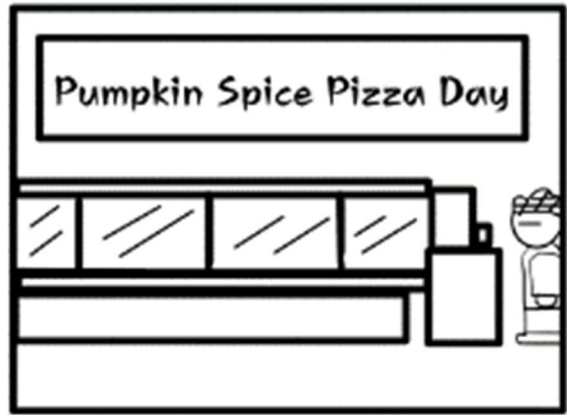


# KUNESTONE

NOVEMBER 2019 Edition



Comic by Emma Smith

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## ABOUT THE EDITION

### *Letter from the Editor*

Dear Reader,

I hope you will enjoy *Runestone's* second edition. In it, you will find interviews welcoming Mendon's newest orchestra director, a featured artist (one for every edition), and the entire freshman class.

In sports, a heartfelt article from a Mendon field hockey member may leave you feeling even prouder of our school. Not to mention Louis' piece: an insightful story about the beginnings of life in a new country that you cannot go without reading. Find out how to keep yourself motivated and efficient this school year, read about the controversy behind the Kalief Browder case, and more in this edition. As always, feel free to submit your work to **pmhsnewspaper@gmail.com**. We would love to feature your voice!

~Izzy He

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# Staff Interview Ft. Mrs. Rister

*Interviewed by Izzy He and Abby Schwartzman*

After the retirement of Mrs. Howard, Mendon was in search of a new orchestra director. Mrs. Rister, previously a music teacher in Victor, gladly stepped up to the task. We interviewed her on life as a music teacher, favorite instrument, and her cat—Frank.

## **Where did you work before you became our orchestra director?**

When I was in college, I worked at the Del Monte Lodge, the hotel in the village. I also did a lot of gigging (I still do) on the weekends—mostly quartet—and I worked in retail in high school, selling suits, shirts and ties.

## **What inspired you to consider teaching music as a career?**

I'd probably say the teachers that I had in high school. They were very inspiring to me, and really embraced music. I've also always loved music, so I wanted to share my love for it with others. I especially wanted to teach high school music, since you're able to get more in-depth with the repertoire. Surface-level reading is nice, but it's also great to be able to dive deeper and tell a story with your music.

## **Did your parents push you towards music?**

Yes and no. Neither of my parents are musicians, actually. My dad was a county police officer, and my mom was an art teacher. When I

started music in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, I guess I just gravitated towards it. If I didn't become a music teacher, I would've been a forensic psychologist, but that's a dangerous job, much more dangerous than teaching. My older sister is a music teacher too, so when she went off to college to pursue her music career, I kind of felt like I was next in line. After high school, I took some time off to gig and, when I went off to college, I knew music was what I wanted to pursue.

## **What's your favorite instrument?**

I don't know! My primary instrument is the violin, so it's my favorite to play, but to listen to, I'd have to go with the bassoon.

## **Hardest piece you've played?**

I think the piece that took the longest to learn was the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso by Saint-Saens. It's equal parts both a show piece and full of great concerto material.

## **What brought you to Mendon?**

I was teaching in Victor before, and then I went on maternity leave once I had my daughter, Frances (she's pretty awesome). When I saw this job opening, I decided to shoot my shot and see if I'd make it. And that's how I ended up here!

## **What concerts have you been to?**

When I was in high school, I got to see Itzhak Perlman, but I sadly missed him last time he came into town. I've also seen Joshua Bell; he has quite the stage presence! My favorite concerts are the local bands though. My husband plays in one,



so I'm always looking to support them.

## **Are you going to have your daughter play an instrument?**

I will let her try out any instruments that catch her interest. I don't want to force her to play, I just want her to do whatever makes her happy. In addition, I would like her to play music so that she can learn to appreciate the hard work and dedication that goes into learning and performing a piece.

## **Who are some current classical musicians that you like?**

I am a huge fan of Itzhak Perlman, of course. He's a classic. I also think that Hilary Hahn is fantastic; her technique is very consistent and precise.

## **Do you have any pets?**

Yes, I have a rescue cat named Frank. Our friends were moving away and couldn't bring him with them, so we took him in. He's a handsome black cat with one very small patch of white fur. Sometimes he acts more like a dog than a cat though; I've caught him howling many times early in the morning for food. And just a disclaimer, I did not intend for Frank and Frances' name to match—it's purely coincidence!

