

Comet Comments

SCHOOL ISSUE – March 2022



FROM THE DESK OF *Mike Churchill*



We are embarking on our final Marking Period of the 2021-22 school year; summer is right around the corner! Upon our return to school from Spring Break, we will be taking the MME tests required for graduation in Michigan. This will affect all grade levels to some degree, please pay special attention to the adjusted school schedule in this newsletter! Our School Counselor, Greg Shaffer has worked tirelessly to create a testing schedule conducive to our students here at CHS **THANK YOU**, Mr. Shaffer!

It is with great excitement that I announce my changing of roles here at CHS. I have decided with the retirement of Mr. Fred Paulsen, I would like to return to the role of Assistant Principal as well as the CTE Director for Coloma Community Schools. Although this is a bittersweet change, it has been a decision that will certainly play to my strengths and enjoyment while here at CHS. My passion for school has always been working with students, teachers, and families directly which is a component of being the principal, however, I am more accessible as the Assistant Principal and CTE Director. All of this being said, I have quite a bit of experience and understanding of students and teachers who are so dedicated to our CTE courses. I am prepared for a wonderful transition to take on a role that plays a big part of what Southwest Michigan is in need of; Automotive technicians, Industry, Health Care, and Business savvy young people who are eager to get out and enter the workforce with a myriad of skills which will set them apart from the competition!

It is of great importance to me that I am clear when I say this is a decision I have made for personal and professional reasons which are a benefit to all. In no way whatsoever is this a decision that I have been forced into. It is my responsibility to know my ability better than anyone and to use my ability as a benefit to as many people in both, the school and community as it possibly can.

Testing season is upon us! Students in grades 9, 10, and 11 will be participating in state testing three weeks after Spring Break, beginning April 13th. In addition to familiarizing yourself with our testing schedule on the next page, please review the below tips for a positive test taking experience:

- **Study:** The best resource for preparing for the PSAT 9, PSAT 10, and SAT is Khan Academy. All CHS students have a free, online account and can access full length practice tests, videos, and specific test strategies. Students are encouraged to take at least one full length practice test in the weeks leading up to the real thing.
- **Stay healthy:** Students should aim for a full 8-9 hours of sleep each night in the week leading up to the test (and every night beyond that!). As much as possible, students should also incorporate movement, a healthy diet, and relaxation in the days leading up to the test. Students should practice extra hygienic precautions by regularly washing their hands to reduce the chance of illness and ensure they can attend school on the day of their test.
- **Plan ahead:** A few days before the test, students should finalize their transportation plans, collect all of the materials they will need on test day, and familiarize themselves with the test day schedule. On the day of the test, students should arrive on time, well-rested, and ready to go.
- **Attend:** Every single student needs to be in attendance and on time on their testing date. State testing is mandatory for all students in the State of Michigan and it is required for students to be present for each scheduled test.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR APRIL

Please mark your calendars!

LATE STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED FOR TESTING

Please be on time!

DATE	Wednesday, April 13th	Thursday, April 14th	Monday, April 18th
9th Grade	PSAT 8:00am-11:05am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast Available in cafeteria at 7:45am• Bagged lunches available at dismissal• Leave school immediately after testing• Must provide own transportation• BRING A CALCULATOR!	Delayed start - school begins 11:30am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must provide own transportation	Normal day begins at 8:00am
10th Grade		ACT WorkKeys 8:00am-11:30am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast available in cafeteria at 7:45am• Normal day starts at 11:30am	M-STEP 8:00am-10:30am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast available in cafeteria at 7:45am• Chromebooks must be charged!• Normal day after testing
11th Grade			
12th Grade	Virtual day - work at home in Google Classroom	Delayed start - school begins 11:30am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must provide own transportation	Normal day begins at 8:00am

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We will inspire all students to achieve at high levels
and empower them for their future success.
INSPIRE TO ACHIEVE –EMPOWER FOR SUCCESS



Many prospective creative writing students have posed the question, "What kinds of things do you do in creative writing class?" Having been asked some form of this question so many times, I thought that this might make a good topic for a brief column.

