Miss Mandarin Pledges Allegiance

By: Julia Cuthbertson, Miss Mandarin
Photo Credit: Cady Studios

It’s a privilege to lead the students in the Pledge of Allegiance during the morning announcements, as doing this serves as a daily reminder that I pledged to represent my peers and my school to the best of my abilities. As Miss Mandarin, I’ve been able to not only participate in numerous school-related activities, but also have the opportunity to participate in volunteer opportunities around our city. I co-hosted Mr. Unbelievable with Miss Mandarin 2017, Julia Cuthbertson, to crown the honor of Miss Congressman to even more girls around our city thanks to the incredible opportunity and blessing that being Miss Mandarin is for me. I am loving every second of it!

—Sophomore Michael Adams

A Passion for Pink

The Leadership Team creates and facilitates a wide range of fun activities to hype up the students during pep rallies. Kensey McMahon said, “We try to create games that really get people involved. Hungry-Hungry-Mustangs definitely accomplished that!”

On Wednesday, October 19 the campus was awash with pink for our traditional Pink Out Pep Rally. Pink tees, pink pants, pink dresses, pink tulle, pink socks, pink bandanas, pink face paint—if your eyes were open, you were seeing pink! Homecoming Week wouldn’t be the same without our traditional Pink Out. Students saturate in pink sat in classrooms anxiously awaiting the announcement for teachers to dismiss them for pep rally. When it finally came, ‘Stangs headed for the gym, while

Julia Cuthbertson was crowned 2018 Miss Mandarin in the auditorium on Friday, April 21st, 2017.

(continued on page 8)
The Teacher of the Year: Mr. Abraham Reising

By: Rowan Vanhoof, Chief Editor
Photo Credit: Cady Studios & Staff

Mr. Abraham Reising has been selected by his colleagues as the 2017-2018 teacher of the year. Mr. Reising said, “Considering the caliber of educators at Mandarin High, it is truly an honor to receive this recognition.” He added, “This school is unique in its immense camaderie and collaboration among teachers, which allows all of us to elevate ourselves and strive to do our best every day.”

Ms. Victoria Schrimscher, Social Studies Department Chair, said, “I am so proud that Mr. Reising is representing social studies as Mandarin’s teacher of the year. He is a dynamic teacher and his students love him. We should all aspire to be Mr. Reising.”

Mr. Reising poses with his third period AP World History class. “It’s a unique class because I can always rely on him to help me understand topics I’m confused on,” said Alyjah Rocourt. She added, “Due to his teaching methods, I’m able to fully understand what I need to be successful in his class.”

Letter from the Editor

When I think of how this year has started, I think of stormy weather. The hurricanes, the blizzard of fake news emanating from the media outlets, and retweets and re-postings on social media platforms of unconfirmed ‘facts’. All of this has caused the staff to wonder about what to believe and how to respond when so much around us is so questionable.

As a result, we decided it would be appropriate to devote this issue to the theme of individuality and identity. This issue includes articles about how verified ‘facts’ and rumors spreading on international, national, and local levels result in negative outcomes.

Amidst all of unconfirmed ‘noise’ that surrounds us, we also spotlight the greatness within ourselves and honor our individuality and the unique aspects of our identity.

Rowan Vanhoof
Editor in Chief

Contact Us

Do you have a story and/or photo you want to share? Contact the Journalism Advisor at parkinson@duvalschools.org or stop by the Journalism room (J201a) during lunch, or before or after school. We want your contributions!

The Go-To Peeps on Campus

By: Rowan Vanhoof, Editor in Chief
Photo Credits: Cady Studios and Mrs. Doni Parkinson, Journalism Adviser

Our Administrators: Dr. Donna Richardson (Principal), Assistant Principals Brian Holloway, Janetta Lucas (Principal’s Designee), Beth Pecarek (and lead Testing Coordinator), and Mary Flynn. This is the team dedicated to ensuring our campus is filled with scholars focusing on the goal of “Measuring Up to Excellence.”

Our Guidance Counselors: Mrs. Diane Dempsey (Department Chair), Mrs. Tanu Seymour, Mrs. Jerica Adlar, Mrs. Linda Smith, Mrs. Amanda Chamberlain, and Ms. Erin Carroll. For the first quarter, the guidance counselors focused on senior graduation checks, ninth grade promotions, and credit checks for all students. They were also involved in leveling classes to ensure that students were as evenly distributed as possible among the teachers in such a way to meet every student’s need to earn the credits necessary to make this a successful academic year for all. Each counselor has a specific group of students they are assigned to help out. Mrs. Seymour works with AVID and students with last names beginning with A-C. Mrs. Chamberlain works with Biotech and students with last names beginning with D-K. Ms. Smith works with Medical and students with last names beginning with L-M. Mrs. Dempsey works with ESOL and students with last names beginning with N-T. Mrs. Adair works with AICE and students with last names beginning with V-Z. Mrs. Carroll assists seniors meet their graduation requirements and assists Assistant Principal Beth Pecarek in the Testing Office.

Athletics Director Brian Rado, Activities Director Daniel Wilcox, Yearbook/Newspaper Adviser Doni Parkinson, Reading Coach Kim Rolfe, Book Manager Paulette Mills, ESOL Para Christina Koontz. In addition to facilitating our athletic program, Coach Rado also sponsors the Student Athletics Leadership Team (SALT), runs our senior aide program, and handles graduation.

Coach Wilcox not only teaches social studies, but also sponsors the Leadership team and the senior class, to include the purchase of senior packages. Mrs. Parkinson teaches 12th grade English and is the adviser of both Yearbook and Newspaper, so if you have a story to share, please let her know. Mrs. Rolfe is our steely-eyed Reading Coach responsible for facilitating academic professional development for the faculty. As most of you have already found out, Ms. Mills works in the Media Center managing the distribution of textbooks and student IDs. Mrs. Koontz is our ESOL paraprofessional responsible for providing the assistance necessary to help students who are English Language Learners.

Dean of Students Rodney Tisdale, Dean’s Admin Assistant Kelly Davis, ISSP Para Jessica Tobler, Head of Security Staff Albert Smith, Officer Jeffrey Woods, and Officer Christa Urban. All this team asks is that you show up to school and each class on time, comply with the dress code policy, make the teachers’ learning goals your own in each classroom, and be a positive role model for your fellow peers. Equally important, report behavior that compromises the safety of faculty and students.