# Artist of the Edition: Melissa Rosen

*Interviewed by Ellie VanHouten*

## Artist of the Edition

*The Artist of the Edition will feature one freshman, sophomore, junior and senior per edition of the Newspaper that the art department wishes to shine a spotlight on. This particular edition will feature Melissa Rosen, a junior this year at Mendon. Either with a computer or a chunk of clay, Melissa creates stunning pieces of art in the several classes she takes: Graphic Design One, Painting and Drawing II, and Ceramics, two pieces from which are pictured below.*

## About the Artist

The purpose of this segment is to not only highlight the art, but the artist themselves. In order to get to know a little bit about this edition's artist, we asked her a couple of questions about herself:

1. *Do you have a favorite type of art, and if so, what kind?*

I love ceramics and other three-dimensional types of art, as well as graphic design. When I was younger, I liked making figurines and using FIMO dough to model sculptures. Also, my grandfather was a sculptor who worked with clay, wood, jewelry, and things like that, so I would play with his materials whenever I went to visit.

2. *What is your favorite aspect of art: the process, the art itself, the atmosphere, teachers, etc?*

I love being able to express myself, and of course all of the teachers and the open and welcoming atmosphere—you can make good art but also have fun doing it!

3. *Now for a few fun ones: What do you like to do outside of school?*

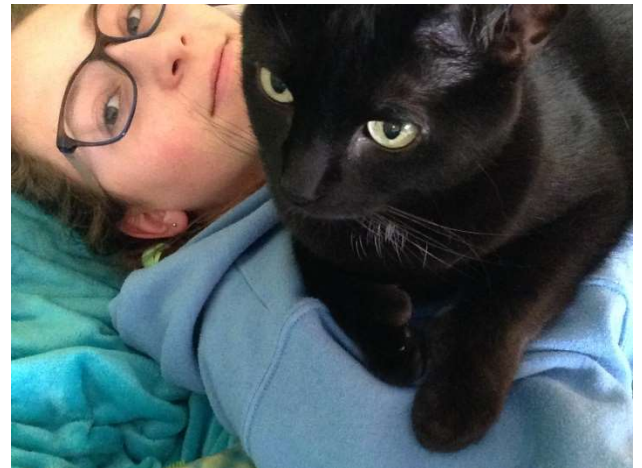
I like to paint, and I am also a swimmer.

4. *Do you have any pets?*

Yes! A snake named Twizzler, a cat named Toothless, and a frog—Spot.

5. *What is your favorite kind of ice cream?*

Double-dunker coffee and cookie dough.



Mel and her cat, Toothless

**Now for the art!** To represent the breadth of Melissa's art, we asked her to choose one piece per class to showcase in *Runestone*. With each of her pieces, we asked her a few questions that would inform us of her sources of inspiration and creative process.



## Painting and Drawing:

### ‘An Apple a Day’

1. Tell us a little about your piece: what was the prompt, what were your inspirations behind your creation?

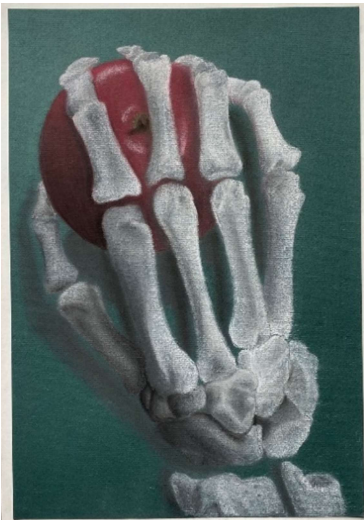
Our prompt was to draw a part of a skeleton in chalk pastel based off of however we chose to position it. As a kid, whenever I asked my dad what to eat, he would always say “an apple”. He also eats an apple every day, and whenever he does, his hand looks like that fist.

2. Do you have a favorite part of your piece, or did you have a favorite part to create?

Well, at first it all looked sort of like blobs, but then as the form was created it just sort of ‘pulled out of the paper’, which was really cool.

3. If this piece of artwork was a brand, what would be its slogan?

“An apple a day keeps the death away!”



## Graphic Design: ‘Snakey’

1. What was the prompt for this Graphic Design piece and what were your inspirations?

We had to create the front cover of a card for Lollypop Farm which they would use to send notes to people who made donations or adoptions. I knew a lot of others were going to pick cats and dogs to draw, so I wanted to choose something different that would also be an animal that Lollypop Farm would have for adoption. I love reptiles, and I wanted to put snakes in a more positive light than they are often portrayed in, so I made a snake!

2. What was your favorite part of your piece, or a part that you had the most fun creating?

I liked using the Wacom tablet—this wasn’t my first experience with it, but I got more instruction this time so I had a better handle on it.

3. What would be the slogan for this piece?

“Snakes are cute!”



## ‘Transformation’

1. Was there a prompt for this piece, and what influenced your artistic decisions?

This was actually a piece that I created over the summer in an art class I took. We had to create something relating to nature or life, and I just kind of saw my hand and went from there.

