THE COUGAR CHRONICLE

BE SAFE, BE RESPECTFUL,
BE RESPONSIBLE
PROUDLT WRITTEN BY
CSMS STUDENTS
SPRING 2017



PROWLING INSIDE:
JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH JR. COVERAGE,
PEER DAY 2017, 8TH GRADE'S TRIP TO ELLIS ISLAND,
AUTISM AWARENESS AND WORLD DOWN SYNDROME
DAY, STUDENT EXPERIENCES, POLLS
AND SO MUCH MORE!

Cougar Credits

Spring 2017

Each issue of the Cougar Chronicle, Carl Sandburg Middle School's newspaper, has been conceptualized, developed, and created top to bottom by students in Grades 6-8. We are proud to bring you current events in our school community and are eager for you to read.

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Stories Prowling Inside:

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Can you find where the Cougar is this month?



Click on the picture above to vote in our poll!

"If you have good thoughts, they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely." - Roald Dahl

A "Juicy" Look Behind the Scenes



Written by Vaishnavi Adusumilli

"……. Right be-fore your eyes, All might seem tra-gic, but then its o-kay!" sang all fifty members of the much anticipated James and Giant Peach Jr. play! The intriguing play, directed by Mrs. Barrow-White, involves a young boy by the name of James Henry Trotter who is sent to live with his atrocious aunts Spiker and Sponge. His aunts send him to chop down an old peach tree which contains a magic potion growing out of one of the branches. When that magic potion grows a peach, James is tossed onto a whirlwind adventure which includes singing insects, magic, ferocious sharks, and a mysterious wizard named Ladahlord. Interested? You should be! Then come take a peek with the Cougar Chronicle for an exciting behind the scenes tour of our spring play, James and the Giant Peach Jr.!

The atmosphere of play practice is merry and quite busy. As you walk down the hallway towards the music room, you will hear the enthusiastic sounds of all the play members singing, chortling, laughing, rehearsing lines, and having a great time. Entering inside the music room reveals the joy and strong bonds developed between this hard-working cast of students. Among the backpacks and jackets spread across the keyboards and desks, students are helping one another dance, practice, their lines, and rehearse individual scenes. Mrs. Barrow-White stands in the middle of it all helping the members, answering questions, and serving as a shining light to guide everyone. In nearly everyone's hands is the rehearsal book, which contains the dialogue and lyrics to each and every moment in the play. Everywhere you look, you will be able to see the books.

As every movie has practice, so does a play. “We take attendance at the beginning of practice and eat snacks to fill up our stomachs so we don't get hungry during practice,” remarked John Valazza, a seventh-grader. Mikayla Stepper, a sixth-grader, added, “It’s a really fun experience, especially since I’m a “core-dancer.” We work on fixing the dances and scenes a lot, but the teachers make it exciting. Honestly, the best part is when we run the show as practice, making simple fixes.” These students certainly show their dedication, as play practice can run from 3:00-5:00 on weekdays and preparation even took place on weekends and during spring break! Mrs. Barrow White does such a thorough job preparing the performers for action that students even know the lines of other character’s parts. That is impressive. With all of this preparation and devotion, it’s evident that theater-goers will be in for an impressive journey.

James and the Giant Peach Jr. premiered April 21st, 2017 at Carl Sandburg Middle School. Check back in our Summer issue for a review and more!














STAGE
CREW



Joining Up with "James"

An Interview with the Title Character



Written By: Sindhu Balakavi

Being the star of a play sounds so exciting and fantastic! It must feel truly wonderful to be the center of so much attention and be appreciated by so many people in the audience! Recently, I had an opportunity to speak to the lead, Delayna Yarborough, about her role as James in the recently premiered play James and the Giant Peach Jr. Read on to hear what this very talented sixth-grader thought about her role:

Q: What inspired you to be in the play?

A: "Well, my sister inspired me to be in the play. As I was watching my sister act, dance, and sing, my goal was to also be in a play. I wanted to express my talent and passion by singing, acting, and dancing."

Q: How did you feel when you were informed that you were James?

A: "At first, I felt that this wasn't really happening. I thought it was a dream! I was running around the house and jumping up and down. I was also going on and on about it to my parents and my sister! It was unbelievable getting the lead role!"

Q: Being the star in this play, are you learning anything from it?

A: "What I learned from being James is to be yourself. If you want to do or achieve your goal, go ahead and get started on it."

Q: **How has your experience been working with the crew?**

A: *"I like everyone in the crew. We got to know each other really well. We have a very tight bond with each other. Everyone is very understanding and friendly. We have had great moments together and I will never forget working with them."*

Q: Tell us a little about practice. How did you start rehearsing the play?

A: "We started really basic by getting to know each other and knowing what we had to do. Then, the work started to increase and the timing of our dances and lines. We started to practice on stage, memorizing the whole script for hours and hours. But it was so fun!"

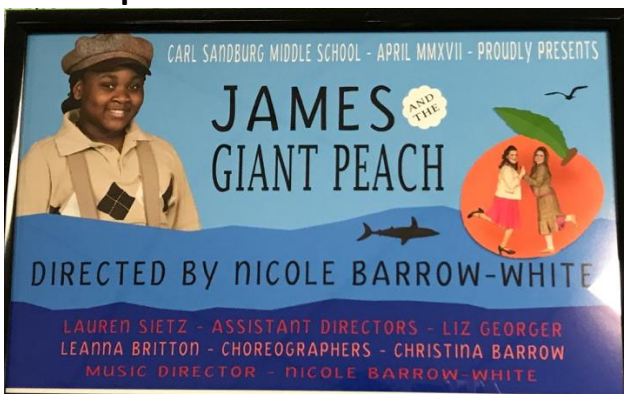
Q: How would you characterize practice?

A: "At practice, not only you do your hard work with the play, but you also have a wonderful time. We always crack up when someone says a funny joke or is hilarious with their acting skills. When we walk into the classroom, we put on our characters and have a good time with the play!"

Q: What is the play, "James and the Giant Peach Jr." about?

A: "This play is about a boy named James who lives with two of his wicked aunts. This amazing journey starts as he discovers a potion that makes a tremendous peach. In the peach, he finds his true self with the help of his singing insect friends!"

The Cougar Chronicle appreciates Delayna taking the time to speak with us and can't wait to see additional performances from her at future Sandburg plays!



PEER Day Returns



Written By: Shilpi Shah and Avani Trivedi

Have you ever felt the need to share your emotions about your life inside and outside of school? PEER Day was a chance for students at Carl Sandburg Middle School to do just that. The day was an opportunity for students to feel safe and open up about topics such as relationships, treatment of one another, pressure about grades, and other matters influencing seventh-grade students. Participating students were split into small groups called "families" for the day, where they were paired with PEER leaders from the eighth grade and the high school and one teacher or administrator, who could be entrusted with your stories.

PEER Day was organized by the Sandburg School Student Assistance Counselor, Mrs. Piserchia, and the activities led by Old Bridge High School's Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown himself had experienced a childhood filled with many vivid memories, so this was a good experience for him as well. The event ran from Wednesday, February 22nd to Friday, February 24th and each block from seventh grade was assigned a particular day.

PEER Day was filled with many events, including some that were extremely amusing and some that brought tears to students' eyes. In our "families", we talked about stress at home and school. It was important that we could trust our families because we would be telling them some of our most personal opinions. PEER Day seemed to make a huge impact on most of the students in attendance, meaning that it was a success! Below is a summary of the events that took place throughout the day:

First, students had an extremely warm welcome when they arrived into the small gymnasium through a tunnel of high-fives, fist-bumping, and high-energy pop music. Afterwards, they continued this excitement by trying to fist-bump as many people as possible, including friends who were only just meeting for the first time. Next, students linked arms with

a random person and introduced themselves to each other. This was definitely a great way to meet new people! When this was finished, students joined their "families" to share stories to answer a group of questions about their overall feelings. Mr. Brown, the mediator, told stories about how people can get through tough times and motivate themselves to learn and grow as a person. After some stories were told, students made a hula-hoop chain and then danced to Cotton-Eye Joe and Gangnam Style. This certainly had lightened the mood! After this event, students went back to their families to talk about their home life. As the day went on, people seemed to appreciate each other's company more and more and bonds were beginning to form.