The Mandarin Times Staff

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The Journalism (Newspaper and Yearbook) staffs are committed to capturing the events and emotions of the ‘Stang Nation for you.

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Kyeli Brennan
Destiny Caraway
Joshua Feig
Sabrina Price
Contributors: Nicholas Crell
and Emily Faunce

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Ashlyn Lacey
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Publishing Information

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Many thanks to our advertisers who have provided the newspaper staff with this opportunity of publishing student work.
Student Council Officers

"Being in Student Council has really brought me to realize the awesome student body at Mandarin and their willingness to help others. Go Stangs!"
Luke Butler, Treasurer

"Student council has been a great way to expand my friendship circle all while interacting with other students to find issues we would like to solve."
Meadow Hodges, Historian

"I'm so happy to be a part of this school and represent the students of MHS."
Sara Tackac, Secretary

"Being in Student Council has been great way to meet new people, and it has given me the chance to really get involved in activities during my senior year."
Morgan Mills, Vice-President

"Student Council has given me so many opportunities to be involved with the school. By allowing all grades to join in, it has allowed me to meet all new like-minded people."
Diana Bruner, President

"Being Senior Class President is truly an amazing experience. Representing my school and the senior class is a responsibility I will forever cherish. It is hard to please so many different people, however, I have learned how to balance it. Being able to encourage seniors to have more school spirit is one of my main goals. Seeing students taking pride in their last year of high school is what means the most to me."
Jasmine Fletcher, President

"Being senior class historian has not only given me the opportunity to have more say in senior activities, but also gave me the opportunity to grow as a leader and be an example for those in the senior class. Capturing all of the amazing moments in senior year made me realize how amazing our class and school truly is!"
Amy Bosman, Historian

"As a freshman, I knew that I wanted to be extremely involved within high school. I challenged myself to be involved with as many different clubs and activities Mandarin held. However, one of my favorite memories that I will have is being Senior Class Treasurer. It gave me an opportunity to be involved with the senior class, and I wouldn’t trade this experience for anything!"
Madison Williams, Treasurer

"Being a leader for the school is a big responsibility, especially with such a large study body. I’ve always wanted to be in a position where I can help make decisions for the good of the school."
Christian Rodriguez, Secretary

"Being VP of the Class of 2018 has been a great experience because of the leadership experience it has given me."
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When did people stop caring about the truth? People you hang with. People you call friends. People you vote for. Do you believe in... People whose opinion you care about.

A man named David Mitchell once said, “Truth is singular. It’s ‘versions’ are mistruths.” Sadly, people have many opportunities to smudge the truth. And now, so many people are constantly seeking attention. The mindset is “It’s all about me and what matters to me.” People don’t take the time to think about others’ feelings and the damage they might cause to someone’s reputation.

“Mistruths” can be very damaging, and even the littlest of these lies has the ability to wreck a person’s reputation. If people in this society don’t care enough to find out the truth, how can someone even begin to defend their name? How many of you have knowingly participated in spreading a rumor even though you had no idea whether it was true or false? Most people have a computer that enables us to smudge the truth. And now, the mindset is “it’s all about you, what do we say? Something worth saying? So why can’t we?”

Fake news has become a very popular and disturbing trend occurring on a global, national, and school level. It is a huge issue. Everyone is affected by these fabricated stories, whether they be a high school student or a presidential candidate.

On the international scale, recently Kenya fell prey to fake news. When the results of the Kenyan election were shared with the public, outbreaks of protest followed. Fake news was spread, stating that 100 people had lost their lives during the aftermath of the elections. However, the death count was actually 24 lives.

Social media were also reporting to their followers the actions that were taking place near their location. These users exaggerated the situation as well. These pieces of information encouraged the thought of the involvement of police brutality. This created further tension between individuals in Kenya. The fake news escalated violence within the country and endangered citizens’ lives. The invented stories physically put the nation’s security at risk. With such a plethora of options, Americans trend toward trusting the news, which aligns with their own political perspectives, listening to the version they most likely want to hear. Membership of the media are concerned about the state of the nation and the defense of it, but they are susceptible to spin based upon their own value system and, more importantly, the goals of sponsors behind the scenes.

Does Truth Exist?

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Rather than investigating and confirming facts before reporting the news, media outlets are actually creating their version of the news based upon very limited and often unverified information. CNN and Fox News receive the same information and then spin this information to fit the agenda of their political sponsors. Consider the claims of the Trump campaign team colluding with Russians in the 2016 presidential campaign. CNN claims that collusion appears to have occurred, and that ‘evidence’ includes the fact that the president’s eldest son met with Russians to collect opposition information against the Clinton campaign team. CNN contends that Fox News normalizes collusion by saying that collecting information on the opposition regularly occurs during all campaigns. CNN counters with the argument that collecting opposition research as an ‘enemy of the state’ is not due to flaws in judgement. On the other hand, Fox News insists that collusion with the Russians is hype created by those who didn’t vote for President Trump.

Is either side (CNN or Fox) putting the matter on hold until an investigation concludes whether or not collusion actually occurred? No. Viewers are bombarded with the ‘news’—not the ‘news’ from both sides. And viewers—citizens who want the facts—are caught in the middle of all of this continuous unsubstantiated noise that both outlets put as news.

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Rumors and lies can have not only emotionally damaging effects, but also lead to physically damaging effects. At the high school level, violence seems to be the most prominent result of mistruths. Fights break out due to flawed news.

One person will share critical information with another without knowing whether it is true or false. The manner in which that person chooses to process and react to the information received is what potentially leads to violence. A poll conducted at a nearby school revealed that fights on high school grounds are caused by relationship rumors and jealousy.

On a more personal level, consider a 14-year-old girl in the ninth grade after a rumor spread that she had cheated on several tests. Most of her friends and classmates just assumed she was cheating and didn’t think to ask whether the rumor was true.

