

THE COURIER

THE LONGEST RUNNING MIDDLE SCHOOLS NEWSPAPER IN THE UNITED STATES

HIGHLANDS STUDENT ORGANIZATION

By Leah Villeneuve-Vedete & Charlotte Pizz

What is the Student Organization?

The SO is the student Government here at Highlands. It’s a Group that you can join if you want to have an input in things happening at our school. The SO help plan events, fundraisers and more.

Who runs it?

The SO is run by students! Its teacher advisor is Ms. Melendez, who teaches Social Studies on team 7B. Some other notable people are, student President Sophia Reinoso Medina, Vice President Grace Plunkett, 7th Grade Secretary Sophia De La Cruz, 8th Grade Secretary Sebastian Leon, 7th Grade Treasurer Aaliyah Cohen, 8th Grade Treasurer Mathew Cuenca, 7th Grade Public Relations Manager John Plunket and 8th Grade Public Relations Manager Olivia Steptoe.

Why have an SO?:

A Student Organization is a way for students to have an input on their school and raise awareness for student issues. I’m sure there are problems you have with school and some of them are non-negotiable. We can’t cancel homework or make recess all day (trust me I wish we could too). But there are things we can change, like making events better in ways we actually enjoy, fundraising to make more money for our trips and other fun things. An SO is important because students should have a voice too.

How can I join?:

If you like the ideas and activities listed above and want your own voice in student government, you can email Ms. Melendez or find her in room 337 to talk about joining SO. Anyone and everyone can join! Officer positions are already filled for this year, but we did all vote for our officers to choose who represents us and 7th Graders you can always run next year. If you don’t want an officer role or still want to join this year, you still can! Everyone in SO has input, not just officers, so it’s not too late to join.

Concluding thoughts:

Student Organization plays a vital role in keeping the school community informed and engaged. The group provides a channel for students to learn about upcoming events, raise concerns, and share their ideas—even when not every thought can be accepted it’s still a good way to get involved and stay updated about school events and things to make the school a better community as a whole.



8TH GRADE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

By Charlotte Pizzirusso

This year we did our quarter one 8th Grade teacher spotlight on Mr. Babicz who teaches earth science on 8B. I did a Q&A with him that you can see here to learn more about him

Q. Where did you grow up?

A. Upstate New York.

Q. Where did you go to college?

A. Associates from Sullivan County Community College in Culinary Arts

Another Associates from The Swedish Institute in Massage Therapy

Bachelors from Pace University for Environmental Studies

Masters from Pace in Science for Teachers

Q. Why did you want to go into teaching?

A. I wanted to go into teaching because I hated going to high school. I was very insecure and felt like I had no connections with my teacher and I wanted to make a difference for younger students to build positive relationships with teachers.

Q. Why did you want to go into science?

A. I was always interested in the weather, how things work, and the natural world. As a kid I wanted to be one of two things a weatherman or a profesional chef

Q. How long have you been teaching for?

A. 14 years

Q. Have you taught anything else besides earth science.

A. No

Q. Who are some of your role models

A. One of my high school English teachers who encouraged me to take risks and mentored my creativity he was just really kind, and I had a great relationship with him. Also, my father because he always taught me to treat others how I want to be treated and be compassionate.

Q. What do you do in your free time?

A. I like to cook, I’ve run three marathons and fun fact that most people don’t know I like to search for different types of mushrooms, edible mushrooms not the poisonous ones. I hike a lot.

Q. What’s your favorite book you’ve ever read?

A. The Dark Towers series by Steven King

Q. What was your favorite subject as a student?

A. I really liked art because it’s creative and there’s no strict format.

Q. What’s some advice for students?

A. “Stay close to the friends that challenge you to be a better person, reach out for support when you need it and always consider your mental health as a top and number one priority in your life and know that if you feel lonely you are never alone”

Q. What are you looking forward to a Highlands this year?

A. I’m looking forward to sharing and teaching in a new way this year based on the fellowship I did for six weeks this summer at Carry Institute for Ecological Studies.