Next, students participated in an event called *Cross the Line. Cross the Line,* was literally what the name is. Students had to cross the line! However, it was much more than that. Questions were about being topics that would encourage students to be honest and truthful with one another. This was the event that brought out the most emotion. It was a chance for you to finally let loose if you were holding anything in fear of being judged. You could show people who you were, and admit some things that you may never have wanted to admit without this experience. It may have been tough, but in the end, the event expressed our vulnerability and showed us that we were not alone. This realization helped and will help us for many years.

Once students completed *Cross the Line*, they had the chance to shout out some special people that helped them get to where they are today. It really showed the importance of friends and having close personal relationships. Shortly thereafter, students participated in a Mannequin Challenge to end the day on a much lighter note. Student poses were hilarious and very wacky.

I will remember PEER Day as a day of opening up and appreciating each other's company. I believe that many students felt grateful for having taken part in the day's events and the experience was a worthwhile one for everyone. Above all else, I think that students learned an important lesson: Don't judge a book by its cover. There's always a lot more than what is on the surface.

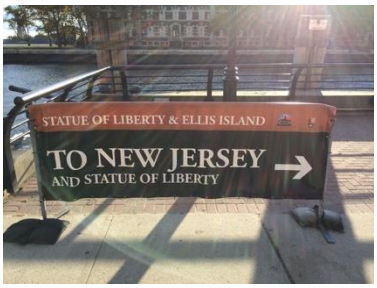



CSMS
PEER
DAY
2017
Welcome To
PEER DAY

Journey to the Island of Freedom



Written by: Rishabh Jain, Mason Stepper, and William Tsang



On Friday March 4th, 8th grade CSMS students were fortunate to visit Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. Although the temperature felt frigid outside, students were eager to take in this history firsthand. This excited group of young minds boarded coach buses headed to Liberty State Park, the location where the ferries transport visitors. 8-1 and 8-3 ventured to Ellis Island first and then The Statue of Liberty while 8-2 did the opposite procedure. Upon arriving at Ellis Island, 8-1 and 8-3 explored the island and took in the historical building and its rich history. They explored the now restored immigration building for an hour and visited many sections which detailed the journey. Meanwhile, 8-2 was at the Statue of Liberty climbing to the majestic pedestal of The Statue of Liberty. Some hungry seagulls joined the crew at lunch while they took a break from their exploration.

After lunch, 8-1 and 8-3 took the ferry to The Statue of Liberty while 8-2 went to Ellis Island. Many took glances at the Statue of Liberty as the ferry was getting ready to approach Liberty Island. When the ferry was safely docked against the pier, the students unloaded and toured the historical site before lining up to enter the Statue of Liberty. They climbed to the pedestal where there was a museum talking about the statue and the history behind it. Some details include the story of the conditions of the ships while coming to the United States and the conditions back home that attracted them here. The sign also talks about the emotions people felt when they saw the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor after the four-month

journey over the Atlantic Ocean. After students had returned from the Statue, they left the island by ferry to Liberty State Park. Many were exhausted as they went on the bus and headed back to Carl Sandburg Middle School, reaching the school around 4 p.m.



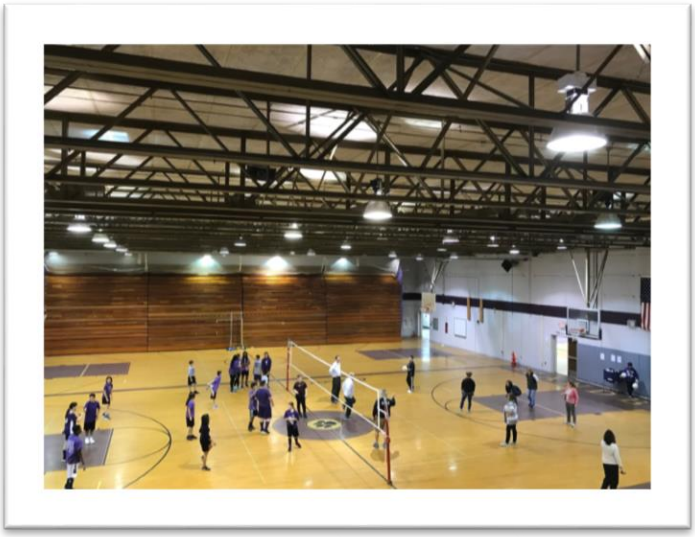
The Statue of Liberty, situated on Liberty Island, was a gift given by France for our alliance during the Revolutionary War. The students saw a statue which represents the Roman goddess of liberty, Libertas. The sculpture, made of copper, is a green color because the copper reacted with oxygen and the other elements. That turned her to the green color she is today instead of the color of copper. She also carried a torch plated with 24-karat gold which `lights the path to freedom` and a tablet which has the date of when our Declaration of Independence was signed, July 4th, 1776. However, students were not allowed to enter the torch part of the Statue of Liberty as it was closed down. On July 30th, 1916, German spies targeted an ammunition plant named the Black Tom during World War I. The ammunition plant had about 2 million pounds of explosives that only needed a spark to detonate. The devastating explosion caused roughly $20 million in shattered windows, destroyed buildings, and deaths. The debris from the explosion ripped through the torch, forever closing it to tourists today. The original torch is visible within the pedestal of the statue.



Ellis Island, located in Upper New York Bay, was the main gateway for immigrants on the East Coast. It was open for 60 years and accepted over 12 million immigrants when it was open. Immigrants passed through long lines to be questioned and experienced strict medical inspections. Those who had diseases that immigration officials thought were harmful were kept in the hospital at Ellis Island. If they didn't fully recover they could be sent back to their country of origin. Ellis Island opened on January 1, 1892, and 700 immigrants passed through that day. Nearly 450,000 immigrants arrived over the course of the first year. On June 15, 1897, a fire broke out. There were no deaths but many records were lost. The new facility opened in December of that year. Ellis Island continues to be a popular destination for students and tourists of many ages.



Victorious in Volleyball!



Written By: Isabelle Padilla and Carel Soney

Whoosh! There goes the ball and here comes a spike! The excitement is penetrating its way into your mind. The teams are warming up. Who will win and who will lose? The suspense is contagious and the anticipation feels like a swift-going burst of confetti. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teams are continuing to battle to earn the place that they rightfully deserve. The bumps, sets, and serves are coming and going as quickly as a spinning tornado funnel. The points are speedily shooting forth and time seems to stand still as the last few seconds are counted down by the blocks. Those last few hits seem to be worth more than a pile of diamonds and everyone is biting their lips in the hope that their own block will win. The winning team erupts in cheers, while the losing teams bow their heads and accept the loss.

These images filled the air as students participated in the annual Physical Education Volleyball Tournament on March 16th, 2017. The crowd roared with excitement as they hoped that their block would be the winners. On the bleachers were many colors supporting each of their blocks. Each block had a chance to play against every other block. Every round lasted for six minutes. There was anxiety in the crowds and students were scared whether teams would win or lose. Finally, the last round came! The two blocks in the finals were crossing their fingers that they would win. BUZZ! The timer had buzzed and 6-1 was the champions of the 2017 sixth grade volleyball tournament. The 6-1 students spectating had started cheering louder than a herd of rushing buffalos.