The girl spent a day in the Headmaster’s office defending herself. During this time, she spent in the office, her classmates who heard and spread the rumor were also told to come forth. One classmate confessed that she had just always had strong feelings of hatred towards the girl. All of those students involved in the beginning were instructed to remain silent about what was said in the office. So the girl didn’t speak of the incident.

When she went to school the next day, the girl received strange looks from all of her classmates who were not involved in the previous day’s meetings. Apparently, those students who were instructed not to discuss the meeting could not keep the information to themselves.

These things happen daily. I am all too familiar with this story, because I am the girl in this story.

Ask yourself these questions. Are you part of the problem or part of the solution? What is your motivation for communicating with others? Is it to make friends, develop deeper friendships, develop trust in others, develop trust in you? Or is it just for something to do because you have nothing else to say? Something that may create enemies, destroy friendships, develop distrust in you? Language is powerful. It can be used as a weapon and is used as both at the international, national, and local levels. Equally important, it’s used as a tool of communication.

By: Kyelli Brennan, Staff Writer

Identity: What I Stand For
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Identity: What I Stand For

The Net Effect of Catfishing

By Sabrina Coward, Staff Writer

Photo Credit: Accessed online 10/1/2017 @ https://www.socialtoaster.com

“Let’s meet at the mall.”

We all know how those stories usually end, and we find out that the dirty old man is called a sexual predator. We’ve all been warned about those sexual predators and have been warned against providing personal information online sufficient to becoming a victim of this type of catfishing.

Now we’re in high school. Now we’re looking for other types of relationships—not just friends who can relate to us, but romantic relationships. We see them developing all around us. We try to develop them ourselves. Sometimes we’re lucky and find someone to make being a teenager more exciting, school a bit more interesting. Sometimes we don’t. Unfortunately, we usually blame ourselves when it doesn’t happen to us.

As teens, we’re vulnerable, and most of us have accounts with a number of social networking platforms. Many of us don’t see the harm of sharing a friend’s phone number, because we think we’re doing them a favor by increasing their social network. However, the threat of others gaining access to you through these platforms becomes real when some of those ‘others’ are not being genuine. When they’re pretending to be someone they’re not. It’s so easy to set up an account with false information—a photo of someone you think would be more attractive to others, make yourself develop an online friendship and that’s as far as it goes. Each has someone to communicate with. Each is having their need for friendship fulfilled, but neither want the relationship to go further than that. Just friends. That’s the best case scenario.

Worst case scenario?

Catfishing can become cyberbullying. Consider a shy person with low self-esteem—male or female. Now consider someone who’s the opposite—someone who has a close net of friends looking for entertainment. One of them can set up a fake account—a catfishing account—to lure that shy person in. The catfisher can ‘befriend’ to being a shy secret admirer.

The shy person will probably be wary at first, but catfishers are patient. They’ll take the time to figure out the best bait to use, sit back and make themselves available, and when gentry tweak their line until they catch their prey. They say things to get the shy person to open up emotionally and share feelings. To share things they wouldn’t dream of sharing with someone they actually knew face to face. Move to what’s the catfisher doing? He or she may be sitting in the table across the aisle from that shy person with his or her friends in the school cafeteria. The catfisher is texting the shy person who finally has someone to text during lunch in the cafeteria. The shy person is texting back—perhaps being bold in the only way he or she feels comfortable being bold. He or she hears a group of students across the aisle laughing over something on one of their phones, but doesn’t make the connection, because he or she is too busy responding to the flirtatious person texting him or her.

But that group across the aisle is watching the entire conversation on the catfisher’s phone. They may even be reading some of what the catfisher should say to the kid for their own amusement. What if the catfisher and his or her friends are tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tired of this game, they’re tire...
I'm Anda and I'm from Brazil, where we speak Portuguese. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, and takes up more than half of the space in South America. It's a beautiful country that would appeal to very many people. You may be familiar with one of the most famous landmarks in a city in Brazil: the Cristo Redentor. It's at the peak of the Corcovado mountains in the beautiful Tijuca Forest National Park. It overlooks Rio de Janeiro, so it gives you a perfect place to get a panoramic view over the entire city. It's amazing. Equally amazing in this city is the annual Carnival—a world famous pre-Lenten celebration. The centerpiece of this festival is the Samba School Parade.

Oh, and by the way, many people think that Rio de Janeiro is the capital of Brazil, but it's not. It used to be, but it was moved to Brasilia. Another city that's very important in Brazil is Sao Paulo. It's the largest city in the southern hemisphere because of the coffee business in the 1800s made it grow very large, very quickly. Sao Paulo has over 11 million residents.

There are sixty-seven tribes of indigenous people in Brazil who have never come in contact with modern man! The Portuguese spoken by most Brazilians is closest to the Portuguese spoken in the 16th century, whereas, the indigenous people have inhabited Brazil for thousands of years, and there are 180 languages spoken in the country.

And now for the best part: the food! We have two types of food. The traditional one is a type of mass with chicken and cream cheese. If you visit Brazil, you must try these dishes.

We also have feijoada. Coxinha is a type of chicken. Those are coxinha and feijoada. Coxinha is a kind of mass with chicken and cream cheese inside. The Brazilians, of course, do eat fish, so you'll find a black bean stew with dried, salted, and smoked meat. We speak Portuguese. Most of the people in Brazil speak Portuguese. If you visit Brazil, you must try these dishes.

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Oh, and by the way, many people think that Rio de Janeiro is the capital of Brazil, but it's not. It used to be, but it was moved to Brasilia. Another city that's very important in Brazil is Sao Paulo. It's the largest city in the southern hemisphere because of the coffee business in the 1800s made it grow very large, very quickly. Sao Paulo has over 11 million residents.

There are sixty-seven tribes of indigenous people in Brazil who have never come in contact with modern man! The Portuguese spoken by most Brazilians is closest to the Portuguese spoken in the 16th century, whereas, the indigenous people have inhabited Brazil for thousands of years, and there are 180 languages spoken in the country.

And now for the best part: the food! We have two types of food. The traditional one is a type of mass with chicken and cream cheese. If you visit Brazil, you must try these dishes.

We also have feijoada. Coxinha is a type of chicken. Those are coxinha and feijoada. Coxinha is a kind of mass with chicken and cream cheese inside. The Brazilians, of course, do eat fish, so you'll find a black bean stew with dried, salted, and smoked meat. We speak Portuguese. Most of the people in Brazil speak Portuguese. If you visit Brazil, you must try these dishes.

