

the courier

the appleton east student newspaper



FEAST

BREAK

Holiday Harmonies Downtown

On November 25, the Downtown Appleton Christmas Parade lit up College Avenue with twinkling lights, festive floats, and the unmistakable sound of holiday spirit. The parade's popularity comes not only from its scale, but from the sense of community and celebration it inspires year after year. At the heart of it all was the school band, performing one of its most beloved traditions of the year. For many students, the parade marks the unofficial start of the holiday season, a moment they have been preparing for months.

For drum major Natalie Tlachac, the anticipation begins well before the band steps onto the parade route. "Preparing the parade starts after homecoming," she explains, "so we get a taste of the Christmas season a little early. As it gets closer, the excitement grows among band students because this parade is definitely a favorite!"

Fellow drum major Collin agrees, emphasizing just how much work goes into making the performance flawless. When asked what preparing for the parade is like, he summed it up with one word: "Chaos."

"As a Drum Major, I need to make sure everyone is prepared in every way," he explains. "Dinkles, pants, music, instruments, hats, gloves, uniforms, and getting all 100+ of us to Downtown Appleton in one piece."

Beyond planning, Collin notes one of the band's biggest challenges and points of pride: "Another aspect is making sure everyone has their music memorized, which no other high school band does. We play it countless times and sometimes get to school early so everyone can practice together."

Behind the Scenes of Parade Preparation -

Preparing for a marching event of this scale requires discipline, energy, and plenty of holiday spirit. Rehearsals sharpen marching technique, keep the band in sync, and help students adjust to playing outdoors in the cold or rainy November weather. But according to Natalie, one of the most memorable parts of preparation happens on the big day itself.

"One of my favorite ways we prepare is the day of the parade, is when we decorate our instruments and batons," she says. Students bring out tinsel, ribbons, battery-powered lights, and even themed accessories to add personality to their section. "It makes everything feel more real after the months of build-up," Natalie adds. The decorating ritual has become a bonding moment, helping performers shake off nervous energy and reminding them that the parade is more than just a performance.

Collin adds, "For the parade, we decorate all the instruments with lights and play a variety of Christmas songs, including 'Jingle Bells', 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas', etc. We also wear Christmas hats during the parade instead of our usual fancy helmets."

However, he also shares that team building doesn't stop there. "Our band does a lot to get into the Christmas spirit," he says. "We do Secret Santa; we give slightly passive-aggressive, funny-ish gifts to each other for Christmasashawonkas, not really sure how you spell it."

All these traditions make the long weeks of preparation feel festive and memorable. It's a celebration.

The Magic of Parade Night -

Once the band lines up, the atmosphere shifts. Spectators pack the downtown sidewalks, holiday music floats through the air, and the familiar glow of Christmas lights fills the street. But for Natalie, the best part comes just after the final note has played.

"My favorite part of the parade is right after we get done," she shares. "Everyone is giddy after the parade, and the bus rides back are always filled with lots of excitement, laughter, and occasionally some Christmas songs! It's always an amazing feeling after we complete something and do it well."

That post-performance high is something every marching band student appreciates: the combination of relief, pride, and shared accomplishment after months of preparation. For many, it's a moment that captures the true essence of the band: teamwork, joy, and a whole lot of heart.

What's Next for the Band -

Even though the parade has wrapped, the season is far from over. The band quickly shifted gears toward its next major event: "A concert in December!" Natalie announces. "There are many amazing songs we are playing, and we are all very excited to share them."

As the holiday season continues, the band moves forward with the same enthusiasm that lit up the streets of Appleton. Their performance at the Downtown Appleton Christmas Parade not only brought cheer to thousands of spectators but it showcased the dedication, joy, and school pride that make the band a cherished part of the community's celebrations.



- Cynthia Vang

APPLETON EAST HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS PRESENT

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON 2025

What a Wonderful World

Do you hear what I hear? The annual Sounds Of The Season concert last Thursday, December 18, sent everyone into glorious festivities after their stunning performance in the Appleton East Auditorium.

Directed by Mr. Dan Van Sickle and Mrs. Christina Conn, Patriot Bass, Patriot and Varsity Treble, Varsity Bass, Chamber Choir, and Easterners gave a "mystical and madrigal" insight into the seasonal vibes of Appleton East around the holidays. Senior Audrey Kitten, soprano singer in Easterners Honors Choir, gives her perspective on the highlight piece performed by Easterners, The Music Of Stillness. "The holidays are super stressful, but this song helps remind us that we can just take time for ourselves and just rest and be okay," she reflects. "Families want to do the best for their kids, and with all the chaos, it's sometimes hard to find peace. It's what the season is supposed to be about."

The winter concert also featured AEVoices' second high school performance after their inspirational performance of "Don't Give Up On Me" during the East Tackles Cancer event last October.

Fundraising for the music department that sponsored this event included the annual fruit sale, Sounds of the Season shirt sales, and early preparations for the choir-sponsored Freshman Snowball Dance on Thursday, January 15, at 7:00 pm in the Appleton East Commons.

Appleton East Choir's next concert will be the late winter choir concert on Thursday, March 12, at 7:30 pm in the Appleton East Auditorium.