As for the other blocks, the 8-2 volleyball team came in the lead for the seventh and eighth grade tournament with 7-3 on their tail. The last match was between the winners and the teachers. The ecstatic buzz was spreading as people were wondering who was going to win. Most people set their minds on the teachers who had more strength, but some settled on the winning team who won against all the other blocks and could work together as a team. In the end, all had a wonderful time and students look forward to future schoolwide events like this.

Rock Your Socks for World Down Syndrome Day



Written by: Felicia Padin

In the United States, one out of every seven hundred children is born with Down Syndrome, almost 6,000 on average each year. Even though this condition is not incredibly common, it definitely is well known in today's society. Many people still do not understand what exactly Down Syndrome is. The condition is caused due to an extra chromosome in the body. That may not seem like much but this imbalance can cause major changes in the human body such as heart defects, Sleep apnea, dental problems, Thyroid disease, delayed growth, adult Alzheimer's, and more.

Due to these facts, it is exceedingly important to raise awareness and funds for those affected with Down Syndrome. People need to understand that people with disabilities still have many similarities with those who do not have this condition. They still want to be accepted, to play sports, to go to school dances; to be like any of the rest of us. Raising awareness is essential for finding a way to being able to prevent those who have the disease from suffering from the side effects.

At Carl Sandburg Middle School, students and staff are doing their absolute best to use our voices to spread knowledge about Down Syndrome. Recently on March 21, our school held an event for World Down Syndrome Day called *Rock Your Socks*. On this day, students were encouraged to wear the most unique socks that they owned. It is strongly encouraged not to use the term 'crazy' to describe the socks because it can sometimes be considered offensive. “Almost 80% of the staff and students participated,” explained Mrs. Vasallo, one of the special education teachers who works in our school. The entire purpose of this gesture was to have all our students to stand out in their own way. Many people with Down Syndrome feel as though they stand out in the crowd. Our school body wanted to send the message that standing out isn't necessarily always a bad thing.

A growing population of students at CSMS have Down Syndrome. "They need to know the school community and the school community needs to know them," explained Mrs. Vasallo. The reason socks were used for this day was the fact was that this action would start conversations and encourage others to participate once they knew the reason behind it. Many schools have participated in *Rock Your Socks Day* for years, with ours just for the past two. Mrs. Vasallo emphasized that our school will continue to participate in this worthwhile event for many years to come.

Sandburg Celebrates Autism Awareness



Written by Vaishnavi Adusumilli, Gina Battaglia, and Carolena Lodzinski

Light it up Blue! Carl Sandburg Middle School officially celebrated Autism Awareness Month on April 3rd, 2017. Autism is a mental condition that is present from early childhood, and is characterized by difficulty in communicating and forming relationships with other people and in using language and abstract concepts. Someone whose condition falls within the spectrum has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Autism affects the brain and makes communicating and interacting with other people (chatting, playing, hanging out, or socializing with others) more difficult. Not everybody with autism spectrum disorder has the same difficulties.

The official symbol for this month of recognition is typically a blue light bulb with rainbow puzzle pieces. This puzzle ribbon was adopted in 1999 as the universal sign of autism awareness. The Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon is the most enduring and recognized symbol of the autism community in the world. Yet, views about the iconic marker are as diverse and wide-ranging as the spectrum it represents. The puzzle pieces inside the light bulb are meant to represent the many spectrums, or types, of autism that people can have. Each puzzle piece is different just as each case and individual is different. The origins of the puzzle piece, the primary symbol for autism, date back to 1963. It was created by Gerald Gasson, a parent and board member for the National Autistic Society in London. The local school board at that time believed autistic people suffered from a 'puzzling' condition.

You can help with Autism at Sandburg too. On April 3, students were asked to wear blue in support of Autism Awareness. Blue lights were strung up around the school as well. The Special Education teachers and their students created a tree of puzzle pieces by the cafeteria and the sewing room. They also made paper blue lightbulbs to display on every classroom door, which was an excellent way to make the students take more notice.

The staff also showed their support for the cause. They had the option to make a donation to the charity *Autism Speaks*, which would then be submitted in Sandburg's name. If any member of the staff donated, they were then entered in a raffle to win one of seven fancy puzzle piece scarves. Staff members could also purchase an *Autism Speaks* button to wear on autism day with their blue clothes. You might have seen your teacher or colleague wearing this decoration. As a Nationally Recognized School of Character, participation in events such as this continue to demonstrate how Sandburg is a welcoming and diverse place to be!

The Many Worlds of ESL



Written by: Jennifer Rojas and Farah Omeed

"Marhabaa, Zdravstvuyte, Hola, Hēllō, Kamosta!" These are just some of the ways that ESL, or English as a Second Language, students at Carl Sandburg Middle School say, "Hello." At Carl Sandburg Middle School, we have a fantastic ESL program. ESL is a class that helps new students that come from other countries learn how to speak English. Mrs. Varod, the ESL teacher, helps students in Grades 6-8 to read, write, speak, listen, and learn about American culture and the English language in class. At Carl Sandburg Middle School, there is a gigantic variety of spoken languages, including: Tagalog, Urdu, Italian, Creole, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Malayalam, Twi, and Gujarati. At home, most ESL students speak English with their siblings and with their parents they speak their language. Students also learn about American holidays and different customs that are shared in America. For example, during the holidays, students made and decorated a gingerbread man. The fun doesn't stop there, because students also get to participate in amazing events like *Fun Friday*, where educational games are played with Old Bridge High School students. There is always something unique to learn!

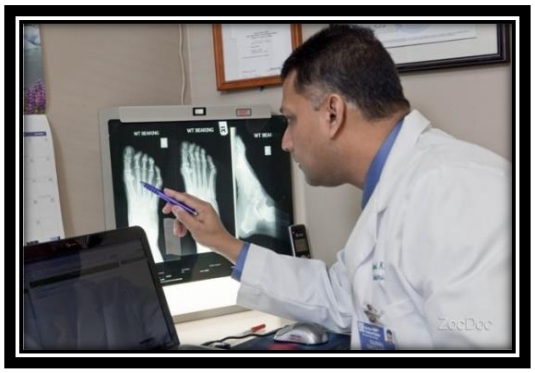
A day in ESL begins with each student talking about their day. Students do different activities to learn about new words. Some ESL students might not understand what the word means so we show them visuals and pictures. We have also learned about idioms and types of verbs so that we can understand different parts of the subjects we learn in school. Students also may play Kahoot and other games to learn in an exciting and hands-on way. Throughout this year, we have learned about synonyms, new vocabulary words, figurative language, sentence types, pronunciation, and anything else that could help us with becoming more skilled with the English Language.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to be an ESL student because you may not understand what other people are saying. Homework and projects can also be very hard because some of the words or directions may be unfamiliar to us. We want to understand the language as best as we can to meet people and learn just like everyone else. Our teacher, Mrs. Varod, has played a huge role in helping students feel better. She teaches students how to be confident and feel better about themselves in a safe way. When we spoke to Mrs. Varod, she explained that she wants to teach her students how to be successful and great Americans. Overall, we thank all ESL teachers for helping us and teaching us throughout our time in Old Bridge Public Schools. We look forward to continuing to get better and better at learning and speaking English each and every day.



Happy Feet: One Step at a Time

A Chat with My Dad, A Podiatrist



Written by: Debosree Datta

Recently, I had the pleasure of talking with my dad, Dr. Ujlwal Datta, who is a podiatrist. I wanted to know more about the field of medicine that he practices and allow him to share his views and suggestions with everyone. My dad is also a surgeon who is board certified in foot surgery. He is affiliated with Raritan Bay Medical Center in Old Bridge and Perth Amboy. He currently has 2 offices—one in Perth Amboy and the other in Bound Brook. I was eager to learn more about exactly what he does.

Q: What is a podiatrist?

*A: A podiatrist is a **Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM)**, also known as a podiatric physician or surgeon. Podiatrists diagnose and treat conditions of the foot, ankle, and related structures of the leg.*

Q: What made you decide to be a podiatrist?

