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THE COURIER

THE LONGEST RUNNING MIDDLE SCHOOLS NEWSPAPER IN THE UNITED STATES

7TH GRADE SPRING BASKETBALL MADNESS

By Julia Anselmo

















Highlands Team Tournament

On Friday, May 22nd the 7th graders at Highlands had their basketball tournament in the North Gym. Although after a rough start losing their first game, 7B won every other match down to the most suspenseful match against 7E.

Following the 7B basketball triumph, there was also some teachers that played! Some of the staff you may have noticed were Mrs. Wray from 7E, Mr. Sullivan from 7A, Mr.Lupia from 7B, Ms.Daly and even our principal Mr. Eaton played!









ENCORE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

By Mina Auletta

Ms. Morelli is one of several PE teachers here at Highlands. She grew up in Yorktown Heights and has been teaching for 18 years. I had a short interview with her for this article.

Coach Morelli
PE



Who are your role models? Why?

Both my parents are my role models, they've always worked hard for my brother and I, and now you know for my husband and their grandkids and they worked and retired and always set a great example.

What do you do for fun on your free time?

I am always with my boys haha. They play every type of sport, every type of activity, so were always at a field somewhere, at a race track, biking, and when we're not playing sports I like to be at the beach as much as possible.

What subject was your favorite when you were a student? Why?

Social studies and math. I absolutely loved everything about history and anytime we'd go somewhere id always try to find a historical site or museum to teach the boys about or to learn about, and I always had really strong and great history teachers.

What advice do you have for students today?

Always try your hardest. You never know who's looking and it is a great habit to, and just always, you know, set goals for yourself, and try your hardest to reach them even if its something simple.

What else would you like our readers to know about you?

I'm very happy working here at highlands. It's exciting to see a lot of you guys I had in elementary school because I was at 4 of the 5 schools so its really cool to see you guys all grown up. Some of you guys I had in kindergarten, and some of you guys I had when you were younger, and then when covid hit I haven't seen you since you got to highlands so it's really nice to see how well everybody grew up.

7TH GRADE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

By Julia Anselmo

Mrs. Staar
Team 7E



1. **Where did you go to school/grow up?**

"I grew up in the Bronx, NY and I went to Cardinal Spellman"

2. **What made you want to go into Education?**

"I didn't go to school to be a teacher I wanted to be a veterinarian. I didn't get into vet school, so I ended deciding that teaching science would be a better option"

3. **How many years have you been teaching?**

"I have been teaching 26 years in total. 24 at Highlands and the other two in the Bronx"

4. **Who are your role models? Why?**

"My role models were my parents because neither one went to college, yet they were still hard-workers and successful"

5. **What are your hobbies/What do you do for fun on your free time?**

"I love to read, watch tv and workout and be out in nature and spend time with my family"

6. **What subject was your favorite when you were a student? Why?**

"ELA because I was good at it and I like to read and write"

7. **What advice do you have for students today?**

"A little goes along way, if you work hard now it will definitely pay off later"

8. **What else would you like our readers to know about you?**

"I have six pets I love animals and Highlands is like my second home"



8TH GRADE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Mrs. Varghese
Team 8B

By Lizzie Orzuna Santiago

1. Where did you go to school/grow up?
I grew up in upstate New York. It is about an hour north of White Plains and it is called Monroe. I went to the Monroe Woodbury School District. When I grew up, we were surrounded by trees and forests. But, they had just begun building the Woodbury Commons Outlets. It opened a lot of job opportunities for grown-ups and for high school students. And it was a great place to shop!



2. What made you want to go into Education?
This is a complicated question. I always knew I wanted to work with kids. I thought I could be a nurse like my mom and be a pediatric nurse. But I discovered in college that I did very poorly in Science because I couldn't memorize facts. I discovered that I had a learning disability. I switched my major to English and Psychology and made the Dean's List. I wish I knew that I had this disability in High School as it was very hard to do well in certain classes.
When I got out of college, I tried working on Wall Street by being an Associate Writer for a Hedge Fund. But it was BORING! This job paid well but didn't feed my soul. I realized I still wanted to work with kids but I also wanted to connect with them. I went back to college and got my Masters Degree in Special Education. I wanted to help all kinds of students and use my life experience to make a difference.

3. How many years have you been teaching?
When I first started teaching, I worked in Washington Heights in NYC. I worked there for 3 years and then I came to White Plains. I worked 22 years here.

4. Who are your role models? Why?
I have lots of role models. My parents are my role models for sure. They came here in the 1970's with very little money but with a lot of education. My mom became a nurse and my dad was a chemist. They worked very hard to move us out of the city and into the suburbs. They wanted us to have a good education in a good school district and also have grass to run through. They were able to buy a home which was a big accomplishment for my parents as they were not born in the United States. My other "role model" is my son Jonathan. He is more like my hero. When Jonathan was 9, he was diagnosed with T-Cell Leukemia. As a mom, I was devastated. But with the support from my family, my Highlands Middle School Family, and my friends, we were able to get through. I watched Jonathan go through a lot of chemo treatments, surgeries and complications. It took 2 years of watching him struggle but he fought hard and is now in remission! He is currently a college student in SUNY Binghamton, and I could not be prouder of his accomplishments. He never let his illness take him down!

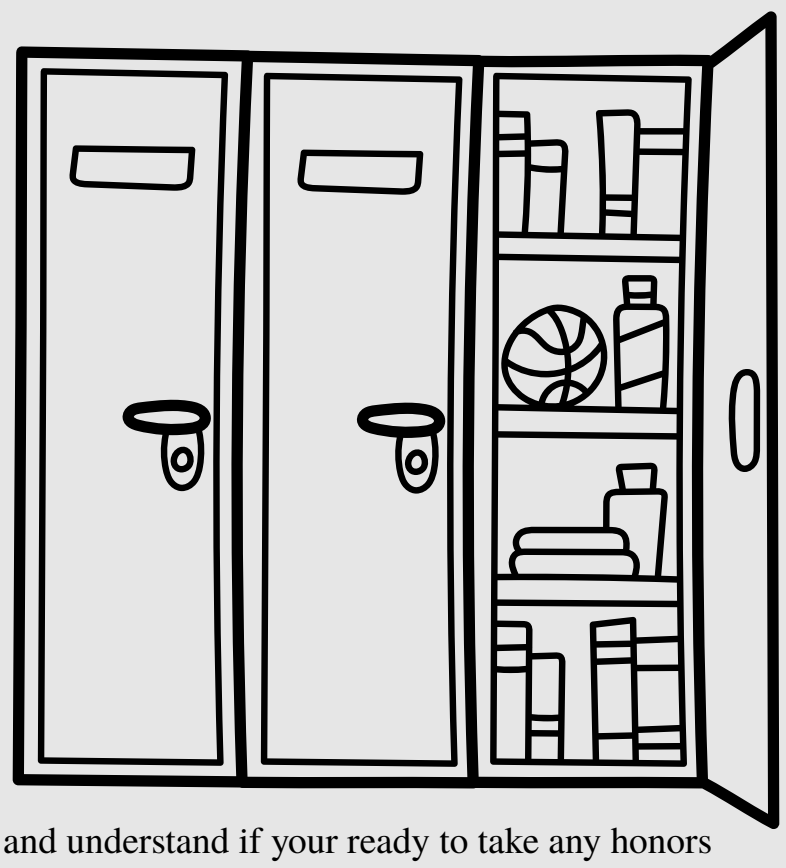
5. What is your favorite book that you've ever read?
It is hard to pick one book because it is part of a series. I love the Harry Potter book series. I loved all the characters and the plot. I also loved the movies.

