



In this issue... Politics, Sports and More

COVID-19 Vaccine Provides Hope

By Julia Oakes and Emma LaFrance
Redcoat Review Writers

On Monday, December 14, 2020, the long-awaited first dosage of the COVID-19 vaccine was administered in the United States to a New York nurse. This vaccine administration came quickly after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorization on December 12th when the vaccine was authorized for emergency use in individuals over 16 years of age.

BioNTech is a biotechnology company who has partnered with Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company, to work on and then release a COVID-19 vaccine to the public. The two companies previously worked together to develop a flu vaccine. Their past relationship allowed for a quicker development process, allowing for a faster vaccine release timeline. These companies have been working together since the beginning of March and have since produced millions of COVID-19 vaccines.

Pfizer and BioNTech conducted vaccine trials over the course of seven months in 2020, testing four different vaccine possibilities. Ultimately, they developed an mRNA-based vaccine requiring two doses to be administered three weeks apart. A vaccine developed by Moderna was authorized for use in the US as of mid-December with the Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccine being approved in the UK shortly thereafter.

Sandra Lindsay, the nurse who received the first dosage, initiated a wave of vaccinations for healthcare workers

across the country. On December 16th, there were 636 authorized vaccination sites across the United States. Nursing home residents and healthcare workers are being prioritized as they face the highest risk of infection with an estimated 2.9 million doses being administered in the first week alone. Nonetheless, the majority of Americans will not receive the vaccine until mid-2021, after the at-risk population has been vaccinated.

According to the COVID-19 Response Team in Connecticut, the state is currently in Phase 1a, meaning that the vaccine is available to healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents, and first responders. Subsequent phases will include members of the critical workforce, adults over 65, and high-risk individuals under 65.

While an estimated 40 million doses were delivered to the US, only 4.73 million doses were administered as of early January 2021. This number is significantly lower than the predicted 20 million vaccinations. Both the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine and the Moderna vaccine require a second dosage weeks later to ensure the vaccine's maximum efficacy. During the period between doses, masks must still be worn and social distancing guidelines must be followed as the vaccine will not yet be fully effective.

Surveys show that many Americans are opposed to receiving the vaccine. In May of 2020, 27% of Americans, surveyed by Pew Research Center, said they would either "probably" or "definitely" not get a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available. In November of that same



Photo Credit: Andrew Cuomo via Twitter

Nurse Sandra Lindsay was the first person to receive the COVID-19 vaccine dose in the United States on December 14th, 2020.

year, that number surged to 39%. Mixed messages spread to the public confused many, leading them to doubt the vaccine's effectiveness.

Despite the data, the vaccine provides a beam of hope to millions of people across the world as the pandemic approaches its tenth month. Its production begins just as the United States surpasses 300,000 COVID-19 related deaths, surpassing heart disease as the leading cause of death in the US. Infection rates rise throughout the US as businesses and schools open and people return to their daily lives. But the return of normality may come to a halt with what scientists are calling a new strain of COVID-19, sprouting in the United Kingdom. This new strain has already been said to be in the US and has similar properties to the original virus.

The US leads the world in COVID-19 cases, a number that can hopefully begin a downward trend following the administration of the vaccine.

CIAC Postpones High School Winter Sports

By Nick Spinali
Redcoat Review Writer

In November, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) announced that all high school winter sports would be postponed until at least January 19 due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The announcement includes both games and team practices being postponed until the assigned date. Before the announcement, the winter sports season was scheduled to get underway on December 5.

"CIAC Interscholastic athletics is an education-based experience that maintains in-person learning and the health and safety of our school communities as our top priority," the CIAC Board of Control said in an official statement. "[This] action supports our member schools while they continue to manage rising

COVID numbers within their communities and experience widespread movements to distance learning."

The announcement is a major disappointment for teams and athletes that had been preparing for a successful winter season. Many athletes had thoroughly practiced the recommended guidelines designed to keep athletes and coaches alike healthy.

BHS senior Megan Perrotta, a four-year varsity athlete and UConn commit who runs cross country in the fall and follows with indoor track in the winter, explains that it was her responsibility as a captain to enforce these guidelines on her runners. "I made sure to remind everyone to maintain 6 feet apart while doing warm ups and runs and to keep masks on when not running."

With the winter sports season postponed and in-person training limited,

Berlin High School athletes have been forced to learn new ways to stay in shape. "In normal years, we would have 1-2 weeks off between seasons; we consider this week or so a 'rest week.' Since our winter season is postponed, we are just trying to stay in shape," said Perrotta.

"We're trying to not lose any of the endurance we gained from cross country while starting to add speed workouts [to prepare for the indoor track season.



