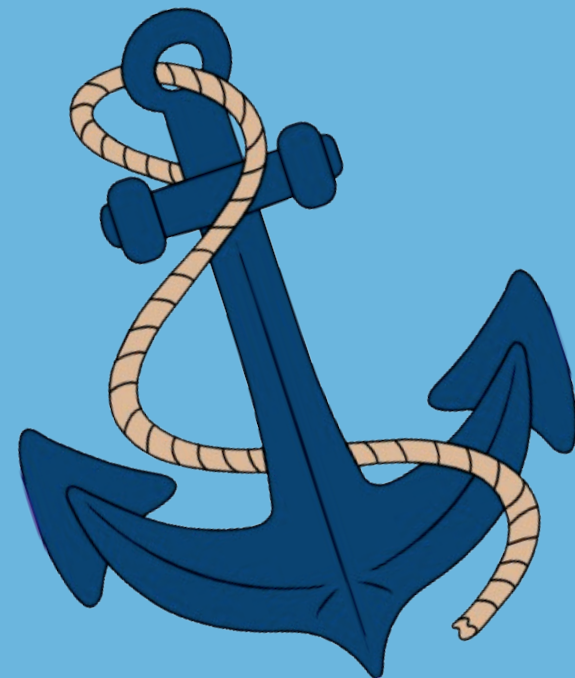


The Sailors'

LOGG



SPORTY STAFF

The MSHS staff possess a variety of talents that many students may not be aware of. Student athletes, especially, will be interested to learn about the staff members who played collegiate sports. See pages 11 for more information.

Pick me, Choose me, Love me

The unspoken struggles of being below the average height

Pick me girls. We all know one, or have at least heard of this species. But what exactly is a pick me girl? Well, according to Tiktok, pick me girls are dedicated to putting other girls down, getting attention from boys, and making themselves seem "different" from other girls.

Throughout my life, I've never been called a pick me girl (to my face) so I would like to call that an accomplishment. However, there have been instances where at first glance people assume that's who I am. You might be wondering "well, why do people think that?" Well, let me introduce myself to you. Hi, my name is Emily and I am 4'11, and if you react the same way that others do after finding out my height, I can already guess your expression. With my name and height, I'm like the template of a "Pick me girl," but I promise you I am not.

Being short definitely comes with its benefits. Some benefits include, but are not limited to, being able to sneak in between slow walkers during passing time (I don't understand how they walk so slowly when their legs are twice the size of mine), looking younger, and being able to win at Hide-and-Seek all the time because I can fit in weird places. It's fun until the seeker decides to give up and leave me in the cabinet under my sink.

But like all things, there are some disadvantages, and boy do I have a long list for you. Starting with the obvious that I'm not always in people's view.

Everyone knows how chaotic and crowded passing time gets, especially after fifth hour. Now imagine having to push through a bunch of slow walking giants, and all of a sudden you get hit in the face with a backpack. Yes, a backpack. All because they can't see you walking next to them. Or getting lost in a store which is a common thing because unlike the average person, I can't really see above the shelves.

But the worst one, in my opinion, is not being able to reach my slot in the phone caddy. Oh, the horror. No one truly likes the idea of putting their phone up, but I bet I dislike it more than you. We all know how



that system works: you get to class, you find your name on the list, and you put your phone away. With my luck, my slot has always been in the top row, which means I can not reach it, no matter how far I stretch or stand on my tippy toes. Sometimes if I struggle just enough I will barely be able to drop my phone in. Other times I'll kindly ask a classmate for their service to put my phone up.



By Emily Dimas,
Staff Writer

Now, there truly isn't a way to avoid the wide eyed, jaw dropping expression I receive after stating my height. But there are some comments I've received that have stuck with me. The most common one is when people repeatedly yell out "You're 4'11?" in utter shock as if I had just admitted to them I was Batman or something. But there are two comments that stood out to me the most. The first one being "did your parents forget to water you or something?" in middle school. The second one being "so...you just look at peoples butts all day?" after showing someone my perspective of people. Which by the way I do not.

An addition to being short are the creative names my lovely friends have given me. Such as, but not limited to, short stack, fun sized, and the most recent one being Labubu.

If you are somehow unfamiliar with what a Labubu is, it's a small collectible plush

toy that has an odd expression. Labubu became a trend last summer, and it caused some controversy on whether or not the evil looking fuzzball should be receiving the fame it did. I personally liked the small, evil fuzzball and so fell into the trap of hanging one on my backpack. So to their reasoning, I can be compared to a Labubu because of my short height and intimidating look.

A different name that has stuck around with me since the fifth grade is Chihuahua. This has traveled from my family to my friends, and if you know me, you could probably brainstorm a few reasons why this has been my nickname for a long time. The three main reasons are that I'm short, intimidating, and Mexican. Which makes me wonder, are people truly intimidated by short people? Can this be a fear?

Microphobia, the fear of small things, or as I'd like to call it "Ankle Biter phobia". During my five years of being short, I can confirm that I have never once bitten someone's ankles. Have I considered it just for the fun of it? Perhaps. But the ankle biter stereotype does not apply to me. But let's talk about how scary it can be having to live in a world filled with giants everywhere. Whether they're average height or above average height, if I have to look up to someone, they are automatically registered as a giant to me. So is it possible to fear tall people? Yes, yes it is, and it is called gigantophobia.

Tall people are afraid of short people because what if they bite their ankles? But I'm afraid of tall people, what if they bend down and lick my head? What am I supposed to do then? An obvious answer to this is to fight them and assert dominance. The only issue is the clear disadvantage at hand. Tall people have longer arms therefore can block off any attack I send their way. Maybe that's when ankle biting comes in hand.

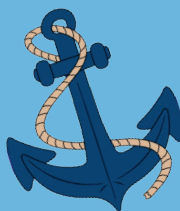
In the end, there truly isn't a correlation between short people and pick me's. So the next time you encounter someone shorter than you, do the following: don't automatically assume that they are part of the pick me species, protect your ankles, and let them know you appreciate them.

from the editors

Learning lessons from the seasons

The seasons serve as gentle teachers, offering wisdom with each shift. As the days start to grow shorter and darkness settles in sooner than before, these longer nights serve as a reminder to slow down. In the quiet stillness of extended evenings, let us embrace the way the change of the season reminds us to change our pace. With the remission of the sun, it's as if we're cajoled into this state of calm, invited to retreat, given permission to take a little break from the fast pace we may have been used to when the days were longer. Maybe our to do lists get shorter, our sleep gets longer, and we allow ourselves this time to just be. Maybe it's taking the time to read a book that's been collecting dust on our shelves for too long. Maybe it's listening to music just for the sake of it, not as background while we do something else, but we just relish in the notes, reflect on the lyrics, and enjoy it without other distractions. Maybe we curl up on the couch with loved ones to watch one too many movies, letting ourselves laugh or cry. And as we watch the trees shed their leaves, I'm reminded of the importance of letting go. So next time you are walking through the woods or driving past a row of trees whose leaves have turned a vibrant shade of red, brilliant orange, and vivid yellow, take a moment to appreciate the lesson. They understand that in order for new growth to emerge in the Spring, they must let go of their leaves now in order to preserve their energy to survive the upcoming months. Letting go is a natural part of the process. Renewal requires a level of relinquishment. Similarly, sometimes we need to let go of things in our own lives which no longer serve us, which are sapping us of our resources, in order to make room for something new, something beautiful. Challenge yourself to let go, to free yourself of the burden. Then take the time to bask in the quietude of the season. **-Mrs. Santos**