6. What advice do you have for students today?
Be kind! Be thoughtful! And give back! Everything else in life will fall into place. But find a way to do these three things. I tried to always be a good friend, to look out for others, and to give back whenever I could. I still believe in these 3 things which I have brought with me to Highlands.

7. What are you most looking forward to this year at Highlands?
I hope to enjoy these last few weeks with my 8th Grade students who will be leaving me to go to the high school next year. I have made some incredible bonds with many of my students and I will be so sad when they move up in June. So I want to enjoy the dance and the picnic to see my kids have a great end of the year.

AN 8TH GRADERS GUIDE ON HOW TO SURVIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL

by Salvatore Bonaiuto



In this article I will give you more advice to succeed in middle school. This edition will be focused on transitioning from 7th grade, into 8th grade.

·NJHS Eligibility

In 8th grade, if your grades are high enough, you become eligible to be inducted into the National Junior Honor Society. After having good grades through the first quarter, you must complete 10 hours of service, fill out an application about clubs, sports, and activities outside of school that you participate in, and write an essay about yourself as a student and member of your community.

·Prepping for high school

Though it may seem a bit soon, you should start preparing yourself for high school. Towards the end of your 8th grade year, your guidance counselor will ask you to fill out a form to figure out what electives (classes you take by choice, like art classes, music classes, theater, engineering classes, dance, metal work, photography, etc.) you will take as a freshman. They will also help you decide if you want to take honors classes. It helps to know what kind of electives you want and understand if your ready to take any honors classes.

·A fresh start

A new school year means a clean slate, learn from your mistakes. If you were stressed out from too many clubs and sports, try to join less next time. If you failed classes, try to do better next year. And remember what was good. If there was a club or sport you loved, keep doing it. If you crushed your classes this year, keep going.

8TH GRADE DANCE PREPERATIONS

By Jahnavi Jahnavi

The 8th grade dance marks the end of middle school and the beginning of high school for the 8th graders. Every June a dance is prepared for the students to have a memorable time at Highlands with friends. Every dance there is always a theme and decorations according to it. To make a dance successful there is a team of students and teacher doing the planning, decorations, ticket selling and making sure the dance is fun for everyone in it.

As of currently they are preparing for the dance on June 6th, but we have some interviews from the teachers telling us how the dance preparations are going. The teachers that are involved are Mrs. Conrad, Mrs. DiCamillo and Mrs. Varghese.

Teacher interview

What are the roles you have in creating the dance and what does the committee bring to table?

Mrs. DiCamillo *-"I am a part of the team that works on organization, I help organize the venders and biggest part of the dance is that I can support everyone else."*

Mrs. Varghese *- "My role is two faced. Organizing the students, create the decorations, and pulling the vision the students and I have created into an actual product. Turing the idea into a concept and ideas with the tickets. I create a schedule for students to sell tickets so that any student that wants to go can have time to purchase the tickets. I also work with students who want to attend the dance but have finical problems in buying the tickets. We try not to turn anyone away from the dance so the staff will sponsor for student and get help from the white plains PTA. My biggest role in the dance is working with Mrs. DiCamillo and Mrs. Conrad."*

What is the most important aspect of the dance?

Mrs. DiCamillo *- "In my role, I think the most importe thing is watching everyone enjoy the dance."*

Mrs. Varghese– "*I think the most important aspect is students creative and seeing the comity working together to make a successful dance"*

What do you think is so unique about your theme this year?

Mrs. DiCamillo - "I *just think it's that the people working on the vision is unique."*

Mrs. Varghese *– "We haven't done an NYC dance in 10 years; we are close to one of the greatest cities in the world and it would be something that everyone can connected to."*

What were all the themes proposed/ what were the potential themes?

Mrs. DiCamillo *- "I thought they were all amazing."*

Mrs. Varghese *– "There was a beach theme which we did last year and garden theme last two years and may use other theme in the future."*

But there aren't only people doing the dance preparations, we have students also helping our teacher planning and decorating for our dance.

Student interview

Why did you join the dance committee?

Kimberly – "*To be part of something and do something for the school."*

Blake – "*I wanted to make sure everybody has a good time at the dance."*



What are you going to be doing for the dance preparations?

Kimberly – "*Decorate*."

Blake – "*I will be decorating and selling tickets."*

How do you feel about the dance?

Kimberly – "*excited*."

Blake – "I*'m excited because I think will it be better than the 6th grade dance."*



CURRENT EVENTS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

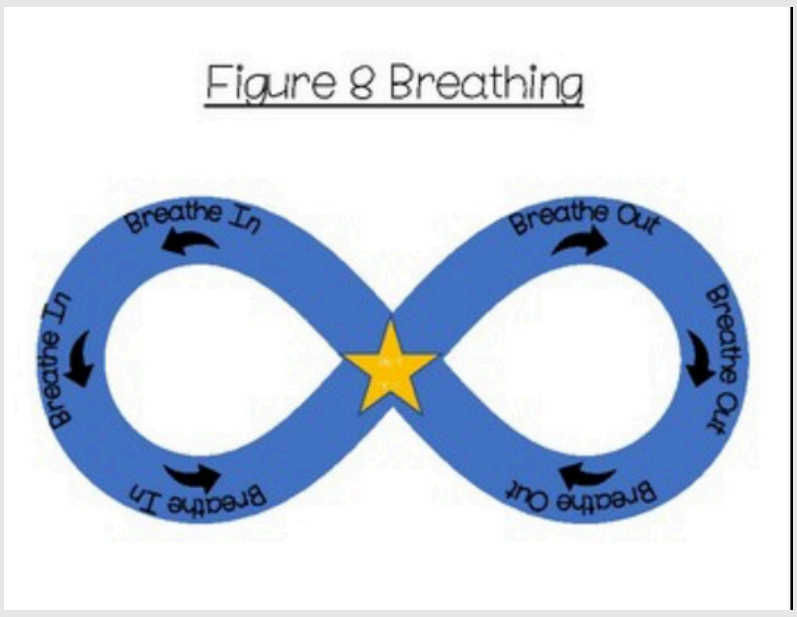
by Charlotte Pizzirusso

May is Mental Health Awareness month. This month focuses on your mental health and keeping your mind in a good place as we get ready for summer.

What is mental health? Well, mental health is our psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. It is how we feel on the inside and is very important for our lives. Below listed are some ways to improve your mental health.

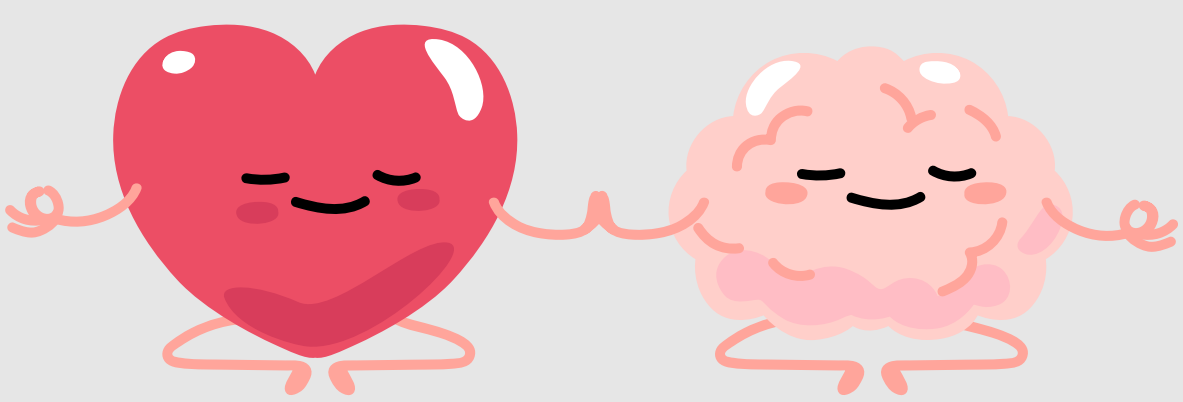
- Take a walk. Try going outside for fresh air. It can help to clear your mind and allow you to think better.
- Try breathing exercises. There are many different methods, the one that helps me most is figure eights. You trace a figure eight on your hand and breathe slowly in going one way out on the other.
- Practice positive self-talk. One method is positive self-affirmations every day. Try looking in the mirror in the morning and telling yourself “I can do this”.
- Spend time with people you care about. It’s always good to have a support system and people to talk to or just be there. Try spending time with parents, siblings, friends or pets.
- Do things that you like. There is always a lot to do in life but try to set aside some time for you to do what you enjoy. People who have “me time” every day are shown to be happier.