Senior Megan Perrotta



Minority Politicians Make History

By Lindsey Leary
Redcoat Review Writer

November 3rd, 2020 and the days following focused largely on the presidential election, with a few battleground Senate races given some media attention. Many Americans were not informed of the importance of the other races going on as well for the U.S. House of Representatives and state legislatures. The 2020 election introduced several minority groups into positions of power for the first time ever.

Five politicians, Sarah McBride, Mondaire Jones, Ritchie Torres, Stephanie Bice, and Yvette Herrell all set new standards for commonly marginalized groups.

Sarah McBride made history this election by being the first openly transgender state senator and highest-ranking transgender public servant. McBride is a Democrat representing the First State Senate District in Delaware, which includes the state's largest city, Wilmington.

Previously, McBride worked as an advocate for LGBTQ rights at the Human Rights Campaign, and is expected to bring progressive ideas to Delaware's Senate. Her main policy focuses are



Sarah McBride



Ritchie Torres

affordable healthcare, criminal justice reform, expanding paid leave, and supporting public school systems.

Mondaire Jones and Ritchie Torres were both elected to the U.S. House of Representatives this election cycle, making them the first openly gay African-American men in Congress. Torres also becomes the first gay Black Latin American person ever elected to Congress. Both Jones and Torres are very progressive leaders, set to represent New York's 17th and 15th districts. Jones' and Torres' policies focus largely on universal healthcare, education, and protection for the working class.



Mondaire Jones

Stephanie Bice is the Representative-elect for one of Oklahoma's five Congressional seats, enabling her to become the first Iranian-American to be elected to the United States Congress. Bice is the daughter



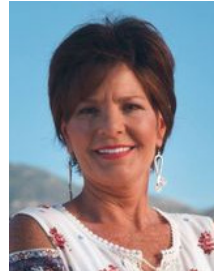
Stephanie Bice

of an Iranian immigrant, and graduated from Oklahoma State University. Bice previously served as a member of Oklahoma's State Senate, spending time as the Assistant Majority Floor Leader as well as the Chair of the Senate Finance Committee. Through her work, Bice earned the reputation as one of Oklahoma's

most effective conservative leaders, and is expected to spend her time in office protecting business owners and fighting to secure individual liberties.

Yvette Herrell became the first Cherokee woman elected to the United States Congress when she won her House seat in New Mexico this election. Herrell previously served four terms in the New Mexico House of Representatives, and is also a successful entrepreneur, owning several small businesses.

Herrell is known to have fairly conservative views and plans to take her policy ideas to Congress to protect the working class and defend the ideals of the Constitution. Ready to work across party lines, Herrell is also prepared to work to reduce the cost of healthcare, and continually put people over politics.



Yvette Herrell

2020 has been a year like no other: raging wildfires, social and racial injustices, a pandemic, and millions of Americans in need of unity. America was a nation created for opportunity and freedom, and these politicians have proven that it is possible to accomplish something never done before. Regardless of political ideologies or beliefs, it seems more possible than ever for there to be new opportunities for America to become united again.

BHS Welcomes National Honor Society Inductees

By Nick Spinali
Redcoat Review Writer

On November 19, Berlin High School officially inducted its newest members of the BHS chapter of the National Honor Society via virtual ceremony. In 2020, a total of 58 BHS students were named members of the prestigious organization after applying in the spring and the fall.

According to its official website, "The National Honor Society (NHS) elevates a school's commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character." Members of NHS are known to have an extensive background in academic success and community engagement, and are encouraged to build upon those areas as a part of the induction process.

"NHS members are well-rounded students who are involved with the community and serve as good role-models for their peers," Mrs. Ramy explained, who, alongside Mrs. Evans, is an advisor for Berlin High's NHS chapter. "We hope that after [these] students graduate, they continue to have a passion for learning and apply their leadership skills while giving back to others."

Of the criteria necessary to be considered for the NHS, students nationwide must display a superior commitment to service, leadership, and character.

"When we were freshmen, being a

house leader for Upbeat or an officer for clubs and councils seemed like a lot of responsibility. Now, many members of our class hold several leadership positions, both within school and in the community," said NHS President Gabby Foster.

"Our class' avid involvement in clubs and organizations since freshman year is an overt indicator that we have always had a drive to help others in our community. It's amazing to see my peers begin to take on leadership roles and create meaningful service projects for our community."

Nationwide, students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of 85 or higher throughout their high school career. Members from Berlin High School, however, are required to obtain a GPA of 93 or higher.

"Students looking to be a member should start by being dedicated to their work, as the GPA minimum is the first criteria to be assessed," Foster continued.