A: When I was doing my undergraduate studies in New York, I used to volunteer in the Emergency Room at Bellevue Hospital. One day, the volunteers who requested were allowed to spend a whole day observing various surgical procedures in the Operating Room upstairs. One of the many cases that I saw involved a below the knee amputation (surgical removal of the leg below the knee) of a patient. I found out later from the surgeons that the patient was a diabetic who developed a bad infection to her foot and that she also had poor circulation (blood flow) to her legs below the knee. So the infection and the wound could not be controlled and unfortunately she had to lose part of her leg. The surgeons told me later that the patient should have seen a podiatrist who could have saved her foot and possibly her leg. That is when I started developing an interest in becoming a podiatrist.

Q: What are the qualifications of becoming a podiatrist?

A: Podiatrists are the most qualified doctors to care for your feet. They complete four years of training in a podiatric medical school and three years of hospital residency training. This training is similar to that of other doctors. Podiatrists can specialize in many fields, including surgery, sports medicine, wound care, pediatrics (children), and diabetic foot care.
Podiatrists can earn ***Board Certification*** *with advanced training, clinical experience, and by ultimately taking an exam. The* ***American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery*** *and the* ***American Board of Podiatric Medicine*** *are the certifying boards for the field.*

Q: What conditions do you treat?

A: As a podiatrist, I treat all problems related to the feet and ankle such as heel pain, plantar fasciitis, bunions, hammertoes, flat feet, fractures, dislocations, sprains/strains, warts, fungal infection of the skin and toenails, ingrown toenail infections, and other soft tissue and musculoskeletal disorders of the foot and ankle. Many of these conditions sometime need surgery which I can also perform. I see a lot of children that have flat feet and walking disorders and helping them recover gives me extra special joy. I also treat diabetic foot wounds and if I can save a patient's foot from amputation it gives me a sense of purpose of the path that I have chosen.

Q: What are your recommendations for proper foot care for adults and children?

A: I encourage everybody, children and adults, to take special care of their feet. Feet are complex anatomical structures that can serve many functions. Feet are the mirror to your overall health and care should be taken to make sure that any small problem(s) is/are addressed immediately so it/they can be treated and future bigger problems can be averted. This is particularly important for people with diabetes.



Click on the picture to check out my Dad's website!

Lightning Strikes The Students of 6-1!



Written by: Jasmine Foo and Ethan Kraja

Crash! Students in block 6-1 were given the incredible chance to see a musical production of the novel Percy Jackson and the Lighting Thief on April 4th, 2017 at Montclair University. Lasting the majority of the day, students were entertained by the mesmerizing story that weaved action, adventure, and Greek mythology all together.

Always trouble-prone, the life of teenager Percy Jackson gets a lot more complicated when he learns that he is the son of the Greek god, Poseidon. At a training ground for the children of gods, Percy must learn to control his powers and prepare for the adventure of a lifetime. He must prevent a feud among the Olympians from erupting into a devastating war on Earth, and rescue his mother from the clutches of Hades, the god of the underworld.

The bus ride to get to the university was about forty minutes. That day, students had to walk through rainy weather to get to the Montclair Theater. When they arrived, there were many children present from all different grades. The show itself was a fantastic treat! The actors all did a spectacular job at being their character and there was even an occasional laugh from the audience. While the play did not include certain parts from the novel, most of the story was present. Can you imagine how hard it would be to do certain scenes that take place in the air from the book?

Percy Jackson is a story originally written by author Rick Riordan in the year 2005. The novel was adapted into a movie in the year 2010, as well as another one of his books, The Sea Of Monsters. Percy, Annabeth, Grover, are all intriguing characters that have captured reader and viewers of many ages. As a musical, this was definitely a different experience. The show felt as spectacular as the novel and if the reaction was anything to judge the play by, it was certainly a hit. If you're looking for a great adaptation of this story, definitely check this play out!

The Captivating History of Boy Bands



Written by Gianna Porcelli

From The Osmond Brothers to Zayn Malik, boy bands have been together for what feels like forever. Though some people would rather not listen to boy bands, they are adored by many dedicated fans. These bands come from all over the globe starting in America and going as far as Asia. While some may think no members from these bands actually play instruments, they are wrong. For example, Niall Horan from One Direction and Ashton Irwin from 5 Seconds Of Summer do in fact play instruments such as piano, guitar, and the drums. To me, boy bands are a way to escape my everyday life and listen to music I that makes me feel good.

Boy bands don't just appeal to me because they are good looking, yes, most of them are, but it's more than that. Most of them have huge hearts and are always helping others. They do charity work and are very thankful for their fans. I have personally been a fan since I was about three years old due to my interest in the Jonas Brothers at that time. Then I began to like bands like One Direction, 5 Seconds of Summer, and many others. Within boy bands, the genres can also be different, ranging from pop, rock, or classic rock. I don't have a very specific genre of music I listen to. Most of the lyrics talk about everything and anything, which makes them very interesting. Some songs talk about heartbreak or beginning to fall in love. Some members have high-pitched voices and can hit high notes very well, while other members have deep raspy voices. It is always interesting to see how these voices work together in a song. To understand just how people easily love boybands and their music, you have to have an open mind and be ready for anything, some may surprise you while others aren't so good.



The history of boy bands is rich and filled with a great variety of groups from all over the United States and world. In 1962, one of the first boy bands, The Osmond Brothers, began making television performances singing barbershop style music. Two years later, The Beatles performed on the Ed Sullivan Show, which was an historic first live television performance marked by ear-splitting shrieks from teenage girls. In 1966 came The Monkees, which were formed as a sitcom band, making their live debut as a group in December. Next, The Jackson 5, a group with a young Michael Jackson, signed to

Motown Records in March 1969. Menudo, a Latin pop group was later founded in 1977, though this group did not reach international fame until the early 1980's.



In 1983, an R&B group called New Edition scored their first major hit with the song "Candy Girl". Five years after, New Kids on the Block exploded onto the pop scene. Another band, Boyz II Men, debuted in 1991, later releasing one of the most successful Hot 100 Singles ever. After, All-4-One's ballad "I Swear" was the Billboard song of the summer in 1994.



In 1996, after s successful run in Europe, the Backstreet Boys finally invaded the U.S. with the debut single "We Got It Goin' On". Their competitor, *NSYNC, released its debut single, "I Want You Back," as well as gaining exposure by opening up for Janet Jackson on her Velvet Rope tour. Westlife, an Irish pop quartet earned its first Number 1 album in its native country and began to conquer Europe during 1999. O-Town was formed in 2000 on the MTV reality show Making the Band. In 2000, *NSYNC broke the BSB's single-week sales record with "No Strings Attached" which featured "Bye Bye Bye" and "It's Gonna Be Me". Its 2.4 million opening week still stands as the biggest album opening ever.



Moving into the 2000's, the R&B group 112 scored a pair of top hits with "Peaches and Cream" and 'Dance With Me" in 2001. *NSYNC went on hiatus following their 2001 "Celebrity" album and subsequent tour in 2002. The Jonas Brothers begin to try and fill up the boy band gap in 2006, with their pop-rock debut "It's About Time". The group would then go on to release three more albums over the next three years. In 2011, Backstreet Boys and New Kids on the Block teamed up for a joint album called "NKOTBSB". A year after, One Direction came in third place on The British X-Factor show in 2010. They later released their debut album "Up All Night". The following year in 2012, The Wanted scored a U.S. top 10 hit with their dance single "Glad You Came". Following the release of their third Number 1 album, "Midnight Memories", One Direction embarked on their first stadium tour and their third headlining tour. Finally in 2015, Zayn Malik, a former member of One Direction, broke millions of hearts by leaving the band to pursue his solo career. One Direction continued touring internationally after Zayn's departure while preparing a fifth studio album.