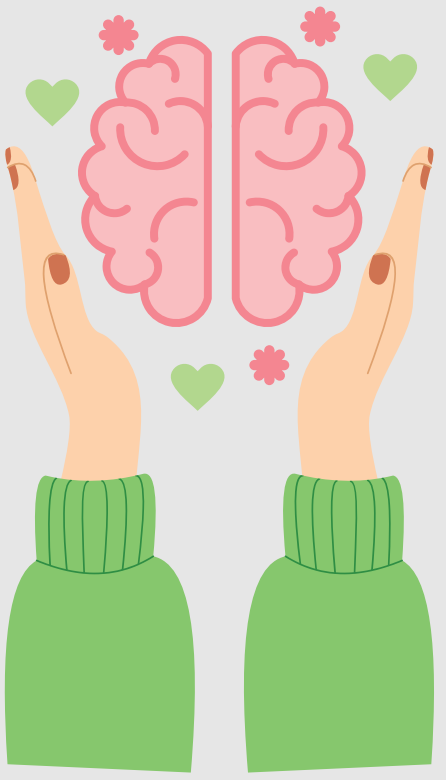
I hope you found this helpful for you. Try to work on making your life better for ***you*** this May and every month of the year.







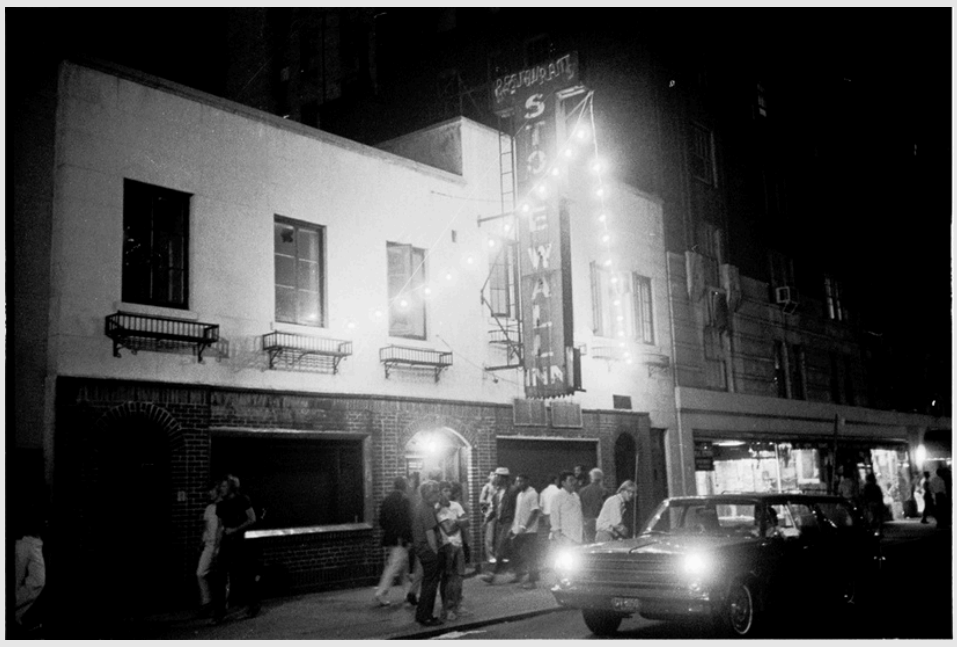




CURRENT EVENTS

THE STORY OF THE STONEWALL RIOTS

by Salvatore Bonaiuto





June is LGBTQIA+ pride month. Pride Month is a month-long observance dedicated to the celebration of LGBTQ pride, commemorating the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer culture and community. June was chosen as pride month to commemorate beginning the Stonewall Riots, also called the Stonewall Uprising, which started on June 28, 1969, and lasted six days and sparked widespread protests against police harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

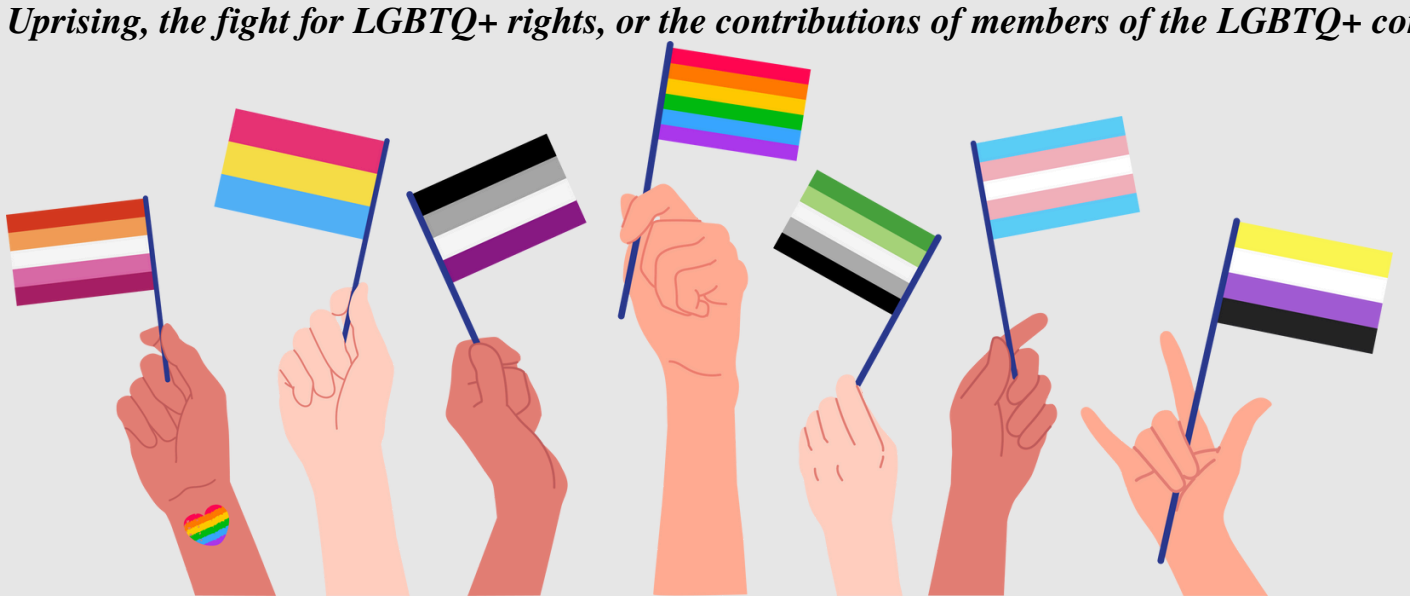
The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar in New York City, owned and operated by the Genovese crime family, which was quite common at the time. The LGBTQ community being ostracized by society and the Mafia generally caring little for the law, made for an unlikely partnership—one that helped establish NYC's gay bar scene. Though they were far from luxurious. There were no emergency exits, there was no running water behind the bar, so all the glasses were "washed" in the same tub of dirty water. But, despite all that, mob-owned bars were one of the only places LGBTQ+ people could openly express themselves.