Timothy Lewis

"Many students [also tend to] find that the leadership requirement is the hardest to fulfill, but this position can be any form of leadership where the student has responsibilities. The National Honor Society's purpose is to encourage students to be invested in their education and in improving their community — resulting in well-rounded individuals with a passion for helping others."

All admitants had to be chosen for consideration based on their academic and extracurricular achievements and then submit an application which includes an official transcript of service hours garnered during high school, as well as an essay that portrayed why they should be inducted into NHS. Candidates also had to obtain two letters of reference which explain why they are a worthy admitant.

"We encourage students to get involved with something that interests them, in or outside of school," Mrs. Ramy continued when asked how students can prepare for their NHS application.

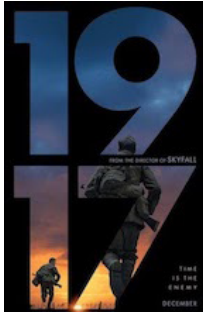
"Starting in ninth grade, students should keep a record of community service activities and leadership experiences that they are involved with throughout their high school career. This will be helpful for them when they put their resume together to apply to colleges and if they enter the selection process for NHS."

A Revolutionary Film: 1917

By Tim Lewis
Redcoat Review Writer

The 2019 blockbuster film *1917* is not only a revolutionary film but also a symbol of innovation in the field of cinematography.

The movie encapsulates the physical and emotional struggles of a soldier at war, specifically as a British soldier during World War I. In 1917, Lance Corporal Schofield (George MacKay) and Lance Corporal Blake (Dean-Charles Chapman) were tasked with a nearly impossible mission: to cross enemy territory and deliver an important message to the commanding officer of another battalion. For many of their fellow soldiers, and Lieutenant Joseph Blake - Corporal Blake's brother, who is unknowingly walking into a surprise attack from the enemy forces - this message could be a saving grace.



Based on the numerous trailers, the audience expects the setting to be set behind enemy lines, but director Sam Mendes does a good job of varying the setting to include a wide array of iconic locations in World War I. This allows the audience to understand the difference between trench warfare and modern day warfare, while also conveying why soldiers wanted to be out of the trenches for as long as they could.

Much of the anticipation of the movie came from the way it was filmed: being in one continuous shot. With the exception of one cut while lead actor George MacKay - who played Lance Corporal Schofield, and was shot unconscious - the entire movie did not have any cuts. Of course, it is impossible to actually shoot an entire movie without cuts. This is what makes the movie's smooth transitions so impressive.

With a score of 89% on Rotten Tomatoes and an 8.1/10 on IMDb, it is safe to say that this movie enjoyed a positive reception from both movie critics and audiences alike. Part of the success of this unique film was due to Roger Deakins, who is a well known cinematographer. His successes have earned him spots in the British Society of Cinematographers and American Society of Cinematographers.

The deeper meaning of the plot in *1917* is that it represents the duty that all soldiers carry out in order to achieve their mission, regardless of the cost. Certain moments in the plot force the audience to consider what they would do in the soldier's position. Not only does this help engulf the audience on a deeper emotional level, but also compels them to understand the hardships of life as a soldier during World War I.

All things considered, due to the unique nature of the film's cinematography and its captivating plot, I give it a score of 9/10.

Writing Center Goes Virtual

By Sam Turgeon
Redcoat Review Writer

In an attempt to adapt to COVID-19 protocols and social distancing, the BHS Writing Center has moved almost entirely online. Students can visit the Berlin High School website and sign up for a Writing Center session under the "Student Services" tab. Once directed to the Writing Center Website, students can make their request under "Sign Up".

Students can submit writing-related assignments from any class, whether it be English, History, Chemistry, or any other subject. Writers can submit their assignment at any point during the writing process, even if they only have an outline.

The Writing Center has proven to be particularly useful to students who are in the process of writing college essays, as applying an extra set of eyes to them can help make them even more effective.

After submitting the request, students will be matched with a trained writing tutor who will read over the student's essay and provide personalized feedback through a recorded Screencastify video.

Students can expect the video response within 48 hours of their submission and are welcome to further email their tutor if they have extra questions or would like more elaboration.

In the months since the Writing Center went online, attendance has risen quite a bit. As of December 2020, the Writing Center has fielded 39 help requests. This number is quite a bit higher than the number of requests that the Writing Center has received in years past. The influx in requests may be due to students feeling more comfortable exposing their writing to a tutor online as opposed to in person. It could also be due to some students struggling with distance learning, and being more willing to take advantage of the resources available to them than in previous years.