Q. Is there anything else you’d want readers to know about you?

A. I’m a big nerd who always tries to look at the brighter side of life.

Mr. Babicz
Team 8B

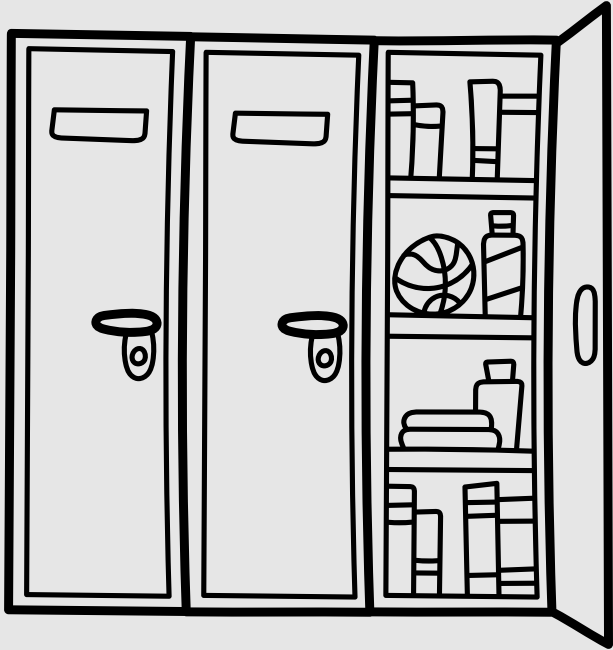


AN 8TH GRADERS GUIDE ON HOW TO SURVIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL

by Daniel Pizzirusso

These are my top tips on how to survive middle school in quarter 1

- When there is a “hallway jam” just go through it because you don’t have time to go around.
- If your locker combination isn’t working don’t pull on it a million times. It wont work. Instead turn it three times and try again, or if it really won’t open go to a teacher for help.
- For lunch get to the cafeteria early. People will mercilessly steal your seat.
- Do not write “6’7” for every answers on your math test. It’s not funny and you are going to fail. Save it for the cafeteria.
- Don’t stand up on the bus it’s dangerous. (Seriously I’ve tried before.)



ENCORE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

By Lizzie O.S

1. Where did you go to school/grew up?
I grew up in Gloversville, NY and went to the Gloversville Enlarged School District. I got my teaching degree's from The College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY.

2. What made you want to go into Education?
I love playing and teaching music and I love helping kids find their own voice through music. I also had a difficult time when I was in middle school. So I like helping kids navigate through the challenges of this part of their lives.

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

4. Who are your role models? Why?
My father. He lived his entire life trying to be the best person he could be.

5. What are your hobbies/What do you do for fun in your free time?
Hockey (let's go Boston Bruins!), computers, the paranormal, animals.

6. What is your favorite book that you've ever read?
Ode to a Tenor Titan: The Life and Times and Music of Michael Brecker by Bill Milkowski

7. What subject was your favorite when you were a student? Why?
Band, because I made many friends and found success and belonging in the band room.

8. What advice do you have for students today?
Be kind and live every moment to the fullest, because "No amount of money ever bought a second of time". (quote by Howard Stark)

9. What are you most looking forward to this year at Highlands?
Getting to know the students on a more personal level and playing some great music while hopefully having some fun along the way.

10. What else would you like our readers to know about you?
My favorite instrument to listen to is a well-played French horn. My least favorite instrument to listen to is a poorly played French horn, tied with bad bagpipes.

Mr. Veeder
Band



7TH GRADE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

by Daniel Pizzirusso

1: I was born and raised in Ardsley and went all the public schools there. After high school I went to. SUNY Purchase and studied literature and got my bachelors degree. Afterwords I went to LIU and got my masters degree in English and special education grade 5-12.

2: What motivated me to pursue education was my love of working with children all throughout high school and sharing with them my love of reading and writing. I always wanted to allow kids to have a positive experience and watch them grow, so they reach their full potential.

3: This is my eleventh-year teaching.

4: My greatest role models would have to be my mom, and older siblings. This is because my mom never went to collage yet made sure all of four daughters pursued their dreams independently and successfully.

5: My newest hobby would have to be playing with my soon to be one year old son baby Dan. When I'm not playing with him, I love to read, exercise, and go on long walks.

6: My favorite book that I have ever read is a very hard question. I have to choose two, the first is The Great Gatsby by F. Scott. Fitzgerald because it teaches all about the American dream. My other favorite book is called How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent because it taught me so much about immigrant experiences in the United States.

I think it's pretty obvious, but I loved English and psychology. I always loved thinking deeper about texts and discussing that with my peers. For psychology. I was always intrigued by the human mind and how it works.

8: In the spirit of just finishing the book Ghost with my students and my own personal experiences. My biggest piece of advice would be. You have the power to make anything of your self, do not let your past define your future.

9: I am most looking forward to seeing my students excel in their writing while hopefully building lifelong connections and trying out new ideas.

10: I would like the readers to know that teachers are people too. What you all see is only one side of me. We are dynamic people just like all of you.

