

LINN

MARCH EDITION

Boys swim team makes a huge splash

By Madison Renz

The Linn-Mar boys swim team made quite the splash at the 2016 District swim meet at Coe College on February 5, winning the district championship title and ending Cedar Rapids Washington High School's 53-year district winning streak.

After winning their first Mississippi Valley Conference title just over a week before, the Lions were in high gear going into Saturday's competition, despite a slight change in location just two hours before the meet. The meet was moved to Coe College from Linn-Mar's aquatic center due to cold pool temperatures. The pool had to be drained and refilled after a broken glass incident the week of the competition.

"Once we got to MVC and won, the motivation just increased more and more," says Linn-Mar Senior Hogan Myers. "And I think we were a little discouraged [when the meet location changed to Coe College] but once we saw how nervous everyone else was, we used it to our advantage."

Hogan Myers is a member of the Linn-Mar boys swim team and a three-year state qualifier in the individual 200 freestyle and the 500 freestyle events, having gone to state all four years as a member of the team. Myers, also a captain for the team, is responsible for leading stretches, cheers, and also being a link between the team and the coaches.

"If there's an issue on the team, captains can solve it and try to keep it among the swimmers themselves. This sometimes works better because a peer telling you to do something may be taken better than if it were a coach."

In problem solving, the captains provide a positive, supportive, and healthy environment for all the swimmers on the team, which has led them to great success in the water.

"The whole team worked hard all season and it was about time someone brought down Wash," says Myers. "I'd say beating Wash was the highlight of the season for most of us."

Don Fejfar is a senior swim team member and another captain of the team. He says he felt the excitement of the two previous years of swimming at districts and a season full of hard work finally pay off when the boys won the meet and broke Washington's streak. Fejfar says that the real excitement leading up to the win came from the All-Metro swim meet where the boys first started to get a peek at their successful season's potential to break records.

"It was exciting the whole way through," said Fejfar. "At no point did we doubt ourselves or ever really feel defeated [even when Wash was ahead]. It was just good to know how we followed through."

Without outstanding swims by Matt

Peng, a junior on the team, the boys may not have been able to accomplish winning the meet. With a hurting shoulder but the motivation to win and be a part of Linn-Mar swimming history, Peng was able to push through his races, despite being in pain. He placed second in both the 50 freestyle and the 100 butterfly, easily qualifying for state his third year in a row.

"I felt that my swims were representative of the phase of training I was in," says Peng. "Simply stated, I was complacent with my swims, however in a broader context, I was overjoyed with the swims of the team as a whole."

Head coach and District Coaching Staff of the Year recipient Tom Belin describes the title as well-earned and well-deserved by the team as a whole, citing the team's hard work in practices in order to break Washington's 53-year district title streak.

"To be the best, you have to compete against the best," says

Belin. "They've [Washington] made us better, they've made a lot of people better and we are thankful to have them in our conference and be able to swim against them."

"Usually not many kids know what the swim team is so it was good that we got some recognition for once," says Myers of breaking Wash's winning streak.

With a well-deserved year of winning the Mississippi Valley Conference and District titles for the first time, the Linn-Mar boys 2016-17 swimming season will remain a part of the team's history and will feed the excitement for the seasons to come.



Key Club's Dance Marathon to be held April 21

By Zoey McDonald

Linn-Mar Key Club has held various types of interactive fundraisers, the most current one being the dance marathon. The club's third dance marathon will be held on April 21st from 8-11 pm in the main gym. All Linn-Mar students grades 9-12 are welcome to join. Admittance is only \$10 at the door or is free with the purchase of a \$15 t-shirt prior to the dance.

The dance marathon may not be the most popular dance at Linn-Mar but it is the most helpful. Each dance marathon raises money that is given to the University of Iowa Children's Oncology Center. The money helps patients and families with medical bills and other needs.

Every year, the theme for the dance is voted on by members of the Linn-Mar Key Club and based off students'

opinions. In 2016, the dance marathon theme was 'Neon' and encouraged dancers to dress up in neon while dancing the night away under strobe and black lights. Food was also a big part of the dance marathon. Students were welcome to re-energize their bodies by taking a break from dancing in the gym and stopping for some food in the cafeteria. Other activities included glow balloons, hula hoops, and a photo booth that took pictures of friends with goofy props.

"We are hoping for an even bigger outcome than years before and to raise even more money for the kids," says Amani Dewan, Key Club officer. Dewan further explains that Key Club is always looking for more sponsors to help out on donations.