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In addition to a multitude of health and safety concerns, the police also often raided the Stonewall Inn and other gay bars. They would take alcohol and force patrons to line up and show identification. However, the police could be persuadednotify the bar's owners ahead of the raids. Police raids were timed for when business was slow, and alcohol would be hidden so it couldn'tbe confiscated, meaning they could be back in action by night. But the early morning of June 28th, a raid happened again, but this one came as a surprise. Police entered, roughed up customers, and arrested 13 people. This was the final straw. Fed up with constant harassment and discrimination, patrons hung around, rather than leave and saw people get aggressively manhandled. Within minutes a full-out riot began involving hundreds of people yelling and tossing pennies, coins, bottles, and rocks at law enforcement. Eventually a riot squad was able to disperse the crowd, but protests, sometimes thousands of people strong, lasted for five more days.

The Stonewall Uprising led to the creation of many new LGBTQ+ rights organizations, the first pride parade on the one-year anniversary of the event, and the overall strengthening of the movement for LGBTQ+ rights.

I encourage you to do your own research into anything to do with pride month this June, whether it be more about the Stonewall Uprising, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, or the contributions of members of the LGBTQ+ community.



7A'S POETRY SHOWCASE

"I'm no good at writing poems"
By *David Braunwart*

If I can get it done
I will be calm and have no homework
I don't know what to write.
Maybe it will be about pets or family
its just that i've got nothing in my brain
it feels weird
and I feel like giving up.
It can be like an experimental poem
with lots of different things from the regular earth
maybe it will end on 2890
and people can be like emo.
But as I jot my ideas down
The bell rings
I've got nothing



"Ode to Evelyn"

Dear Evelyn,
From the moment I met you I knew you were family.
The fact that you were 3 and I was 9 when we first met didn't matter to me.
Through the past few years we've been through plenty.
Conflicts, struggles, grief, success, rivalry, growing, and yet we, have always stuck together like glue.
Because, Evelyn, you ARE family.
People can say otherwise but I, we won't care.
If they say that then they don't understand the bond we share.
I have a biological sister but we're distant.
She treated me as if we were separated.
But I would never do that to you, make you feel hated.
Because you, Evelyn, are my sister, even though we aren't related.
-anonymous

"My Glorious King , LeBron"

You are better than that grown man at the bay
You are so good you never miss a lay

You get through people so easily
You can always find a free shot
No one can guard the deep 3-point shot

You know what it is
It's TACO TUESDAY
The best day of the week

You are the oldest player in the league
The best player ever in the league
Not that much actually believe

Fans would grieve if LeBron would retire
Because of the kids just like me
he inspired

-Jared Bodner



"An Ode to Cheese, The Greatest Food Ever."
-anonymous



Cheese is awesome!
Cheese is awesome, it's such a delight,
Whenever you're hungry, it's the perfect bite!
It tastes so great no one can debate.
Cheese can fill you up right away, it and make you sway.

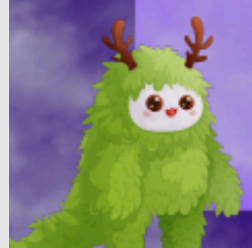
Cheese is great!
It's so good you will celebrate.
It can fill you up no need to hesitate.
If you're feeling down don't give up.
Just grab some cheese and gobble it up!
It can even brighten your mood it's truly first rate.
Cheese your really really great

Cheese is the best!
If you're stressed
Take a cheese break and it will calm you down
Cheese, I love you thanks for being around.

Whispers of the Unseen

I had always been brave,
relaxed,
and longing for something more.
I just didn't know what.
When I heard something in the woods,
I felt a wave of curiosity hit me

I was full of pure happiness
Was this what I was waiting for?
I approached the sound
Ready to fight
Yet I was calm
The creature sounded sad
Depressed
I didn't know why



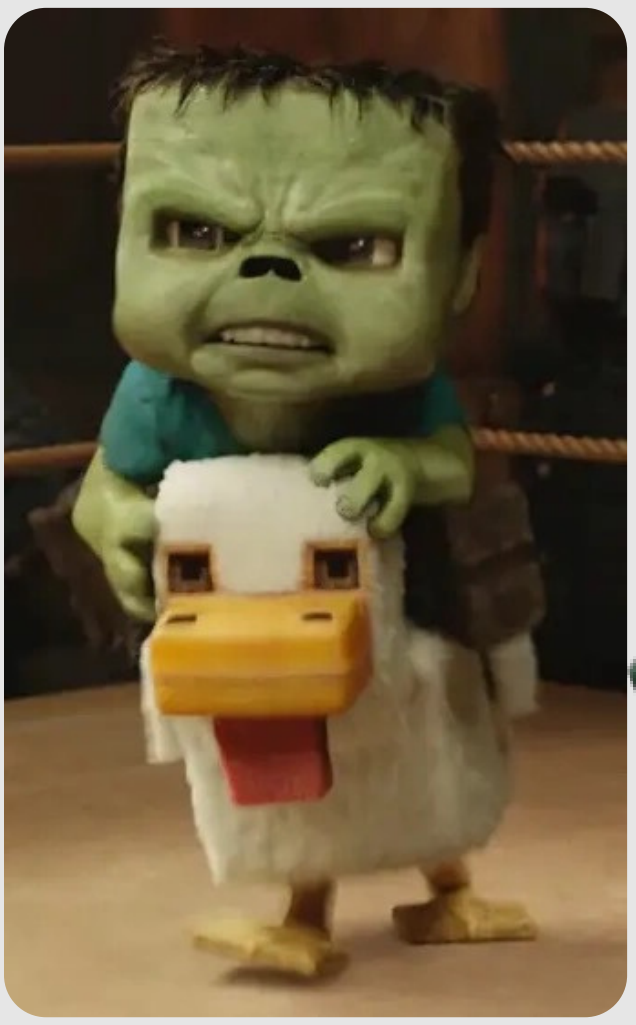
LIFE & LEISURE

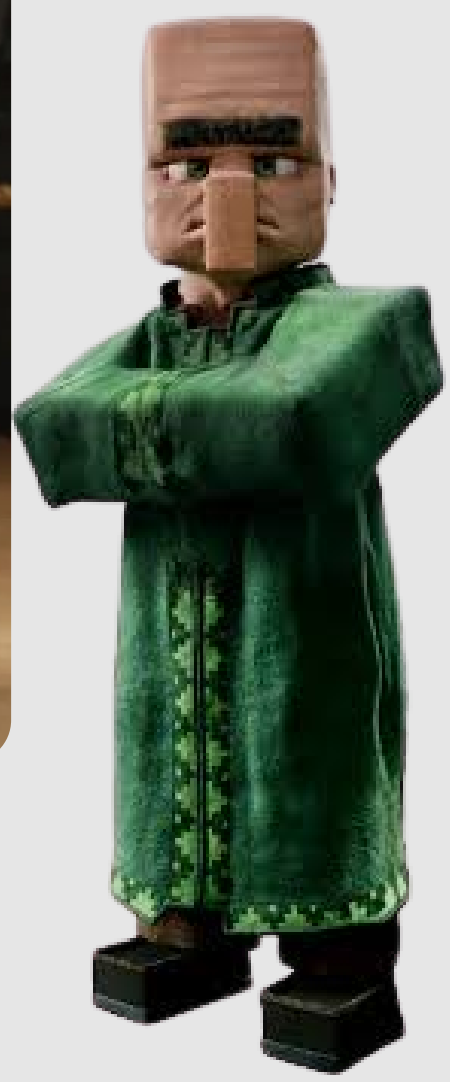
SUMMER MOVIE REVIEW: THE MINECRAFT MOVIE

By Andy Jimenez

I'm sure a lot of people have heard of Minecraft before. Whether you've played the game or not, everyone has at least seen or heard of the game. It's a very popular game after all. So, when they announced it was going to be turned into a movie, not many people were all that excited because, first of all, it was severely delayed from is announced date being originally announced all the way back in 2016 and said to be released in April of 2019 but obviously that didn't happen. And secondly, few people were optimistic about what it was going to be about since it was obviously going to be marketed towards children. Now when I heard that they were going to be releasing the movie this year, I'll admit I had zero hopes for the movie. From looking at the trailer, the CGI looked terrible, the dialogue was cheesy and overall, the movie looked like it would be corny and bad and Jack Black was there. (No hate towards Jack Black, but seriously? As Steve?). I even asked my friends about their opinions on the movie and even they said it looked trash.

