistics," "women ages 20-24 are at the greatest risk of nonfatal domestic violence, and women age 24 and under suffer from the highest rates of rape. The Justice Department estimates that one in five women will experience rape or attempted rape during their college years, which is why it is important to learn self-defense sooner than later. School is supposed to prepare teenagers for the world, so why don't we learn this means of protection that most of us may have to use in our lives?"

According to the *New York Times* article "83% To Be Victims of Crime Violence," 83% of 12-year-old children will be victims of violent crimes at least once in their life, and 53% will be victims more than once. Almost one in every four men and one in every five women will be robbed. Murder victim rates are also very high, with approximately one out of every 133 Americans being murdered; this means that at least one person you know could be a future victim. The statistic for African-Americans is even higher, with one out of every thirty African-American men being murdered. In addition, one out of every twelve women will be the victim of rape, attempted or actual. These statistics are all frighteningly high. By learning self-defense, we can lower these statistics. When someone has a gun pointed at them or is grabbed for the first time, one's immediate instinct is to freeze and panic. By practicing being grabbed with potential harm in a safe environment, such as school, you will be better prepared if you face an actual situation that calls for such skills, which is statistically very likely. Self-defense isn't just

knowing how to hit somebody, it's knowing what to do if someone is making you uncomfortable, or if someone pulls a weapon on you.



There are almost always two crime scenes when someone is abducted and murdered: the first crime scene, where the person is taken from, and the second crime scene, where they are found dead. If you panic and freeze, you will likely be taken to the second crime scene, and your chances of survival decrease exponentially. Learning how to deal with abductors could save hundreds of lives. Having the ability to handle someone pointing a gun at you is also, unfortunately, a skill that people should obtain—with multiple school shootings that have occurred across the nation. There are three possible ways to handle someone with a gun: fight, flight, or freeze. If you have never practiced self-defense, then you will most likely freeze and get shot. It leads one to question—if self-defense is necessary, why don't we learn it?

Send us your work for a chance to be featured in the next edition of *Runestone* at **pmhsnewspaper@gmail.com**

Word Search

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

- 1. Inspire
- 2. Empower
- 3. Strength
- 4. Ms Julian
- 5. Students
- 6. Band
- 7. Orchestra
- 8. Technology
- 9. Business
- 10. Science
- 11. Mathematics
- 12. Art
- 13. History
- 14. English
- 15. Language
- 16. Runestone
- 17. Sports
- 18. Gym
- 19. Health
- 20. Education
- 21. Success
- 22. Brilliance
- 23. Clubs
- 24. Teachers