The Sailors'
LOG



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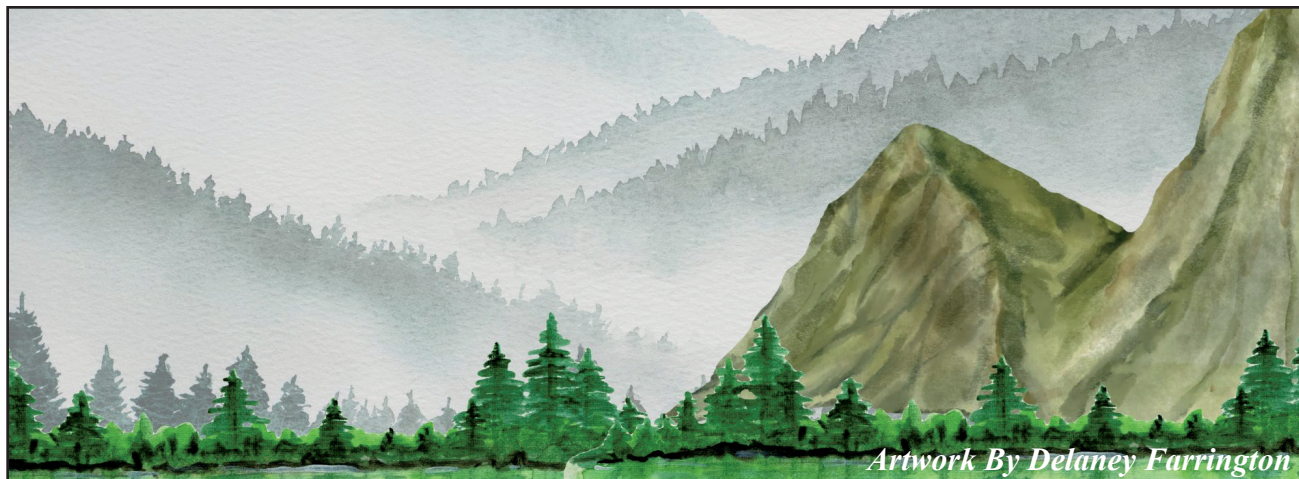
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Securing our national inheritance

Why preserving national parks is a battle we cannot afford to lose.



Artwork By Delaney Farrington

Our national parks are more than just scenic landscapes: they are essential inheritances that need our unwavering protection. Preserving these national treasures is not just an act of environmentalism but a crucial responsibility to future generations.



By Delaney Farrington, staff writer

These parks are habitats of biodiversity, cradling ecosystems that are essential for the health of our planet. Within their bounds, a complex web of life thrives, offering scientists invaluable opportunities to study and understand the natural world. To ignore and neglect these areas is to jeopardize the ecological balance and undermine the potential for groundbreaking discoveries and research that could benefit all humankind.

One of the most significant threats is overuse and underfunding. Parks are bursting at the seams with record numbers of visitors, leading to trail erosion, increased pollution, and strain on park resources. Simultaneously, funding for park maintenance and staffing has been inadequate for years, leaving parks struggling to keep up

with basic needs, let alone address long term conservation challenges. With the government shut down in effect as of when this is being written, it has led to thousands of national park rangers being let go and the closure of visitor centers and facilities. Which leaves the door open for more environmental damage to the parks, with vandalism and illegal activity rates already rising. There are also concerns of long-term and irreversible damage due to proposed budget cuts and a large reduction in staff.

Climate change is another looming crisis. Rising temperatures, altered rain patterns, and increased frequencies of extreme weather events are already impacting our parks ecosystems. Glaciers are melting, forests are dying, and wildlife habitats are shifting, threatening the very features that make these parks special. We need to take action and protect these parks because they are essential for preserving biodiversity and providing clean air and water. You can help be the change and protect our parks for the next generations to come. We need to demand better funding, promote sustainable tourism and visitor practices, and take meaningful steps to combat climate change before it is too late. The time to act is now before we lose these irreplaceable landscapes forever.

Leave No Trace

Follow these seven steps when visiting a national park

- 1 Plan ahead and prepare**
Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- 2 Travel and camp on durable surfaces**
Durable surfaces include maintained trails and designated campsites, rock, gravel, sand, dry grasses or snow.
Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- 3 Dispose of waste properly**
Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite, food preparation areas, and rest areas for trash or spilled foods
- 4 Leave what you find**
Preserve the past: examine, photograph, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them
- 5 Minimize campfire impacts**
Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light to minimize the impacts on the environment
Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- 6 Respect wildlife**
Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- 7 Be considerate of other visitors**
Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.



"The Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling is my favorite because it leaves you on the edge of your seat, and it is very interesting."
Colt Conklin, freshman



"Stephen King's IT was good because of how eerie it was. He thinks differently and all of his work was before his time."
Gravin Bower-Slade, sophomore



"My favorite book is Lord of the Flies by William Golding because it was one of the first chapter books I read."
Wyatt Mercer, junior



"Can't Hurt Me by David Goggins changed my mindset as I read what he came from and how he pushed himself to the best of his ability."
Chase Coburn, senior

What is your favorite book and why?



In each edition of *The Sailors' Log*, eight students will be asked their opinion about a current topic.



"I really liked To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee because I understood it well, and I really liked the theme."
Chloe Welch, freshman



"My favorite book is The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo. I have liked it since 3rd grade. It was written in verse."
Isabelle Karish, sophomore



"Goldfish Boy by Lisa Thompson is about a boy who witnesses a kidnapping and becomes a key witness who helps solve the case."
Piper Fritz, junior



"Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley is really good. I am so interested in the plot, and it keeps me on my toes."
Emma DeYoung, senior

Love is in the Air!

A multitude of female artists tie the knot and find their person.

By Julia Campos,
Staff Writer

Love is definitely in the air if you are a female singer currently dominating the music industry. In the past year, so many of the icons that run the music industry have gotten engaged or married. From the biggest pop star in the world, Taylor Swift, to more recent popular singers, like Charli XCX, they have found love and the person they plan to spend the rest of their lives with.

The musicians that we all sang along with about heartbreak and not finding love now have found, as Taylor likes to call it, "The one." Those same people we grew up with on our screens, either on Disney channel or watching their life changing music videos, are now in that phase of their life where they are truly in love with someone.

Alex Russo and Benny Blanco, the one behind bangers like "Love Yourself," "Diamonds," and "Teenage Dream," are now married. The people who shaped our childhood through their acting and music now plan to be together forever.

Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco recently got married in the end of September, and their wedding was described as a blended intimate moment which had a fairytale vibe to it.

After years of being in the public eye, Selena Gomez has finally found someone who worships the ground she walks on each day.

Next we have the one and only Lana Del Rey who married Jeremy Dufrene, a swamp tour guide (yes you did in fact read that right). In the short period after meeting Jeremy Dufrene, Lana Del Rey went from "Summertime Sadness" to "Swamptime Gladness".

All jokes aside, Lana has mentioned on multiple occasions how she loves Jeremy, that he is the love of her life, and "when you know, you know." The couple

Demi Lovato poses with her now husband Jordan Lutes. (Courtesy photo)



Taylor Swift poses with her soon to be husband Travis Kelce (Courtesy photo)

was most recently seen together at the Valentino fashion show, which happened in Paris.

Meanwhile in London, singer Charli XCX recently got married to a drummer from the band 1975, George Daniel. The singer has seen a rise in popularity this past summer with her album "Brat." The wedding itself was in London, but the afterparty took place in Sicily. It's actually romantic how much effort was put into the celebration of love between these two musicians.

This September, Dua Lipa got engaged to actor Callum Turner. Both were, surprisingly, seen on vacation before and after the engagement. Both of them took the "go girl! give us nothing!" too seriously and have not shared any major details about their future wedding. However, they are seen living their lives to the fullest and traveling everywhere. Even though that should be me, I am happy for

her I guess.