2. Did you have a favorite part to create?

Yeah— this piece was actually Raku-fired, which is a really cool process. We put our pottery into this outdoor metal cage that traps heat, and then once it got really hot, we threw it into a can full of wood chips. The clay then oxidized, which made it look all colorful, shiny, and nice.

3. What is the slogan for this piece?

“Lend a helping hand.”



# Freshman Class of 2023 Interviews

*Interviewed by Meg Pardee and David Wang*

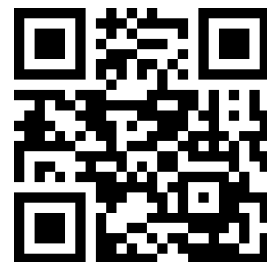
*This school year, Runestone will be interviewing students from all four grades for each of its four editions. Our freshmen gladly accepted our interview requests, and we talked to many interesting students with diverse views.*

## 1. What is the scariest thing about Mendon?

We had many different responses for this question due to the many different circumstances the freshmen were in. We interviewed incoming freshmen, freshmen that had older siblings, and freshmen that were completely new to the district in general. One freshman, new to Pittsford schools, said the following:

*The scariest thing about Mendon for me is not being able to find my classes or being late. I remember that during freshman orientation, they explained to us that the entire school was a square, and then they proceeded to take us in a triangle. Another of my worries was being late to class because my locker was extremely hard to open.*

**What's the best way to spend your snow day?**



Another freshman, who experienced many issues on their first day of school in the district, said the following:

*The scariest thing that I ever experienced was all my technology issues. Since I'm new to the school district, the teachers here at Mendon set me up with Office 365, Infinite Campus and everything else I needed to know. I created my computer login before the first day of school, and I thought that I was all set. Little did I know that they reset all my accounts and their subsequent passwords, so that when I tried to log on during English class, I couldn't. Thankfully, the librarians helped me with all of my issues, and I couldn't thank them enough.*

It seems that while many freshman experienced hardships during their first few days here at Mendon, according to many of the responses we received, they acclimated quickly to the amazing environment here.

## 2. What is the best thing about Mendon so far?

*So far, the best thing about Mendon was how helpful the counselors were. They helped me fix my schedule, and they even gave me tips on how to get through the school year intact. They helped me with literally everything, and they even referred me to other teachers for questions I had!*

The following response came from a new student from out-of-state:

*I was really scared that I didn't have any friends the first day, but having English first period really changed me. Even though I didn't know anyone, everyone was being so nice to me. It really made the first day of school a whole lot better.*

## 3. What is your favorite class so far, and why?

Mr. Rumley, Global 9

*Mr. Rumley makes Global incredibly interesting. Even though he gives a lot of homework, and I was never good at history, he really makes Global enjoyable. It's fun to learn from him.*

Mr. Sanderson, Business Dynamics I

*I really like learning business. It's like a break halfway through the day, and class is always fun. Sandy always makes class interesting, and I always want to pay attention.*

**Are there any clubs that you would like to see added at Mendon?**

- Badminton
- Fencing
- Comedy
- Asian Culture
- Chess
- Social Media
- Cooking

**What are some of your favorite fall activities?**

- Eating food
- Drinking apple cider
- Corn Mazes
- Playing sports
- Skiing
- Doing math problems
- Trying to handle my life
- Stressing out about school
- Free candy!
- Snowboarding
- Studying
- Powers Farm Market
- Regattas

**What about high school is different than you expected?**

- The teachers are Mendon actually care about you
- Everybody wants to help
- The atmosphere is much friendlier than I expected
- More people in my class
- Not a lot of homework so far
- So. Many. Clubs.
- So many electives I can take. And I still don't know what I want to do in life
- I actually have to work hard
- More freedom and the teachers are flexible
- Scheduling is hard

**What are some of your favorite fall-related foods?**

- Apple Cider
- Donuts
- Donuts, in general
- Apple Pie
- Squash
- Pumpkin Pie
- Cinnamon Buns
- Bagels with Pumpkin Butter
- Pancakes and Waffles with Maple Syrup
- Sugar Cookies

Although they may have been nervous on the first day, the class of 2023 seem to be adjusting well to high school and are ready for their upcoming years at Mendon. Again, welcome to our newest Vikings!

*This is the first in a two-part series on one freshman's experience in starting Mendon High School.*

*The following article should be read with an open mind. I have the utmost respect for my classmates, the upperclassmen, and any and all teachers.*

## Fragile, Handle with Care: Part One

*By Angel Tang*

Hello. Let me not introduce myself. All you need to know is that I'm a freshman. Yup, one of those lowerclassmen who scurries around everywhere and isn't willing to make eye contact.