When asked about the Writing Center and the sudden influx in feedback requests, Writing Center Student Director Makayla Gorski stated, "I think the Writing Center is one of Berlin High School's most valuable and under-utilized resources.

"Receiving feedback on just one piece can assist students with developing long-lasting writing skills," Gorski explained. "Your tutor might explain how to properly format a quote or even give suggestions on how to elevate your introductory paragraph - knowledge that can assist you with your future pieces of writing as well. Our tutors are approachable and want to help students become better writers!"



Photo Courtesy of Berlin High School

BHS Student Artwork on National Stage

Four Berlin High School students were honored with having their artwork displayed this year on the 2020 National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C. Ornaments designed by juniors Eryn Riggott, Karla Oyola, Emily Kobus and freshman Jack Salerno represented Berlin Public Schools, one of 56 school districts in the country chosen to design one-of-a-kind ornaments for the 2020 tree.

Kobus had an opportunity to visit the White House in December and was treated to a personal tour of the White House with the First Lady. The students' ornaments were displayed on the Ellipse in President's Park. The trees represent each U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia as part of the America Celebrates ornament display. This year, several ornaments from each school will also be displayed inside the White House.

The America Celebrates ornament program is a collaboration of the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Department of Education and the National Park Foundation (NPF). The U.S. Department of Education worked through state art and education offices, which identified elementary, middle and high schools to participate in the America Celebrates program. The project is funded by the NPF.

From state flowers to notable landmarks, students created ornaments that celebrate their state, district or territory. The public was invited to view the National Christmas Tree and the 56 state, district, and territory trees and their ornaments daily from Dec. 1 through Jan. 1, 2021.

The National Christmas Tree Lighting has strong ties to education. In 1923, the District of Columbia Public Schools proposed that a decorated Christmas tree be placed on the South Lawn of the White House. On Christmas Eve that year, President Calvin Coolidge lit the first National Christmas Tree.

- National Park Service Press Release



Students, Staff Enjoy Virtual Pep Rally

By Abigail Ferland and Gina Scalero
Redcoat Review Writers

During the weeks of November 8th and 15th, we had our Fall Spirit Week where all grades participated in themed days. The Spirit Week was broken up between 2 weeks, so both cohorts had the opportunity to participate. This year's Spirit Week theme lineup included American, Purple, Pink, Tie-Dye, and Color Wars Day. Students then submitted pictures of their spirit attire, which were featured on the Student Council and Berlin High School social media pages.

Teachers and students used this as an opportunity to bring a sense of normalcy into these ever-changing days. This was the first event that the whole student body has participated in since the start of the pandemic. These spirited days helped to remind both students and staff that there is some light in the darkness. Although the current situation has changed some of our school's beloved traditions, we have proven that we can be flexible and adapt during this challenging time.

As for the Pep Rally, this year's Student Council officers and advisors faced a challenge with how they were going to uphold this beloved Fall tradition. Through careful planning and working closely with Mr. Smith and administration, BHS was able to produce its first ever virtual Pep Rally video. To film the Pep Rally games, which included the scooter race, the soccer kick, and the basketball throw, class officers needed to sign up five students of the class for each game. One of the trickiest parts of the filming process was finding a time that would work for all of the students in a grade to film a game they signed up for. Of course, the students were flexible and found a time that worked for everyone,



allowing the Pep Rally to be great.

Student Council created a Fathead fundraiser to add something new to the Pep Rally. Fatheads were sold for \$10 each made by ImageInk, a reliable company who never lets BHS down. ImageInk was also kind enough to give an amount of money from each order to Boxes to Boots, a group in town who makes Hero Boxes for men and women enlisted overseas. The Fatheads were a hit. Student Council, with the help of their peers, hung up the Fatheads in the gym for the Pep Rally video and around the school for Pep Rally day!

Mr. Smith then took all of the footage he compiled from filming the games and Fathead set-up, submitted fall and winter captain videos, and Spirit Week photos and made a stunning video that was aired on BHS's YouTube account in advisory the day before Thanksgiving Break.

For the Pep Rally games, the seniors came out on top, winning two out of the three games: the scooter race and

the soccer kick. The freshmen were also very impressive for their first Pep Rally, winning the infamous basketball throw. However, every grade did outstanding and contributed to making the Pep Rally tradition prevail!

Student Council is hoping to plan an in-person Pep Rally for the spring, but if they can't, we know they can plan a successful virtual one! A big thanks to Mr. Smith, Student Council, class officers, and the BHS community who helped make this Pep Rally the best it could be!