- ELLA RANES

COURIER COMICS



- CHARISMA MJOS



Give The Gift Of GIVING!

This holiday season, why not try spreading the festive love through giving back to the community? Many organizations and nonprofits are seeking volunteers in the Fox Cities to help in holiday programs, outreaches, and service.

Orphan Animal Rescue & Sanctuary

Neenah adoption center, has cat-care shifts like cleaning cat rooms, feeding, socializing cats & kittens, helping run the adoption center, assisting with fundraising or special events; occasional errands or outreach. Shifts are in two-hour blocks, with morning and afternoon/evening shifts; you can choose a regular weekly shift or pick by month depending on availability.

Contact:

Phone: 920-558-4430

United Way Fox Cities

Community-wide service projects like diaper-bank repacks, support for families, community outreach. It is based on a basic-needs aid, and has group volunteering and flexible scheduling.

Visit:

Website: <https://unitedwayfoxcities.org/>

World Relief Fox Valley

You can volunteer as a "Friendship Partner," transport helper, or help prepare apartments and home-sets for newly arriving refugee families: a meaningful, ongoing support role.

Contact:

Phone: (920) 231-3600

Cribbage With Horizons Elementary 5th Graders

Interested in visiting every other Friday during Flex (9:45-11:00a.m.) to play cribbage? Sign up to help use games to make math more fun and engaging, providing amazing mentoring and volunteer experience.

Contact: Mrs. Burton-Mahoney

Email: burtonmahoneym@asd.k12.wi.us

Johnston Elementary Y-Care

Wanting to volunteer with kids? Play games, help with homework, and do other fun activities through this YMCA-sponsored daycare before and after school. Openings include December 22 from 3:20-6:00p.m. and 23 from 6:30-8:10a.m. and also 3:20-6:00p.m.

Contact: Mrs. Jennifer Schmidt

Email: schmidtjennife@asd.k12.wi.us

SOAR Fox Cities

Ongoing volunteer opportunities: help with social and recreational programs like dances, outings, cooking classes, and crafts; work with youth or adults; assist in office or administrative roles; and support special events. Great for individuals or groups, can be one-time or ongoing.

Contact: Volunteer Coordinator

Phone: (920) 731-9831 or Email: info@soarfoxcities.com

Saving Paws Animal Rescue Help

Animal shelter volunteering: help with cat care (feeding, cleaning, socializing), dog care, general maintenance, fostering, fundraising or outreach events. You can choose shifts to fit your schedule.

Contact:

Phone: (920) 830-2392 or Email: info@savingpawswi.com

- ELLA RANES



Festive Favorites: Holiday Recipes

Picture this: You're hosting a last-minute holiday party, and you only have a few hours to prepare. You have no clue what to make and are running out of time. Don't fret: we have you covered, so throw on your apron and whip up something magical with our quick, easy and delicious holiday recipes from main dishes to sweet treats that'll impress your guests and make you the hero of the holiday season.

Best Holiday Cut-Out Cookies

Cookie Ingredients:

- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 ½ cups of butter (or 3 sticks) softened
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 5 cups of flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt

Icing ingredients:

- 3 cups of confectioners' sugar
- ½ tsp of vanilla extract
- 2 tsp corn syrup
- 4.5 Tbsp milk (or until it forms peaks when being mixed)

Baking tips:

- When baking, vanilla extract can generally be substituted with ½ tsp of almond extract per tsp of required vanilla.
- To replace eggs when baking use ¼ cup of unsweetened applesauce per egg.
- Practice mise en place (preparing your ingredients ahead of time).
- Let meat rest after cooking, this helps it to be more juicy and tender.

Directions:

1. Cream together butter and sugar.
2. Add in eggs, vanilla, baking powder, and salt, and mix again.
3. Combine with flour until it forms a dough-like consistency, then let it chill in the fridge for one hour
4. Preheat oven to 375 degrees
5. On a flour-covered surface, roll a section of cookie dough into a thin sheet, use a cookie cutter and or a knife to get the desired shape, and set on a parchment lined baking sheet
6. Once the cookies are cut out, put them in the oven for 8 minutes or until the tops are golden brown. Keep a close eye on the cookies!
7. Let cool and while they cool combine all icing ingredients in a bowl, you can then divide the white icing out into bowls to dye with food safe dye.
8. Decorate cooled cookies as desired and enjoy!

Directions:

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine sour cream, soup, salt, pepper, dried minced onion, and 6tbsp of melted but cooled butter.
3. Gently fold in cheese and thawed hashbrowns then add to a 9x13 pan.
4. Melt remaining butter and combine with lightly crushed cornflakes.
5. Add the cornflakes on top of the casserole
6. Bake for 40-50 minutes until the top is crisp and it bubbles on the sides.
7. Serve warm and enjoy!



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees
2. Prep ham as package instructs (cut out bone and such)
3. Brush ¼ cup of pineapple juice and 2 Tbsp dijon.
4. Cover the ham in tinfoil and put in the oven for 12-15 minutes per pound of meat.
5. Combine glaze ingredients, bring them to a boil, simmer for 2-3 minutes then cool.
6. Once the ham has 15 minutes left, take the ham out of the oven and brush with cooled glaze, turn the oven up to 425 degrees and then cook the ham for the final 15 minutes or until it reaches an internal temperature of 140 degrees.
7. Carve the ham, serve warm, and enjoy!