Ok, so we aren't really like that. It's just that our nerves and stress have us permanently residing in the panic zone, a place which tends to occupy quite a few of our brain cells. For the first week of school at least. During the days leading up to it, there was sweat dripping, minds blanking, and breaths shortening. Not to mention our sleep was plagued with nightmares of upperclassmen stealing our lunch money—

Wait. This is high school.

—nightmares of upperclassmen beating us up. Worrying about getting lost, and getting beat up by an upperclassman, gave us wrinkles. Anticipating the Mt. Everest-sized piles of homework we would get, and then an upperclassman beating us up, made us stress about stressing.

Let's be real though: no one was going to beat us up, other than ourselves if we dare get a D on a math test. Yes, the movies and TV shows depicting high school life are overflowing with bullies. A bunch of bullies, and not an ounce of homework. Where do schools with no homework exist? Right, in your imagination. Respect for these movies though, as they are brave enough to think up of such a holy being. School without homework? Hallelujah!

What the above nonsense was trying to convey: No one was going to shove us into a locker or dunk our head into a toilet like and Oreos into milk. (Sorry for ruining Oreos for you.) *But a distance might grow between the friend you were always partners with in any class you had together, who you walked with before homeroom because both your buses got to BRMS early. You might become people who would only smile at each other in the halls—there are no more inside jokes to whisper in their ear, no more shared drama to exchange. Because you only ever see them in the halls. And one day you'll see them walking with someone—who's not you—having the time of their life. And you will smile internally, be happy, and reminisce of when you were the one that made their cheeks burst with laughter like that. But they will walk past you, caught in conversation, and you know they won't see you smile at them. Because you are hotly debating whether pineapple should go on pizza with the girl who sits next to you in Biology. You know, the one that cracks too many corny puns and always comments on*





the videos you guys watch in class. (There really are some weird ones.) Your friend who sits next to you in Bio. (Though if she keeps on saying that pineapple belongs on pizza, this relationship may have to end. It's not you, it's me.)

So, you made it through the first day. Made it to all your classes. Survived the seven “yearly overview” speeches that you definitely paid attention to. (What math class am I even taking?) Didn't get lost once. Were late to Spanish. Used “got lost” as an excuse. (It's hard to Mario Kart and walk at the same time. Solution: Don't walk while trying to get that last star you need.) You found a lunch table and bonded over stressing out about the first day. No homework! Okay, it's going to be a fine year. (Ask me if I'm excited for the school year two days later, which is when the teachers have gotten over the initial shock of the school year and realize that they went to college for four years to learn how to assign ten-pounds-too-much of homework and make all our tests fall on the same day. It's a conspiracy, let me tell you. Ask and I'll look at you as if you just said that you eat mac 'n' cheese with a spoon. Crazy.)

But what won't change after two days, two months, or even two years at this place is my love for the freedom. I bathe in the glory that is the independence of high school. The liberty. The control. Changing your schedule because you can. Not having teachers come up to you and ask, “Shouldn't you be in class?” Signing out every time you wanted to get a drink of water. Being able to use your phone anywhere and everywhere. And you know what that means: I am going to *dominate* the Mario Kart Tours.

*To Be Continued...*

## Overworking Yourself: Tips to Help You Survive this Year

*By David Wang*

We all know that feeling you get when you imagine all the things you have to do, and all the homework you have to get done. On top of that, you must practice your instrument, and go to practice for whatever sport you do. You look at your schedule and think, “I'm gonna get less than 4 hours of sleep tonight.” When this becomes an everyday occurrence, those sleepless nights will catch up to you fast. Especially for sophomores and juniors, this ends up being the case. So that's why I'm writing this article: to help you.



Overworking yourself comes in many different forms. Sometimes you just pass out over your homework. Other times, you just don't get enough sleep to survive. Sometimes, you just don't have the time to even make a dent in the pile of homework you have. Usually, overworking yourself is something you inflict on yourself. In fact, around 95% of Mendon students admit having overly procrastinated at least once this year. Procrastination leaves different marks on everyone. It causes unhealthy stress, lack of sleep, and sometimes it leaves you feeling bad about the quality of the work you just finished. Some people end up overworking themselves due to the number of classes they take. Some people replace their lunch with electives, and even though I am one of them, I still believe having lunch as a break halfway through the day is important.

So how do we fix overworking yourself? Take advantages of study halls and lunches, and don't let your peers distract you. If you find that you don't understand something, find a teacher for help (it doesn't make you look stupid). If you play an instrument, take a break from practicing for a day. It won't hurt you. Try to work more efficiently at the same quality, find ways to reduce distractions when working, and know your limits, strengths, and weaknesses.

# ASI at Mendon

By Avery Parker

*The American Statesman Initiative*, better known as ASI, has been on the rise ever since 2018. But what is ASI? How does it work? What does it offer to the students of Mendon? Well, let me tell you, dear reader, and, by the end, I'm sure that you're going to want to *talk about it*.