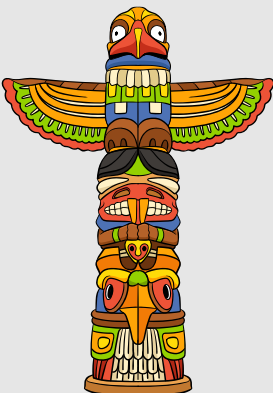
Mrs. Wray
Team 7E



NOVEMBER: NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

By Mina Auletta

November is Native American heritage month. We honor Native Americans today and their crucial role in our history and society. America is one of the most diverse countries in the world, and it is important to know all cultures when you live here, especially the one that was originally here. Today, Native Americans make about 1.5 percent of our population. That might seem like a small number, but it is 4.5 million people! Many Native American tribes lived in New York, including the Lenape in the southern part of the state and New York City area, the Mohawk, and other nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy further north, and the Mohican along the Hudson River. There are other tribes, but these are the most known. Native people today still celebrate their culture with rituals, ceremonies, and festivals like green corn festivals. It is important to know your heritage and honor others!



LOCAL NEWS

THE DAY THE PHONES WENT SILENT.

By Lukas Villar

Some kids have been asking for “How come they cannot use their phones in school anymore?” Well in January 2025, Kathy Hochul announced her plan to ban smartphones in school during her “States of the State Address” in Albany, she wanted a distraction free environments for students

Later in February the bills were introduced in the legislature and then around march debates took place in Albany and there was a split between people and Speaker Carl Heastie,

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins made an advocacy group called the Phones Free NY led by Ram Goyle.

Near April of 2025 the phone ban was included in the FY 2026 New York State Budgets Negotiations.

Then on the fateful day, May 9th, Governor Hochul signed the budget, which officially included the bell-to-bell phone ban law which means you can not pull out your phone from the start of first period until the end of the school day and must be away.

Near our school year 2025-2026 the law took effect and making it New York’s largest state in the nation to have such a ban for its citizens.

Some students and parents supported the ban thinking it would help with focus while others opposed that they are worried about emergencies or needing to contact family,

Have you realized some students have been more productive than the year prior due to this law?



THANKSGIVING MYTHS & TRADITIONS

By Lizzie Orzuna Santiago and Mason Coronel

You all know how Thanksgiving started right? The Wampanoag (The name of the tribe that lived pilgrims,) and the pilgrims helped each other to survive the winter and had a celebration in honor of their alliance. Well, that isn’t exactly the case. They did help each other, but they weren’t invited. Some historians suspect that the Wampanoag heard the gun shots of the pilgrim celebrating, went over and stuck around.

Some may believe that the “First Thanksgiving” was the start of a yearly tradition, but the story is more complex than a single feast. While some may say that “The First Thanksgiving was simply the start of yearly tradition.” However, others say that “The holiday we celebrate today doesn’t reflect the messy, and complicated history of the time, turning a single event into an oversimplified story.” But the truth is the first Thanksgiving was a harvest celebration shared in 1621 by the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag people. While it is often remembered as the start of a yearly tradition, there is no evidence that it at once became an annual event.

Pilgrims are iconic for their black and white clothes and the shiny buckles on their hats and shoes. But the question here is “What did Pilgrims actually wear during that sacred day we know as thanksgiving?” The truth was that the Pilgrims wore a variety of earthly tones and other shades, often avoiding the oversized buckles. Black was often saved for special occasions due to it being expensive and difficult to dye.

Many believe that to celebrate the friendship between the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims, they were invited to a feast. However there’s evidence that imply that the Pilgrims had their feast on their own, shooting their muskets into the air. This made the Wampanoag think they were under attack, and so rushed over.

Now that you know about some myths about the event, here is how major events lead up to the first thanksgiving. Firstly, the pilgrims decided to leave England around September 16, 1620. They mostly left due to religious persecution and the need for religious freedom since they were a Separatist group. A Separatist group is a group of people who supports the separation of a particular group of people from a larger body based ethnicity, religion, or gender. This group wanted to break free from the Catholic Church and so fled to Holland. After a period, they chose to go to America to be able to practice their religion freely, while keeping their English identity. Some also wanted to convert Native Americans to Christianity. However first they went to Southampton England before boarding the Mayflower.

The trip was challenging and miserable. It took them 66 days to arrive at Cape Cod on their third attempt. The first time, the Mayflower went with another ship named the Speedwell, but the Speedwell proved unseaworthy and so they tuned back. The second time, the Speedwell was leaking so had to turn back. On the third attempt, the Mayflower went alone. It was cramped, rocky and one passenger Willian Bitten died. It is believed he was sick for 2 months before succumbing to the disease. The Mayflower first landed on what is now called Provincetown Harbor on Cape Cod Massachusetts on 11/11/1620. After exploring the place, they eventually decided to stay and make a permanent settlement. While they were building, they lived on the ship while building. The first winter was brutal, causing nearly half of the colonists dying from disease and horrid conditions. Thanks to the Wampanoag people, particularly Squanto who taught them essential skill for survival, they were able to survive.