Baked Cheesy Potatoes

Ingredient List:

- 30oz of frozen Hashbrowns thawed
- 2 cups sour cream
- 10.5oz can of Cream of Chicken soup
- 10Tbsp Butter
- 1tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Ground pepper
- 3 tsp dried minced onion
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 cups plain cornflakes

Brown Sugar Glazed Ham

Ingredient List:

- 7-9 lb ham
- -2 Tbsp dijon mustard
- -¼ cup pineapple Juice
- -½ cup of pineapple or orange juice
- -½ cup brown sugar
- -2 Tbsp dijon mustard
- -¼ tsp ground ginger
- -2 tsp corn starch



-Ginerva Grabowski

★ PEP RALLY HIGHLIGHTS ★



Get Your College Credit Here!

AP

AP English Language & Composition

Course Number: 1120

Description: This is a course that is similar to a first-year college composition class. We study rhetoric (how writers achieve their purposes) and use principles of effective rhetoric in our own writing.

Why Take It?: Students should take this course because it helps them become better writers and communicators. They may also earn college credit for the course depending on their score on the exam.

Tip: Focus on growth--not points!

Teacher: Ms. Moran

Fun Fact: I am a huge John Travolta fan.

AP Government: U.S. & Comparative

Course Number: 3400

Description: AP Government: U.S. & Comparative introduces students to how governments work both in the United States and around the world. The course explores political institutions, public policy, and citizen behavior, giving students the tools to analyze real-world politics and compare systems.

Why Take It?: If you are interested in politics and government, students can earn college credit for two courses. Passage of both AP exams for the course will equal eight college credits at UW-Madison.

Tip: Focus on the essential knowledge and key terms for each unit.

Teacher: Mr. Kurth

Fun Fact: My family and I go out foraging for edible mushrooms in the spring, summer, and fall.

AP Psychology

Course Number: 3320

Description: Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. We learn about your brain, thinking, learning, development, social interactions, personality, and mental and physical health. The course prepares you to take the AP exam in May for potential college credit.

Why Take It?: This course is about YOU! It will help you understand yourself better and create better habits, practices, and relationships. Every term in every unit is something that connects to you and your life.

Tip: Hard work beats talent. Learning to work hard and persevere through adversity will help you be successful here and beyond.

Teacher: Mr. Skifton

Fun Fact: Before coming to East, I coached football and have a former player now playing in the NFL.

AP English Literature and Composition

Course Number: 1270

Description: AP English Literature and Composition engages students in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, students deepen their understanding of the way writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. This course is equivalent to a college freshman English course with an emphasis on written essays through which students learn to articulate ideas concisely and thoroughly.

Tip: There are very few disciplines that don't require reading. Challenge yourself to read and read more.

Teacher: Mr. Herrmann

Fun Fact: I sometimes have various cookies/baked goods stashed in my classroom.

AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based

Course Number: 4560

Description: Students will explore introductory theories of kinematics, dynamics (mechanical, rotational, and fluid), circular motion and gravitation, conservation laws, and simple harmonic motion, while using mathematics and lab-based practices to understand and prove the validity of these theories.

Why Take It?: Any students interested in STEM, healthcare, military, or simply wanting to learn about why things work should take this course.

Tip: The harder classes get, the harder you have to work to succeed. Learn your study habits now while it's free!

Teacher: Mr. Eckrose

Fun Fact: I have an undergraduate degree in Biochemical Engineering and have a passion for engineering and physics!

AP Statistics

Course Number: 9520

Description: Roughly equivalent to a 1-semester stats 1 in college.

Why Take It?: Every student should take a stats class because everything we do in the class has application in real life. After taking Stats, you will be a much more careful consumer of information that you get from the news or online.

Tip: Take notes, do your homework, and avoid as much screen time as possible.

Teacher: Mr. Pritzl

Fun Fact: I met Scott Flansberg (the human calculator) and had a picture taken with him at a conference.

AP U.S. History

Course Number: 3050

Description: AP U.S. History teaches students to think like historians: analyzing documents, evaluating arguments, and making historical connections. Students should expect critical thinking and regular practice with writing historical arguments. It's challenging, but it prepares students extremely well for college-level work and helps them understand how the past shapes the world they live in today.

Why Take It?: Students have a great opportunity to earn college credit, develop their critical thinking and writing skills, and learn a lot about U.S. History.

Tip: As long as you are locked in during class and put in some time on preparing for summative assessments, you will do well.

Teacher: Mr. Kurth

Fun Fact: I have traveled around 14 different countries and taught for two years in both Thailand and Guatemala.

Dual Credit

College Technical Math (formally known as Math Topics)

Course Number: 9250

Description: This course strengthens Algebra and Geometry Skills. You might consider this course if... math is NOT your thing, but you need another credit. If you do plan on attending a four-year college, but you want to improve your math skills before taking Algebra 2. Dual Credit means you can get three college credits for FREE.

Tip: Show up, do your work, and have fun.

Teacher: Ms. Sherry

Fun Fact: I truly enjoy teaching math and helping students to feel better about their understanding of math.