My name is Avery Parker, and I serve as one of ASI's three Executive Officers, alongside Diane Nguyen and Adam Wesley. The three of us work together to organize ASI and its activities, ensuring smooth function for the club and its members. So, what exactly is this club? ASI is a *modern issues discussion club*. Our world is a rapidly moving and often confusing place, plagued by many an issue, with few simple solutions to such issues being presented. ASI hopes to dispel that confusion and create a friendly environment for students to learn about, discuss, and consider possible solutions to the issues facing our world today, both in order to reinforce their own understandings and to encounter new ones.

So, how does ASI achieve such ends? Through two types of meetings: informal discussions and formal debates. The club meets in room 103 and simply discusses a preselected topic. The level of involvement in the informal discussions is entirely up to the member—no one is ever required to speak at informal discussions or to have notes. In fact, attendance is not even mandatory, making ASI a perfect club for busy students who still want a platform to discuss modern issues and politics. One of the three Officers, yours truly included, will loosely moderate the discussion to assure that anyone who wishes to speak has the opportunity to and that the discussions remain orderly. The moderator *does* possess a gavel, but fear not, we all promise not to whack anyone over the head...

The other mode of meeting is the formal debate. Now, hold on. I know that might sound intimidating, but, remember, participation in formal debates will *never* be mandatory. For those who are interested in formal debates, though, they are formatted as such: a topic of debate will be chosen, and two teams will be formed.

On the day of the debate, those two teams will each be allotted time for opening statements, main arguments, rebuttals, and closing statements. Without a single doubt, this is a perfect way for students to hone their debating abilities, as well as their talent for constructing cohesive arguments and thinking critically on the spot. Either type of meeting offers students the ability to expand their understanding of the world around them, learn how to express their beliefs, and exchange ideas with their fellow contemporaries. In the past, those issues have included, though are not limited to, the state of the Hong Kong protests, the state of the American National Security State, the Crimean Conflict, bioengineering and ethical questions relating to it, and gun control. We cover these topics and more at ASI.



It is worth noting, at this point, that ASI does and will always refrain from endorsing or supporting any one specific belief, ideology, or view. All views are welcomed at ASI and none are discriminated, so long as they are respectfully expressed. As one current member of ASI is quoted as saying, "In ASI, we discuss our beliefs in a free and respectful environment." At ASI, we hope to cultivate a diverse range of voices, which might offer unique views on various issues, providing a better center for information and learning to all the students of Mendon and assuring that the students of today can be the leaders of tomorrow. So, do you want to learn about your world? Do you want to better understand the tasks that our generation is faced with? *Do you want to become a Statesman?* Then, by all means, join ASI and come *talk about it!*

Meetings in **Rm 103**

ASI Remind Code: **@asi2018**

# Mendon Field Hockey: A Legacy of Success

By Grace Olczak

Mendon Field Hockey has had great amounts of success this year. We finished the regular season undefeated, won Section Five Finals for the fourth time in a row against cross-town rival, Pittsford Sutherland, and secured a spot in the state tournament for the third time.

You might wonder how the field hockey team went from never winning a sectional championship in school history to creating a legacy at Mendon High School four years later. Well, I'll tell you. It's the years of training and looking up to older girls as inspiration. It's spending hours at the turf hitting balls into the goal, perfecting techniques, and running "The Mile" over and over again. It's knowing how it feels to win and knowing how it feels to lose. It is all those things, but above all, it is growing as a family over the past six years.

The seniors this year have a bond like no other. We have experienced the heartache of playing our last games of the season and the joy of winning a championship that was fought for until the second overtime. We have gone through so much together, and it translates to how hard we fight on the field. We aren't playing for ourselves; we are playing for each other.



There are seven of us: Peri Wivell, Olivia Hernick, Sarah Williams, Kyra Lucey, Julia Zatyko, Claudia Rupprecht, and me, Grace Olczak. We were together that first year we lost in overtime at the State Semifinal; we know just how close we have been to making it to the State Championships. For the past few years, we have looked for leadership from the older girls, but this year, we are taking matters into our own hands, and we won't go down without a fight. We are going to play our hearts out from the first whistle to the last.

We are fighting for one last game together before it's time to say goodbye.

Over the years, these girls have gone from being strangers to teammates to become, ultimately, my best friends. When I first picked up a stick in sixth grade, I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I am so glad I did. Mendon Field Hockey is truly a family, and I will forever be grateful for the friends it gave me, the lessons it taught me, and the future it has given me.