Esteemed Spoken-Word Poet Visits Students

By Sam Turgeon
Redcoat Review Writer

On Monday, October 26th, esteemed spoken word poet, Michael Peterson visited BHS creative writing classes to give a presentation on spoken word poetry. Peterson, or "Chief The Poet" as he's more commonly called, Zoomed in from his home to speak to the students. He was a lively and interactive speaker, greeting each student individually as they logged into the Zoom call and engaging in brief conversations with them.

Chief touched upon a variety of topics including his journey to becoming a spoken word poet and how he used poetry to help get him through quarantine. Chief read aloud a few of the poems that he had written during quarantine as well as a few others that he had previously published. Chief then spent the majority of the session taking questions from students. In a way, Zoom allowed students to have more interaction with Chief than they would have if he had been on stage in the auditorium.



Photo Credit: Mrs. Rice

Michael "Chief the Poet" Peterson worked with students in Creative Writing via Zoom.

Chief was able to call all of the students by name and have in-depth conversations with them regarding their questions.

One of the most in-depth topics that Chief spoke about was how he gets his ideas onto paper and the emotion that he puts into each piece. Chief told the audience that the major thing that he looks for in a poem is its ability to make the audience feel something. When he was

asked if he ever felt scared sharing his personal stories, he replied, "It is a very scary thing at times, but the people you inspire make it all worth it."

Chief's presentation was very well put together, and he was a very personable speaker. His lessons were worthwhile and are sure to have inspired numerous creative writing students to begin writing their own poetry.

BHS senior Matt Tierney was in the audience for Chief's presentation. Tierney said, "He inspired me to further my own writing because I thought that he was a very interesting and enthusiastic person. He made writing poetry sound less like a chore or an assignment and more like a way to express your thoughts."

Chief was a fantastic speaker for the BHS students and is definitely worth bringing back in the future. Any students or teachers who are interested in Chief but weren't able to make the presentation should make sure to check out the large selection of poetry that he has published on his YouTube channel, chiefthepoet.

Innovation in the Theatre Department; Excitement in the School Community

By Paul Kendrick
Redcoat Review Writer

As a consequence of COVID-19 restrictions, Berlin High School's annual fall play could not be performed in the typical manner this year. Consider the practical limitations COVID-19 imposes on theatrical performances. Any play that requires performers to cluster in groups or make physical contact with each other - off the list. Any script that requires a detailed set to be built and operated on by a team of close-working crew members - off the list. Any tear-jerker that requires the audience to read the performers' facial expressions - off the list.

Further obstructing the play's actualization were the logistics behind performing to an audience. Even Broadway had to shut its doors due to COVID-19, so clearly, changes would have to be made to the medium by which the fall play was viewed. Instead of postponing the play or cancelling it entirely, Director of Choral Music and Theatre Mr. Boyle took an innovative approach and elected to pre-record the performance scene-by-scene in a COVID-safe manner so that the final cut of the performance could be streamed to families from the comfort of their own homes.

This year's play was *The Rehearsal* by Don Zolidis. The plot centers around an eccentric batch of theatre kids who are trying to pull off a performance of the musical *Guys and Dolls*. In essence, *The Rehearsal* is a comedic glimpse into the



Photo Credit: Paul Kendrick

world of theatre.

Fortunately, the fact that *The Rehearsal* is set in a high school allowed the performance to simply be recorded in the halls of BHS rather than in a set built to look like a high school.

When performers needed to record in the hallway, they would do so in the hallway. When performers needed to record on a stage, they would record on the actual stage. As for the camera crew filming the play, BHS Tech Specialist Mr. Smith and a small team of BHS students were hard at work behind the scenes setting up lighting and filming the performance one scene at a time. After roughly four tedious weeks of filming, the play was ready to be finalized, edited

down, and streamed. In truth, some students within the theatre community were initially skeptical about the fate of this play. However, as performer Laura Sarrazin pointed out, "We're hoping for a bigger turn out this year - with the new format it could be much more accessible to those who might not go out to the auditorium on a Friday night or Saturday morning to go see the show."

As it turned out, many people showed their support for BHS theater by purchasing tickets for and viewing the streamed play. Ultimately, it can be said with certainty that *The Rehearsal* fulfilled its fundamental purpose: giving all those involved an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Mamma Mia! Springs to Stage

By Paul Kendrick
Redcoat Review Writer

Excitement is in the air! Director of Choral Music and Theatre Mr. Boyle announced in November that this year's school musical will be *Mamma Mia!*, a jukebox musical based on the music of ABBA, a popular Swedish pop band. Written by playwright Catherine Johnson in coordination with former band members Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, this musical features hit songs such as "Dancing Queen", "Money, Money, Money" and "Mamma Mia."