The Pilgrim feast in 1621 began as a harvest celebration to celebrate a successful harvest after such a devastating first year. The governor William Bradford organized the the three event which originally consisted of corn, squash, beans, wild fowl, seafood and possibly cranberries. Some of the pilgrims shot their muskets in the air to celebrate but the Wampanoag thought they were under attack. This caused a group of 90 Wampanoag men, led by Chief Massasoit, arrived at the settlement and were invited to join the feast. The Wampanoag in turn, brought 5 deer to share with the colonists.

And that is the whole article. Now you have learned a lot more about thanksgiving, myths, and the pilgrims’s actual voyage. Some traditions have started from unexpected things, and some myths can be busted. Hopefully you can find this helpful for any confusion. There are so many Thanksgiving traditions and myths. Have you ever heard of these myths before? You could share these random facts at the thanksgiving table to make you seem smarter. Have a wonderful holiday season this year!



Hey You!(Yes You.) Are you worried about emergencies or needing to contact family, have you realized some students have been more productive than the year prior due to this law. What is your opinion about this?! Email: Lv509404@live.wpcsd.k12.ny.us On outlook For Questions or Other articles I should write about, Thanks for Reading :D



CELEBRATE THE ARTS AT HIGHLANDS

By Leah Villeneuve-Vedete

Every song has a story — and so do the teachers who bring them to life. From early morning rehearsals to late-night concert prep, the music department’s teachers dedicate themselves to helping students find their rhythm, their voice, and their confidence, one note at a time.

Ms. Pyne is the 8th grade band teacher, she does the NYSSMA club and the 8th grade band lessons

What started you love for music?

“I first remember loving music when I was 4 years old. My oldest brother was 14, and I would listen to his records whenever he would let me. We listened to the Beatles, Pink Floyd and Jethro Tull a lot. My love of music started with rock and roll, and I had started collecting records as soon as I was old enough to save up money to buy them. Buying records was my favorite thing! I started piano lessons when I was 7 and started playing flute in 4th grade.”

Why teach 8th grade band?

“I teach 8th grade band because it's such an important bridge between elementary music and high school music. The students are intelligent and funny, and they are starting to become aware of the larger world of music, both in terms of the complexity of playing and reading music, and what they might want to do with music in the future.”

What’s the most rewarding part about being a music teacher?

“The most rewarding part of teaching music is having a front-row seat to developing artists. We have a lot of laughs in class, but we work hard. Going through the process from starting a new piece of music, working through it one student and one note at a time, then putting it all together and presenting a concert, it's very exciting; especially on concert night.”

What’s the most challenging part about being a music teacher?

“The most challenging part of teaching 8th grade is motivating everyone to pay attention at all times. Our rehearsal time is sacred, but band students tend to be very chatty. “

How do you pick your concert pieces?

“I have several reasons for choosing each concert piece. We like to have different moods (exciting/slow/melancholy/uplifting), different styles (classical, contemporary), some classic pop or holiday tunes, maybe some movie music, it's different for every concert. It is also very important that the music includes notes, rhythms, and musical expression that present a challenge to the students, but that they will be able to learn by the time we play a concert! Finally, the piece has to move me in some way; if I don't enjoy it, the students will not enjoy it. That's just how it is. Sometimes I worry that we won't be ready in time to present a concert, but in all the years I have been a band teacher, the young musicians show up and do a beautiful job every time!”

Ms. Davila is one of our music teachers here at highlands, she teaches general music, chorus and founded the tenth period select choir.

What started your love for music?

“ I don’t remember a time when I wasn’t singing and dancing and playing the piano.”

Why teach chorus and select choir?

“My main instrument is voice, and I like this age group and it’s a nice variety so I’m not teaching the same thing every day.”

What’s the most rewarding part about being a music teacher?