*After writing this article, Grace and her teammates went on to beat Williamsville East and represent the region in the New York State Championship Semifinal game. There, the Mendon girls fell to eleven-time NYS champions, Lakeland.*

Varsity Field Hockey 2019 Season Record: 19-1-1

# My Story in America

*By Louis Lemperlé*

This is my experience. I will share with you my insight of what I felt when I landed in America. I was really excited to come and live in the state of New York. In fact, I had already moved in 2016 to India from France. It was a life changing decision we had made as a family. It opened my vision of the world. Before that time, I knew that there were other countries, languages, cultures, but I was not aware of what it really meant. Now I had firsthand knowledge.

Again, we wanted a new lifestyle and moved to The States. Everything was different, sometimes surprising and even shocking. During the first few weeks, I could tell that Americans were helpful and welcoming, their smile and awesome “vibes” made it easier to settle. I was happy because there were trees and the air was pure and fresh (unlike in India). You should have seen my face when I saw the radio reading 80 degrees in the car, but it was in Fahrenheit, not Celsius! Still, I am always confused with feet, inches, and the measurement system in general.

The most shocking things are the size and proportion of things. Everything is huge: the food in restaurants, the cars, the roads, the buildings. I have never seen a shopping market so big as Walmart and Wegmans; there’s so many products and food in one place. I thought everything was cool. The yellow bus is like something you would see in the movies. The cafeteria is huge, and phones are allowed in class (in France it is strictly forbidden, and the punishments are severe). The teachers are friendly, and there is a sense of belonging. Every morning, students stand and say The Pledge in front of the American flag, which was surprising because I have never done that before. (Fun Fact: Indians sing the anthem in movie theaters.) Now, I regularly go for a picnic with my family during the weekend. We enjoy the view of the landscape, and the animals that we can see. As fall came, I went to Wickham Farm. There were a lot of people, and the place was charming and convivial. The apple cider was delicious, and we could feed sheep and other animals. The ride through a Halloween-themed forest just added the feeling of an American festival.

Homecoming week was awesome and fun. It was my first time seeing a football game, and I told myself that I wouldn’t want to be on the field because all the players were big and muscular, and the way they jumped and tackled each other was scary. During the match, the students would support our team, and there was a lot of noise and shouting. The cheerleaders did backflips and impressive choreography. It was stunning to see the community come together as one.

However, I would like to say that it is difficult to move from one country to another because there are things I don’t know, such as the culture, the people, and the fact that everything is new here for me. Let me tell you it is hard to make friends, adjust to a new time zone, and to the winter. Nevertheless, it is going to be an experience full of memories and happy moments. Our decision to move may have been a tough one, but it has been life changing

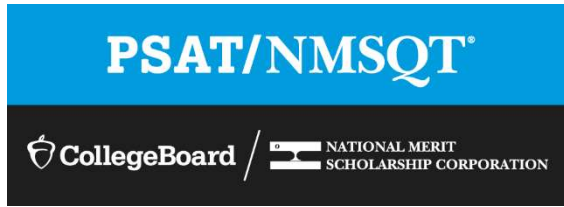


Louis and his family pose for a group photo



# The PSAT – A Small Step to a Big Future

By David Wang



October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. A crowd of Mendon juniors fill the hallways, waiting to take the PSAT. This is likely the first test they will take among the various other types of college-admittance tests. So what? Do sophomores and freshmen even know what the PSAT is?

The PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) is a test that juniors take in October. About 3.6 million students take this test every year. It is out of 160–760 for two sections—math (no calculator and calculator) and English (reading/language)—adding up to a maximum score of 1520. This is very similar to the SAT, which has the same sections but totals to 1600. Don’t worry, there are no essays or short answer questions in any of these sections: It’s all multiple choice. So, if short response questions aren't your strong suit, you don’t have to worry.

The PSAT is also known as the NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). So, what’s the big deal? Isn’t it just an easier version of the SAT? Well, no. With your PSAT score is a selection index score, a number ranging from 36 to 228. This selection index score decides who is eligible for the National Merit Scholarship, which is a prestigious scholarship given to the top students of the country. Only the top 1% of the people who took the PSAT are eligible for the National Merit Scholarship. But there’s one more catch. Just because you’re eligible for the National Merit Scholarship doesn’t mean you’ll get it. The PSAT helps you get to the semifinalist level of the scholarship, but to be a finalist and get the actual scholarship, you’ll have to send in an application, which includes your regular GPA, and SAT and ACT scores. These other factors will determine if you get the scholarship.

So how does one know if they are eligible for National Merit anyway? Well, there’s a cutoff score for every state. You know that Selection Index Score I was talking about earlier? This is where that comes in. The better people perform on the exam in your state, the higher the cutoff score for National Merit. New York State typically has one of the highest cutoff scores in the country (around 220-223 every year), which makes it more difficult for students in NY to qualify.

If you achieve semifinalist level (results come out when you’re a senior), you’ll already be applying to colleges. Having the scholarship will help you a lot in the process. Achieving semifinalist level will give you an edge over other applicants, especially in the competition for top universities.