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Identity: Connections to the Old World

If we were to talk about a civilization that goes deep in history to 8,000 years ago, we would be talking about the foundation of the first alphabet in the world. The first people to create and use farming tools. The country that has had the greatest of old civilizations, such as Sumerian, Acadian, Amirian, Babelian, and the Arabic civilizations. Language that was spoken by Jesus Christ. When we talk about the first capital city in the world, we would be talking about my beloved country, Syria.

I spent the first ten years of my life creating the greatest memories of both family and friends, as well as all that is good in the world in the small village of Fairuzah in Syria. The village name, Fairuzah, means turquoise almond, but the reason for this has been lost over the centuries. Perhaps it has something to do with the blossoming of almond flower trees in the spring, which we all looked forward to each year after playing in the snow during the winter months. I also remember how much I loved playing soccer with my friends at school after the soccer pitch that was very close to home.

My home village of Fairuzah is not the only place I love about Syria. There are more than eighty-three historical castle sites in the country, including Salah Aiden and Alhoson castles, which both are on UNESCO’s world heritage list. In addition to the castles, there are three great colossums, the most important of which is Bosrah located in the ancient city of Palmyra. These are just a few places in the middle of other amazing sites, magical landscapes, and beautiful Clement.

Suddenly, the beauty and peace of my country was overwhelmed by the ugliness of war, so my family made the decision to move to what is often called the greatest country in the world — the United States. Here, I enjoy attending a great school, developing friendships with amazing peers who have helped me to learn English. My friends also have helped me to fit into this new life and to get used to a place so different from the village of my parents. It wasn’t easy to make the transition, and I am grateful for the help that I received along the way in beginning a new life here.

However, I do hope that when peace is restored in Syria to invite all of my friends to see the real beauty of my country.

I also miss the food very much and wish that I could return to Syria to go back to the same places that I used to go. I also miss the people I know here in the United States very much. I love the United States very much. I love the American people very much. I think the United States is a very beautiful country.

My name is Wang Jun, and I come from China. In China, our family name is first and then our personal name is last. This is only one small difference between life in the United States and life in China.

Education in China is very different. First of all, school is only compulsory for nine years. Each day in junior high school is very long. I would wake up at 6:30 a.m. and was still in school after 5 p.m. I went to school with the same students during elementary school and junior high school. Like most students, I thought school could be dull, but the learning was substantial.

At the beginning of year three in junior high, we had a very important exam. The results determine whether students will qualify to go to high school. This may seem cruel to many because it means those who do not score well are not eligible to go to high school. To prepare for this exam, the junior high school schedule was very tight. Chinese parents are also very involved because this exam is so important. It is common for students to stay awake until the early morning hours to finish their homework.

My scores on this exam qualified to attend high school. The high school I attended was very far away, so I decided to live at school. (Only kindergarten schools provide buses to their students.) My memories of high school are beautiful to me. I shared a room with six or seven other students and these were very happy times for me. I miss the days that I spent working with my fellow students. I also miss going into town for delicious snacks in the afternoons. The only problem was that we had to return to school by seven p.m.

I enjoyed socializing with my friends. We would play basketball, spend time with girls, and each other. We were able to stay out very late because the streets in my village were safe. It was so much fun being with my friends. I also miss the food very much and wish that the people I know here in the United States could taste how unforgettable the food in China is.

My life has not been extraordinary. I’m just a typical teenager like you. I came to Mandarin last year, and will graduate this year. I’m sure most people my age think that life is going by very quickly. The time is going by very quickly for me because I’m trying to finish school with very little English. However, I’m grateful for the trouble that teachers and fellow students are going through to help me. Thank you!

My home village of Fairuzah is not the only place I love about Syria. There are more than eighty-three historical castle sites in the country, including Salah Aiden and Alhoson castles, which both are on UNESCO’s world heritage list. In addition to the castles, there are three great colossums, the most important of which is Bosrah located in the ancient city of Palmyra. These are just a few places in the middle of other amazing sites, magical landscapes, and beautiful Clement.

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Homecoming Happenings

A Passion for Pink

(continued from page 1)

hooking up with their friends along the way. As soon as they left the classroom, students could hear the band’s heart-thumping “Fight Song” blaring out of the doors of the gym beckoning students to hurry in and fill the bleachers. Once the pep rally began, the cheerleaders were center stage with pink (instead of their usual orange and green) pom-poms, the fall sports teams were gathered at the far end of bleachers waiting to be introduced, and the noise of so many people hyped up because school spirit was overwhelming.

The Leadership group was all hyped up because they’ve been planning this event for weeks and setting it up for days. Saturated with pink balloons, banners, streamers, and a pink table, the gym was transformed. One of the main responsibilities of Leadership is to organize and facilitate pep rallies in their continuous effort to increase and maintain school spirit...

Senior Class President Jasmine Green said, “I felt so blessed to serve such a wonderful group of caring young people. It touched my heart, and made me realize how much I am going to miss being a high school principal at Mandarin. This has become my school and these students are like my children. I pray they all find great success when they leave our school,” said Dr. Richardson in response to receiving the gloves.

Some members of the Leadership Team pose for a ‘family’ photo between morning and afternoon pep rallies. The photo includes members of the PBIS Club (on the left), who performed their a cappella rendition of Alessa Carra’s song “Scars to your Beautiful.” “The sisterhood of PBIS appreciated performing for the larger sisterhood of the women in our school during this important and informative assembly. It was also a lot of fun,” said Christina Robinson, who’s Co-President of PBIS along with Madison Holliday.

Unite to Fight!

By Emily Faunz, Yearbook Staff
Photo Credit: Maria Munoz-Martinez

At the end of the assembly, students were invited to pose on the stage for a photo op with News4Jax, who shared the event and pictures during their broadcast later that day.

“Going to this assembly taught me that us girls as a whole have to work together and bring breast cancer to an end,” said Kennedy Hagerty.

“I felt a sense of unity and comfort knowing that others have been affected by this disease with people as close to them as the victims were to me,” said Apryl Davis.