That was the complete run-down of the major boy bands for the last fifty-three years. Whether they went on hiatus, all began solo careers or just stopped making music completely, boy bands were huge part of the music industry throughout time. Who will come next?

Vegan for a Week



Written By: Malina Alwis

Love devouring hamburgers or savoring delicious Kentucky Fried Chicken? Did you ever think about the impact that you are having on the lives of animals? A few months ago, my friend Phyllis Goodridge decided to be vegan for a week, meaning eating nothing that comes from an animal: no meat, no dairy, no honey, and no egg products in your diet. Veganism has many benefits. As a vegan myself, I think the hardest part about being vegan is people challenging your decision to go vegan. Secondly, the availability of vegan style food makes it difficult at times to live this lifestyle. As someone who eats meat, you can easily pull into a McDonald's or any other restaurant and be able to order what you want. As a vegan, the options available are more limited, including bagels, oatmeal, or salad. Another advantage to going vegan is the fact that many of these foods are lower in calories and potential bacteria. Lastly, many of the animals that are later sold for consumption have to live their lives in tiny cages or other less than desirable conditions.

For some, this might be a tough reality to tackle, but my friend Phyllis still decided to give it a try:

Q: Why did you go vegan for a week?

A: I went vegan for a week because I always saw my friend Malina eating dumplings. I tried one and thought that they weren't that bad. I challenged myself to go vegan after watching her. Before seeing her, I also saw some animals being mistreated and it almost made me cry. Seeing those animals made me think about what I was really eating.

Q: What difficulties did you have being vegan?

A: Nothing was really bad about being vegan except getting used to it. On the first day, I came home and couldn't find anything I could eat. After learning what I could and couldn't eat, everything began to get easier.

Q: What type of food did you eat?

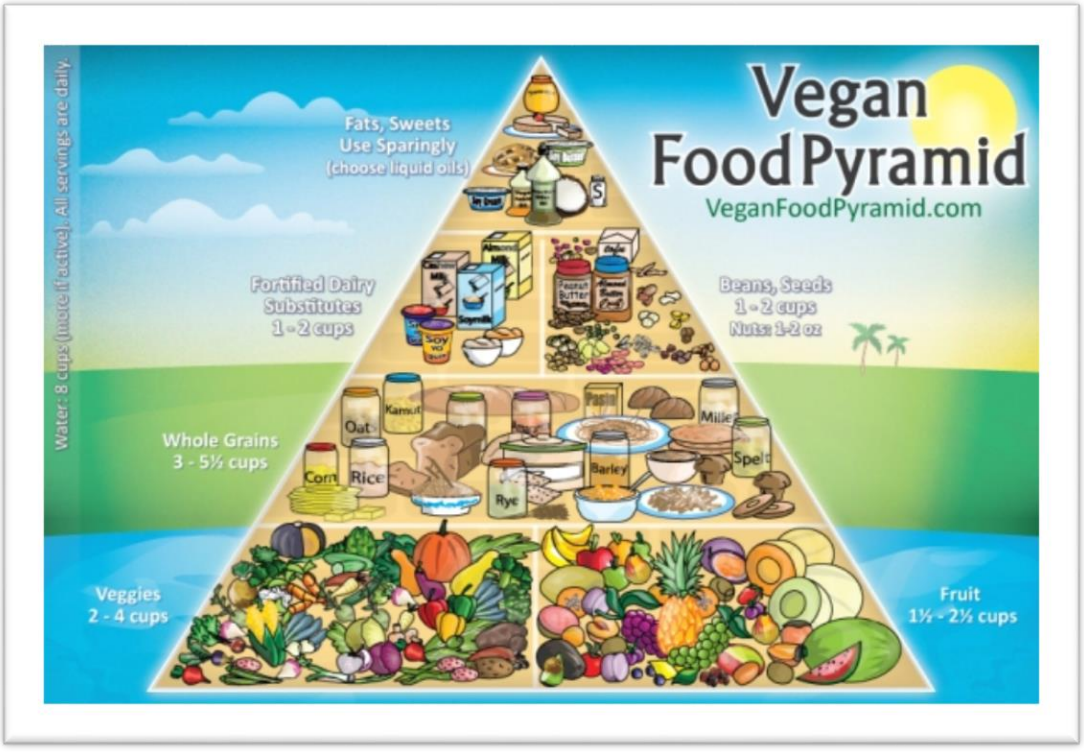
A: I ate all kinds of food. I started out with eating Oreos and potato chips as a snack and started my day with meatless breakfast sausage. Later on, I ate Gardein chicken tenders, pork-less bites, and Mandarin chicken. I also ate dumplings from H-Mart that my friend Malina recommended.

Q: Do you recommend others try going vegan?

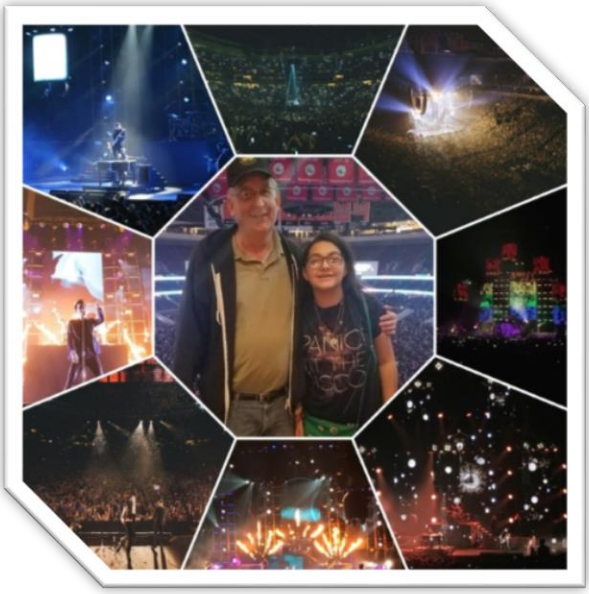
A: Yes, being vegan teaches you to eat consciously. I didn't miss out on any food because I was overwhelmed with the amount of options that I could eat. I also didn't have to feel bad for the animals I was eating.

Q: What do you take away from this experience?

A: After being vegan for a week, I learned what eating healthy exactly meant. I also learned to eat food with less sugar and to read the nutritional label. I would go vegan again and I plan to go vegetarian for a month starting in April.



Tonight, We Are Victorious: My *Panic at the Disco* Concert Experience



Written by: Jenna Ortiz

On Saturday, February 25th, 2017, I had the opportunity to travel to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for my very first Panic! At The Disco concert for their latest tour at the Wells Fargo Center. Lasting from 7:00PM to around 11:30PM, I had a wonderful time. Forming in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2004, the founding members of this band were Ryan Ross, Spencer Smith, Brent Wilson, and lead vocalist Brendon Urie. While this group of members has changed over time, their music has remained enjoyable throughout. Even the band's genre seems to change from album to album. From pop rock to pop punk and alternative music, the style of their music is always a surprise.

Touring with two bands named Saint Motel and Misterwives, their latest tour showcased this band at the height of their creativity. The performance was breathtaking and included massive background screens, confetti, streamers, sparks, and fire falling from the machines on stage. In addition, the energy of the crowd was extremely electric, with all sorts of hype and joyful singing along. During the show, the crowd was able to interact by holding up hearts that formed a rainbow when everyone put them together. There were also major differences between the singing in-concert and on the album. In person, the sound sounded so much clearer and richer, especially when listening to the high notes. The lead singer's vocal range and dancing made all the songs sound so much better. Other than the pouring rain delaying my arrival, I would say that the concert was amazing and flawless, and I would definitely recommend checking out all three bands.

Can Twenty One Pilots' *HeavyDirtySoul* be Saved?