As with *The Rehearsal*, the usual challenges associated with rehearsing and performing a musical have only been amplified by the pandemic. From maintaining social distance on and off the stage to sanitizing props and technological equipment, it is sure to be no easy feat to put on this musical. Despite these setbacks, the theatre community is overwhelmingly optimistic about *Mamma Mia!* because of the musical's popular appeal, catchy show tunes, and compelling plot.

Performer Laura Sarrazin discussed what this performance is going to look like and how the theatre department feels about the musical. She put particular em-

phasis on the deliberate uplifting nature of this musical, promising that "It's gonna be a really happy, exciting show, and it will be sure to put you in a good mood and make you forget about the pandemic for a little."

That's the ultimate purpose of *Mamma Mia!* and other musicals: to allow the audience to escape the hardships of their daily lives for just a small sliver of time, a purpose far more meaningful now that we have been in a global pandemic for ten months. Overall, people are just excited to have something to look forward to again. A song to rehearse at home. An activity to fill up afternoons. A way to show off musical talent. A performance to attend.

Moreover, according to Sarrazin, this musical is likely going to be performed at the Berlin Fairgrounds "or some other venue with an open air stage" as to comply with COVID-19 restrictions, though the final logistics are up in the air and subject to change at any moment. There will be masks. There will be social distancing. But most importantly, there will be entertaining music and choreography. Though it will be a couple months from now, I can't wait to see how *Mamma Mia!* turns out.

JOIN OUR STAFF

The *Redcoat Review* is looking for new members. Our welcoming staff includes a variety of writers and editors in all grade levels. Students in this club have the flexibility to contribute regularly or simply submit a special one-time article.

The *Redcoat Review* meets weekly on Zoom and in person in the Library. Students are welcome to come into school for our meetings. We have a Schoology group to communicate information.

In this issue, the following students contributed: Seniors Nick Spinali, Mason DiMauro, Sam Turgeon, Matt Tierney, Ryan Brockel, Tim Lewis, Julia Oakes, Gina Scalaro, Abby Ferland, Emma LaFrance and juniors Paul Kendrick and Lindsey Leary.

If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please contact Mrs. Rice or Mrs. Glass. We will guide you along in how to write an article or come up with a story idea and will support you throughout the process.

Being a member of the school newspaper looks great on a resume or brag sheet, and teaches and reinforces valuable lifelong skills that apply to any profession. We hope to see you at our next meeting!



Pixar Honors Black Culture With Soul

By Nick Spinali
Redcoat Review Writer

Soul is the latest animated feature to be released by Pixar Animation Studios and distributed by the Walt Disney Company. The film is directed by Pete Docter, known for directing fellow Pixar films *Monsters, Inc.*, *Up*, and *Inside Out*, and stars the voice talents of Jamie Foxx and Tina Fey.



The film follows Joe Gardner, a middle school music teacher who for his entire life has aspired to be a musician. After finally getting his big break, Joe is involved in an accident that leaves his soul separated from his body. Now an existential human being, Joe's soul encounters 22, a soul who is being prepared for life as a human. Together, the two attempt to assemble Joe's soul with his body so that he can perform in a gig later that day.

Although a seemingly simple story at first, where *Soul* exceeds expectations is its portrayal of human characteristics and how those characteristics ultimately mesh into a human life. After Joe's soul is separated from his physical body, he is brought to a supernatural setting where he is allowed to evaluate his life and how it has since shaped up from a third-person perspective. This allows Joe to question what his true purpose is and whether he has truly lived his life to its fullest potential.

Joe himself feels like a real person in this film. He has a real job with true aspirations that both he and the audience care for. Along with Joe, other characters throughout the film are given real motives and blend beautifully to create what is a deep and compelling story. Each character compliments each other impeccably and offers input that helps Joe on his quest to discover the meaning of his life.

Math Tutoring Center Goes Virtual

By Tim Lewis
Redcoat Review Writer

With so many changes occurring to the safety procedures at school, many support resources for students have subsequently made changes in order to accommodate student needs. Among those resources is the Berlin High School Math Tutoring Center, which has continued to accommodate the needs of students while simultaneously following proper safety procedures.

Math tutors are experienced to help in all math courses offered at BHS and are trained in how to answer questions so that the student understands the entire concept rather than just the answer to the question. A student seeking assistance can access a form via the BHS Math Tutoring Academy Group on Schoology, which can be reached using the code 7PR7J-D5FC2 to join.