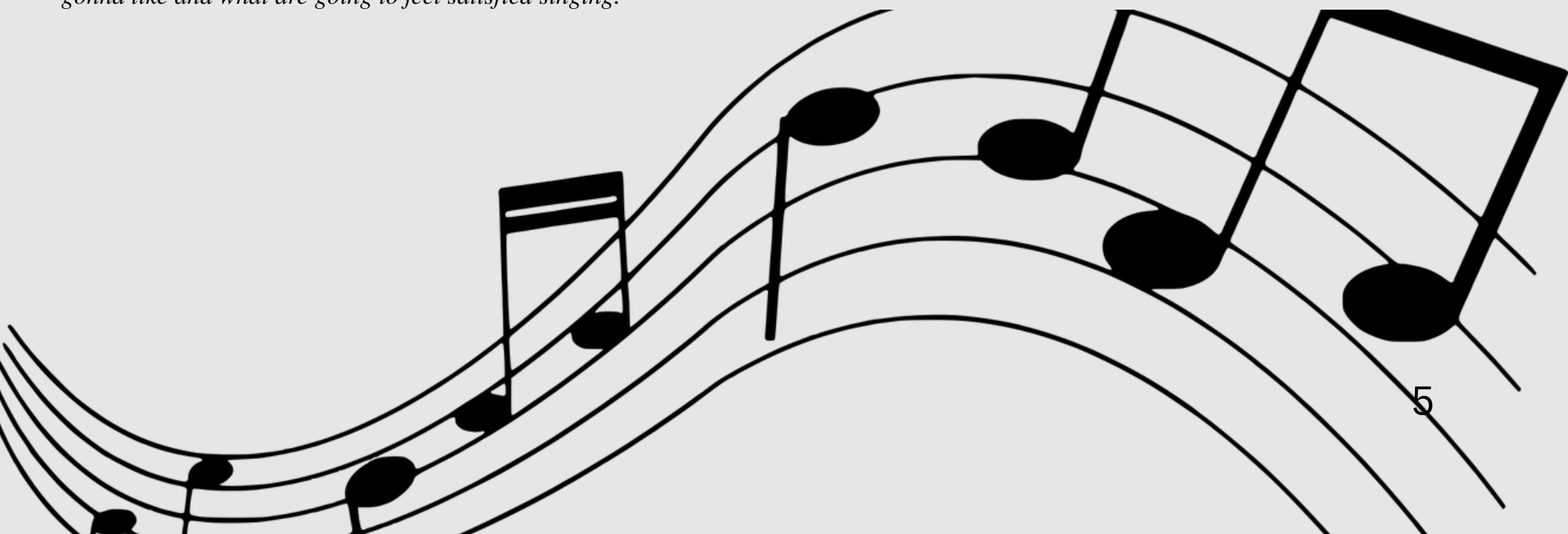
“Making music with the students and when they really enjoy a piece and when a student grows in confidence or realizes when they are good at an instrument”

What is the most challenging part about being a music teacher?

“Never feeling like you have enough time for things like practices and concerts.”

How do you pick your music pieces?

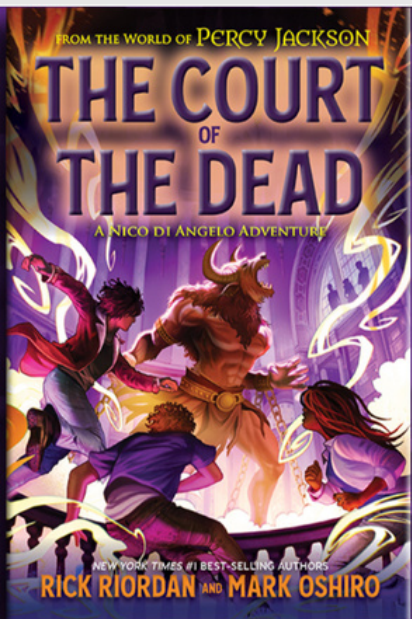
“I pick them over the summer- yes that means listening to jingle bells in July. But it’s a mixture of what the students are gonna like and what are going to feel satisfied singing.”



By Leah Villeneuve-Vedete



Whether it's leading a choir, tuning instruments, or helping a student find their confidence, each of our music teachers brings something unique to the stage. Together, they fill our school with rhythm, creativity, and heart — proving that music isn't just part of our curriculum, it's part of who we are.



BOOK REVIEW: *BLUE LOCK*

by: Jennifer Reyes Martinez

Blue Lock is a manga series about a high school soccer player named Yoichi Isagi who joins a rigorous training program to become the best striker in the world. Created by Muneyuki Kaneshiro with illustrations by Yusuke Nomura, Blue Lock is a competitive and intense sports drama where 300 players face off in a "battle royale" to find the best striker in Japan. The program is designed to create a selfish and goal-hungry striker, and the last one standing will earn a spot on the national team. Blue Lock is also available on Netflix. I recommend this book and movie to people who love soccer or who want to be a soccer player in the future. Blue Lock was first released as a manga and later as a movie, and some of the characters are LGBTQ+.

Traducción al español:

Blue Lock es una serie de manga y se trata sobre una escuela secundaria que es parte de futbol llamado Yoichi Isagi que se une en un programa de entrenamiento riguroso para convertirse en el mejor delantero del mundo. Blue lock fue creado por muneyuki kaneshiro con ilustraciones de Yusuke nomura la serie es un drama Deportivo, competitivo e intenso, donde 300 jugadores se enfrentan en una “batalla campal” para encontrar al mejor delantero de Japón. El programa está diseñado para crear un delantero, egoísta y hambriento de goles, y el último en pie, se ganará un puesto en la selección Nacional. Blue Lock también está en Netflix para que todos lo vean. Yo recomiendo este libros y película por qué las personas que encanta futbol o las personas que quieren ser un jugador de futbol en el futuro. Blue lock primero salió como un manga primero y despues salió como una película y tambien unos personajes son parte de Lgbtq+.