Demi Lovato has also found love, and recently married Jordan Lutes this past May. The famous actress of movies like "Camp Rock" and "Camp Rock 2" has now found true love with an underground songwriter. She apparently falls in love with a famous singer/songwriter in every timeline.

The wedding is set to have plenty of mugs for all guests (since it's her favorite

dish and all). After years of working on herself, Demi Lovato has found her match and the love of her life.

Last but certainly not least, Taylor Swift, the most famous pop star/singer in

the world, recently got engaged to Travis Kelce, the Chiefs tight end. Since Travis Kelce publicly stated on his podcast that he wanted to give Taylor Swift his hand made friendship bracelet personally, the couple has been in the spotlight.

After her record breaking world tour, The Eras Tour, Taylor Swift went back to living her life in a more private manner, but a few days after announcing her new album she also announced her engagement. Taylor's ring was far from paper, as it was estimated to be between 8 and 10 carats of diamond.

After a very public love life set to be judged by the entire world, Taylor Swift has not only found her perfect match but also the one who saved her from the fate of Ophelia.

If there is one thing you can take away from this article it is that even if you have lived through a lifetime of heartbreaks (and written songs about it) there is still someone out there waiting for you. But always remember that a relationship does not define the person that you are. All these powerful and well known women will forever be remembered by the incredible accomplishments they have made and not their love life.

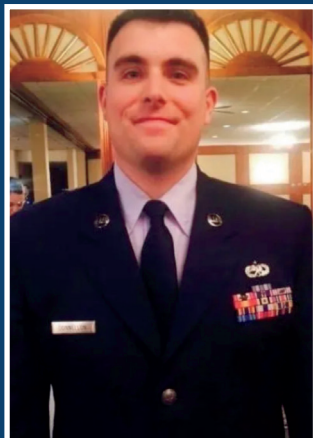
Eddie and Stella's Top Ten Pieces of Advice for Freshmen

1. Run through the hallways.
2. Don't mess with the newspaper staff.
3. Join a club.
4. Befriend all administrators (make friendship bracelets).
5. Buy a rolling backpack.
6. Take only gym classes.
7. Forget everything you have ever learned before.
8. Start multiple coups to gain leadership positions. (#NeverToEarlyToStartCollegePrep)
9. Breaking the law is not cool
Wink Wink
10. There are secret tunnels under the school for those chosen students that can find them.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

Mona Shores's Anchored in Honor Project brings the community together by honoring local veterans

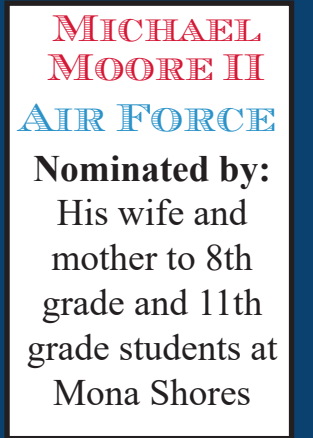
VETERAN NOMINATIONS FOR ANCHORED IN HONOR:



JOHN DONNELLON

AIR FORCE

Nominated by:
His daughter,
junior Meredith
Donnellon



MICHAEL MOORE II

AIR FORCE

Nominated by:
His wife and
mother to 8th
grade and 11th
grade students at
Mona Shores



TODD MCKEOWN

MARINE CORPS

Nominated by:
His nephew,
6th grade Carson
Mckeown



STEVE MORELL

MARINE CORPS

Nominated by:
French teacher
Madame Brown



Anchored in Honor Project led by students aims to honor veterans

Veterans Day is an important federal holiday to recognize and honor veterans who have served our country.

The Anchored in Honor project aims to bring more gratitude to veterans.

“Anchored in Honor is a project I started through the Mona Shores Interact Rotary Club, with inspiration from our club advisor, Mr. Brown, and some input from Amara Bradfield,” said senior Mya Schlafer. “The project recognizes and celebrates veterans and current military members in our community. Students and families fill out a form to honor someone they know, and we use that information to create personalized posters. The posters are displayed in the high school’s main lobby during Veterans Day week and then returned to families as keepsakes. It’s a meaningful way for students to show appreciation and reflect on the importance of Veterans Day.”

Creating these posters takes heavy consideration and thought, which only further shows the passion and dedication put into this project.

“I’ve always had a passion for making a difference, and I felt like this project could have a real impact,” Schlafer said. “A lot of students want to thank veterans but aren’t sure how—beyond saying ‘thank you.’ Anchored in Honor gives students a simple,

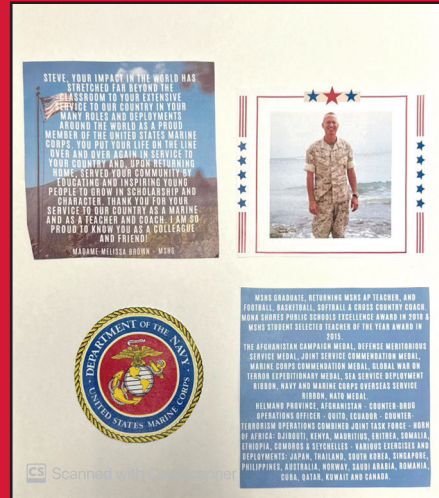
meaningful way to recognize their family members, friends, or even fallen veterans. It’s a small project with a big emotional impact, which is why I was so motivated to lead it.”

With each submission a student makes to recognize a veteran, the more awareness that this project will bring to Veterans Day. Furthermore, as Schlafer mentioned, it is difficult to find a way to give gratitude to veterans in one’s life in a meaningful, special way. However, this project gives Mona Shores students just that opportunity, a way of showing appreciation.

“Most veterans are reluctant to seek recognition, and too often, their contributions go unnoticed,” said English teacher and Interact advisor Peter Brown. “I want to make sure their stories are heard and that students truly understand the sacrifices required to preserve the freedoms we enjoy in this country.”

The Anchored in Honor project ensures that local veterans are properly celebrated and honored; it aims to make sure that veterans in our community never feel underappreciated.

“I know how proud everyone is of their friends and family who have served our country, and I wanted to amplify that pride and share their service stories across our school community,” Brown said. “This



Example of a nomination poster (Mya Schlafer)

project means the world to me because I understand how meaningful it is for veterans and their families to be recognized.”

As stories of veterans from their families get shared across the school through the posters on display, it allows students to understand sacrifices that goes into being in the military.

“I hope this project helps students understand what Veterans Day means,” Schlafer said. “I want Anchored in Honor to keep growing each year, helping students, veterans, and the community feel connected while showing genuine appreciation for those who’ve served.”

Articles
By Sara
Kim,
Staff Writer

Military recruiter gives insight into story

Many people involved in the military have an interesting story of how they got involved, and their perspectives are important to consider. For example, Joshua Cox, father of Mona Shores student freshman Gabe Cox, but also a Sergeant First Class in the United States Army, currently serves as a Recruiter and has a meaningful motivation as to why he is in the military.

“I grew up as the only child knowing that I wanted more than the original day in and out lifestyle,” Cox said. “I joined to challenge myself, build a better life, leave my small town, and be part of something bigger than myself. What keeps me going is seeing how the Army changes lives and knowing I’m giving back to my country and my community every day.”

Although everyone has a different story of how they ended up in the military, they all have the same goal: to serve the country and the people.

“The hardest part about being in the military is definitely being away from family,” Cox said. “But the best part is the brotherhood, the people you meet, and the sense of purpose that comes with serving. You build lifelong bonds that feel like family no matter where you go.”

It is inevitable that one will have to make sacrifices in their family life in order to serve in the military, and it is important for everyone to honor these veterans.

“I think the best way to honor veterans is through action, taking care of one another, living with gratitude, and continuing to serve our communities,” Cox said. “Also, just



Cox saluting (Courtesy photo).

taking the time to listen to a veteran’s story goes a long way. Sometimes, that simple “thank you” means more than folks realize.”