So obviously as a man of my word, I watched the movie myself and I surely sort of ate my words. Now to me it was obviously cheesy because it had jokes targeted at younger children. But the way the lines were delivered made me and the rest of the theater, who were all definitely not children, laugh or at least crack a chuckle. Something about the way those stupidly designed jokes were delivered perfectly that it made me and a whole theater of TEENS, YES TEENS, start laughing. Whether it was their comedic genius or the overall stupidity of those cheesy jokes, it was all too funny. And don't get me started on the "Chicken jockey" meme. That singular line was delivered so perfectly by Jack Black that it caused riots in so many theaters. It was small from people yelling "CHICKEN JOCKEY" when the scene played, to others literally throwing food and bringing live chicken to the theater. It was crazy! I would say that A Minecraft Movie, A MOVIE MADE FOR CHILDREN, was so influential to our generation and our meme culture that it will never be forgotten.







SUMMER COURIER BOOK REVIEW

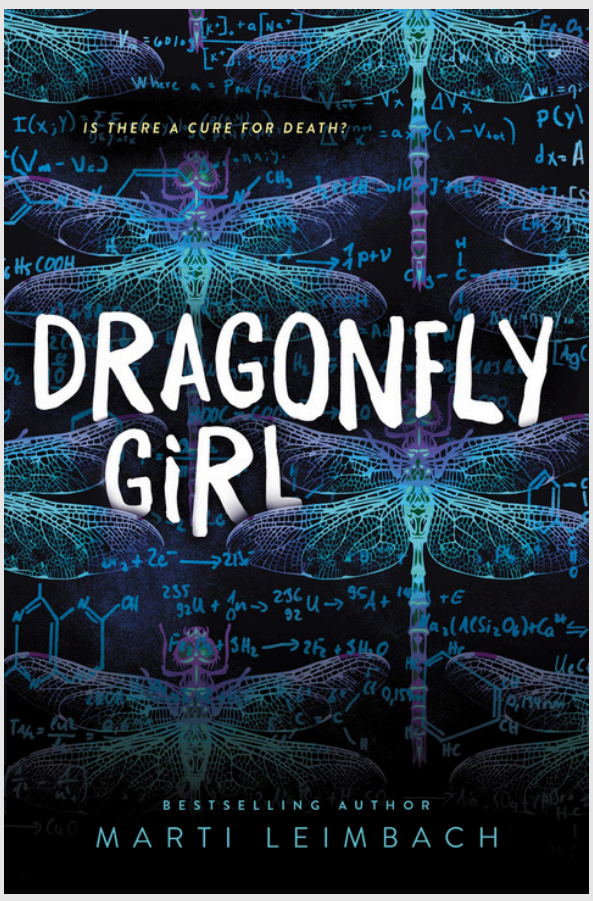
By Eleanor Ingram

If you like the books The Maze Runner by James Dashner, We Were Liars by E. Lockhart, and Frankenstein by Mary Shelley than you will likely enjoy Dragonfly Girl by Marti Leimback as well. This book is a really good science fiction thriller told from the 1st person perspective of Kira Adams. She is a science prodigy who's mom is suffering from cancer. Kira's only way out of the severe poverty her mom's cancer is causing them is to compete at all of these science competitions for their prizes, which usually consist of large amounts of money. Kira spends all of her time on science, and is struggling in every other subject as a result. While her families debts are slowly increasing, she applies for a science contest that is far away in Switzerland. For this contest, there is a requirement dealing with a pHd that Kira does not have so she leaves it blank and hopes for the best.

When Kira gets accepted into the contest, she ends up being really successful and getting the attention of a top American scientist. After he asks her to work at his lab, the Munn institute, she happily accepts as it part better than her other job and would be clean and safe for her. Things do not totally work in her favor, as she gets put under one of the guys she beat in the contest, Will. She ends up doing a lot of assistant work and cleaning at the start. One late night at the lab, she finds that one of the lab rats her only friends asked her to take care of had died. She tries out a method that she came up with and ends up actually saving his life and bringing him back to life through a complicated process. This becomes revolutionary for Kira, and she quickly gets promoted to a much higher job. As this attracts the news of many other scientists, Kiras life quickly gets put into danger as other countries start to get curious about her remedy for death. Her increadable discovery of a solution for death may just end up causing her to be imprisoned

.

This book is easy to follow and has an original plot with many twists to it. As the School Library Journal said, "This is a compelling YA debut… all the characters have depth, especially Kira, whose growth will entice readers to invest in her" (Erik Knapp). This highlights how interesting Dragonfly Girl is since any book where you truly feel as though you are friends with the character makes it so much more interesting to read. Additionally, Books, Bones, & Buffy stated, "Leimbach…i infuses her tale with some unexpected international intrigue, a little romance, and some edgy sci-fi elements" (Tammy). Both of these are completely true.

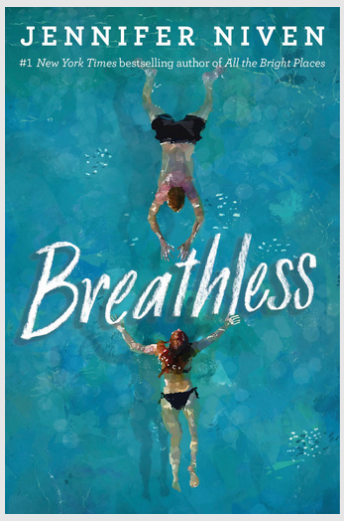


Similar books to this are We Kept Her in the Cellar by W.R. Gorman and Friends Like These by Jennifer Lynn Alvarez. We Kept Her in the Cellar is a reimagined story of Cinderella, told from the perspective of one of her stepsister's POV. The sister, Eunice, has always cared for Cinderella and has kept her families secret until Cinderella escapes one night to go to the ball. Friends Like These is about a mystery where the main characters Jessica and Jake both are caught up in a murder that they had no part in. Jake does not remember what happened, and Jessica wants to know what really happened and what happened to the girl.

LIFE & LEISURE

BEST YA BOOKS FOR THE SUMMER

By Eleanor Ingram



Breathless by Jennifer Niven

Romance

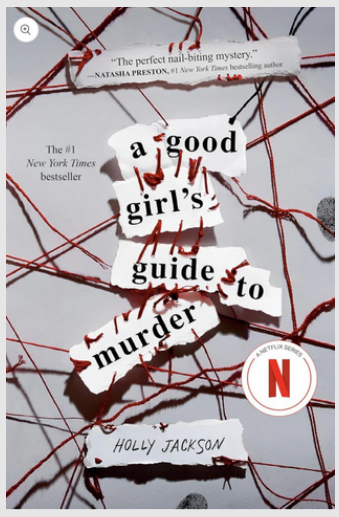
Takes place in summer on an island, 18 year old Claude and Jeremiah fall in love.



Nyxia by Scott Reintgen

Science fiction

Selected kids journey to an alien planet, have to learn to use a substance called Nyxia.



A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson

Mystery

Main character Pippa decides to solve a cold case in her town for school.