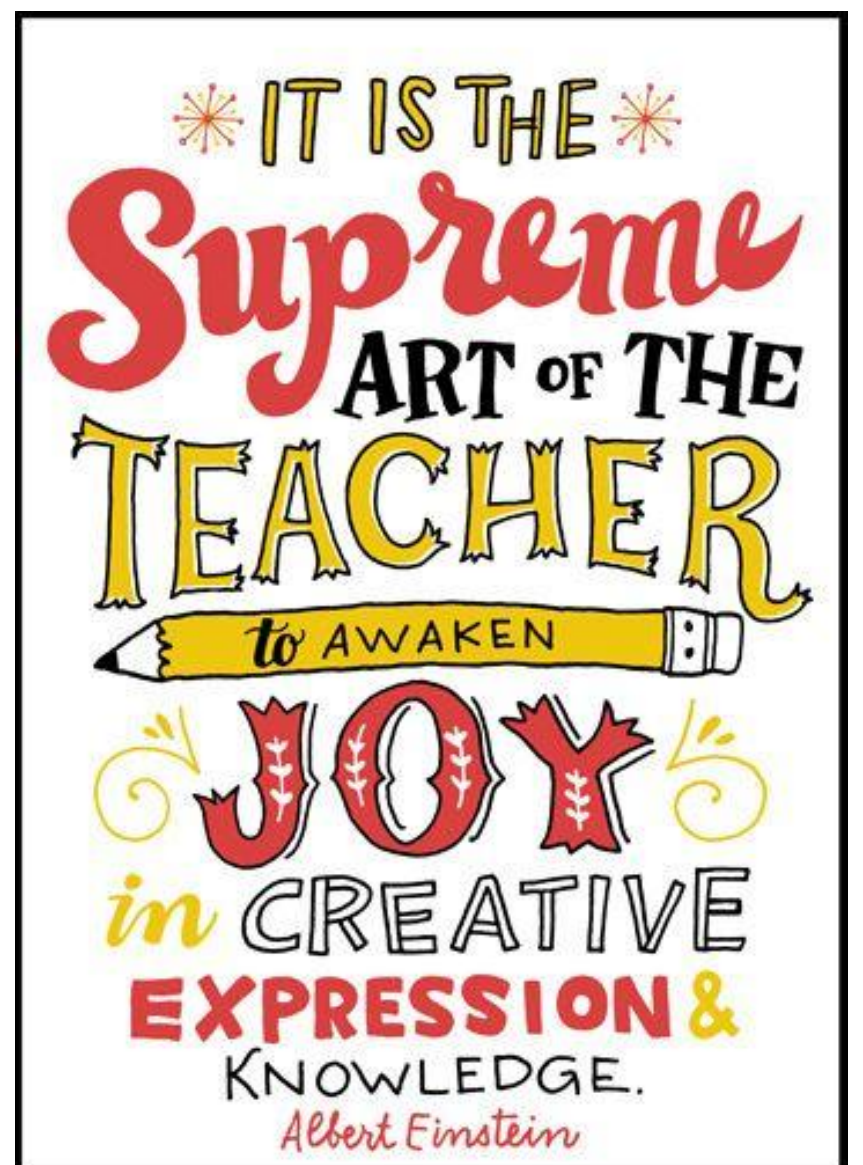
One overarching principle that I follow in class is that we should look closely at what professional writers say about a variety of writing-related topics. In this spirit, I model various writing techniques by utilizing a number of short works and passages by great authors in order to demonstrate to students what mastery of these different techniques looks like. I even show students some of my own pieces and explain various choices that I make as a writer, showing students the various things to consider when writing.

I also think that it's important for students to write on a daily basis, so I usually have students read articles or sections of two books written by authors about the art of writing. The first book that we use is Stephen King's *On Writing*, which is both informative and extremely engaging. As we proceed to the poetry unit, we read parts of a concise, helpful book written by former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser.

In terms of writing assignments, I try to allow for some choice, which many students really enjoy. We begin the year by doing a short assignment that involves closely describing an item of the student's choice, focusing on imagery and perspective. Next, students have a choice of writing either a personal narrative or a personal essay, after we have read and discussed some models of both forms. Our largest class project is the short story, which we approach through a step-by-step process, including plenty of time for peer revision and editing. We also do a series of journal questions in which we work on different aspects of the draft-in-progress.