Listening and carrying on stories are crucial to keeping the legacy of someone alive. And that is an important way to remember Veterans, by spreading their lessons and stories they have collected over the years.

Senior discusses future plans and also owls

Senior Sara Kim may have joined newspaper for friendship and time off, but she found much more.

Newspaper helps students grow their interviewing and writing skills, but it offers much more socially.

"I originally took the class because I thought it was cool, and a friend of mine was taking it," Kim said. "But I ended up liking it, so I took it the next year. I'm in a lot of advanced classes, so I usually only see the same people every day. In Newspaper, however, I get to see others I normally don't."

Kim also holds plenty of talents. She has played piano since she was a child.

"I like to play the piano," Kim said. "I've been playing it since I was six years old."

Other than music, Kim values education

and the occasional racket sport, like badminton or tennis. Outside of that she doesn't consider herself very sporty, only being able to carry a mundane number of owls.

"I think I could carry an average number of owls at once," Kim said. "Probably seven of them. I'm below average in general athletic activities but I don't think someone's athleticism should be determined by whether they can carry owls or not. Like, Simone Biles could only carry four owls max, but she's the best athlete of our times."

Though she may have joined the Sailors' Log staff for a since graduated friend, Sara Kim is a hard-working, skilled writer and badminton player who has learned to appreciate what the class can offer.



MEET THE PRESS

Junior explains love and discovery of cheer

Every story has a story teller and at the Sailors' Log one of those storytellers is Emily Dimas. Emily has been writing for the sailor log since her sophomore year. She found herself enjoying the class and continued to pursue it her junior year.

"Honestly, I was peer pressured by Amelia," Dimas said. "I ended up liking it and wanted to continue doing it."

Outside of writing, Dimas loves to cheer for the school.

"In my third hour class, my freshman year, I met this senior cheerleader, and she was like, you should try out for cheer. And I've never done it before, I'd never

even watched a cheerleading movie, so I really had no idea what I was getting into" Dimas said. "So I was like, yeah, all right, whatever. I'll check it out. So I asked my mom about it, she said 'yeah like give it a try' she didn't know what it's like either. It was a big shift and something like really knew, but I started making bonds and just like being included in things more, and that was great."

As for the future, Dimas hopes to educate others.

"I want to become a teacher," Dimas said "I have seen how they are always dedicated to changing a student's life whether it's academically or personally."



Junior shares his love for sports and writing

Nathan VanEtten is an integral part of our staff, and I'm not saying that because he can write the sports stories that none of us dare to touch. He adds depth to our roster, in ways many of us overlook.

One of Nate's biggest passions is baseball. Not only is he good at playing, but he values the connections he makes by being part of the team.

"I just like the connections and the friendships that I built over the years playing the game," said VanEtten. "Being able to play with them is a ton of fun."

Being a part of the team and making valuable friendships goes beyond just the dugout, though. It's his identity.

"It's a big part of my friend group," VanEtten said. "It's...building my character over the years."

Besides baseball, Nate has always enjoyed writing, and wanted to test out and improve his writing skills by joining the class.

"I've always enjoyed writing," said VanEtten. "...and I felt that being in newspaper this year could also help my writing."

From baseball to writing, Nate provides a different perspective to our paper than our typical staff. He offers differing viewpoints, a new attitude, and a new approach to writing. Without someone of his experience, our paper just wouldn't feel complete.



Junior Swiftie shares about Brazilian roots

To most people, Julia Campos is just an ordinary person. Yeah, she's a smart, kind, soft-spoken person, but the newspaper class has really seen the true Julia.

"My favorite part about Newspaper is that it's blended, of course, but I also just really love the community and the environment," Campos said. "Everyone is so nice and it really feels like a family."

As most people know, Julia is a very smart person. She has all A's and takes hard, challenging classes, one being AP Chem. She believes it pushes her to be a better student.

"My favorite class is probably AP Chem," Campos said. "I love Mrs. Check, and I also just enjoy learning about things on a molecular level."

A fun fact about Campos is that she

is originally from Salvador, Brazil. She transferred to Mona Shores in 7th grade and has loved it ever since.

"Brazil is much different than here," Campos said. "I miss so many things from there, but I do think this is a great place to have opportunities and make new connections with people."

One of Julia's many hobbies is reading and hanging out with her friends.

"My favorite book is currently Binding 13," Campos said. "Its main points are found family and making friendships through the hardships of life."

Julia is such an amazing person who we love to have in class. Without her talks about Taylor Swift, or Brazil's soccer team, class would be much more boring. We are so grateful to have her as part of our newspaper staff!



Senior gains community through chance

A senior's high school experience can be full of unexpected moments, deep inspirations, and meaningful growth.

Senior Delaney Farrington, was accidentally placed in Newspaper class but chose to stay because she found herself enjoying it. What started as a simple mistake turned into an opportunity to discover new skills like writing, interviewing, and teamwork.

"I got put in the newspaper in my junior year," Farrington said. "I didn't pick the class but I liked the people so I decided to do it again my senior year. I like being able to spread awareness about important

things that need more attention." When Farrington is not writing articles, she can be found crafting or watching soccer. "I have too many hobbies,"

Farrington said, "I craft a lot, there's a whole room in my house just dedicated to all my crafting and scrapbooking supplies. I usually have at least 3 projects going, because when I get bored of one I just switch to a different one."

"I like to play volleyball, I played for Mona Shores from sixth grade to freshman year," Farrington said. "Though I don't play for the school anymore, I still play at open gyms and beach tournaments around the city."



Senior talks extensively about golf and fish

Being the co-editor-in-chief of the Sailors' Log is a big responsibility that requires a lot of dedication and hard work. Luckily, the Sailors' Log is in great hands this year with senior Eddie Kuznar.

"My sister was the editor before I came in here, so I was kind of peer pressured into it," Kuznar said. "But I also liked the idea of it. I enjoy writing, so I thought it would be fun to join."

With most of the newspaper staff being peer-pressured into joining Newspaper, Kuznar is no exception. However, as the co-editor this year, he is enjoying the class.

"I'm very honored to be co-editor," Kuznar said. "I like being in control over everybody, and it's fun to be the editor."

His enjoyment of being in control over everybody is apparent every day. Surprisingly, the newspaper staff has so far survived under Kuznar's rule.

Outside of Newspaper, Kuznar indulges in various hobbies, such as fishing and golf.

"I think golfing is very relaxing," Kuznar said. "It's a good stress reliever and there are many physical and mental benefits to it."

It is well-known that Kuznar enjoys golfing outside of school, and it is not a superficial enjoyment, as he believes golfing provides numerous benefits. As it is a sport that requires complete concentration.

Between Newspaper and his enjoyment of golf, Kuznar has a compelling life inside and outside of school.



Junior shares about many creative passions

Talented artist, staff writer, and country music enthusiast Anna Trasky has a lot to say if the topic is literature or Warrior Cats. So, given we share a passion for Warriors, it'd only be right to start off by asking who her favorite character is.

"My favorite Warriors character is Mudclaw," Trasky states, "I was absolutely obsessed with the Tragedy of Julius Caesar when I was forced to read it for Honors English 9 and Winds of Change, Mudclaw's POV book is based on Shakespeare's writing."

Next, I wanted to ask her about her music

"I'm never really sure of my own music taste, either." Trasky said, "If I had to pick select songs I'll take "Where the Wild Things Are" by Combs and "The Chicken in Black" by Cash"

Her art is also something I was curious about. How many years of experience does she have?

"I've been making art for as long as I've had the capabilities," said Trasky. "I have enough of an ego that I believe I can do anything so I have attempted many different media in my time. I'm never good at it, so I mostly just stick to drawing, writing, and animation."