By: Mason Stepper

I remember sometime in 2015 when I had stumbled upon a then-unknown band named Twenty One Pilots. They had an interesting style: fusing rock, rap, hip-hop, and even reggae with introspective and involving vocals. At the time, they had just released their double platinum album, *Blurryface*, followed up by their quintuple platinum single: *Stressed Out*. Interested in their music, and wanting to know more about the musicians behind it, I decided to investigate further… If only I had known what I had just fell into!

Twenty One Pilots is a band composed of two main members: Tyler Joseph and Josh Dun. The band lineup has changed over time, and as of right now, only Tyler Joseph has persisted throughout all four albums. They had started out with their eponymous album: *Twenty One Pilots,* followed up by the slightly more successful *Regional at Best.* The latter had earned the attention of record label *Fueled By Ramen*, and was taken off sale. Some of the tracks were remade and compiled into their first commercial hit, *Vessel,* which had apparently been positively reviewed, barring the rather destructive review by Dave DiMartino of the Rolling Stone. Following the album, the band went on tour with a portable recording studio so that they could compile the mess that would become *Blurryface*...

Blurryface itself is a mess. Tracks like the drum & bass infused *HeavyDirtySoul* are mixed in with tracks like the simplistic, yet emotional *Goner.* The sole idea of *Blurryface*, the idea of a secret, insecure, antagonistic 'dark side' to everybody is a bit... cliché. The production is decent,

but of course, it was not handled by Twenty One Pilots themselves. (Would this prevent them from being truly 'independent'? Perhaps.) In addition, some of the lyrics themselves are a bit flawed. For example, the entirety of *HeavyDirtySoul's* lyrics are direct carbon copies of Tyler Joseph's street poetry video, in a similar way to how Detroit's Marshall Mathers, better known as Eminem, took some of his early lyrics from his day of battle-rapping and used them on various songs within the *Slim Shady EP*. *Stressed Out*'s lyrics are not only almost specifically engineered to be the #1 "alternative" hit, but also the definition of *#relatable*.

However, when you look deeper and ignore the fan base, you might just enjoy their music for what it is: imperfect, sloppy, strange, and above all: emotional. Before my music taste became what it is today, I often found myself lying in bed listening to *Goner* on repeat when I had a bad day, and *HeavyDirtySoul* to get myself pumped. Although there are multiple things about this album that irk me, and it's honestly not one of my top ten, I'd still recommend people who enjoy these genres of music to give it a try.

- **BEST SONGS – HeavyDirtySoul, Fairly Local, Message Man**
- **HONORABLE MENTION - Hometown**
- **WORST SONGS – Tear In My Heart, Polarize, Stressed Out**
- **DISHONORABLE MENTION – Goner**
- **WOULD RECOMMEND? - Give it a shot, I suppose.**



Book Nook Featured Review:

The Rest of Us Just Live Here



Written by Felicia Padin

My adoration for That Was Then, This is Now is one that can barely be put into words. In my opinion, it was better than The Outsiders, one of the more famous books by S.E. Hinton. The ending leaves readers completely shocked. I promise not to give out any spoilers, but there was a serious amount of heart-wrenching betrayal involved that didn't see coming.

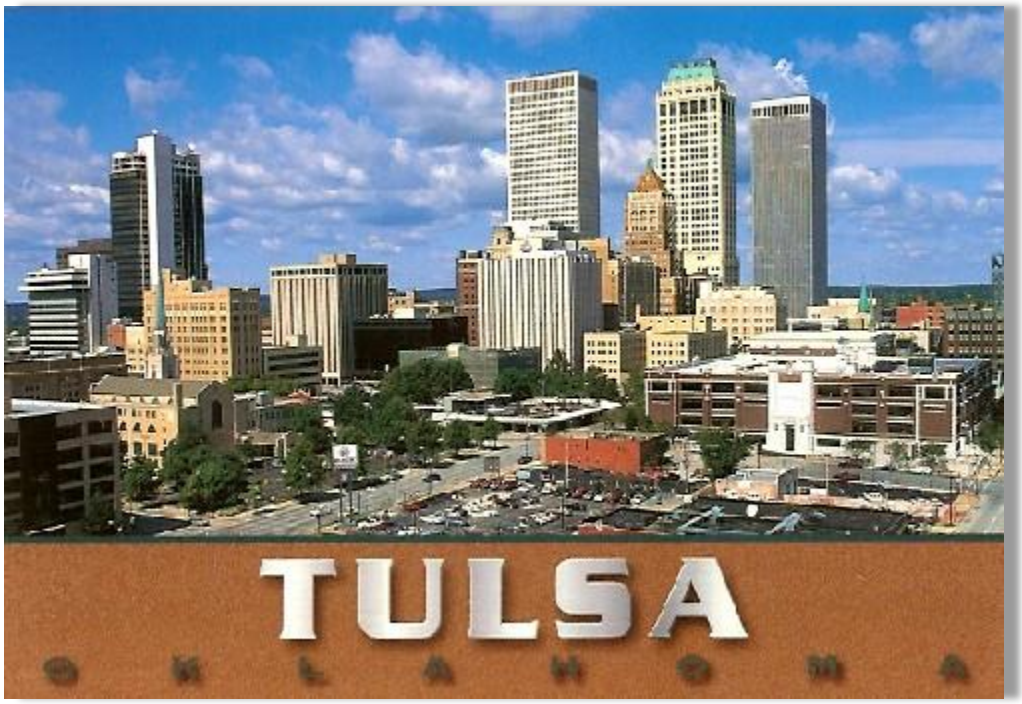
Like the novel The Outsiders, this book also takes place in Tulsa, Nebraska in the 1960s, featuring many of the same characters. Like most of Hinton's books, the narrative is a coming-of-age tale, focused on the friendship and lives of Bryon and Mark, as told from Bryon's point of view. Imagine living in a bad town full of fighting between different social groups and crimes being committed every other day. Imagine having your mother in the hospital and having barely enough money to get by. Imagine having to deal with all of this while also trying to stay away from the wrong crowd. Throughout this story, these vulnerable characters' experience first love, betrayal, and a first-hand account of just how bad drugs can be, turning someone smart and joyful into depressed and forgetful. The storyline is so realistic with its portrayal of real problems that people during this time period experienced. None of it was sugar coated at all and I think that's how every good story should be. Hinton wasn't trying to pretend that kids were always good, making proper choices, or that every family was perfect.

One character who I almost instantly came to love was M&M. He gets the nickname for his unusual love for the candy. Incredibly sweet and innocent, M&M was always there for his friends. This boy always talked about how when he grew old he'd love to have lots of children and didn't mind babysitting his younger siblings. M&M didn't deserve to have to live in the

situation that he did. This is not me saying that any of the characters deserved the atrocities that took place around them, but especially felt for him. In a town full of fighting and bad influences, it wasn't easy for M&M to stay true to his kind, easy-going self. Even though he did make a couple of wrong choices throughout the book, I continued to adore him as a character and managed to forgive his decisions.

I can't stress just how much I recommend this book, especially to anyone who has enjoyed any other books by Hinton. It is very easy to be able to appreciate all the wonderful writing thoughtfully poured into this breath taking, lesson-teaching book. However, be ready with a box of tissues by your side because I can promise that you'll need them. On behalf of the Cougar Critic Corner, I award this novel **five** out of **five** paws!





Book Nook Featured Review: The Selection



Written by: Jasmine Foo

Sixteen-year-old America Singer is living in the caste-divided nation of Illea, which formed after the war that destroyed the United States. America is chosen to compete in the Selection—a contest to see which girl can win the heart of Illea's prince, but all she wants is a chance for a future with her secret love, Aspen, who is a caste below her. For thirty-four other girls, the selection is the chance of a lifetime. It's the opportunity to be swept up in a world of glittering gowns and priceless jewels; to live in a palace and compete for the heart of the gorgeous Prince Maxon. But for America, being selected is a nightmare. It means turning her back on Aspen, and leaving her home to enter a fierce competition for a crown she doesn't want. Then, she meets Prince Maxon. Gradually, she begins to realize that the life she's always dreamed of may not compare to a future she never imagined.