The photo includes members of the PBIS Club (on the left), who performed their a cappella rendition of Alessa Carra’s song “Scars to your Beautiful.” “The sisterhood of PBIS appreciated performing for the larger sisterhood of the women in our school during this important and informative assembly. It was also a lot of fun,” said Christina Robinson, who’s Co-President of PBIS along with Madison Holliday.

The principal, Dr. Donna Richardson, who is a cancer survivor herself, introduces and welcomes Ms. Jeannie Blaylock to the students at the assembly.

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Strutting our ‘Stang Spirit

By: Nikki Ritchotte, Staff Writer
Photo Credit: Mrs. Doni Parkinson, Journalism Adviser

Although our annual Homecoming Parade was cancelled last year due to a hurricane, this year the hurricane came early so we were able to show off some of our clubs and organizations to the community on October 20th, 2017. Activities Director Coach Daniel Wilcox invited each club and organization to enter a float with the theme of “Shock the Hawk” that provides the community with insight into the more than thirty groups our students join to share personal interests, talent, and school spirit. The parade this year was smaller than usual (more than likely because of the shortened Homecoming Week), but it was still big on “Stang spirit. Multiple benefits occur because of the traditional Homecoming Parade. First, club and organization members bond as they spend countless hours in sessions brainstorming how to incorporate their version of the theme and cooperating to create their presentation. For example, Jenna Sammons, Vice President of Junior Ladies, said, “Putting our creativity and minds together to create our Junior Ladies float not only promoted great ideas, but also created a stronger bond between our club members.”

Avery Lewis, Best Buddies Club, said, “Our goal is inclusivity, learning new things & appreciating differences among people. This [creating the homecoming float] was our first way of forming connections between buddies and their peers! The friendships created and the smiles we induced by simply saying hello to our buddies we met through the float creation has to be one of the most heartwarming feelings we could ask for!”

Trinity Grimmie said, “The parade brought people together to help make spectacular floats to form an energized parade for Homecoming Week.” The parade participants not only make the community aware of the diverse interest groups on our campus, but also informs some of our students who were not aware of what our school has to offer both during and after school. For example, The producers, cast, and crew of the Musical Drama Theatre reminded both students and community members of their upcoming production, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown” scheduled for October 26-28. Alejandro Rivera found it interesting to learn that, “There were a lot of clubs that I didn’t know about.” Andrew Sindel added that, “The parade was a great example of how our school works together to achieve a common goal.”

It’s an opportunity for the school to showcase our school’s ‘dignitaries,’ such as Miss Mandarin, the Homecoming Court members, senior nominees, and our Teacher of the Year. In addition, the parade serves as an opportunity for our Principal, Dr. Donna Richardson, to share this community moment with the DCPS Superintendent, Dr. Patricia Willis, and some of our business partners.

The parade provides a look ahead into the future for Greenland Pines Elementary students who concluded along the street in front of their school to watch, while it also served as an opportunity for the seniors participating in the parade to look back at their academic beginnings, National Honor Society President Sarah Gilbert shared, “The members of NHS participating in the parade could feel the excitement radiating from Greenland Pines Elementary [students] as the floats rolled by. Seeing these younger students reminded us of the years of hard work that lead up to our senior year.”

Equally important, it was the final opportunity to heighten excitement for the upcoming Homecoming Game.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

By: Emily Faunce, Yearbook Staff
Photo Credit: Cady Studios and Contributed

While all students enjoy an excuse to get out of the classroom for a bit of a break, imagine the excitement experienced by elementary students as they make signs in preparation of watching high schoolers parade right past your school. A parade of students in a school that you will attend years from now. What’s running through their minds as the floats pass in front of their eyes? “Some day...”

Now imagine the memories flooding through the minds of the high school students as they roll past the elementary students. National Honor Society President Sarah Gilbert shared, “The members of NHS participating in the parade could feel the excitement radiating from Greenland Pines Elementary [students] as the floats rolled by. Seeing these younger students reminded us of the years of hard work that lead up to our senior year.”
**Great Food & Atmosphere**

By: Rowan Vanhoof, Restaurant Review Columnist and Editor-in-Chief

The Salento Colombian Steakhouse serves a traditional Colombian cuisine and is a family favorite. The food is both novel and delicious. In my recent visit, I went with my parents to try something different than what I usually order. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed our meals. 

For an appetizer, we ordered a plate of chicken empanadas with corn shells and a spicy dipping sauce. The empanadas were excellent. The simple chicken filling inside a fried corn shell was flavored with the sauce that tasted like a vinegar base with cilantro and peppers. This appetizer was excellent start to the meal. For the entree, I ordered the grilled chicken with rice, grilled vegetables, and round yellow potatoes. The chicken itself was cooked perfectly and tasted delicious when paired with the peppers and onions that accompanied the grilled vegetables. At first, I was surprised by the consistency of the rice because it was sticky white rice, which I didn’t expect to be served in a Colombian restaurant. However, it was good either way. In the past, yellow potatoes were served a minute or two later than the rest of the food, but I didn’t eat as much of them because I found them to be piping hot after being rushed to the table. The plating wasn’t anything fancy but very well garnished with a side of grilled vegetables. I liked the simplicity of the hot skillet sitting on a wooden block.

To accompany my meal, I had the fresh squeezed lemonade that had a bit of added carbonation for some extra fizz. A bottle of water with a sprig of mint leaves in it is also placed on the table that we found to be very refreshing. Overall, the food and drink were excellent and is definitely worth trying.

The restaurant is decorated to look rustic, with many antiques spread across the walls. The benches and tables are made out of rebar wood, with burlap covered cushions. There is a display of very old Colu-

Review Columns

**Book Review: To Kill a Mockingbird**

By: Ashlyn Lacey, Book Review Columnist

To many students, at the very sound of the term “classic,” an immediate shudder occurs. However, To Kill a Mockingbird breaks this stigma in a compelling coming-of-age story of life in the discriminatory 1930s South. In Harper Lee’s book, though published in 1960 and still ongoing, those living in today’s tumultuous political climate. Scout, a young girl, narrates the entire book. Her world is her older brother, Jem, and her father Atticus, where they call a sleepy old town their home. At first, Scout’s main struggles are just the daily ups and downs of growing up. However, the trial of an African-American man, who her father takes the responsibility to defend in the court of law, forces Scout to quickly mature in the sudden face of an ugly world of hate and racism.