Junior brightens lives through their friendship

To many, Shane Thompson is just a passing face in the hall, or a name on a paper, but to the newspaper class, he's more than just that. His personality positively radiates into the lives of everyone he interacts with.

"I joined newspaper because I have a lot of friends in this class," said Thompson. "I wanted to have fun and connect with my peers around me."

Thompson also enjoys connecting with his peers around him in and out of class. "During the school year, I love to hang out with my friends on the weekends," said Thompson. "I enjoy going to school

events, specifically football games."

When Thompson is not hanging out with his friends, he thoroughly disciplines himself to achieve academic success.

"I have never gotten any grade less than an A," said Thompson. "I especially like taking AP classes because although they push me hard, I end up learning a lot."

Thompson truly is more than just a passing face in the hall, or a name on a paper.

He exemplifies the type of person everyone should aspire to be; friendly, determined, and radiant. The newspaper staff is very lucky to have him.



Sophomore reveals her many fun interests

Sophomore, Ava Hardy is new to The Sailor's Log staff this year, and she has already made an impression with her excellent writing skills.

Outside of Newspaper, Hardy has many other unique interests which many may not know about.

"I love to watch figure skating, specifically Yuzuru Hanyu's programs," Hardy said. "I love the elegance, music, and the years of passion put into each performance. It inspires me to put more effort into the things I do, almost like seeing the skaters striving to be great rubs off on me."

Yuzuru Hanyu is a Japanese figure skater, who is generally regarded as one of the greatest figure skates of all time. Hardy's interest in figure skating might

be unknown to many, but watching figure skating is actually one of her favorite things to do, especially after school. In fact, it has influenced Hardy's plans for her future.

"Honestly, I'm unsure [of what I want to do in the future]," Hardy said. "I want to be a writer, an artist, and figure skater all at once, but I find it hard to imagine that future for myself, as my aspirations are constantly changing."

Hardy definitely has lots of interests which could lead to a successful, and creative, future career, even her taste in music is quite unique to her; as she is passionate about VKEI music.

Hardy likely had more unique interests to share with anyone who gets to know her, and her eclectic and distinct perspective is an essential part of this year's Sailor's Log staff.



Junior discusses love of sports and school

Kendall Berghuis is not only a student-athlete, but also a major part of the newspaper staff at Mona Shores High School. She embodies what it means to be a Sailor by balancing extracurriculars with her school life.

"I play varsity basketball and soccer here at Mona Shores," Berghuis said. "I think being a part of a team really shaped me into the person I am today."

Berghuis believes that teamwork played an important role in helping her become a hardworking person. She also credits her support system for helping her handle the challenges that come with being a student-athlete.

"I love hanging out with my friends,"

Berghuis said. "They always support me and are there for me when I need them."

Berghuis puts a great deal of effort into everything she does. She always strives to do her best in both academics and extracurricular activities.

"I try to take challenging classes that push me to become a better student," said Berghuis. "I think giving your best is really important in all situations, and for you to grow as a person in general."

Berghuis is great at bringing people together and continues to inspire others with her leadership. She is a positive influence on her peers and continues to motivate them through her dedication while setting an example.



Senior's love for writing helps her as editor

For Estella O'Brien, writing has always come naturally. Now a senior and co-editor of The Sailor's Log, she first decided to join the Newspaper staff as a sophomore, in an attempt to take as many English classes as possible. Estella enjoys the creative and chaotic energy that comes with this class.

"I loved the crazy environment and all the fun people in class," O'Brien said. "That's why I've continued to take it every year."

This is Estella's third year taking Newspaper, and she enjoys guiding others while also continuing to write, which is something she has been passionate about since she learned how.

"It sounds cliché, but I've loved writing forever," O'Brien said.

"Making people laugh through my writing is especially fun."

In this vein, Estella especially enjoys creating and watching comedy, sketches, and screenwriting.

Beyond Newspaper, Estella leads Crafts for a Cause as president, and has spent the past few years doing stage tech with The Players; she also enjoys reading, baking, sewing, and watching sitcoms in her free time.

One of Estella's all-time favorite pieces that she has written is a debate column that she co-wrote with Edward Micheal Kuznar about who Mr. Kent liked more.

"That article was super ridiculous - and so much fun to write," O'Brien said. "I definitely won the debate one by the way."





Heart of the Lens



Student photographers discuss their passion for photography and share words of advice



Photographer Cameron Smith takes picture of football player posing at Grand Valley State University Game (*Cameron Smith*)



Photograph taken by Brady Wallace shows beauty of Lake Michigan from a hill (*Brady Wallace*)



Known photographer Madelyn Warran captures senior session with friend (*Madelyn Warren*)

**By Shane Thompson,
Staff Writer**

Senior Madelyn Warren carries her camera in the same way that many carry their phone. She's always nearby, ready to capture the perfect moments and to turn them into meaningful moments. She started with an old family camera and a trip to Maine, and since then the act of photography has become a part of who she is and how she spends her time. She chases the quiet and candid moments rather than the flashy poses meant to fill a feed on Instagram. This shapes how she shoots, how she prepares, and how she talks about the job of being a student photographer. When the school day ends, other students with cameras are out making different kinds of images: one is drawn to landscape horizons and bold sports photos, another to the flicker of action and expression of excitement. Each operates independently of one another, but have similar experiences in balancing school, shoots, edits, and decisions that come with being your own boss. This story follows Madelyn closely, while still featuring and highlighting the perspectives of two other known photographers at the school: senior Cameron Smith and junior Brady Wallace.

Madelyn's beginning could seem unremarkable to some, but to anyone who knows her, it was the spark of a passion and a future. She remembers borrowing her grandfather's camera on a family trip and never quite putting it down.

"Well, my grandpa had an old camera and he let me borrow it one time to take it on a trip to Maine," said Warren. "I started taking pictures and then I really liked it, and then I just kept it with me."

That loan turned into her passion. Carrying the camera changed how she viewed the world and how she noticed details others would look over.

Every photographer, including junior Brady Wallace, has a favorite photo, whether it be their typical shooting style or something completely out of their realm.

"My favorite photo that I've ever taken is a landscape in Norton Shores during September," said Wallace. "It's special to me because that is where I was like, 'Hey, I can

actually make something out of photography and make it a part of who I am and get better at it.'"

Not only was it Brady's favorite photo, it started his career in photography. Similarly, Madelyn dials in on those candid takes.

"I just took a senior session with my friend Autumn this past summer," said Warren. "...there's a picture of her running through the woods with sunlight coming in, and that's my favorite."

This just goes to show Madelyn's amazing attention to detail and focus on candidness. She knows what works, and she knows how to make photos 10x better. Bland poses do the trick, but they're nothing compared to the perfect candid shots.

"The candid moments are so much better than the pose ones," said Warren. "When it's actually natural and in the moment."

This may be true, but it's not the only thing that can make or break a photo. When asked what makes a great photo stand out from an average one, senior Cameron Smith replied.

"The editing of the photo," said Smith.

Although you can capture some real authentic moments in raw, unedited photos, you'll never be able to emphasize the details that matter. Editing a photo creates the real authenticity people feel and see when they look at professional photos. Madelyn knows this. She specifically sets out to make sure the pictures turn out just how the client wants them to.

"I first ask the client what they want the editing style to look like in their posts," said Warren. "...they send me their inspo pictures and then I go to the spot early and check out places that we can take pictures at."

Not only does she adjust her editing style to the client's preferences, but she scouts the best possible places that she can capture the perfect photos. Madelyn describes her photography struggles plainly: time is limited, and figuring out how to value her work is another learning curve.