Nothing Bad Happens Here by Rachel Ekstrom Courage

Mystery/thriller

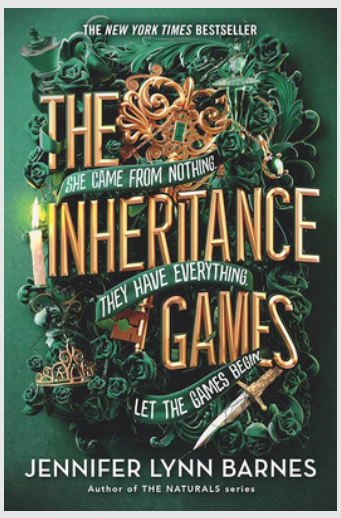
Lucia goes to Nantucket for the summer, stumbles into a murder mystery and tries to solve it.



Beach Cute by Beth Reekles

Humor, romance

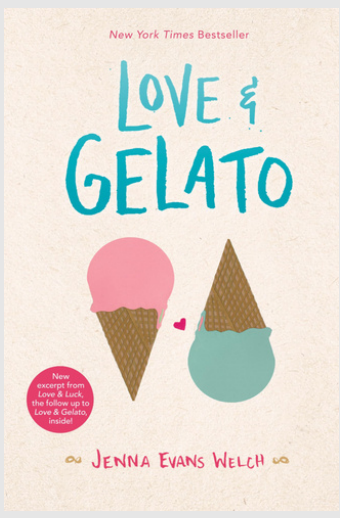
Three very different girls collide at a resort and have an interesting summer.



The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

Mystery/romance

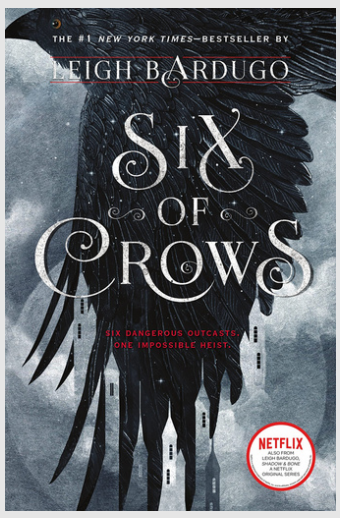
Avery Grams gets somehow in a billionaires will, gets hooked into a mystery with 4 brothers.



Love and Gelato by Jenna Evans Welch

Romance

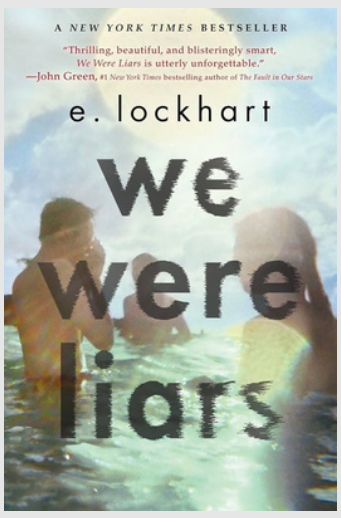
Lina goes to Italy to meet her dad, gets sucked into the magic of Italy with Ren.



Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo

Distopian

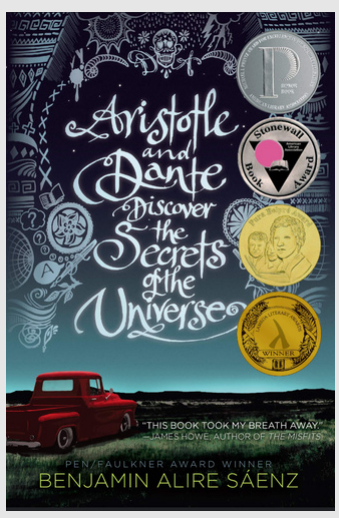
The fun story following a group of six thieves on a dangerous mission.



We Were Liars by E. Lockhart

Psychological thriller

Cadence has a strange injury and as she gets her memory back, things are not as they seemed.



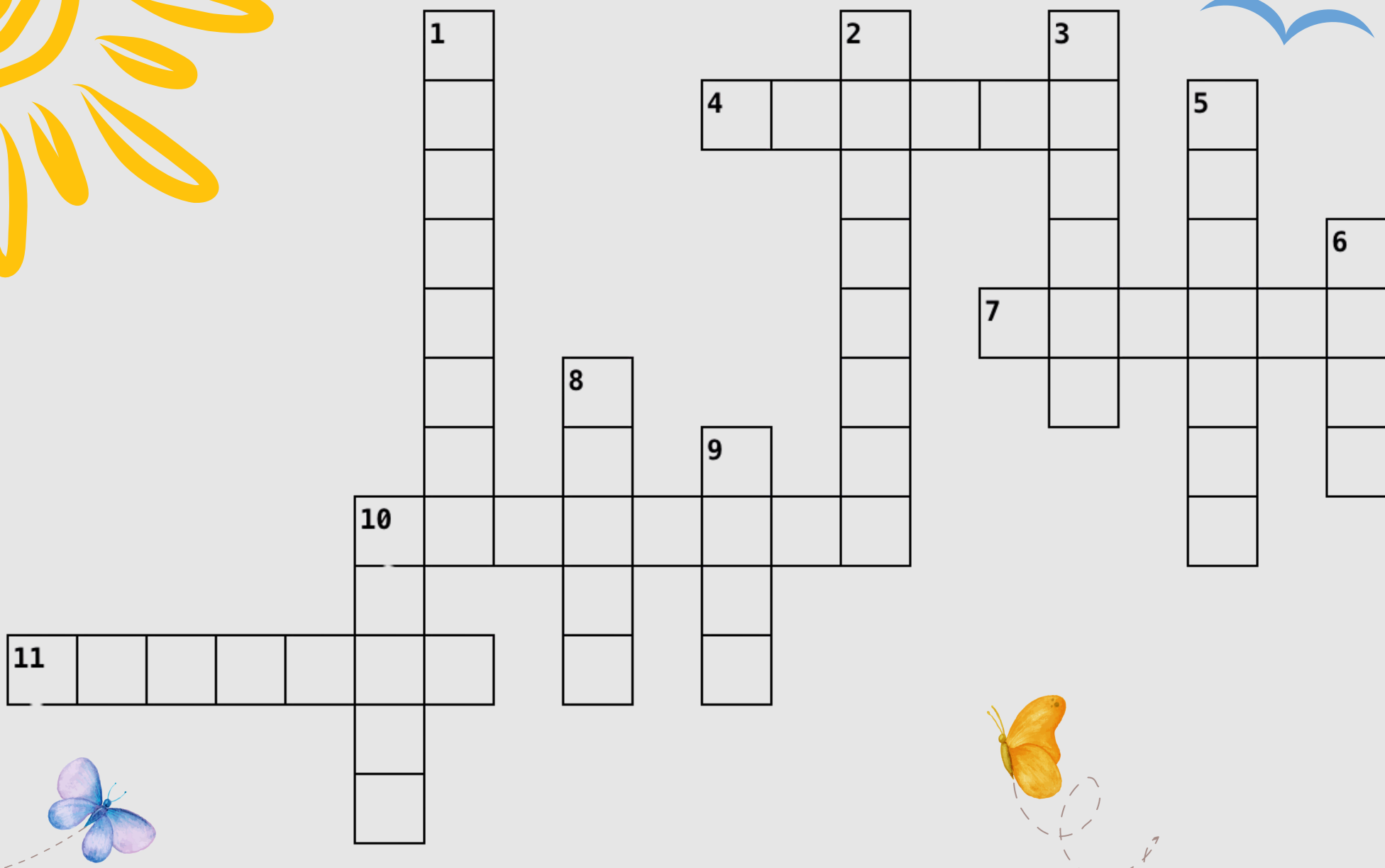
Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Coming of Age/romance

Ari and Dante become close friends one summer, Ari questions their friendship and himself.