BOOK REVIEW:

THE COURT OF THE DEAD

By Charlotte Pizzirusso

Do you like reading fantasy? Do you enjoy adventure? Have you read the Percy Jackson series? If so then I have the book for you! The Court of the Dead is Rick Riordan’s latest book which he coauthored with Mark Oshiro. The book follows the popular characters Nico di Angelo and Will Solace and takes place as a sequel to The Sun and the Star happening three months later. If you're looking to read this book you should read the Sun and the Star first.(which should be no problem because it’s an amazing book 10/10 but that’s not what this is about). Anyway if you’ve read that than read on! In this book Nico and Will are back at Camp Half-Blood helping some new demigods when Nico gets an urgent call from his sister Hazel Levesque saying that she needs there help at Camp Jupiter. She won’t give them many details except that it has to do with there new... guests(ominous much). The boys are confused but Hazel seems panicked so they set off. This quest challenges everything demigods have ever been taught for centuries but if anyone could be open minded to change it’s Nico and Will. If you love the thrill of the Percy Jackson series quests and the signature Rick Riordan humor that’s there even in dark moments or if you're looking for more cute moments from Nico and Will than this book is for you!

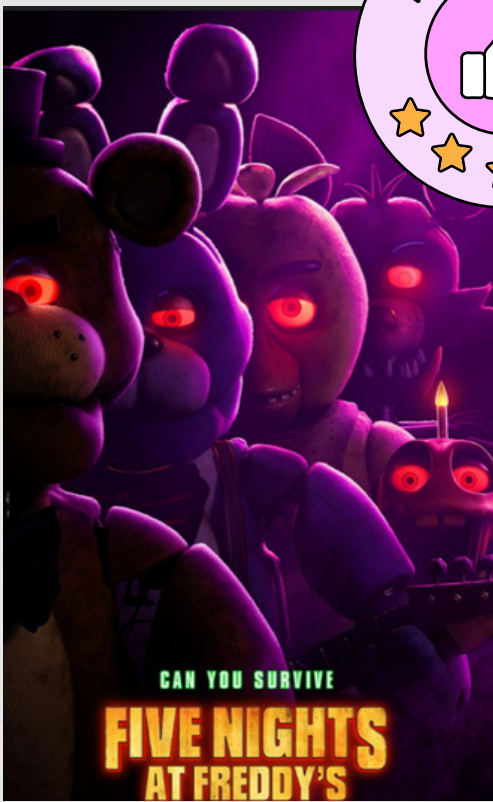
“FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY’S” MOVIE REVIEW

by Samira Baculima

The movie "Five Nights at Freddy's," which hit theaters in 2023, turns the well-known horror game series into a film filled with suspense, mystery, and emotional drama. Directed by Emma Tammi and brought to life by Blumhouse, it tells the story of Mike Schmidt. He is a young guy trying hard to look after his little sister Abby while haunted by difficult past memories. In need of money, he takes on a night-guard job at an old place called Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. What starts as an easy gig soon turns frightening when the animatronics—Freddy, Bonnie, Chica, and Foxy—begin moving on their own.

A standout feature of this film is how it uses practical effects and puppetry to animate the robotic characters. Instead of heavily using CGI, they make these figures seem real and present in the scene, enhancing the fear factor. The film also captures key elements from the games like spooky hallways, security camera screens, and the eerie silence of the pizzeria during nighttime. These details create a setting that feels both familiar yet new for fans and those new to it.

Beyond its scary moments, the movie adds layers to the FNAF world by looking into themes like family bonds, trauma recovery, and taking responsibility. The bond between Mike and Abby forms the heart of this tale as they navigate challenges together. Meanwhile, William Afton's mysterious presence links back to darker parts of game lore. Overall, "Five Nights at Freddy's" balances horror with heartfelt moments for a gripping adaptation experience.



LIFE & LEISURE

“THE WONDERFULLY WEIRD WORLD OF GUMBALL” REVIEW

by Donovan Diaz



This show dives into a comedic vibe and gives you a laugh! An awesome show on Hulu and shows a character which is a boy or a cat who cares? Anyways it's about 2 characters Darwin and Gumball, 2 brothers who go to junior high school! Anyways it's just basically very humorous and gets a bit dark but it's overall really good! You should watch it! And if you want a spoiler if you don't know this, then you should watch it! I guarantee that you would enjoy this and there's another called “the amazing world of gumball.” This show is basically the same but with episodes from a few years ago. But mostly there are some sad parts and that's all i am telling you! So, get up and go watch the amazing world of gumball!