"I feel like I'm just so busy," said Warren. "I feel like one of the biggest challenges is setting your own prices

and knowing how much your photography is worth."

Putting a price on your own work requires knowing your worth, but it also requires some humility. Another big part of this field is knowing whether or not you want to continue the journey behind high school and turn it into more than just a hobby.

Cameron sees his path forward as educational.

"I'm going to try to attend Grand Valley for the photography program," said Smith.

Cameron is truly passionate about his photography skills. He wants to embrace it and actually learn about the practice formally. It's not a path that many take, but it's an amazing experience for those who do.

When asked what they would tell someone starting out, each of them offered a short, usable line. Madelyn encouraged people to start small and grow into photography at their own pace.

"I would say just start small," said Warren. "Just practice with your family or just practice on other things and then once you start to get comfortable then you can start doing other people."

Junior Brady Wallace, who you can see on the sidelines of every football game, gives advice that is blunt and motivating.

"Just do it," said Wallace.

As Brady said, go for it. Don't be scared to try new things. Embrace your interests. Who knows, you might become the next Madelyn Warren.

Madelyn's photographs are quiet in a way that feels intentional. They capture the moment as it happens and emphasize candidness. Brady, seen frequently shooting at school sporting events, started with his prized landscape photo. Cameron focuses on the excitement, joy, and intensity of action shots. While they all have their own unique styles and focuses, they all share a passion for photography. Though they are definitely learning about photography itself, it goes beyond that. They are developing more than just shutter speeds and proper angles, they're learning time management, communication with clients, and balancing work and passion. All of these skills are valuable in life, and will take them far beyond graduation.

Chatty Cathy

Dear Chatty Cathy,

I'm a junior, and lately it's hitting me that college isn't as far away as it used to feel. Everyone keeps talking about applications, majors, and future plans, and it's honestly kind of overwhelming.

I've always had a specific career path in mind, and I really love it—but it doesn't exactly make a lot of money. Recently, I discovered another field that's way more practical and pays better, and now I'm feeling torn. I still favor my original choice, but I can't stop wondering if choosing the more stable option would be smarter in the long run.

To make things more complicated, my boyfriend already has his heart set on a certain college, and part of me wants to look there too. But I don't know if it's the best fit for what I want to study. I really care about him, and the idea of going to different schools kind of scares me, but I also don't want to make a huge decision about my future just to stay close to someone else.

I feel torn between following what's familiar and exploring new possibilities. I don't want to make the "wrong" choice, but I also don't want to look back and regret not trying something different. How do I figure out what's actually right for me, and how can I think about college without letting relationships or fear of change take over?

Sincerely,
Conflicted About
College

Dear Conflicted About College,

First of all, I absolutely sympathize with your plight. It is one that is all too familiar. The biggest thing you can do right now, especially as a junior, is to research colleges as much as possible. Make a list of things that are important to you when choosing a college and put them in order of most to least significant.

Then it's time to "hit the books." Look for information online about colleges that fit what you are looking for. I'd recommend looking into colleges that have opportunities for double majors/dual degree programs. Maybe there's a place where you can study both careers you're interested in. You can also use the online Federal Student Aid calculator to get an idea of the monetary commitment that is feasible for you.

Remember that any and all reasons for liking or disliking a college are valid. Wanting to be closer to your boyfriend is absolutely understandable, but maybe there's a college an hour away from him that fits your needs a bit better.

Another good resource is college tours. Walk around campus and see if you can picture yourself thriving there.

You can use this same strategy when thinking about a career path. What is important to you when having a job? Does passion outweigh money? Could you pursue one path as a career and the other as a hobby or side hustle?

Ultimately, remember that college is the time to make mistakes, learn about yourself, and grow as a person. No matter what the outcome is, I promise you that you will find value in your college experience, so hang in there and utilize the many resources available to find the best place for YOU.

Sincerely,
Chatty Cathy

Building Bonds Through DND

Deep dive into the world of Dungeons and Dragons

By Ava Hardy,
Staff writer

Dungeons and Dragons, an imagination based game created in the 1970s that's full of the curiosities of fantasy. It was made to, quite literally, be for everyone. There's almost no end to how magical you can be.

Whether you're a bard, rogue, or even the dungeon master yourself, the game guarantees suspense, action, and the art of roleplay!

The game grew in popularity during the pandemic, it was cheap and easy to learn, so plenty of households held family gamenights playing it. Numerous shows and games have also adapted their own versions, such as Gravity Falls' Dungeons, Dungeons, and More Dungeons, or Monopoly Dungeons & Dragons edition, to name a few.

The game has captured the hearts of cosplayers, artists, writers, and roleplayers with its varying components, and became their way of venting their creativity, relieving stress, simply just having fun, or even inspiring deeper, more colorful imagination. It also served as a way for families to bond during power-outages, snowdays, or weekends.

So, what is Dungeons and Dragons, where can you play it, what are the rules, and would people recommend it?

The premise of this feature will tell you the basics and key aspects of DND, while hopefully inspiring you to take an interest in the game, or recommend it to that one friend whose thirst for tales of magic, dragons, and mythology is never quite quenched. To begin, here at Mona Shores, we offer an amazing new DND club created by Mrs. Coverly-Palladino which is full of some pretty awesome sauce people. This incredible club comes together on Thursdays, and is run by experienced students who are fully willing to teach newbies how to play their favorite game.

So, what is it and why do so many people play it? I hope you'll be intrigued to know that there aren't many rules on how you play, just guides to help the game run more smoothly. It can be whatever you want it to be.

"My favorite part of the game is the chaos," said club member Kaydince Grayson, "The freedom of doing almost whatever you want." "I would say that my absolute favorite part of DND is being to step back from the chaos of organizing and just watch them play."

In Dungeons and Dragons, the adventure rests in the hands of both the dungeon master and the dice. The dungeon master, who creates the world, is the final arbiter of rules, and holds control over NPCs, non-player characters, is essentially the dictator of how the game plays out. They're like the strong voiced narrator in Christmas films, working

alongside the characters to help form a fantasy storyline that's both unique and full of action. If the designated Dungeon master is facing some grueling writer's block, or has no ideas, there are pre-made campaigns available for them!

But how do you play? Well, here's how. First, character creation. You do this through a character sheet where you distribute twenty seven points into your character's stats, create their backstory, give them classes and subclasses, abilities, and neat clothing.

Now, to select a class. There are so many different and really cool classes to pick from! There isn't much difficulty when it comes to classes, so one role isn't harder than the other. It really just depends on how well you roleplay, your familiarity with the rules, and how devious the Dungeon Master is feeling when it comes to spawning enemies. (The dungeon master

decides when and where enemies will appear).

Next, the dice. There are seven different dice, but the most important and common

Members play Dungeons and Dragons. (Kaydince Grayson)

is the D20, a twenty sided die that decides things like character stats, how effective your attacks are, and if said attack succeeds or fails.

I barely scratched the surface with this, because I, myself, am new to DND. So I, and all the other members of the DND club, would highly recommend you dig deeper into the game if any of this fascinated you! There's so much effort that goes into creating a game with this level of diversity, and it really is an epic concept. Who wouldn't want to be Batman and battle goblins with really weird weaponry?

Club members themselves stated they adored the endless creativity.

"DND is a way to express myself in a different way," said club member Phoenix Warner. "It's different than, like, drawing or reading."

Joining vlubs help get people out of their comfort zones. "It's a great way to express yourself," Darcy Parker said. "It build relationships with people."

Before DND, the club started out as a book club, but it morphed into DND.

"My inspiration to start the club wwas so I could have something to do with friends. We are up to 22 people, and I couldn't be happier with how this rutned out. It was a pretty long journey that seemed like it would never end."

So if you're looking for a place to talk about fantasies, roleplay, and indulge in your creative side, this club might just be perfect for you!