The theme for this year's dance will be a costume party, similar to the back-to-school dance, Toga. Students will be encouraged to dress up with their

friends in creative, yet appropriate costumes. This theme was a majority vote and has students excited because of how much they enjoy the back-to-school costume dance.

In previous years, t-shirts have been sold to participants as another way to raise more money to donate. This year, Key Club will be mixing things up by selling neon pink t-shirts and bro tanks for \$15, which then allows free admittance into the dance. They are also selling glow-in-the-dark wristbands. Items will be sold in the four-corners of the high school on decided dates.

This year's activities will also include a photo booth, music, snacks and refreshments just like previous years. There will also be a poster that attendees get to sign for the Children's Hospital. All of these activities make the overall dance marathon experience more enjoyable for participants and hosts.

This year, Linn-Mar Key Club received a grant of \$900 from the Key Club International, which will help cover expenses for the dance as well as provide some extra money to send in a donation to the Children's Hospital. Many members of Key Club are excited as they would like to make this a great experience and something to remember for themselves and everyone who plans on participating in the dance marathon.

"This is a great opportunity for Linn-Mar students to come together for a fun night and give back to the community," says Alee Bruns, one of the Linn-Mar Key Club presidents.

Everyone is encouraged to come and participate in this event on April 21st with the aim of having a good time while donating to those in need at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. Get your boogie on!

Anderson to retire from Linn-Mar

By Izzy Nanke

Mr. Bob Anderson has been with Linn-Mar for the last 22 years, and is still as enthusiastic about teaching today as he was when he first stepped through the doors of Linn-Mar High School. For the last 22 years, Anderson has been seen as a mentor to many, and an inspiration to all. He consistently strives to be better, and anyone who's ever had him in class can say that he won't stop until he gets there.

Junior Elizabeth Ullrick captures his personality well saying, "Mr. Anderson has a lot of experience and a unique way of teaching that makes you love the process it takes to develop a concert piece and gives you a greater appreciation for what you do in class, even if it seems like it doesn't matter."

Many people agree that Anderson has a unique way of teaching, and that uniqueness has given the Linn-Mar music department the reputation it has today. Anyone going into the department knows that only excellence is allowed, and if they're not willing to give that much, he makes it clear where the exit is. Yes, he can be seen as having quite an intense personality, but that intensity all comes from the passion that he has for what he does.

"Success is the trophy and

excellence is the process," is a favorite quote from Anderson.

Through this quote, he's explaining to all that what is done at Linn-Mar is no easy job. It takes hard work, time, and effort, and he gives just that. Anderson walks into a class ready to work, every single day, and that takes real talent.

Anderson takes his job very seriously, and the students of Linn-Mar now have high standards for the new director that will be coming in next year. When Mr. Trent Buglewicz asked his fourth hour class, *Bella Voce*, what they wanted to see in the new choir director, the girls replied with, "a strong leader," "someone who knows how to effectively run a rehearsal," and even "someone that expects greatness out of us."

These are all aspects of Anderson. No one can deny he's a strong teacher with copious amounts of dedication, and that he's willing to work hard to get the perfected end product. There are no doubt many times when rehearsals aren't the most fun to be at, but the excellent end product makes it all worth it. Linn-Mar's music department has been shaped into a department of the highest respect, and every student involved is thankful to him for that.

Ms. Jaelyn Hussey says that

she has gained many things from working with Anderson, even if it was only for a year. She learned a different style of being present in a room as well as a different level of expectations. She learned new ways of expressing musicality, and says the drive that Anderson had while teaching inspired her.

Hussey isn't the only one inspired by Anderson. When asked his favorite memory of working with Anderson, piano player Lee Nguyen got very serious. He talked of how he's never played piano for a school for longer than three years at a time, but Anderson convinced him and challenged him so much that he's been with Linn-Mar for the past eight years.

"It's never exactly the same when he (Anderson) conducts. He has so many different ways of doing it and I just follow along because he trusts me to make great decisions. It's always different and that's how music should be, always different," said Nguyen.

Anderson makes music different. He makes people feel things through music, whether it's through the selection he makes, the dynamics he uses, or the musicality he conducts throughout the song. The music produced by Anderson's choirs never ceases to amaze people.

Mr. Anderson has been a great



teacher and an inspiration to all. He made everyone feel important, and that's something not many teachers can do. He will be missed at Linn-Mar, and he'll miss Linn-Mar too.