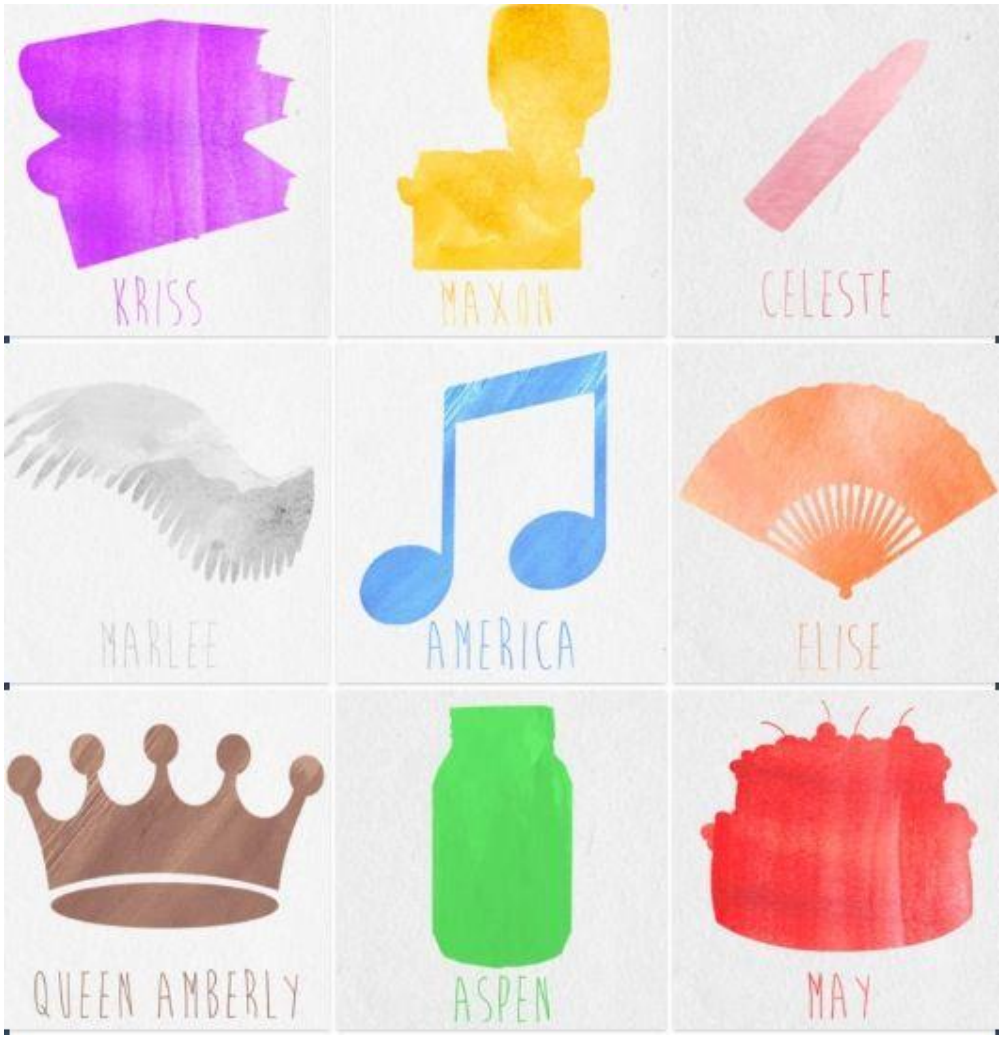
The Selection, written by Kierra Cass, is a story categorized as teen fiction. Many of these characters, though, can be relatable for many people. Such as America, as mentioned before. At the beginning of the story, America seems to be an average teenager, but her story has a deeper meaning. As we see America grow, we soon learn that she is more than just an average "Five" in her time. She comes from a family of seven. Her mother, older sister, Kenna, and she are classical musicians. Her father, younger sister, May, and older brother, Kota, are artists. Her younger brother, Gerad, has not yet found his talent. All of this changes in many ways, when the *Illea Capital Report* shows the girls who were chosen to compete in the Selection for Maxon's hand in marriage. Of course, she gets chosen. She is stripped of her status as a Five, and is changed to a Three.

I personally believe that Kierra Cass is very brilliant for creating a book that is a cross between *The Hunger Games* and *The Bachelor.* ***The Selection*** was a book that gave me a need to read more. I have read many teen fiction novels and found this book to be one of a kind. Cass wrote the story from America's point of view, which I find to be a good choice for the narrator. This is not like most stories of princes and princesses. In my opinion, this story is a lot

more involving than others. This book is narrated by America, who has different thoughts about marrying into royalty than the other girls do. The whole series is a look into America's mind and it is quite the journey.

Being completely head-over-heels for this whole series is an understatement. The in-depth story had me so attached, even from the very first page! After I finished reading the series, I had a desire to read more. There are a total of five books in the whole series, two of which are next generation in the Illean palace. I really recommend this book to all fans of any sort of teen fiction. On behalf of the Cougar Critic Corner, I award this novel **five** out of **five** paws!





NINTENDO SWITCHES TO THE NEW GENERATION



Written by: Frederick Kusi

March 3rd, 2017 marked the release of Nintendo's latest video game console, The Nintendo Switch. Retailing for $299.99, Nintendo's latest home system is once again innovative and exciting. Video game fanatics quickly snatched systems off the shelves and the console is currently very hard to find. What's the big fuss? The Nintendo Switch is the first ever console/handheld that has been made in the gaming era. The Nintendo switch can be played in different environments (in other words, it is like a tablet with controllers on the side). Want to bring your latest game out with you in the car? You can! When you're home, place the system in the docking station and now your game is back on the television screen. This functionality has captured the eye of many, many people.

Arriving with a new type of controller that contains gyroscope controls, gaming feels as fresh and exciting as ever. However, this console is not as powerful as the current generation of systems, with the Playstation 4 and Xbox One clearly beating it in hardware and graphical capability. Another downside is the weak onboard memory since this console only comes with a 32 GB hard drive. This could be a problem when downloading games. Remember to have USB drives ready! Still, the Nintendo Switch has brought new features never thought of before in the gaming world which could prove to be a booming success.