Dungeons and Dragons club meets (Kaydince Grayson)



Paws For Celebration

Lets all help celebrate national animal shelter week this November.

By Megan Avila,
Staff Writer

Noah Project has been a vital organization for the pet community in West Michigan. Since they were founded, they have saved the lives of countless dogs and cats, and continue to do so throughout their future. Even though they are a well-known non-profit organization in the community, every organization has to have a start.

“Rainbow Pet Care Center began in 2000 by private individuals,” said Jane McGregor, president of Noah Project. “It was started to supplement the need to house the abandoned and orphaned/surrendered pets in and around Muskegon County, that is the local Dog Pound - Animal Control - which still remains true today.”

The motive of Noah Project has never strayed from their mission to protect our furry friends, but sometimes it can be rough getting the proper funding to stay afloat. Noah Project doesn't receive any federal funding or state support, so they have to be completely funded through the community.

“We receive no county nor state funding,” said McGregor. “We are community funded and our support comes from adoption fees, fundraising, Bingo night, donations from the community, occasional grants.”

One way Noah Project collects funds is through monthly donations and stop-by or mail in donations. They also receive help from the community by posting specific needs that the community can provide.

“We post a need on Facebook,” said McGregor. “Bleach, peanut butter, collars, etc....our wonderful community responds.”

With all the ways that Noah Project receives funding from the community of West Michigan, this makes it possible for pets to be taken into their facility and taken care of.

“We take in your pets when you can no longer care for them due to - death or divorce, moving to an apartment, grandparent moving into assisted living, cannot afford the



(Courtesy Photo)

pet, new baby in the house, no time for the pet, pet developed bad habits (pee in the house or biting),” said McGregor. “We also assist the local shelters with their overflow if we have room available. We assist the kill shelters across the state and we assist in huge hoarding abuse cases. We do not take stray pets off of the street - that is the responsibility of the county animal control.”

The Noah Project routinely opens its doors to animals in need, and as shown, the community shows up when necessary. However, among the many animals they've helped, one rescue stands out as significant in 2017 during Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas.

“One of our biggest rescues was in 2017 when we Cleared the Shelters in Houston to assist with the devastation of Hurricane Harvey,” said McGregor. “We had charity planes and volunteer pilots and volunteers in Texas that were

pulling dogs and cats from the flooding kill shelters in TX that were about to be euthanized to make room for all of the pets abandoned by the floods.”

The success of this rescue underscored the importance of community support and collaboration that took place to aid in the tragedy. While the Noah Project's efforts during Hurricane Harvey demonstrated their capacity for large-scale rescue, their day-to-day operations are based off of a more modest facility and setting.

“We are still in the original cement block building on 2 acres at 5205 Airline Rd in Fruitport Township that was once a veterinarian office,” said McGregor. “We outgrew the building 15 years ago! There were 3 additions over the years and no more additions can be done to the building per the township and the lot configuration.”

With the large amount of growth that has occurred in the Noah Project due to large community support in West Michigan, along with a greater quantity of taking in pets into their building, it can be frustrating to be working in a facility that is overcrowded and can not be renovated to accommodate the increasing growth. Thus, relocating to a larger facility is a plan in the future.

“We are hoping to someday get into a much bigger and newer building,” said McGregor. “Set back off of the busy road, on 5-10 acres with walking trails as our volunteers love to walk the dogs. We need a sanctuary wing for the pets who have a slim chance of getting adopted - the ones that don't like other dogs, cats, kids, men, etc....but we still continue to hope for a match and sometimes it does happen.”

The Noah Project has built a legacy of compassion, determination, and dedication as it strives each day to place every animal into a loving home full of care. From its beginning to its ambitious future, this organization is a beacon of hope towards all of the hopeless cases towards animals in need.

The Noah Project's commitment to community and animal welfare shines through every rescue and adoption.

ADOPT ME



(Courtesy Photo)

Goose

Adult
Male

3-years-old

German Shorthaired Pointer/Plott
Hound Mix



(Courtesy Photo)

Snoopy

Adult
Male

5-years-old

Pit Bull Terrier Mix



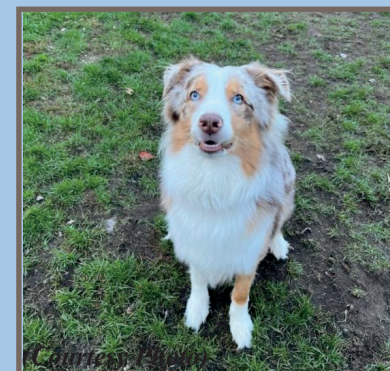
(Courtesy Photo)

Rugar

Young
Male

10-month-old

Australian Shepherd and Golden
Retriever mix



(Courtesy Photo)

Kash

Young
Male

1-year and 10-months-old

Australian Shepherd

AT THE NEXT LEVEL

Ex-collegiate athletes give advice to the next generation

Success, love, and basketball

Though all dream of being a great hall-of-famer player, many can be satisfied with the experience and believe the lessons learned alone are worth the challenge of collegiate sports. Counselor Danielle Smith-Walker can handle both.

"I played basketball at Ferris State University," Smith-Walker said. "I was a 4-year starter and was later inducted into their Hall of Fame. It was the experience of a lifetime to be a part of that sisterhood! I have so many fond memories of my time being a collegiate student athlete."

Though she may have achieved plenty in basketball, she gained even more in the love of the game and the people she met.

"I made lifelong relationships and friends," Smith-Walker said. "Being able to compete and play a sport that you love at the next level was very special and a true blessing that I did not take for granted. I met so many different people from all over, including my husband."

Though daunting, Smith-Walker believes that all students are capable of making it to the next level.

"You can do it!" Smith-Walker said. "Have a plan and a goal in mind. Anything that you are willing to work for, you can have! You have to understand that there will be sacrifices. Be diligent and purposeful in your work!"

Finding your own recognition

Fall or winter sports may not be so familiar to Special Education teacher Jim VanderWall, but he surely values his time as a middle blocker for Michigan State University.

"I played Men's Volleyball at Michigan State University for 3 years," VanderWall said. "I was a middle blocker for the Spartans and was a starter for my last two seasons."

NCAA, at the time, did not recognize Men's Volleyball as a varsity sport.

For all the work to get there, VanderWall endorses participation.

"I highly recommend getting involved in sports, clubs, or other outside activities," VanderWall said. "It allows you to meet new people, challenge yourself, and set goals"

He cares for the sport and continues to pursue it today.

"I truly enjoy the sport of volleyball and attempt to spread the joy that this sport has to offer," VanderWall said. "I make it a goal to go play in a tournament at MSU every year"

Working with the Mona Shoes team, Vanderwall is glad that boys' volleyball is gaining recognition. "I am very excited that boys' volleyball is now recognized as a varsity sport in Michigan," VanderWall said. "I am excited to help coach my son, Cal, and the Mona Shores Boys' Volleyball Team this spring."



Danielle Smith-Walker at Ferris State University.
(Courtesy Photo)

Other staff members who played college sports:

- Heather Clausen: Volleyball
- Scott Lautenschleager: Basketball
- Brad Kurth: Basketball
- Jen Bustard: Basketball
- Joe Shaffer: Football
- Kenneth Rose: Football
- Abe Swanson: Football
- Jevon Shaw: Football
- Bill Lent: Baseball
- Cathy Coverly-Palladino: Tennis
- Kyle Mireles: whatever

By Anna Trasky, staff writer

Prepare for all outcomes

For psychology teacher Heather Hall, personal growth isn't always equitable to success in the moment.

"I ran cross-country and track for 2 years at Taylor University during my freshman and sophomore years," Hall said. "However, my experience was not the most positive one."