For our final unit, we veer away from prose and delve into poetry. First, we do several exercises in which we start focusing on different aspects of poetry. Next, we create several haiku (very brief and focused poems with a particular form). The final assignment is to create several original poems, which allows for a great deal of latitude and personal choice in terms of techniques and topics. Throughout the last weeks of class, I show students a wide variety of different types of poetry, including a great deal of modern poetry.

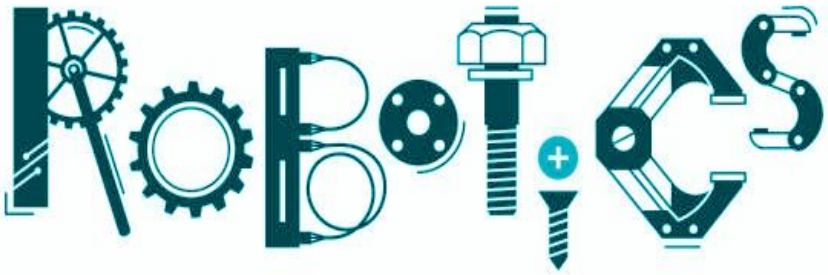
By the end of the class, students will have been exposed to a multitude of great writing styles as well as many practical strategies that will help them improve as writers. To use Stephen King's analogy, everyone who writes comes to the blank page with his own particular "toolbox", and the ultimate goal of this class is to add new tools to each student's inventory that can be of use throughout life beyond high school.



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This month the CW Tech Robotarians (FRC #2959) competed at the FIRST in Michigan (FiM) St Joseph District event. The team competed in twelve qualification rounds, was selected by the #4 alliance (Average Joes of St Joseph and Norsemen of Suttons Bay) and helped them advance into the semi-finals during elimination rounds. This was in spite of many setbacks, such as shooter mechanism failure, climb rope break and unresponsive joysticks, which are all part and parcel of robotics competition and help the students learn how to overcome adversities. In addition, the team won the Innovation in Control award and the safety captain won Star of the Day on Saturday.

Kai Tsao, a Coloma junior exchange student from Taiwan, is getting to experience our version of robotics, compared to the team she was a member of in Taiwan. She has contributed during the build season to most aspects of the team (programming, build, electrical, etc) and focused on data collection at the event, which helps the team with match strategy and alliance selection.

I also want to give a shout out to Dan Mares for helping a former FTC team member (Nathan L of Watervliet) to re-engage with robotics and turn his academics around. You can find his story at the 2:46:40 time mark of this [link](#), which covers all the elimination rounds of the event.

Next we will be traveling to Grand Valley State University for the FiM Western MI District event, March 24th-26th.



After a two year break, MSVMA District 6 Choral Festival was held from March 1st-2nd at The Chapel in St. Joseph. Schools (grades 6-12) from Berrien, Van Buren, and Cass counties participate in this event. Each ensemble prepared two selections of music and they were evaluated by three judges in the areas of tone, intonation, rhythm, technique, and interpretation. They also sight read and were evaluated by a fourth judge. These ratings are combined for the final rating.

Coloma Choirs are very proud of our high school ensembles that participated in the choral festival where many of our students were experiencing this event for the first time.

Serenade Treble Choir received a division II and Chamber Singers received a division I. All of the students showed poise, pride, and professionalism at the event as well giving strong performances.

Both choirs will perform with Lake Michigan College on April 20th at 7pm. This concert will feature Serenade Treble Choir, Chamber Singers, and Varsity Singers as well as a collaborative work with Lake Michigan College's Concert Choir and Soundwaves. The students will premiere a new work by Mr. Kristopher Zook, the Interim Dean of Arts & Sciences; Visual & Performing Arts Department Chair, and Director of Choirs at Lake Michigan College. This concert is free.



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Freshman - Darion Lee Sophomore - Kourtney Smith
Junior - Kayla Pratl Senior - William Schaus

OMG

WHAT'S HAPPENING

- April 6th: Late Start - School starts at 10 am
- April 13th/14th: PSAT/Workkeys State Testing
- April 15th: No School - Good Friday
- April 18th: M-step Testing
- April 20th: Late Start - School starts at 10am

Prom

Date: **May 7, 2022**
Time: **8pm - Midnight**
Where: **Hidden Point Event Hall**
1062 Nickerson Avenue
Benton Harbor

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