On the form, they can submit a picture of the math problem they are

As always, *Pixar* pushes the limits of computer animation by creating a lifelike world in *Soul*. In particular, the scenes that take place in New York City feel real and character movement continues to improve. Colors are constantly vibrant, yet the film never allows itself to focus too closely on its visuals in order to avoid potential fabrication. Instead, the filmmakers did an outstanding job of creating the perfect blend of visuals that enhance the main plot so that it feels like the story has created the world, and not that the world has created the story.

Soul is notable for featuring the first black protagonist in a *Pixar* film. The film does an outstanding job of paying homage to black culture, specifically in music. There is one scene in particular involving a barber shop and black customers that admirably portrays black citizens and how they have embraced said culture in real life, which has been almost nonexistent in animated films up until now. Joe's interaction with these people feels natural, and they offer serious head-scratching advice that makes Joe reconsider what he believes to be the critical components of his existence.

Soul is a beautiful film that hits all of the right notes of a successful animated feature. Characters mesh wonderfully and the charming story is able to strike a sensitive topic without feeling forced or unnatural, but completely necessary. There are only a few nitpicks to be found in this film, most notably what felt like a quick ending for the main protagonist after a final realization is discovered about life and the opportunities that are given to every person. Yet, even the conclusion felt well-deserved and imperative for the characters and can only be criticized due to the sheer innovation that is present in every other aspect of the film. Overall, the minor issues that occur in this film are widely offset by what *Pixar* did right in what has proven to be the latest success in the *Pixar* collection.

confused with trying to solve. Math tutors will solve the problem using a new three-step method. First, tutors set out what steps are necessary to complete the problem. Second, they will complete the problem, following the guide created in the first step. And finally, the math tutor will check the answer to the problem and go back through the steps so that the math process can be conceptualized.

The math tutor will submit the problem for review by Ms. Gagnon in order to ensure it is correct and complete and it will then be sent back to the student or the teacher who requested the problem. All tutoring feedback will be sent back to the student via a video that includes a step-by-step analysis of the problem as well as verbal input from the tutor.

The new process is a safe way for students to get their math questions solved while still being provided with an in-depth analysis that would be present if a student was receiving in-person help.



Photo Credit: Lucy Micacci-Bantle

Seniors on the boys cross country team from left, Nick Spinali, Tyler Rice, Matt Tierney, Ryan Brockel, Tim Lewis and Chris Bantle.

Season a Success Despite Challenges

By Matt Tierney
Redcoat Review Writer

Coming off of a season in which they endured their first division title in more than a decade, the Boys Cross Country team came in with high expectations. However, the loss of All State runner Mike Parzych and seniors Nick Parzych and Ryan Munch would prove to leave substantial vacancies for the varsity squad this season.

Moreover, due to COVID-19 implications, Berlin was forced to shift to a new division that included the likes of Middletown, Newington, Wethersfield, and Rocky Hill, all of which were amongst the top teams in the state. They were up for the challenge, however, and fought to a winning record of 4-3, including an upset win over Wethersfield.

Berlin kicked off the year with a clean sweep of Buckley, and then took a loss at rival Middletown while putting up a good fight. In the middle half of the season, Berlin picked up two more wins against Platt and Maloney and then dropped an extremely close race against Wethersfield. That could have been a big setback for the rest of the year, but it proved only to serve as motivation for Berlin.

The turning point of the season for Berlin was a meet at Newington, a top 25 team in the state last year. Berlin came into the meet as an underdog and was not expected to come close whatsoever. Despite that, Berlin lost 25-30, which to put that in perspective is the equivalent of a one score game in soccer. Led by big performances from Ben Fisher, Tim Lewis, and Chris Bantle, Berlin was able to keep the race close and use it as a confidence booster going into the final race of the year.

After that race, Berlin sat at a 3-3 record and refused to finish on a losing note. Going up against Wethersfield, a team Berlin had narrowly lost to at the start of the season, the Berlin squad was more motivated than ever to flip the script and end on a win. Fueled by 3rd and 4th place finishes from Fisher and Bantle, Berlin easily rolled to an upset win and finished the season on a strong team performance.

Reflecting on the season, Lewis offered praise for the season as a whole, saying, "We took a season that was supposed to be nonexistent and did extremely well. I am proud of all the boys and I know the team will be in good hands next year."

Lewis also added that for the next year, Berlin should be in good shape.



Photo Courtesy of Berlin Athletics

Unified Sports Nationally Recognized

By Matt Tierney
Redcoat Review Writer

In early December, the Berlin High School Unified Sports Team was recognized as a National Unified Champion School by the Special Olympics for achieving the national standards. Coach Marie Siegal praised how BHS was a pioneer of Unified Sports in the area.