Sports don't exist in a vacuum; they represent many other aspects of the human experience and teach plenty of unique skills.

"Athletics have so many parallels to other parts of our lives," Hall said. "Being part of a team with a common goal teaches so many great skills."

Though there is so much to gain, it's still difficult to go from high school to college, and student-athletes need to know to be prepared.

"Be prepared for a big adjustment," Hall said. "College athletics are very different from high school."

There's a lot to gain from college sports, but they may not always be the thing of dreams. Students should always consider what they really want.

"For some athletes, a club team intramurals might be better," Hall said. "You will also need to learn a lot more about time management. Your sport will take up more time than you expect. You might also miss out on other things going on on campus due to your schedule."

Managing responsibility

Science teacher David Gross may not have been the one to suit up, but he earned plenty of his own experience as a manager.

"I served as a student manager for the Men's Basketball Team at the University of Michigan from the Fall of 1993 until 1997," Gross said. "I responded to an advertisement in the school newspaper for the position and was interviewed and hired in October of my freshman year."

It isn't all about friendship and personal development, though he experienced plenty. Extracurriculars can make it hard to manage school work and one's social life, especially so in college. "As a manager, I had to budget my time in order to complete all of my duties," Gross said. "There was still time for hanging out and having fun, but not a minute in the week was wasted." In the end, Gross believes the labor was well worth it. "Doors were opened later in life because of the recommendations that I had and the relationships that I could draw on," Gross said. "Winning games was amazing and the travel was something I would never forget, but the rewards of participating in college athletics go far beyond those things. Whether someone has the talent and desire to play college sports or wants to participate as a manager or other support staff, I highly encourage him or her to consider it and put in the hours necessary to make it happen."

Sports Briefs

<p>Football The Sailors lost in the district semifinals to the Muskegon Big Reds 39-34. The team finished with a record of 5-5. Tomarion Steward ended the year as the all-time leading rusher for the Sailors.</p>	<p>Thursday, November 6th.</p> <p>Girls Golf The ladies tied for 10th place at the D1, Regional 1. Leading the Sailors was Avery Nehra, who placed 16th with a 90. Kiele Buckner, Evie Lucas, and Lily Knowlton also scored.</p>	<p>against top 10 state ranked opponents. 7 athletes earned personal records led by Hayden Fox and Ella Grimm. Ella Grimm's finish of 19:35.01 earned her the 6th fastest time in school history.</p>	<p>Mui, and Parker Derose.</p>
<p>Girls Volleyball The girls are 24-14 on the year and have advanced to the district finals after a win against Coopersville. The ladies will play Grand Haven on</p>	<p>Cross Country The Sailor cross country team ended their season at the regional championships. Both teams placed 8th</p>	<p>Girls Swin and Dive Jovie Beezley earned three first place finishes and a second place finish to lead the Sailors. Team members also include Sherry Jiang, Teagan Wallace, Hollen Emmick, Bee Hopper, Kayla Vanderlinde, Claire Bradley, Michelle</p>	<p>Boys Soccer The boys ended their season at the District tournament with a loss to Jenison. The Sailors ended with a 4-14-1 record.</p> <p>Boys Tennis Reid Hackney advanced to the state finals and eventually lost in the semifinals. He finishes with a 31-1 record</p>

Beyond the Game

New coach brings excitement and hope for the basketball program

By Nathan VanEtten
Staff Writer

After a decade of coaching at Grand Rapids Catholic Central, where Coach Meerman helped build one of the state's top basketball programs, he sort of thought that his days of coaching high school basketball might be coming to an end. Coach Meerman had accomplished nearly everything that any coach would dream of: a state championship, eight conference titles, six district titles, and a long list of collegiate athletes.

In Coach Meerman's decision to step away from coaching high school basketball, it was mostly a choice to spend more time with his family. Coach Meerman took the opportunity of stepping away from coaching high school basketball to coach his son Luke's AAU team, and he was able to watch his daughter Norah play volleyball. For the first time in years, life began to slow down, which allowed Meerman to spend more time with the people closest to him.

But as Coach Meerman puts it, "Basketball has a funny way of finding you again."

When the head coach position at Mona Shores opened up, Meerman wasn't openly looking for a new coaching gig. However, a few connections with the people at Mona Shores pulled him towards joining the Sailor Community.

"I had a friend whose son plays on my AAU team and works at Shores," Meerman said. "Then one of my wife's best friends, a teacher and coach at Shores, also told me how great the school and community are. That got me interested."

After having met with administrators, he realized that this opportunity was not solely just about basketball.

"They talked about wanting to build something lasting. A program that develops kids as players and people," Meerman said. "That's what really drew me in."

Coach Meerman also saw this as a chance to try and connect his nonprofit, The Village99, to his new role as head coach of Mona Shores basketball. The organization helps students and families access opportunities in sports, education, as well as the arts. This is something Meerman is incredibly passionate about continuing at Mona Shores.

For us as Sailors, Meerman's arrival marks a new era for not only our basketball program but for our school as a whole. The Shores basketball program has seen its fair share of change in the past few years, including five head coaches and a long stretch of time without a district championship since 2007. Still, recent progress under the former head coach, Coach Murray, showed a definitive improvement in the program. This included back-to-back winning seasons and a growing sense of belief in the basketball program.

Meerman has proven what it takes to turn a program around. When he arrived at Grand Rapids Catholic Central in 2012, the school was really only known more for its football program rather than its basketball program.

Within a few years of stepping up as head coach, Meerman changed this team into one of Michigan's most elite teams.

"It took three years to change the culture there," he said. "But in year four, everything clicked. From that moment forth, Catholic Central built a program that developed 17 collegiate athletes and even brought a state championship back to Catholic Central for the first time in 2021.

Still, when asked what he's proudest of, Meerman doesn't once mention trophies or wins.

"Our teams at CC were Academic All-State six years in a row," he said. "I've gone to a few of my players' weddings, and I'm still in touch with a lot of them. That's what it's really about, relationships."

Now here at Mona Shores, he hopes to bring that same focus to academics, character, and the community.

"For us, success won't be defined by wins or losses," he said. "It'll be about growth in the classroom, on the court, and as teammates. That's what we can control."

His motto for the team this year is simple yet very effective: "See the good."

"We talk about being positive, supporting each other, and focusing on what's going right," Meerman explained. "It's easy to be a great teammate when things are going well. The real test is how you act when they're not."

This message has already begun shaping the team's mindset.

"We have a great group of guys who've worked really hard this summer," Meerman said. "They're buying in, showing up, and setting the tone for what we want this program to be."

Coaching is not only something that Coach Meerman picked up out of the blue; it runs deep in his family. Meerman's father, Coach Jim Meerman, was a Hall of Fame football coach whose school stadium was later named in his honor.

"After I finished playing at Central Michigan, I knew I wanted to follow in my dad's footsteps," Meerman said. "He passed away ten years ago, but his legacy still inspires me every day. His players even started three scholarships for low-income students at Grand Valley State. That's the kind of lasting impact I hope to make."

That legacy of leadership, mentorship, and positivity now continues here at Mona Shores. Meerman is already impressed by our school's pride in both academic and extracurricular activities.

"It's a place that celebrates all kinds of excellence," Meerman said. "Sports, music, the arts - it all matters here."

As this season approaches, the Sailors basketball team is ready to embrace that mindset and their new leader's message. For Coach Meerman, it all comes back to the one simple idea to "See the good." Because for Coach Meerman, basketball isn't just about the outcomes of what happens on the court. It is instead about shaping these young men in order for them to be able to carry these lessons for life.



Coach Meerman's Family, along with the parents of late college teammate. (Courtesy Photo)



Coach Meerman poses with his former player, Marcus Bingham Jr., who broke MSU's career blocks record. (Courtesy Photo)