Digital Electronics

Course Number: 7720

Description: Digital Electronics starts with the basics of electricity and works all the way to working with microprocessors.

Why Take It?: Although this is a Tesla class, East students are welcome to join us for the year (as an East student).

Tip: Have a sense of humor about your mistakes. Setbacks are great teachers.

Teacher: Mr. German

Fun Fact: I love teaching at East/Tesla!

Interpersonal Communication

Course Number: 1600

Description: Students learn communication skills from each other, in small groups, and learn how to deliver speeches.

Why Take It?: Communication skills are essential to almost every career and program. It is a dual credit class, which means that it is free for you to take. It often counts as the speech requirement for colleges/universities.

Tip: Practice your speeches with friends and family, it makes speech delivery so much easier!

Teacher: Ms. Bartel

Fun Fact: I get nervous speaking in front of a large group. Sometimes I am nervous speaking in front of my students!

AP World History

Course Number: 3150

Description: An in-depth look at the history of people and places around the world.

Why Take It?: AP World will make you a stronger reader, writer, and student; after this class, you will be more prepared for other AP classes and college. Even more importantly, you will have a much better understanding of other people and cultures around the world.

Tip: Don't procrastinate.

Teacher: Ms. Schneider

Fun Fact: I love traveling to the places I teach about. Last year I visited Spain and Mexico.

Criminal Justice System

Course Number: 3023

Description: Criminal Justice explores the American Criminal Justice System by looking at law, policing, courts, and corrections. Emphasis on current events and current issues in policing.

Why Take It?: This class is great for anyone. It isn't just for people who want to be cops in the future.

Tip: Pay attention and do your work.

Teacher: Ms. Loritz

Fun Fact: In high school, I was voted most likely to become a cop.

English Composition 1

Course Number: 1275

Description: This is a new class that will be offered next semester. It will be one semester, and students can earn three credits through FVTC. It is already approved for NCAA, and it is a great option for students who are college-bound and want to earn an English credit (and don't want to take an AP exam/pay the fee).

Teacher: Ms. Bartel

Learn more here!

- GRACE BOE

Introduction to Psychology

Course Number: 3325

Description: The student will learn different psychological methods and will survey the essentials of psychology, including the topics of: Cognition, States of Consciousness, Research Methods, Brain and Behavior, Learning and Conditioning, and Abnormal Psychology. (Note: Students may not take this course if they have taken or plan to take AP Psychology).

Why Take It?: AP Psychology is designed to help you pass the AP test. Dual credit psychology is more hands-on and interactive because you can get college credit for free with no test.

Teacher: Ms. Koss

Fun Fact: I competed in gymnastics at UW-Eau Claire.

Welding & Metal Fabrication

Course Number: 7540

Description: Students learn the basics of welding (GMAW, SMAW, GTAW) and metal fabrication. Safe work habits, measurement, technical drawing, and career opportunities are also components of the course. Students will learn problem-solving skills and the importance of a strong work ethic as it relates to today's workforce. Students will incorporate modern technology with traditional methods to produce metal products. Students will design and fabricate products individually and as part of a team.

Why Take It?: After students have completed their required work, they have opportunities to work on personal projects. We have made grinder racers, mini bikes, go carts, metal roses, truck bumpers, repaired trailers, and students get to cut out their own CNC signs!

Tip: Never give up. Persistence is the key to success!

Teacher: Mr. Reisweber

Fun Fact: I have been teaching at East for 25 years, and I love to come to work every day and have fun!

Practices in Healthcare

Course Number: 6975

Description: Practices in Healthcare will no longer be a Dual-Credit course through FVTC, but will instead offer a healthcare industry certificate option with the course.

Teacher: Mrs. Flannery-Bosin

Note: this course is no longer Dual Credit

CAPP

CAPP Accounting

Course Number: 5322

Description: This course is an intro-level, virtual (online) college-level accounting course through UW-Whitewater where students can earn three transferable college credits.

Why Take It?: Any students who are interested in majoring in business or marketing will have to take this course during college. Students should consider getting it out of the way in high school for a discount to increase opportunities down the line.

Tip: Watch the videos and take notes. Accounting is new for everyone, and that is expected when taking this class.

Teacher: For more information contact Mr. DeBruin

Fun Fact: I am actually not the professor; I just help oversee the course on the East side of things.

Introduction to Sociology

Course Number: 3350

Description: Sociology introduces the science of group behavior and studies the interaction that takes place between the individual and society. It focuses on the basic concepts of the intercultural discipline of sociology. The course also looks at five institutions: family, politics, economics, religion, and education. Additional topics include demography, deviance, technology, environmental social issues, and social change and organization. A major goal of this course is to establish a self-motivating desire to appreciate and understand human behavior.

Why Take It?: You should take this class if you are curious about why people do what they do when they are in groups. And you will find all of the information useful and relevant to your life right now.

Tip: Show up, be curious, and be involved.

Teacher: Ms. Koss

Fun Fact: I was once royalty.

Written Communication

Course Number: 1290

Description: A college-level writing course. It has some short writing summatives and one research paper.

Why Take It?: Dual Credit classes save you money and help prepare you for college. If you earn college credit and your college/university accepts the credit, it also saves you time when you get to college.