Harper Lee’s novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, does not waver from the principles Atticus has emulated in her, principles of freedom and of equality, as well as her own bit of innocence to take a stand against those who look down on someone due to their differences.

Overall, the book raises questions and ideas about the injustices of society towards those outside the mainstream. To Kill a Mockingbird will still stir the senses of many who choose to read the book due to the racial climate today and the issues our country still faces involving racism. Harper Lee highlights some of the tensions still seen in our country, and even identifies perspectives on how to deal with a world of hatred, as well as a Beautiful use of symbolism throughout, specifically of why “it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.”

“Remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.” That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it. “Your father’s right,” she said. “Mockingbirds don’t do one thing but make music for us to enjoy . . . but sing their hearts out for us. That’s why it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.”

Throughout the trial, To Kill a Mockingbird’s chief theme is the importance of upholding one’s principles, as well as her own bit of responsibility to defend in life of hate and racism.

Scout does not waver from the principles Atticus has emulated in her, principles of freedom and of equality, as well as her own bit of innocence to take a stand against those who look down on someone due to their differences.

In Harper Lee’s novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, does not waver from the principles Atticus has emulated in her, principles of freedom and of equality, as well as her own bit of innocence to take a stand against those who look down on someone due to their differences.

**Music Review**

By: Destiny Caraway, Music Review Columnist

Kelly Clarkson is an American pop artist well-known around the world. Her career kicked off after becoming the first winner of the popular singing contest, American Idol in 2002. In a month after winning the hit-song, “A Moment Like This,” which hit No.1 on the Billboard charts.

Since then, she has released over ninety No.1 songs and sold over 25 million albums around the world. Not only has she gained many fans over the fifteen years of her career, but also won 66 awards out of 140 nominations.

Clarkson’s latest album release, Meaning of Life, includes fourteen songs and focuses on how it feels to be in love and includes examples of the R&B genre. Meaning of Life shows the artist’s growth as a singer over the past decade. Songs, such as “Go High,” represent the strength and wide range of Clark-son’s voice and the progression she has made from her classical voice lessons in high school, to pop icon, to country singer, to R&B singer.

In addition to serving as a role model for women with body image. Over the course of her career, Clarkson has yo-yo’d in weight, causing others to comment that she’s either too thin or too fat. For example, after tweeting a message from her family about the New Year, someone tweeted to her: “You’re fat.” Clarkson’s response was still f***ing awesome!”

In this day and age where sexism and cyber-bullying are major problems, it’s refreshing that Clarkson uses her role as an icon to fight body-shamers who’s actions cause women to lose self-confidence and gain eating disorders, anxiety, and depression.

Clarkson’s song “Whole Lotta Woman” is definitely a song capable of inspiring others to believe that regardless of their size, they are beautiful. Her song “I Don’t Think About You” is clearly about those who try to bring her down. Her lyrics read, “Feel freedom where I stand and I feel proud from who I am now. Yeah, I learned a lot along the way. I love the woman that I became.”

It’s refreshing that someone as iconic as Clarkson, hasn’t fallen victim to trends of anorexia, plastic surgery, or the pressure that so many of the rich and famous allow themselves to fall victim to. She’s as real as her voice—something definitely worth listening to whether she’s singing or slammimg body-shamers.
Destiny 2 gave the game developers Bungie a chance at redemption. When Destin- 
y's released in September of 2014, many people were disappointed with a very 
limited storyline and what they didn’t want that great in the first place. Despite this, Destiny 2 amassed a large player base 
that, over the course of the years, it’s grown to love with the core gunplay and leveling 
systems. After seeing trailers and announcements many players became 
enthusiasts for Destiny 2 because they disliked about Destiny gone. 
Destiny 2 has all of the content and storylines that were a part of an MMO (massively multi-player 
world). This means certain gear no longer drops at levels that will benefit the player. 
Regarding the quests that are offered right after completing the story, it is best if they 
are saved for when the player is able to face them. Since they are some of the few 
activities that drop what is called xenon, players will want to complete all 
the main campaign and when players should be level 20, the 
game becomes much more fun.

Upon completing the campaign, the player faces many new challenges. The 
player has access to a vast amount of gear and can upgrade their 
armory as they see fit. The player can take on almost any mission 
that they want, and they can even take on some of the 
more difficult bosses in the game. 

Destiny 2 is the perfect game for anyone who is a fan of the original Destiny, 
or have a group of friends who are also fans. It is definitely worth 
playing, and I would recommend it to anyone who is looking for a 
good new MMORPG to enjoy.

### Game Review: Destiny 2

By: Rowan Vanhoof, Chief Editor

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**NETFLIX'S**

**13 REASONS WHY**

**IV Series Review: “13 Reasons Why”**

By: Sabrina Coward, Entertainment Review Columnist

probably the worst thing to deal with when faced with the suicide of a loved one or friend is the persistent longing of all survivors’ faces—some for the rest of their lives:

Did I contribute to this death and could I have prevented it?

The American Drama series on Netflix, “13 Reasons Why” explores these questions.

The series is about a teenager girl, Hannah Baker, who has just committed suicide as episode one begins.

Meanwhile, the lives of those she left behind must carry on (at her home and her school). For example, her parents have to bring their daughter’s belongings stored in her school locker home. 

her classmates decorated her locker to honor her. 

Hannah leaves seven cassette tapes she record- 
ed to give the thirteen rea- 
sions why she ended her life. The cassette tapes, a list of those who contribut- ed to her decision to end her life, and a map are left to Clay Jensen, whom Han- 

nah claims is not one of the people responsible for her death. 

The tapes and map are passed on consecutive- 
ly to each person on the list, who listens to the tapes as he or she follows the map.

This show deals with many realistic and sensitive topics other than suicide, such as bullying and rape, so it’s not for the faint-hearted. 

Some characters

beside Hannah also experi-

enced traumatic events, which shows that suicide is not the only way of dealing with such situations... like in real life, the charac-

ters struggle with finding their identity, and this shows a few life les-

sons included in the story-

line as well.