Here are some cool facts and the first one is that the show was released in 2011 which is kind of long but continues today! Another fact is that if each other characters voices change the voice actors retire and new voice actors take over the character, crazy, right?! Anyways another fact is that if you noticed you can see season by season the quality changes from like a more cartoonish look to more of a modern look because as the year goes by the technology gets better and let's not talk about tech and let's talk about this amazing show!

So today we will talk about it.... Gumball is the main character! If you don't know him, let me introduce him. He is a kind, funny, and very adventurous boy. He's also quite a mischievous boy to his teacher and gets detention quite often, but he doesn't do it by accident, which is quite obvious, but he does it just for fun that's one mischievous boy! Anyways, and that's mostly about him and his lovely brother Darwin!

Another day the last character. This is all about Darwin now, so make sure your eyes are peeled and look at this part. Anyways Darwin is a curious, shy and kind boy if you get to know him! Anyways one thing he likes is hanging out with friends and playing a lot of stuff!



HOW TO DESTRESS WITH VOLLEYBALL

by Samira Baculima

The volleyball team is a group of seventh and eighth graders who know how to play volleyball. They play volleyball games with other teams from different middle schools and we get to cheer them on.

Volleyball is a sport for teenagers, kids, and even adults to help with stress and they can just focus on one thing and to exercise their hands. I think volleyball is a great sport is because it helps you exercise your, hands so they don't feel tired all the time, and also it can help you exercise more and relieve all the stress you have from school, homework and all those types of stuff you have that is stressing you.

I think you should join the volleyball team next year if you are in seventh grade because it is a fun sport to play and it's a great way to play the favorite sport you love, also to make new friends if they make the team.

If you ever are interested to try the volleyball team next year if you are in seventh grade, here are some exercises that you are going to do a tryouts, first you are going to face the wall and you have to try and touch the top of the wall like pretend you were hitting a volleyball that is coming to you and you have to try and hit it over the net.

Then you are going to have to jump from the left to the right over and over again, after that, you were going to run backwards and forward because they want to see how fast you can run like to pretend the ball is coming another direction and you have to run over there to get the ball over the net in time. And the final thing is you must run from the left to the right sideways to practice you to move around, so you can make sure where the ball is coming. This is the last thing we are going to do; you are going to jump forward and backwards to practice. You are jumping just in case you need to serve.

Other things you were going to do you need to grab a volleyball and try to serve it over the net so they can see who has a good hit, remember to hit hard and try out for the team!



Fall Word Search

by Mathew Cuenca Serrano

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

1. Fall

2. Rake

3. Tree

4. Scarecrow

5. Leaves

6. Pie

7. Pumpkin

8. Acorn

9.Owl

10. Football

11. Apple

12. Crow

13. Mushroom

14. Turkey

15. Halloween

COURIER’S CREATIVE CORNER

In Mrs. Wray’s ELA classes, students worked through the rigorous writing process of a realistic fiction story, proving that they ALL are creative authors. After the writing process, students marketed their stories by creating a PicCollage/Canva project with their favorite excerpt along with photos and an explanation of why they chose to showcase that section to the class. Each class then voted on their favorite project. Each class had a winner that then went to the next round. Mrs. Wray then used "Wheel of Names" to choose which one would be published to The Courier (as it was too hard to choose between them all)! Congratulations to Jordana Carvalho Caamano on 7E for winning based on her beautiful story! Also, a special shout to Ellis Kraver, Kaleb Mullings, Jake Van Thol, and Charlotte Kriger as the runners-up! Keep writing, authors!!

Trust is a Game you Shouldn’t Play
by Jordana Carvalho Caamaño

Dear diary,
The cool breeze on an October night is the best feeling. I was walking with my boyfriend James down the park, as I felt the icy wind on my hair James held my hand and said he loved me. When I was with James, I felt magical, I felt sort of special because of the way he treated me. But all of that was about to end because of one text.