Tip: Show up for class and ask for help when you need it.

Teacher: Ms. Bartel

Fun Fact: I was born in Alaska.

CAPP Personal Finance

Course Number: 6320

Description: Students will develop an understanding of important financial decisions typically encountered throughout their teen and adult years. Successful completion of this course fulfills the .5 credit Financial Literacy state and district graduation requirement. This course is dual credit with UW Oshkosh, and these credits can be transferred to most four-year colleges.

Why Take It?: Students will receive three college credits.

Tip: Meet your deadlines and do not procrastinate. Always communicate with the teacher.

Teacher: Not fixed, the teacher likely depends on scheduling availability.

Scheduling Timeline

Advisory: 12/22

Scheduling Overview Video Part 2

Advisory: 1/5

Receive scheduling worksheets

Flex: 1/6-8

Get course recommendations from current classes

1/9

Take the scheduling worksheet home to get it signed

Advisory: 1/12,20,21

Finalize course selection

Early August

Schedules are out

January Scholarships

OPEN SOON!

With the premise of a new year rapidly approaching, so are billions of dollars in new scholarships opening January 2026, including the Mr. David Reichenberger Memorial Scholarship.

1. CollegeReady (NE Wisconsin) Scholarship

Opens: January 15, 2026

Details: Seniors demonstrating leadership, integrity, and academic achievement.

2. Live Más Scholarship

Opens: January 6, 2026

Details: Students aged 16-26 with a passion for their community or future career.

3. John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Essay Contest

Opens: January 12, 2026

Details: U.S. high school students writing an essay on an act of political courage by a U.S. elected official.

4. MPOWER Women in STEM Scholarship

Opens: January 15, 2026

Details: Female international or DACA students pursuing a STEM degree in the US or Canada.

5. American Red Cross - Leaders Save Lives Scholarship

Opens: January 15, 2026

Details: Students who organize a blood drive when school is not in session.

6. Hope for Healing Scholarship (FHE Health)

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Students impacted by health issues or medical background.

7. Strong Family Scholarship

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Academic & community or family strength.

8. Travel Grants for Women in Mathematics

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Women studying mathematics (conference and travel support)

9. Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF) Scholar Program

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Hispanic or Latinx students

10. MIT THINK Out of the Box Scholars Program

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Juniors and seniors, provides funding for projects in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

11. Dell Scholars Program

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Seniors who have participated in a college readiness program, including a monetary award, a laptop, and other benefits.

12. Doodle for Google Scholarship Contest

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Talented artistic students across all grade levels.

13. ASFA National High School Essay Contest

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Students passionate about persuasive writing, the power of arts, and diplomacy.

14. CirkledIn "No Sweat" Scholarships

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Any grade level, any interest, no stressful essays!

15. Matthew E. Minor Awareness Foundation Scholarship

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: Seniors, focused on bullying awareness.

15. Sallie Mae \$2,000 "No Essay" Scholarship

Opens: January 1, 2026

Details: No essay, monthly cycles, easy to apply

Mr. David Reichenberger

Memorial Scholarship:

More information coming soon!

3, 2, 1, LAUNCH!

Within the East library is a place with the primary mission of helping students navigate the path after high school: the Launch Studio.

On October 23, 2018, the Appleton East Launch Studio celebrated its grand opening, a feat made possible by the grants from the Appleton Education Foundation and Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, as well as continued funding from local businesses.

Since its debut, the program has grown exponentially, increasing the rate of student participation in eye-opening experiences. In its first year, there were 413 student interactions with the events offered. Last year's numbers were over six times greater than those of 2018, with 2,655 student interactions. This school year, participation is already over 2,000, well before the end of first semester, said Ms. Coonen, who has been on the program's committee since the beginning.

So, what exactly is the goal of these interactions, what are these experiences, and why is the expanding outreach so important?

"The Launch Studio is a part of academic and career planning that connects students with local businesses to learn about potential careers," Ms. Coonen stated in a recent interview. This creates a "win-win relationship" where students have the opportunity to determine if a career is right for them, and local businesses can see the upcoming generation of workers, she noted.

The Launch Studio stands "to help prepare you for life after high school, whatever that looks like," Ms. Coonen explained. The stress of planning for an unpredictable future is often felt by high schoolers. In helping students find a place to start their plans by recognizing what careers are best suited for them, the Launch Studio hopes to enable students to take ownership of their own lives by overcoming the stress and realizing "what is right for you may not be right for me." Therefore, the basis of the Launch Studio is to help students navigate their future pathways, a mission supported by the surrounding Fox Cities community and East staff members.

A variety of offerings are available to students through this initiative. One event that took place this semester was the psychology event on November 21, where students from East, North, and West met therapy dogs from the Therapy Dog Alliance, learned about forensic psychology, and explored research with the Fox Valley Technical College. Ms. Coonen, while highlighting this event as one of her favorites, also revealed the importance of working with teachers to reach students, as demonstrated by her collaborative work on this event with Ms. Koss, Appleton East psychology teacher. She stated, "The psychology careers event has been really fun, partly because working with Ms. Koss is amazing, and we have been able to do really great things." Ms. Coonen continuously emphasizes the importance of working with teachers to prepare students for whatever chapter lies next.