This past year, our school district had a whopping 16 seniors become National Merit Scholarship semifinalists. These students were among 41 students to be named semifinalists in the Greater Rochester area, and among 16,000 students in the U.S. chosen to compete for 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$31 million. The winners of National Merit Scholarships for this year will be named in the spring of 2020.

So, many juniors from Mendon have reached their goals of getting the Scholarship or of doing very well on the PSAT. Hopefully, many more of our juniors will become semifinalists this year and for years to come. Let’s Go Vikings!

1. Turkey
2. Apple/picking
3. Caramel/apple
4. Pumpkin
5. Hot/Chocolate
6. Hayrides
7. Sweater
8. Thanksgivng
9. Hiking
10. Tailgate/Trick or Treat
11. Jackolantern
12. Daylight Savings
13. Leaves
14. Candy/Commaze
15. Autumn



# The Justice Lens: “Ma, I can’t take it anymore.”

By Remy Commisso

Four years ago, in the summer of 2015, a man named Kalief Browder killed himself in his Bronx home at the age of 22. The memories of his time in Rikers Island Prison had haunted him for years. Locked up for 3 years, or seven hundred and thirty days, in solitary confinement—on suspicion of stealing a backpack. No trial, no conviction.

Some called him a prophet. His story brought attention to New York's broken criminal justice system and to the corruption in our incarceration system. Browder was arrested at the age of sixteen but was held as an adult. Just like hundreds of other Rikers inmates, Browder couldn't post bail because of his family's low income; they consulted a bail bondsman, who also denied their request because of Browder's previous probation. In 2012, Browder was offered a plea for three and a half years in prison but turned it down. He always maintained his innocence; even a year later, when he was offered another plea for immediate release if he pleaded guilty to two misdemeanors, an offer he declined. It wasn't until two months later



that he was finally released by Judge DiMango. The charges against him were dropped, but the damage of three years in jail had already been done. We know this because two years after his release, his mother found him dead. In January of 2015, NYC did act; the NYC Council voted to ban solitary confinement for inmates younger than 21, and Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a legislation that would allow charities in New York to post bail up to 2,000 dollars.

Unfortunately, this story isn't unusual or the last of its kind. The Habeas Corpus law states that no innocent person can be detained unlawfully, yet people can stay in jail for years without a trial or sentence. For Browder, it was more of a guilty-until-proven-innocent type of situation. 97 percent of low-income people that go to jail don't get a trial<sup>1</sup>. It was also very likely that Kalief Browder was profiled for being a black man. Yes, he was only sixteen at the time, but America treated him as a man. Today, in the 21st century this country is still experiencing the effects of President Reagan's War on Drugs in the 80's. African American communities were torn apart, and the violence that law enforcement imparted on black bodies was ruthless. Even now, a black individual is 50 percent more likely to be incarcerated than a white American<sup>2</sup>. Overall, the criminal justice system disproportionately affects people of color. While incarcerated, you are stripped of the rights that the government claims to be “inalienable” and are narrowed down to less than a human. So, is it completely legal for the government to take away the freedoms of innocent African Americans in jail? This sounds all too familiar. Even worse, most Americans are unaware of this problem. Many of our public schools fail to educate us about this “New Jim Crow”<sup>3</sup>. America has the highest incarceration rate in the world, yet most of us don't even understand the difference between jail and prison.

So, what can we do? If you see police violate or profile someone, take out your phone and start filming immediately. It is completely legal to film a police officer anywhere in America. You can also report any incident to the Police Accountability Board, which privately investigates the Rochester Police Department. Call representatives in your local government to let them know you want to see change in the criminal justice system. It is our job as the people to demand change. Because until that change comes, mothers will have to hear their sons say they “can't take it anymore,” and black boys simply just can't be boys.

<sup>1</sup>13th. Directed by Ava DuVernay, 2016.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. The News Press, 2010.

# Cuisine Corner

By Sarah Dailey and Sophie Buciferro

All Items from the Village Bakery

## Cinnamon Bun

The cinnamon bun from the Village Bakery is a symphony in your mouth. The flavors blend in perfect harmony, neither overpowering the other. To top it off, the delectable frosting has a creamy texture that adds tone and sweetness to the treat.