LIFE & LEISURE

END OF THE YEAR CROSSWORD



Across

4. A slight wind

7. A pretty type of plant

10. Sport played with bat in the spring

11. You say the flowers are _____

Down

1. Protection from the rain

2. First word of day of remembrance

3. things that come off of blooming trees

5. Spring bring May flowers

6. Plants do this in the spring

8. Needed to grow trees

9. Baby Cow

10. Cute furry carrot eating animal



Created by Wyatt Gonzalez

Answers posted on the last page

LIFE AND LEISURE

Summer Fun Activity Recomendations

By Elizabeth O.S

Summer is a season many look forward to, since we don't have to go to school for 2 months and get to enjoy the heat. However, some people easily get bored and have no idea what to do in the blistering heat. Here are 5 activities you can do during the summer that are fun, and you'll be able to easily do.

1) Go to the pool!

Some pools may require you to have a membership, but other pools allow you to go without needing a membership. There you can cool down, splash anyone, and enjoy yourself! Some pools like Kittrell Park Pool need membership, but the ice cream truck comes to the pool where you can have a nice cool treat!

2) Going to the library

The library is a nice place where you can wind down and read a book! There's also events for 7-12th graders in the Edge. Sometimes they have movies, other times they have games, it always depends! Plus, if you have a library card, you can go upstairs to the Trove and use your library card to use one of the computers. They have a daily limit of 90 minutes, but it allows you to browse the Internet without feeling too hot.

3) Parks

There are always many public parks, and there you can do so many things. As long as the weather is nice, you can relax, have a nice walk, climb a tree, have a small picnic, play with your friends, the possibilities are endless!

4) Visit friends

You might eventually get bored not being able to visit your friends, so why don't you ask your parents if you can go to their house or hang out? Try to phrase it politely, and try to bargain. For example you could say, "I wanna visit my friend's house, and if you let me I'll do something you want." Negotiate with your parents to find a compromise.

5) Explore

Sometimes, you just want to do something new. For that, you could explore your town. Visit a store you haven't gone to, wander the street, and see if there's any local activities.





AFTER ONE MONTH, HERE'S HOW THE AWARD RACES ARE STACKING UP

By Kellen Doherty

Almost a quarter of the MLB regular season has happened, and we are starting to understand who the standout players will be, who the disappointments will be, what teams are leading, and what teams are lagging. Along with that, we have some ideas of who is front running for the MLB awards, specifically MVP, Cy Young, and Rookie of the Year. So, in today's article, I'm going through the favorites so far for each of those awards, and who might win each award if the season ended today.

American League MVP: Aaron Judge, OF, New York Yankees



At this point, Aaron Judge may have officially asserted himself as the greatest hitter of the 2010- present era and is remarkably close to guaranteeing a first ballot trip to Cooperstown. And as of right now, he's building stats that are reminiscent of steroid-era bombers, like Sammy Sosa, Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, and Alex Rodriguez. Not only does he have 12 homers, which is tied for the lead in the major leagues, but he leads the majors in average (at an astounding .401), OPS (1.241), is tied for first with 34 RBI and leads the majors with a 3.2 WAR, only one month into the season. His underlying metrics are incredible too, with Judge in the 100th percentile for batting run value and barrel %, the 99th for average exit velocity, and the 97th for hard hit %. And while you can argue that some of Judge's power is enhanced by the Little League Ballpark that is Yankee Stadium, Baseballsavant.com measured Judge to have at least 6 no-doubt homers, meaning towering, moonshots of home runs. Judge has been playing solid defense in the outfield, with an above average arm and arm range, and making above average plays in right. To add to his argument: Judge has been a significant role player behind the Yankee's above .500 start this season. And while he hasn't been the only reason, with hitters like Ben Rice, Paul Goldschmidt, Cody Bellinger, and Austin Wells also having strong offensive seasons, they wouldn't be the same team without Judge. He is irreplaceable to the Yankees, and in turn, he's been the Most Valuable Player in the American League.

2nd Place: Bobby Witt Jr (SS, Kansas City), 3rd Place: Alex Bregman (3B, Boston)

Bobby Witt Jr has picked up right where he left off last season, carrying the Royals to contention, although they look more like pretenders than contenders. Witt has a .325/.392/.530 slash line with 16 doubles and 5 homers, along with 23 RBI and 13 stolen bases. Similarly to Judge, he really carried the Royals last season, and so far, he has this season as well. He's a premium defender and playmaker at shortstop as well. Meanwhile, Bregman in his first season with the Sox has been adapting perfectly to Fenway, with a .319/.392/.596 slash line, 9 homers and 30 RBI. He's slotted into the Red Sox lineup well, and it's looking like the Astros and Tigers will regret their decision not to sign him last offseason.

Honorable Mention: Cal Raleigh (C, Seattle), Tyler Soderstrom (1B, Sacramento), Steven Kwan (OF, Cleveland)

National League MVP: Pete Alonso, 1B, New York Mets



Will this be the first time in baseball history that the MLB sees a New York- New York MVP award sweep? Or the first time in baseball history a Met wins the MVP award? As of now, it's looking like it. The Mets first baseman is off to an incredible start after his contract controversy last offseason, with a NL- leading 1.085 OPS and 34 RBI, along with having the 2nd best average in the NL, and the 2nd best WAR in the NL with 2.3. His power is still there, with him blasting 9 homers, 4 of which were no doubters, and many more fly balls would have gone out in different parks. His underlying metrics are exceptional as well, with Alonso being in the 98th percentile in barrel %, hard hit % and average exit velocity. His whiff rate and chase rate are down as opposed to last year, and he's taking much more mature and patient approaches at the plate. His defense, while it isn't the best, has improved, and he's made some very impressive picks and diving stops at first to protect runs and hits. And similarly to Judge, Alonso really carried the Mets through April. When Juan Soto would take a 7- pitch walk

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

AFTER ONE MONTH, HERE'S HOW THE AWARD RACES ARE STACKING UP *(CONTINUED)*

By Kellen Doherty

to put the pressure on Alonso in the 8th inning of a game the Mets are down by 3 in, Alonso always came up clutch, driving many doubles and triples into the gap in left- center field. So far, Pete's proved all his doubters wrong, and is on track to win the NL MVP.

2nd Place: Fernando Tatis Jr (OF, San Diego). 3rd Place: Corbin Carroll (OF, Arizona)

It's looking like Tatis has finally reached his MVP- caliber potential for the first time since he was suspended for using performance enhancing drugs in 2021. After switching from shortstop to the outfield in 2023, Tatis has been playing stellar defense in right, utilizing the cannon of an arm he was gifted with. On top of that, Tatis is slashing .319/.388/.584 with 8 homers, and a whopping 2.6 WAR already. One could argue that Tatis is the NL MVP. As for Corbin Carroll, it seems impossible to get the 2022 NL Rookie of the Year out. He has a .959 OPS, with 10 homers (many of which are no-doubters), 28 RBI, and a league leading 4 triples. Carroll has been a key part of the D-Backs success, and it is good to see him ending his "sophomore slump."

Honorable Mention: Kyle Tucker (OF, Chicago) Shohei Ohtani (DH, Los Angeles) James Wood (OF, Washington)

American League Cy Young: Garrett Crochet, LHP, Boston Red Sox

The Red Sox struck gold on Garrett Crochet when they made the biggest pitching trade of the offseason last February. While he hasn't had the best counting stats of 2025, they still are stellar, with a 1.09 WHIP, a 2.02 ERA, a 1.4 WAR, 10.3 k/9 and only 20 walks through 49 innings. Sure, they're good, but other pitchers have better counting stats than Crochet does. But his underlying metrics are among the best in the league, which tells me he will only be getting better as the season goes on. For example: his 30.1% chase and whiff rate are in the 80-82nd percentile.