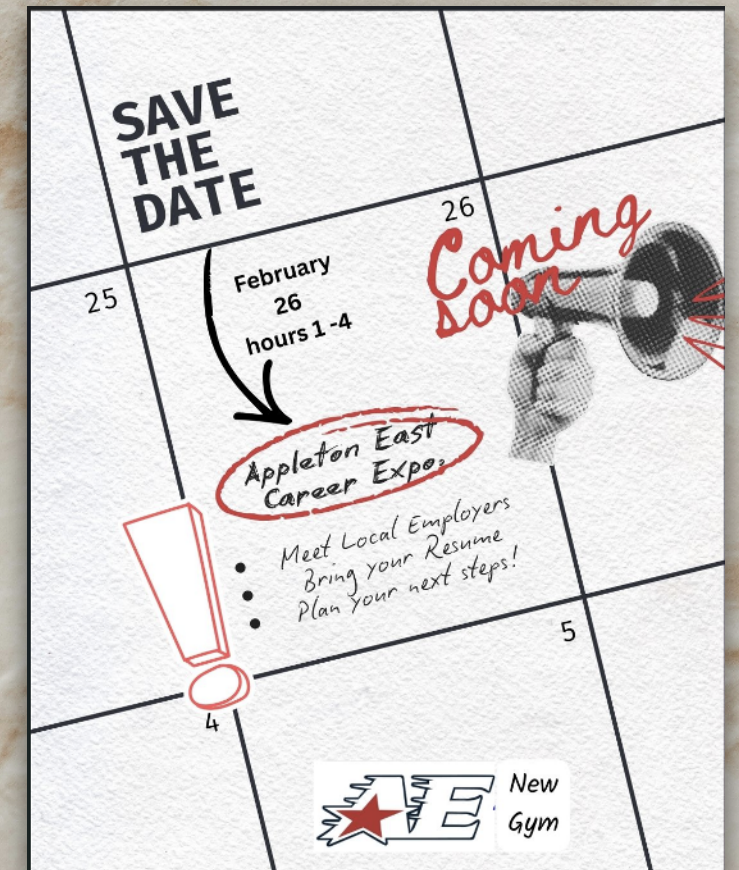
In terms of the future, upcoming events such as the Career Fair on February 26 (first through fourth hour), a communication event during the spring, and mock interviews in the Senior Communication classes all stand to help students prepare. Aside from attending events, students can also contact the East coordinator, Ms. Coonen, via email or during Flex to discuss career pathways, refine resumes, set up job shadows, and more. Plus, there is no need to worry about cost. "I do not think any student has ever been charged," Ms. Coonen said, "local businesses really donate their time, talent, treasure to help."

The Launch Studio's mission is to prepare students for what lies ahead with the help of teachers, local businesses, and, of course, Ms. Coonen. Although this is her last school year with the Launch Studio, Ms. Coonen continues to spread the positive ideal it sits upon, and the community that supports it. "There is something about the air and the culture here that is so positive."

If you are interested in starting to plan for your future by attending any events, setting up job shadows, or more, please reach out to Ms. Coonen via email or sign up for flex!



Woodward Media Group visited East, informing students about careers in broadcasting, *Karen Coonen*



Bellin College visits East, *Karen Coonen*



2025 Smart Girls Rock, *Karen Coonen*

Take on New Heights

As winter settles in and students search for activities that keep them active and engaged indoors, one club in particular has been steadily rising, literally. The Rock Climbing Club, now entering its second year, has become a thriving space for students seeking challenge, community, and a unique athletic experience. With competition season underway, members are training harder than ever, but the club's spirit remains rooted in fun, growth, and inclusivity.

Mr. Rana, advisor, recalls how the idea took shape: "The club started last year when Mr. Stratton (Appleton West) and Mr. Nichols (Appleton North) reached out to see if I would be interested in starting a climbing club, allowing students the opportunity to take part in this fun indoor activity during the harsh winter months." What began as a simple winter activity has now grown into a committed and enthusiastic group of climbers who meet weekly to practice and build their skills.

A Season of Strength and Strategy -

Climbing competitions may look effortless from afar, but preparing for them is anything. The club's competition season runs from November through April, stretching across months of training, new routes, and steady improvement. Each week brings opportunities for students to test themselves on different problems, work on endurance, and develop the mental focus that climbing demands.

Not every student in the club competes, and that's by design. One of the aspects that makes this club unique is its open-door approach. "Taking part in competition is not mandatory," Mr. Rana emphasizes. "You can be part of the club and casually climb without taking part in any competition." This inclusivity attracts a wide mix of students, some hoping to stand on a podium, others simply enjoying a new hobby or looking for a supportive group to spend time with.

Learning to Read the Wall -

One of the biggest challenges for newer climbers is learning how to "read" a route. Understanding how to move their hands, feet, and body through holds they've never seen before. Mr. Rana describes route-reading as one of the most important skills a climber can develop. "A good way to read routes is to map out in your head the hand and foot positions you would use to complete a certain route," he explains. With time, climbers begin to recognize how different holds are meant to be used, which muscle groups each move demands, and how to sequence their body efficiently.

He adds, "Watching other climbers and talking with them is also a good way to get helpful hints on difficult routes."