The cast includes

Tristan Wilds, who plays Clay 

Jensen and actress Katheryn 

Langford, who plays Hannah Baker. The show has not won any awards, but has excellent reviews and many people who attend our school watch it. Altogether, “13 Reasons Why” is an intri-

cate and heart-wrenching tale worth checking out.

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### Movie Review: Spiderman: The Homecoming

By: Sabrina Coward, Entertainment Review Columnist

No doubt there’s more people in high school than wish they had super powers than in any other organiza-

tion. Perhaps that’s why “Spiderman: Homecoming” may appeal to teens outside of the usual ‘superheroic com-
cic and movie’ fan base. Peter returns to high school while hiding his superhero alter 
eo, his high school peers consider him to be THE loser at school and, as such, is re-
tentiously bullied. The idea of knowing you had the power to put bullies in their place—
even if you need that power to remain a secret—would greatly appeal to many. 

The cast includes

Dylan Minnette, who plays Clay 

Jensen and actress Katheryn 

Langford, who plays Hannah Baker. The show has not won any awards, but has excellent reviews and many people who attend our school watch it. Altogether, “13 Reasons Why” is an intri-
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### Review Columns

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**HEY, GIRL!**

“I can’t sign your yearbook until you buy one!”

Go online @ yearbookordercenter.com 

& use school code 0234 

or bring your yearbook in 

order to the Yearbook Advisor, 

room J201a, without delay. 

(Make money orders out to Mandarin High.)
The program for this year is “1001 Nights” and features selections from Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade. However, with the hurricanes at the beginning of the year, the season seemed more like Dorothy’s whirlwind tumble into Oz than a smooth ride on Aladdin’s magic carpet. Nevertheless, it’s no surprise that the band persevered and walked away with armfuls of trophies.

To the uninitiated, band starts over the summer with the 2-week long band camp. The first week consists of a 3-day leadership camp followed by a 2-day rookie camp. It’s during the second week of summer camp that the band begins to march the current year’s program.

Once school begins, practice sessions develop muscle memory for the marching sequence, and plenty of practice to perfect the musical rendition, syncing the music with the movements. All of this practice is punctuated by performances during half-time at weekly football games, and these performances eventually lead to competitions.

Going into its first competition week, the band marched through another grueling week of class practices and an extra rehearsal on Friday to prepare for the competition at Middleburg High School. The day of the competition unfortunately started very rainy and led to a special circumstance performance in the gym standing still. The band was graded only on music and basic visuals, but still placed 2nd in class and 3rd overall out of 10!

Ms. Pam Chaffin, Band Director

Our award-winning band results from the coordination of the Drum Majors, each band member, and the color guard led by the Band Director, Ms. Pam Chaffin, along with the backup help by the Band Booster parents. Hail to the Band!

Pulling it all Together into a Cohesive Unit

Drum Majors Brendan Ledesma and Sarah Gilbert

Casen Barrilleaux
Trumpet

"Being a part of the band has given me a true appreciation for the work ethic that I and everyone around me puts in."

Ruben Godlaman
Baritone Saxophone

"Being in the band has been so fun—so much so that I want it to become my career in the future. All the friends that I’ve made have definitely made band into a family."

Kate Frock
Alto Saxophone

"Playing in band made me realize that the music is everything you work for, and it’s not something you will regret or take for granted. I’ve only been playing for a few years, but Mandarin’s where I excelled the most."

Ryan Halford
Tenor Saxophone

"I’ve seen that as time goes, my skills have greatly improved with the Mandarin High program, especially with the support of close friends and staff."
New Year, New Unit, New Goals

By: Ashlyn Lacey, Staff Writer
Photo Credit: Mrs. Doni Parkinson, Journalism Adviser, and Ashlyn Lacey

High school is full of different opportunities and paths to transpire. With so many programs to choose from, some may find it difficult to find a place meant for them. However, the NJROTC program at Mandarin is essential in helping its cadets find a place for themselves during the tumultuous years of high school and even a future for themselves down the road.

One such student is Travis Dempsey, a three-year cadet who has worked his way up to cadet’s command master chief, one of the highest positions for his senior year. As for his future, he plans to pursue a military career in the Navy, thanks to his knowledge learned from his days in ROTC.

When asked why he joined ROTC, Dempsey’s immediate response was to “build leadership skills and character.” And it is safe to say ROTC has definitely built up these characteristics in the cadet over the years. Through basic leadership camps, as Paris Island and orienteering camps, Dempsey and his fellow cadets are able to sharpen not only their minds, but physical skills as well. On top of the above-mentioned camps, there are numerous other camps as well, wide-ranging, but with the main purpose of not only honing students’ physical abilities, but their teamwork and other important characteristics as well. Participating in these camps has led to Dempsey to be part of victories in the Area 12 Drill Championships and Orienteering Championship, events Dempsey is immensely proud of and why he prides himself in being a part of Mandarin ROTC and their hard work.

However, one of the most important events in Dempsey’s ROTC career occurred over the 2017 summer. Travis was able to attend Boy’s State in Tallahassee, with many other cadets from varying schools. The camp had a classroom aspect to it, with many hours of learning about the inner workings of our government, with many other exciting activities. However, one of the most important aspects about the camp was the opportunity to win a scholarship for college at FSU. To be selected was a grueling process, with a required essay and several interviews with officials, with hundreds of cadets participating. With Dempsey’s dedication, he was narrowed down out of many, and eventually won the scholarship to FSU.

Dempsey equates his success to not only what ROTC has taught him, but what it means to him. For him, Mandarin’s program has made him feel as “part of a family, something in the school that is bigger than myself.” This mindset allows him to work his hardest not for himself, but for his fellow friends in the ROTC program. He believes the program has made him more responsible and goal-oriented which has in turn increased his involvement in school, improved his academics, and eventually even lending him the necessary tools to be able to receive an FSU scholarship.

For those looking for their niche within Mandarin, Dempsey personally suggests the ROTC program. He believes not only will you find some of your closest friends, but will develop traits of “dedication, motivation and goal orientation that will last a life-time.”