“Twenty-four years ago, our then Athletic Director, George Hall, along with Special Education teacher Jim Day, George Synnott, our principal and (myself) formed the Unified Sports team.

“We were one of the first schools to play a game at the half-time of a varsity game, thereby introducing Unified Sports

to the town of Berlin.”

Siegal went on to note the significance of this achievement to the program.

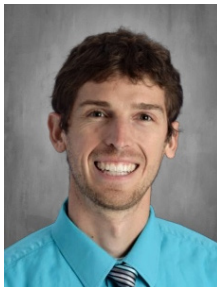
“This award is not about winning or losing, it’s about Unified’s inclusion into the entire Berlin High community. This award is about being included at Awards night, about being included at Pep Rallies and it’s about recognizing this program as part of the Athletic Department. The key component here is inclusion, giving all athletes the opportunity to belong to a team, wear their uniform proudly and make Berlin proud.”

Congratulations to the Unified Sports Team on their accomplishments and best of luck to them in the future.

BHS Welcomes New Educator

By Paul Kendrick
Redcoat Review Writer

This year, Berlin High School welcomes math department head and teacher, Mr. Hanson, to its sizable list of new educators. It can be challenging to familiarize oneself with a teacher in the age of digital learning and social-distancing, so in order for students to get to know him on



a personal level, get to know Mr. Hanson and his impressions of the school, his teaching style, his personal life, and his advice for students. From his educational knowledge to his optimism, Mr. Hanson has a lot to offer Berlin High School.

First Impressions: “My first impression of Berlin High School is that it is an amazing place to work. The teachers are extremely welcoming. The students are very polite. Hybrid learning has made building relationships with students more difficult but not impossible. One pro of hybrid learning is that it has forced me as a professional to use technology even more. In some ways, this has definitely changed my teaching for the better.”

Goals as a Teacher: “My favorite thing about teaching is getting to work with students. Seeing and working with students motivates me everyday. As a teacher, it is my hope and goal to positively influence students to be better

individuals who lead happy lives that positively contribute to society.”

Style of Teaching: “I like to laugh and have a good time with students while working hard and learning a lot. I also put an emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving.”

Personal Hobbies: “In my free time, I like to play with my son and train for triathlons. My son Trevor is just over one and watching him discover the world is truly special. When Trevor is being babysat, I am often running, biking, swimming, or doing yoga with my wife.”

Education / College Experience: “I attended Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Central Connecticut State University for my Bachelors in mathematics and Western Governors University for my Masters in education. I attended Central for my second Masters in educational leadership. I have fond memories of swimming and running cross country and outdoor track at WPI.”

Advice / Tips for Students: “I would tell students to use the resources available to them and to not give up. Khan Academy is a great online free resource that has video lessons that align to all regular high school math classes. If you take the time to watch the videos, Khan Academy will help you learn math. Next, do not be afraid to reach out to your teacher or fellow students with questions! If you are a remote student, ask your math teacher when they are available for a Zoom extra help session. Finally, and most importantly, don’t give up.”

Athletes Stay Motivated in Hopes for a Winter Season

Continued from Page 1

“Coach Soucy] has been great during this period,” Perrotta said. “And has been sending the team ideal workouts to keep us on track and motivated.”

Staying motivated will prove to be a struggle for winter sports athletes since the shortened season will almost certainly guarantee that most sports will have a restricted postseason schedule this year.

This happened in the fall, where the boys and girls soccer teams only played in a handful of postseason games as opposed to the normal state tournament that the teams normally partake in. Similarly, the boys and girls cross country teams concluded their fall season with a single conference meet, although only two total teams ultimately participated amongst COVID struggles.

“It has been very difficult for many, including myself,” Perrotta continued. “It’s hard to find the motivation to go outside for a run.”

Despite the obvious drop in motivation among athletes and the serious nature of staying safe, teams and athletes have still found ways to keep themselves engaged in BHS athletics. Perrotta explained that during the cross country season, the girls team tried to keep its runners engaged by having them participate in running related challenges.

“The concept was to complete the challenges [that Coach Soucy] and I created to earn raffle tickets. Challenges were worth 1-3 tickets, depending on their difficulty. At the end of the season, we used the tickets to raffle off running related gifts. I feel this helped us stay focused and motivated, which was crucial because we did not have big races to work towards this year.”

Although Berlin High School athletes continue to hold hope that their season can be salvaged, Berlin Public Schools and CIAC officials alike will continue to monitor the COVID pandemic to keep all students and athletes safe.

“Since Cross Country ended,” Perrotta concluded, “I have been communicating with the team to remind them about workouts and encouraging them to continue being safe so our indoor season can happen.”