This collaborative learning environment has become one of the club's strongest assets, turning practices into a space where students support one another's growth.



A Community Built on Encouragement -

While climbing may appear individualistic, the club proves that it thrives on cooperation and encouragement. Members often cheer each other on as they attempt challenging routes, giving advice, moral support, or simply a steady presence on the mats below. The club has developed a reputation for being not only athletic but deeply welcoming.

"The climbing community is very welcoming," says Mr. Rana. "It can be a fun and healthy way to spend harsh winter months while helping you stay in shape." Many students, whether athletic or new to sports entirely, find climbing to be accessible because it allows them to progress at their own pace. There is no pressure to excel immediately, just a willingness to try, learn, and climb again.

The timing also works in the club's favor. As Mr. Rana points out, "It nicely aligns between most fall and spring sports," making it a perfect option for student-athletes looking to stay active in the offseason. And for many, climbing becomes more than just a seasonal activity. "For some, climbing can become a lifelong passion, something they take far beyond high school," he adds.



As the club continues to grow, new members are always welcome. No experience required. Mr. Rana encourages anyone curious to give climbing a chance. "First time is free if you come with someone with a membership, so no reason not to try it," he notes.

Whether students aim to train for competitions or simply want a supportive community during the cold months, the Rock Climbing Club offers a place to rise, both on the wall and beyond it. As the team continues through the season, one thing is clear: the club's strength lies not just in strong grip and technique, but in its spirit, determination, and the bonds formed along the way.

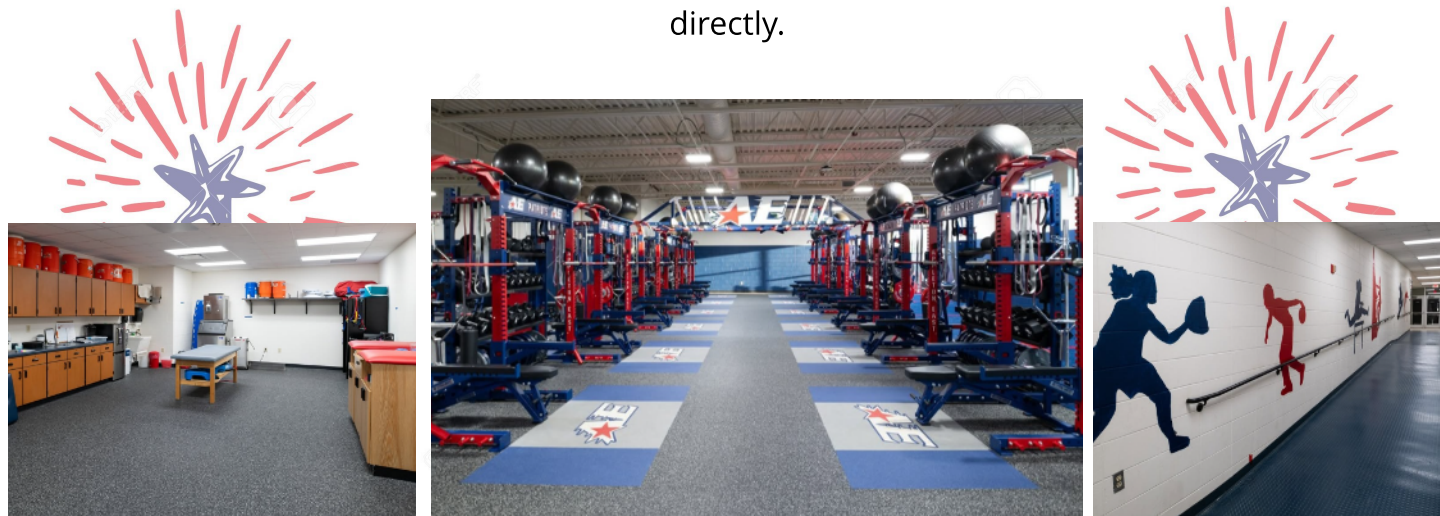
FITNESS CENTER: Additions at East!

Our final stop in the tour of East's new addition is the brand-new weight room, which dwarfed the previous. Before this year, students and staff alike had limited space, resources, and organization in an outdated fitness center, now more than ever are excited to put the new one to use.

The new features include new Patriot-themed equipment, with separate spaces for types of training. A 40+ yard turf stretches across the end of the room for athlete warm-ups and sprints, with markings embedded for various track event training. Next, a weight-training area is divided into two sections: red racks and blue racks - with new equipment like pull-up bars, dumbbells, barbells, plates, kettle balls, benches, pull-down bars, and bands. Finally, long double rows of cardiovascular equipment, including treadmills, ellipticals, bikes, and stair machines, are located closest to the entrance.

Although the hallway leading up to the fitness center has remained relatively unchanged, the old athletic trainer's office has been replaced with an updated space, featuring Coach Kyle managing the center as Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, along with several assistant coaches. Several college students from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh have also been recruited as student-teachers to offer resources as part of their athletic trainer degree for athletes using the fitness center.

Any students wishing to add an athletic study hall to their schedule next semester and take advantage of Appleton East's state-of-the-art facility upgrade should contact their counselors directly.



Thank you for following our tour! We hope you all are enjoying Appleton East's brand-new facilities!