## French Toast

The flavors transport you to a little French café. The delicious breakfast treat is like eating a light and fluffy cloud. Not too overpowering nor too crispy—it's the perfect mix. With the addition of the powdered sugar and maple syrup, the sweetness never stops. All in all, *délicieuse!*



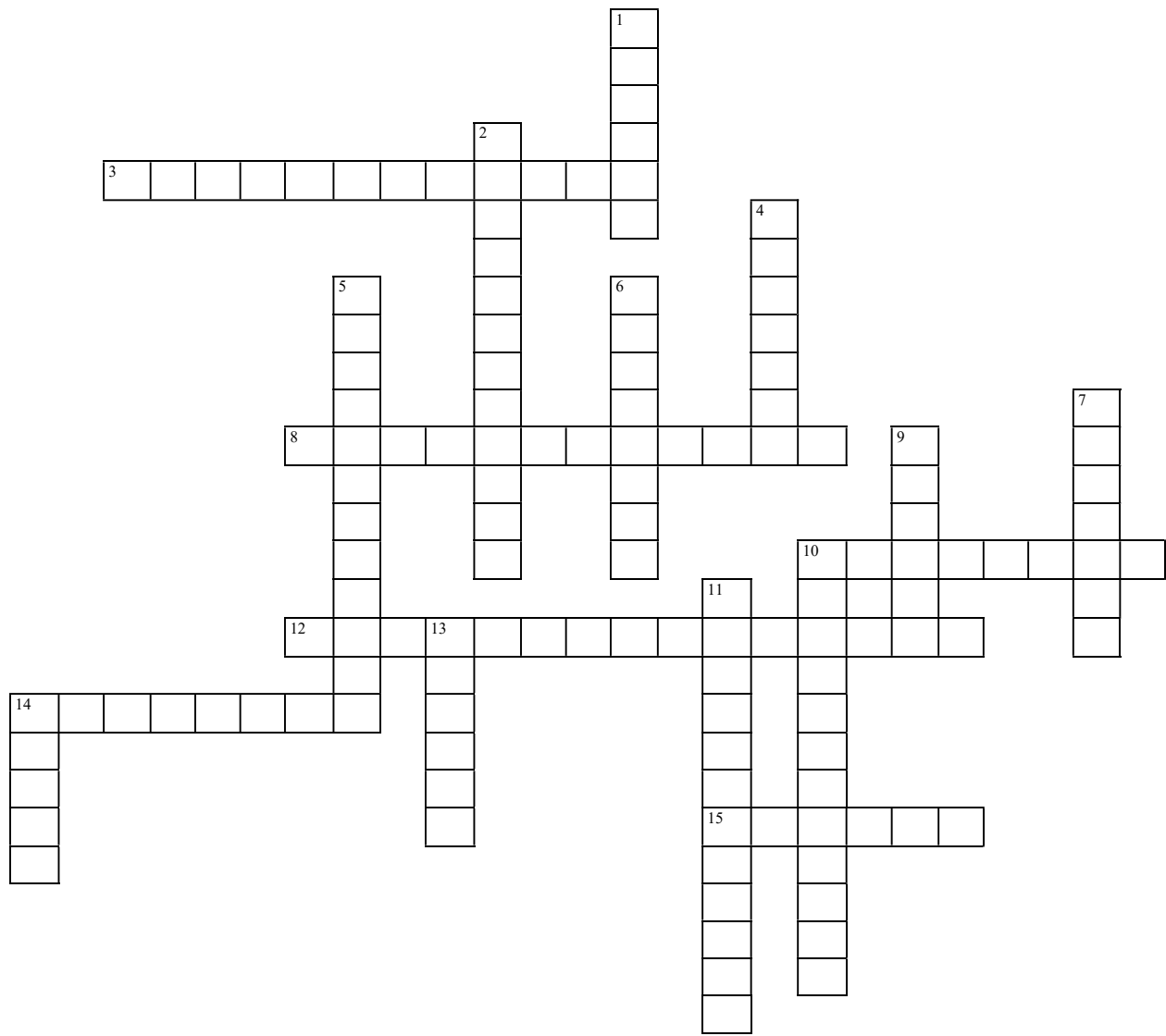
Art by Diane Nguyen

## Hot Chocolate

The smooth creamy texture is a powerful fall dance in your mouth. The ideal blend of spices combined with the delight of whipped cream will remind you of a nostalgic fall evening. It's a spectacular match for the apple tart.

## Apple Tart

The apple filling balances exquisitely with the dough, giving it just the right amount of sweetness and a heavenly flavor. With a touch of cinnamon, it's the best fall pastry. However, it might be tough to eat for the folks with braces!



## Crossword

### Across

3. Coat this fruit in sugar and stab it with a stick to make a...
8. Mashed potatoes are the best part of this holiday
10. What do you do in the parking lot before your favorite football game?
12. Lose an hour of sleep because of this day
14. Don't get lost in the 'maiz'
15. The season of Halloween

### Down

1. A popular fall bird
2. A popular New York pastime in fall
4. Everything is this flavor in fall
5. A great drink to warm you up, minus the caffeine
6. Enjoy this spooky attraction at Powers Farm Market
7. Rummage through your closet for this type of fall clothing

9. Get on your rain boots to go...
10. The best way to get free candy in fall is to...
11. Carve a gourd and stick a candle in it to make a...
13. Their colors change with the seasons

*Created by Abigail Schwartzman*