Cadets march in the Homecoming Parade. Colton Merritt said, “It was great to be involved in something that all my peers got to watch and show my pride in my country, my school, and my unit.”

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Organizations—NJROTC and Chorus

NJROTC

The NJROTC chain of command starts here: Commander Herbert Hadley, Chief Johnette Burnett, and Chief Kevin Mathews

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**Spotlight on Stephen Butler (Varsity Football)**

By: Kyelli Brennan, Staff Writer
Photo Credit: Family & Casey Studios

The average teenager has the responsibility of passing his/her classes, pleasing his/her parents, and—if they choose to—leading their team to success. Stephen Butler not only balances these responsibilities, but he also pours his blood, sweat and tears into working extra jobs so that he can provide for his family and daughter. After school, Butler walks to the football field and puts in hours of hard work and elbow grease at practice. Afterwards, he has a job mowing lawns. Once home, Butler knuckles down on homework and his studies. Though it is said that the common teen should get eight hours of sleep, Butler is lucky to receive 4 hours of sleep on a regular night. Needless to say, it takes a special kind of human being to fulfill such a schedule.

Butler puts family first, above all other things. Whether it be on the field or at home, Butler constantly makes sure he is working his hardest to please his family. “We’re a family, brothers, don’t forget that.” Butler says to his younger teammates. Butler is constantly working hard at practice, day in and day out. For Butler, a successful high school football career does not just mean a championship or trophy under his belt, to him it means a way to a collegiate level education. Butler’s family has always had financial issues, so if Butler were able to attain an athletic scholarship, a load of financial pressure could be relieved of his family.

Even though Butler says he is “waiting for a scholarship to any university”, he would like to attend Jacksonville University or University of Central Florida. Butler does not want to travel far from home. Every weekend, Butler tries to spend as much time as possible with his daughter. However, he also finds time to work out and study for his upcoming classes. Though Butler’s weekly routine seems daunting and stressful, somehow he finds a way to make time for everything.

Butler is also a very talented football player. Lighting speed is what distinguishes Butler from most players. He says that he has always loved to run and was even so eager to showcase his speed in football. That being said, Tight End is the perfect position for Butler. Not only does Butler have to be skilled at multiple jobs for his daily life, as a tight end he also has to play the roles of both an offensive lineman and a wide receiver. It should be noted that Butler is incredibly skilled at juggling many tasks.

Butler is certainly not one to back away from a challenge. He is a disciplined player, a diligent student, and a dedicated father. “Never give up, especially when things don’t go your way,” said Butler. Although Butler’s senior season didn’t go exactly as he had hoped, he has no regrets. He tightened bonds with his teammates and learned many lessons from the game and his coaches. Butler believes that football taught him how to stay committed even when times were hard. In his 13th year of playing football, Butler says that football has most definitely molded him into the man he is today.

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**Spotlight on Ryan McMahon (Swimming)**

By: Nikki Ritchotte, Staff Writer
Photo Credit: Family Credit: Family & Casey Studios

While so many students choose to focus on academics or athletics, student Ryan McMahon chose to focus on both, and even fewer excel at both. Sophomore Ryan McMahon excels at both academics and athletics.

With a GPA of 4.0, he demonstrates his ability to excel with the challenging AP and Honors course load he carries, which includes AP World History, Honors English, and Chemistry. His AP World History teacher, Mr. Reising said, “Ryan is the type of student that not only exceeds expectations outside of the classroom, but also is willing to ask questions in class, often leading to discussions that are meaningful, bringing the class to a deeper level of analysis and understanding.”

As an athlete, McMahon excels as a varsity swimmer. If fact, he was the second highest scorer of the school’s swim/dive team this year. At the Gateway Conference swim meet, he achieved multiple best times. For example, he seeded 2nd in the 100 yard backstroke and 4th in the 200 Individual Medley.

McMahon began swimming at the age of six. Although he seeded 2nd in the 100 yard backstroke and 4th in the 200 Individual Medley, McMahon shared that he is “waiting for a scholarship to any university”, he would like to attend Jacksonville University or University of Central Florida. Butler does not want to travel far to achieve his goals. He has no regrets. He tightens bonds with his teammates and learned many lessons from the game and his coaches. McMahon believes that football taught him how to stay committed even when times were hard. In his 13th year of playing football, Butler says that football has most definitely molded him into the man he is today.

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By: Ashlyn Lacey, Staff Writer

Photo Credit: Mr. McMahon

The title of Scholar-Athlete of the Week is given to students in Duval County who have academic accolades, athletic accomplishments, and are active members in their community. There is a challenge at juggling school and athletics, but Kensey McMahon is able to balance being a star athlete and a star pupil. As a result, she was selected from all high school athletes in Duval County by Jax Sports Radio as the first Scholar-Athlete of this year.

Kensey McMahon during her interview with Jax Sports Radio.

The Effect of Sports Injuries on Senior Dreams

By: Joshua Feig, Staff Writer

Photo Credit: Mr. Moni Parkinson, Journalism Adviser

Can you imagine the anticipation of a dream throughput from your senior year? Perhaps you are playing on the varsity team of favorite sport during senior year? For some student athletes who may be lucky enough to play in their senior year, dream is the driving force for even attempting school in a regular basis and can result in a scholarship. You spend your senior years practicing and learning from experi- ences, developing muscle memory. It all pays off when you make the cut for the varsity team.

To manage the pain, doctors prescribed oxycodone. However, because oxycodone is highly addictive and wasn’t particularly effective in reducing his pain, Watkins stopped taking it.

He learned that the physical pain was equaled only by the emotional effects resulting from the injury. He shared that he was “very angry all the time,” but not at the people in his life. Rather, he is angry at himself. He said, “I felt like pushing everyone away because of how bad I was feeling.” He missed a lot of school even after he was physically able to return. His teachers called home to find out when he’d be returning, and realized that Watkins was dealing with his own injury issues that were preventing him from being on the course or in life, and was defeated. Watkins decided to go back to school.

Meanwhile, he’s decided that he doesn’t want to play at the college level because “in college, football stops being fun and becomes a job.” He wants to enjoy his college experience pursuing a degree in airplane mechanic- ies because he enjoys working with his hands, a career where he has a chance of success.
Steal the Spotlight