- ELLA RANES

G A M E S

CONNECTIONS

Connections is a word game that challenges players to find themes between words.

Players are given 16 words and find groups of four items that share something in common.

For example:

- FISH: Bass, Flounder, Salmon, Trout
- Things that start with FIRE: Ant, Drill, Island, Opal

Each group is assigned a color (Yellow, Green, Blue, or Purple), with Yellow being the easiest category and Purple being the trickiest.

Play here!

Strands

Find all the words based on the hint!

Play here!



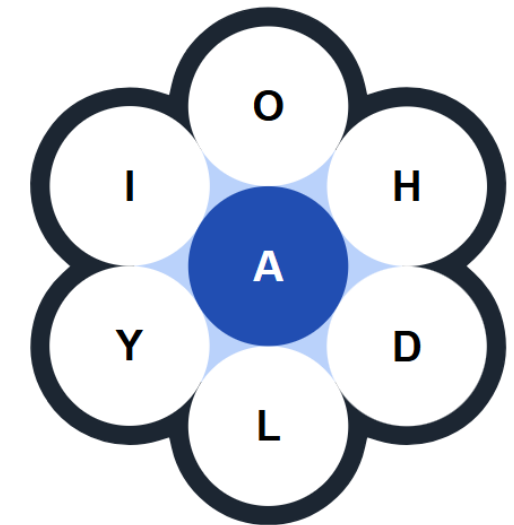
Find the hidden word in six guesses or less!

R = the letter does not appear in the word

O = the letter does appear in the word, but in a different spot

W = the letter appears in the word in that spot

SPELLINGBEAST



Make as many words as possible with the given letters!

- All words must contain the center letter
- Words must be at least four letters long
- Letters may be used multiple times within one word
- Four-letter words are worth one point, any words longer than four letters are worth the number of points equal to the number of letters in the word
- There is at least one word that can be made using all seven letters, called a pangram. A pangram is worth seven bonus points plus the word's length, so a seven-letter pangram would be worth 14 points.
- *Click the letters above to play now!*

- MATS RIDLEHOOVER

the courier

the appleton east student newspaper

Courier Contributors:

Grace Boe: College Credit & Scheduling Advice & Launch Studio

Ginerva Grabowski: Holiday Recipes

Charisma Mjos: Comics

Ella Ranes: Fitness Center Additions, Sounds of the Season, Scholarships, Gift of Giving

Mats Ridlehoover: Games

Cynthia Vang: Appleton Christmas Parade & Rock Climbing Club

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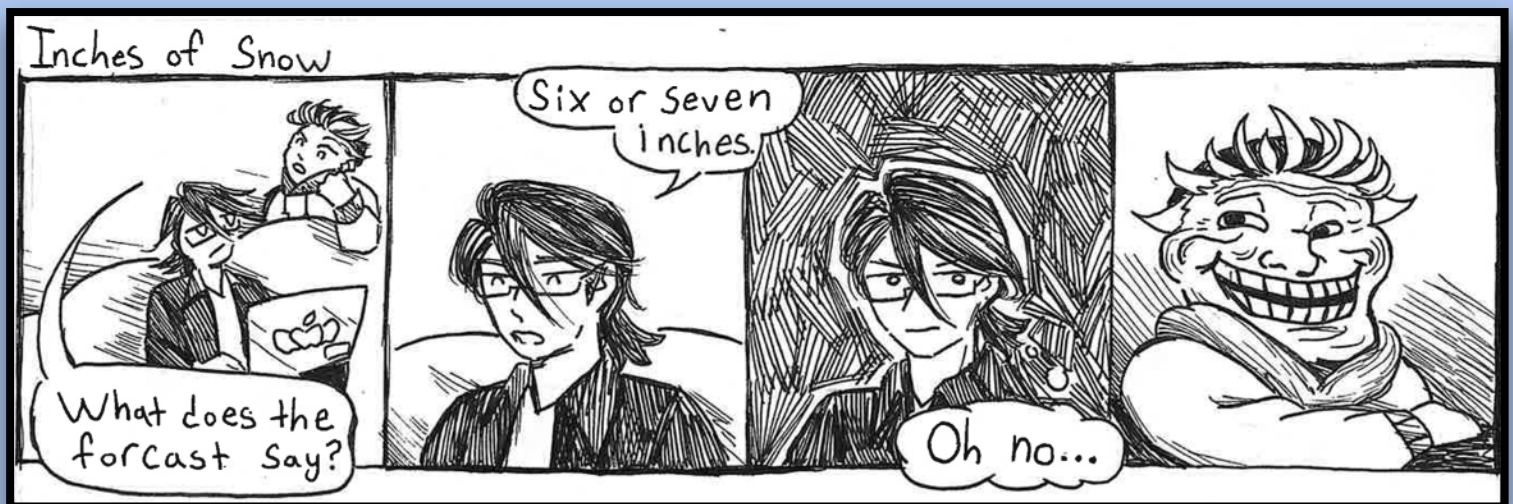
Cynthia Vang

Advisor:

Mr. Otis

The Courier, Appleton East's student newspaper, is written, edited, and distributed by Patriot students and staff.

JOIN NOW!



Happy Holidays! See you Jan. 5!