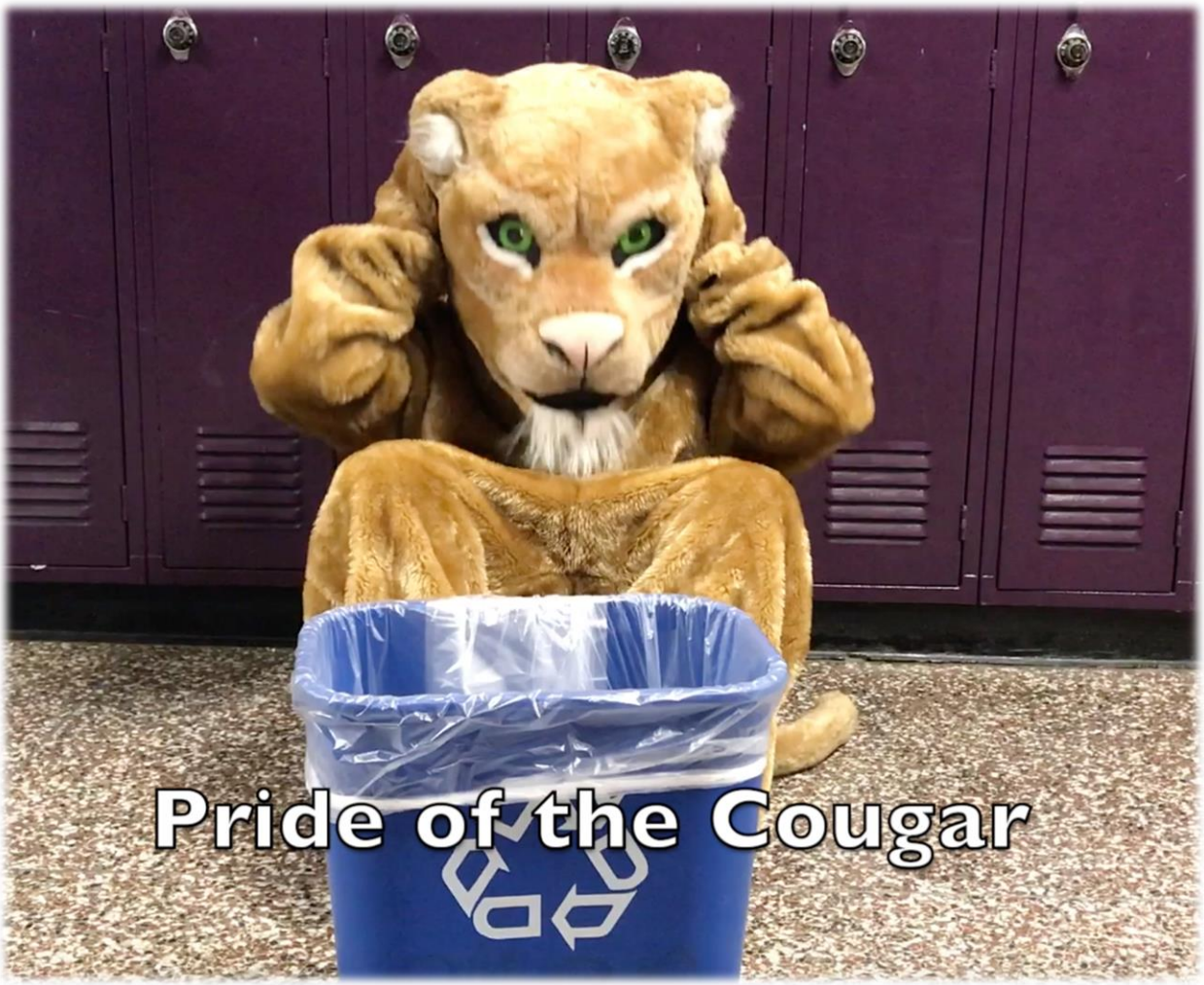
The Nintendo Switch's release games are also a little disappointing, though the clear standout game is *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. This new *Zelda* title is an immersive open-world experience that is an RPG (role-playing game) with a host of interesting, creative ideas. Other launch games include *1,2 Switch, Super Bomberman, Just Dance 2017, and Skylanders: Imaginators.* Hopefully as time goes on the Nintendo Switch will continue to build its library and make Nintendo fans proud!

The Nintendo Switch is now available online and in stores… if you can find one!

Pride of the Cougar: An Earth Day Celebration

This year at Carl Sandburg Middle School, students in the Environment Club came together to create a video celebrating our school's enthusiasm for Earth Day. Parodying the song *Eye of the Tiger* by the band *Survivor*, the Sandburg cougar joined in on the fun to "train" for the Earth Day festivities.

Click on the picture below to check out the video!



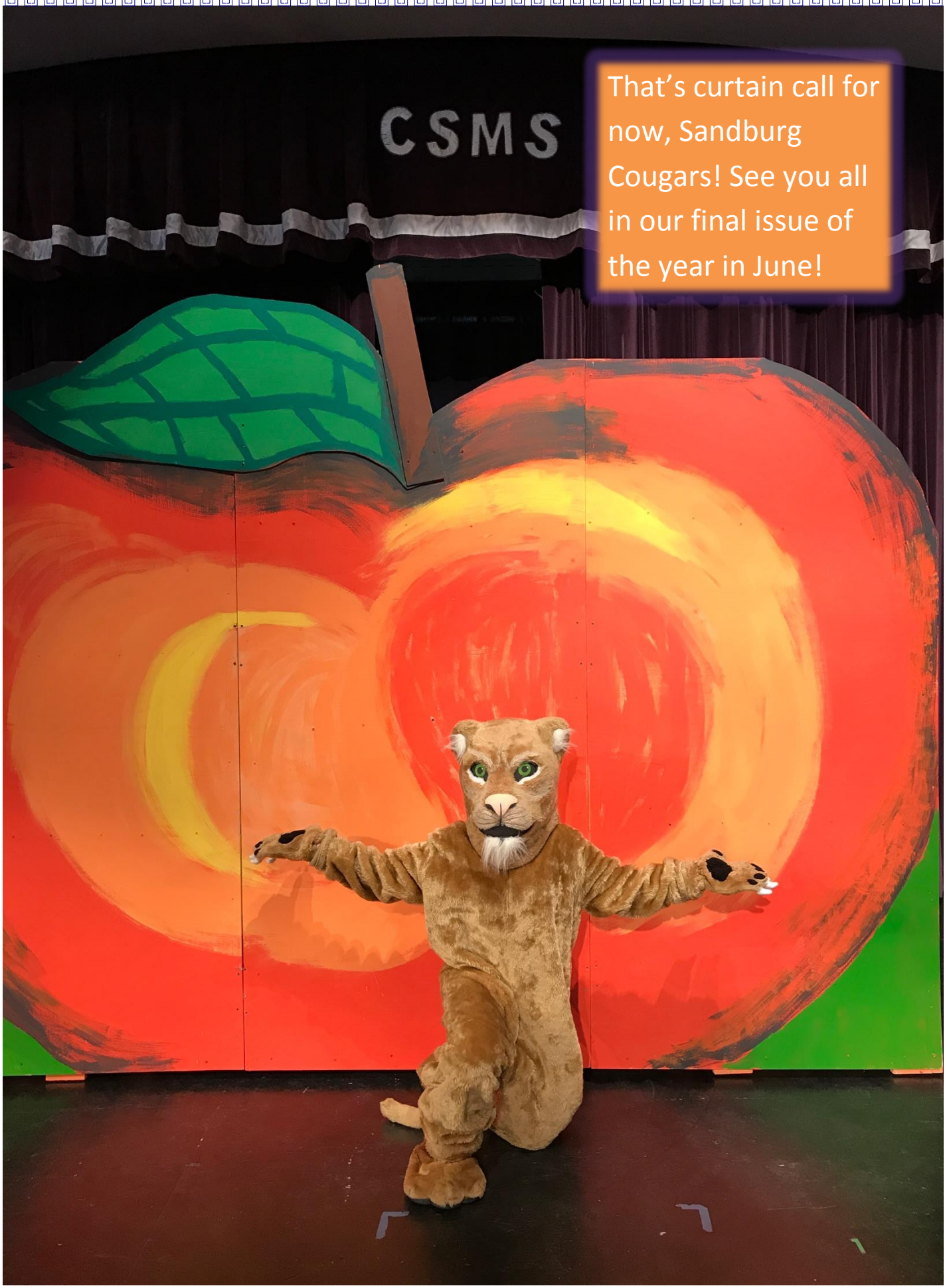

Cougar Comics
Artists to the Rescue!




Sebastian Reguzman
3/18/17
Bob!


Rosemarie Cassara 63E
6th grade


TALENT SHOW!
Are you sure our act will hit the spot?
Surely, we'll be a great team! We'll DOMINATE this!
I got 'em warmed up for you guys!
Thanks!
LET'S GO!
Created by: Jacob Nieves
...one!
...two!
THREE!
No, Jacob, DON'T-
WHUMP!
HAHA HA HA
This is why you shouldn't have been at the top.


CSMS
That’s curtain call for now, Sandburg Cougars! See you all in our final issue of the year in June!