■ ■ ■

“Taylor Addison get ready for school now! You’re going to be late!” My mom squealed. The sound of my mom yelling was louder than my alarm I usually ignore.
“I’m coming!” I yelled back. I grabbed my phone yawning, with my eyes barely opened.
But suddenly my stomach felt hollow. I wanted to throw up and scream! I saw the text that I never thought I would ever see. I tried to to keep calm, but I couldn’t. How could the guy who always says he loves me, and that we’re infinity do this!?
My best friend Ari sent me messages and messages going months back of James texting my friend Laura. Saying that they love each other, and when they should meet up. I couldn’t believe this I started sobbing instantly. “Taylor come downstairs now!” My mom screamed.
“OK!” I put some pajama pants and threw on a random hoodie from my closet. I ran down the stairs and ran to my car barely saying bye to my mom.
I drove with my hands tense on the steering wheel, and my foot wanting speed up to 100 miles per hour. But suddenly I remembered the moments where me and James were happy and in love! But my head filled with rage as love pushed itself away and my body filled with fire wanting revenge. I didn’t know what was going on with me. “Was I still falling for him?” I whispered to myself.
“YO! GO! THE LIGHT IS GREEN!” This random man was yelling at me from his car window for me to move! My tires screeched, I immediately started speeding up again not letting James get in my head again.
I finally got to school hungry, but the side eyes and rude comments fueled me. “Tay over here.” Ari yelled across the hall. She was wearing black combat boots, baggy jeans with so many rips I could see her bare legs. And a black crop top to “top”it all off. Ari was my best friend I could trust her with anything -- or so I thought.
“Did you see the new kid” Ari smirked.
“EW GROSS ARI!” Let me just say Ari had a “type.” “Anyways... Can you lend me the answers to the math homework?”
“Again Ari, this is the fourth time this week!”
“I know I’ll start doing work next week OK.”
“Fine.” I groaned. This would be one of the last times I’d talk to her without feeling betrayed. The following day I was surprised by the amount of people who forgave me. So, I finally decided to talk to James.
“James!” I yelled across the hallway. He was shocked that I talked to him. He slowly walked towards me as I said, “We need to talk.”
“Um... ok?” James said with his voice sounding shaky. Me and James walked outside and sat down on the wooden table across from each other. He had a glazed donut. It looked so sweet, sugary, and delicious! His mom used to make those donuts for me.
“Do you want some Tay? You always loved my mom's homemade donuts.”
“Uh... Sure. Yes please.” James chuckled. “You never pass up my mom’s donuts don’t you?”
“Yea.” I said, “chuckling. As I bit into that sticky sugary goodness. But I didn’t come here for donuts. I came here for the truth. “James. What actually happened?” He was so nervous I could hear birds chipping, and squirrels jumping on leaves.
After minutes and minutes of waiting he finally said something that made my blood boil. “Tay. I don’t want to hurt you as much as I already did.” He whispered in a soft tone.
“You’re right. You already did. Just tell me.” I said firmly ready for whatever he was about to throw at me.
“Ok.” James sighed nervously. But then he blurted it all out like he’d been waiting for this moment for years!
“I didn’t do it! Your best friend did.” My heart felt like it skipped a beat. Tears built up in my eyes burning.
“What do you mean?” My voice, cracking, because of the tears.
“Tay don’t cry.” Let me explain.
“NO! YOU’RE JUST TRYING TO MAKE UP EXCUSES!” I said with tears streaming down my face. I cried even more because James kept silent, which meant he was telling the truth.
After a few minutes I calmed down. And finally said, “OK. I’m ready to know now James.”
“OK. So basically, when your best friend found out we were dating, she told the whole school that she hated it because she was just “protecting” her best friend. And you thought it was true because you trusted her.”
“Yea.” I whispered to myself. It sounded like I was putting together a puzzle in my head. “Continue James.”

(Continued on Page 11)

TRUST IS A GAME YOU SHOULDN’T PLAY (CONTINUED)

by Jordana Carvalho Caamaño

“And then, she made fake text messages on Chat GPT because she was jealous of us being together. She liked me too. And thought it wasn’t fair that you got everything. I couldn’t believe this was happening, but it all made sense. Because when James and I broke up, I saw Ari going to James crying saying some things I couldn’t hear. And since the breakup, she hadn’t talked to me since! I was shocked. I felt like I’d been stabbed in the back. But I wanted to make it look like I had myself under control. Then, I finally cracked... out of nowhere I started screaming! “THIS IS NOT FAIR! I WANT SOMEONE I COULD TRUST! NOT FEEL AND BE BETRAYED BY!” James kept staring at me like I was scary, but then he did something I didn’t expect... he kissed me! HE KISSED ME! I felt love at that moment. His kiss made me forget everything. And diary, that’s when I knew... that James and I were meant to be.

I went to school the next day, and people told me that Ari had switched schools because of how embarrassed she felt after making this huge mess happen. AND – she blocked me and James on everything, and so did we. So, we couldn’t reach her. We were so happy together, and we were finally at peace again. It was like my happily ever after!

“Taylor go to bed now!” Mom squealed!

“OK!” I said with a “little” attitude.

But now diary, I’m sorry, I rushed the ending, but I REALLY MUST go to bed or else my mom’s going to yell at me!!

Goodnight diary!!

THE “AVERAGE” DAY IN A SCHOOL HALLWAY

by Daniel Pizzirusso



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