He has a very low hard-hit rate, and a very high ground ball rate, which is crucial when pitching in the AL East. Small ballparks like Fenway, Yankees Stadium, Steinbrenner Field, and Camden Yards are not pitcher friendly, however Crochet does an excellent job of reducing fly balls, and letting his exceptional defense do the work for him. Although Red Sox pitchers like Tanner Houck, Walker Beuhler and Brayan Bello haven't been the best this season, Crochet has been carrying the brunt of the rotation for Boston, and will bring this team into the summer in what is sure to be a must-watch battle of the ages for 1st place in the AL East.

2nd Place: Max Fried (LHP, New York). 3rd Place: Hunter Brown (RHP, Houston)

I'll admit that I was wrong. Max Fried did not suffer a season- ending injury and cost the Yankees over $200 million for 7 years of mediocre seasons and injury- list stints. As of now, that investment has paid off big time. Between the injuries to aces Gerrit Cole and Luis Gil, and the insufficient pitching of Marcus Stroman and Carlos Carrasco, the Yankees needed someone to step up and become the work horse nasty ace pitcher all World Series contending teams need. Fried has become that guy. He has a 1.05 ERA, which leads the AL, and a 0.91 WHIP, which is 5th, along with a 2.0 WAR and 6 quality starts in 8 starts and 51 innings. He is inches away from Crochet in this race, and if he can stay healthy, very well may steal it from him come November. As for Hunter Brown, he has been one of the sole bright spots in what will likely be an otherwise dark year for Astros fans, as they cope with the idea their dynastic days may be over. Brown is bouncing back from a 2024 which saw him go from a top prospect to the worst pitcher in baseball to a solid 3-4 starter to a future ace. He's now safely landed at that ace landing, posting a 1.48 ERA and a 0.90 WHIP with a 2.1 WAR for the Astros, where he'll look to try and almost singlehandedly push the 'Stros to another playoff berth.

Honorable Mention: Tyler Mahle (RHP, Texas) Nathaniel Eovaldi (RHP, Texas) Tarik Skubal (LHP, Detroit)

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

AFTER ONE MONTH, HERE'S HOW THE AWARD RACES ARE STACKING UP *(CONTINUED)*

By Kellen Doherty



National League Cy Young: Hunter Greene, RHP, Cincinnati Reds

I was about 30 seconds away from fully committing to Yoshinobu Yamamoto to win this award. I started writing about him, I found a good-looking picture, and I pulled up multiple stat pages to collect info about his dominance. But while researching Yamamoto, I found someone who topped Yamamoto in almost every stat besides ERA. Hunter Greene of the Cincinnati Reds, who once was dubbed "Baseball's LeBron" when he was on the cover of Sports Illustrated during his senior year of high school. He's on track to becoming a superstar. After being plagued by injuries early in his professional career and by lingering command issues, Greene has settled into his role as the ace of the Reds nicely. And while he will drop back in the race after being placed on the IL with a groin injury a few days ago, his stats are incredible, and he deserves credit for the April Cy Young. He leads the NL with a 0.88 WHIP, he has a 2.36 ERA, he is 3rd in the NL with 12.0 K/9, he has has a 1.9 WAR, which is 2nd in the NL, and only has 8 walks in 45.2 innings. His whiff % is in the 92nd percentile of major leaguers, his average fastball velocity, which is sitting at a whopping 99.2 miles per hour, is in the 99th percentile, and his 34.7% k rate is in the 95th percentile of major leaguers. His secondary stuff is good as well, but his overwhelming fastball is what blows away hitters. And he's been carrying the Reds rotation that has been stretched extremely thin. While hitting and explosion on the base paths are the Red's specialty, Greene proves to the rest of the league that the Reds have power in the pitching department as well.

2nd Place: Yoshinobu Yamamoto (RHP, Los Angeles). 3rd Place: Zach Wheeler (RHP, Philadelphia)

As I mentioned earlier, Yamamoto is right on the tail of Hunter Greene for this award, with his dominating 1.80 ERA and 0.98 WHIP. He got a k/9 in the 10s, and already has a 1.3 WAR, and limits his free passes given in games. I veered away from him because of the inconsistency of his underlying metrics, which has him ranking middle of the pack for multiple crucial stats like Barrel %, Hard Hit %, BB %, and Average Exit Velocity. This suggests that overtime, when he faces better and better teams, like the Padres, Diamondbacks and Giants, his production will see a decrease. However, there's no hiding his excellent start to the season, standing out on a star-studded Los Angeles Dodgers team like a Phillies fan at Citi Field. Speaking of the Phillies and Mets, Zach Wheeler, a current Phillie and former Met is my third-place finisher. It seems every year that the veteran righty comes so close to the Cy Young award but still has never collected one for his trophy shelf. Could this be his year? Wheeler has a 0.91 WHIP, a 2.95 ERA, a 1.9 WAR and a 11.5 k/9 in 58 innings pitched. As the Phillies near the end of their window of contention, Wheeler also nears the end of his career, and it would be amazing to see him bring a Cy Young home, even though it would be as a Phillie, and not a Met, like it should have been.

Honorable Mention: Paul Skenes (RHP, Pittsburgh), Logan Webb (RHP, San Francisco), Kodai Senga (RHP, New York)

American League Rookie of the Year: Jacob Wilson, SS, Sacramento Athletics

He has the slowest bat in the majors, he never squares up the ball, and it's rarely a homer, but Jacob Wilson is better at putting the ball in play than anyone else in the American League. Wilson was famous for being the "greatest minor leaguer of all time," where he posted a batting average near .400. He has carried that success with him to the bigs, as he currently is batting .363 for the A's, with a .906 OPS, and the lowest strikeout rate in the majors, at just 5.4%. Granted, he has the worst underlying metrics that a ROY candidate may have ever had, with his baseballsavant.com page looking very, very blue. He is in the 16th percentile for average exit velo, 13th for barrel %, 5th for hard-hit %, and has the official slowest bat speed in the majors, at 63.2 MPH. Somehow, he just puts the ball in play, and it finds holes. But he's been a key part to the A's successful-so-far-first year in Sacramento. He holds a 1.5 WAR, 24 runs and 26 RBI, so I'll give him my vote for April's AL ROY.

2nd Place: Kristian Campbell (2B/OF, Boston). 3rd Place: Jackson Jobe (RHP, Detroit)

National League Rookie of the Year: Agustin Ramirez, C, Miami Marlins

When the Yankees traded for Jazz Chisholm Jr. last summer to "complete" their team, one of the major prospects the Marlins got back was a young catcher named Agustin Ramirez. No one outside of the most diehard Yankees fans knew him. Now people are saying the Yankees lost the trade that brought them to the World Series because of how Ramirez has played. Through 19 games, Ramirez has a .247/.295/.521 slash line with 9 RBI and 4 moonshot homers. On top of that, the Marlins #4 overall prospect has an exceptional hard-hit rate and barrel %, and has some great bat speed, but does not get to be ranked among other major leaguers due to his late call-up. He's been of the utmost importance to the Marlins this season, because of his defense at a premier position, which has been average, but still is important for the struggling Marlins team. All in all, Ramirez has shown excellent potential toward the beginning of the season, despite his small sample size, and is my winner for NL May ROY. (Note: The Yankees won the trade, as of now.)

2nd Place: Dylan Crews (OF, Washington). 3rd Place: Luisangel Acuna (INF, New York)

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End of the Year Crossword Puzzle Answers

Across

4. Breeze
7. Flower
10. Baseball
11. Budding



Down

1. Umbrella
2. Memorial
3. Petals
5. Showers
6. Bloom
8. Seeds
9. Calf
10. Bunny