Says Anderson, "I want students to understand that they are in an environment and school that is second to none. Their success rests on them to grab the opportunity and to urgently apply themselves. Over the last 22 years, I have watched amazing, talented, wonderful kids grow and become great leaders and I have also grown in how I teach. We're all in this together. Don't miss the opportunity."

Linn-Mar orchestra program excels

By Brianna Martin

Over the years, the orchestra program at the high school has more than doubled in numbers. In 2002, when Linn-Mar Orchestra director Josh Reznicow began teaching, the department consisted of about 50-55 stringed instrument players; it currently has about 155. Along with that, the program has gone from one ensemble to three ensembles. The ensembles are broken up into three different groups; Symphony, Philharmonic, and Concert. Symphony and Philharmonic are both audition-required groups while Concert is an un-auditioned group.

In addition to number growth, the department has developed some very talented musicians.

"The depth of talent and skill [of the students] has really grown so we are able to play more advanced music in all of those ensembles. That's been really exciting and we have been able to do some really cool pieces and projects," says Reznicow.

Even as numbers and talent have soared through the years, the program still lacked one thing according to Reznicow: interactions.

Having started teaching at Linn-Mar 15 years ago, Reznicow noticed that there was a lack of outside artists and groups brought in to work with students. In doing this, students are able to further grow and gain outside perspectives of expertise. As this is very important to Reznicow, he has made it one of [his] little missions "to bring in professionals all the time to work with them."

One of the unique things about Linn-Mar's orchestra is that some of the music they play comes directly from their Lead Director, Reznicow. Starting in 6th grade, he began taking composition lessons with a teacher and continued to do so through high school. By about his senior year in high school, a piece that he had written was performed by his school and he had the honor of leading them. This love of music and writing led him to double major in Music Ed/String Ed and Music Composition at the University of Northern Iowa.

Reznicow's drive, passion and experience has no doubt led to Linn-Mar's upstanding orchestra reputation. As a result of the orchestra member's outstanding

talent, a group of musicians known as *The Piano Guys* reached out to Reznicow when they came to town for a concert back on September 22, 2016. *The Piano Guys* offered an opportunity to have some of the Linn-Mar Orchestra members play alongside them at their concert held at the Paramount Theater.

Having local high schools play alongside them has been a growing tradition of *The Piano Guys*. It started when they paired up with and made a video with a high school ensemble to play one of their older famous songs, "Beethoven's 5 Secrets." Ever since, countless high schools have had the privilege of playing with *The Piano Guys*.

With this honor, 5 Linn-Mar Orchestra members were carefully selected to play with *The Piano Guys* at the Paramount Theater.

"There was some criteria involved. The students had to play in tune, memorize the music, and have a certain skill level. I paired it down from there as to who would be mentally able to get on that stage in front of hundreds to thousands of people and not screw up. That takes a bit of mental maturity and

the folks I selected did an amazing job so I was excited for them," says Reznicow.

Among the students chosen was Linn-Mar Senior Morgan Francis. To her, this opportunity was unreal and such an honor.

"I listen to their music all the time and I was super pumped. The whole experience was so enriching. I walked into the Paramount Theater and saw them rehearsing and started crying happy tears. It was so cool and so much fun to be a part of."

Amidst the increase in numbers, talent, and opportunities, the orchestra room has been transferred to the music hallway with choir and band. This came with a good amount of upgrades for the program such as a new high-tech humidifier to keep the instruments in a balanced humidity to prevent cracking. It has been noted to be very helpful for members as it is now easier to tune their strings and their instruments are no longer as vulnerable to cracking, which can cost hundreds of dollars in repairs. This new room will serve as a good tool and resource for further growth of the orchestra program.

Paul James named head L-M football coach

By Robert Read

Paul James has been named the new head football coach at Linn-Mar High School. James was hired after the retirement of Bob Forsyth, who had previously held the position for nine years. James comes from Cedar Rapids Washington High School, where he had spent the previous 41 years in a variety of roles.

James had been employed at Washington since 1976 in wide ranging roles, including time as an administrator and as a teacher. Also during his tenure, James spent time as a girls' basketball coach, winning state titles in 1988 and 1995, and also as the school's head football coach, where in two different tenures he compiled a 97-57 record, including multiple trips to the state final in 2003 and 2014.

James did not intend on leaving Washington, but after being pursued by Linn-Mar, he realized the position ranked among the top in the state. "My wife and I were putting the job into consideration and quickly realized that on paper this was one of the better jobs around, considering Linn-Mar's history, the size of the district, new facilities, and so on," said James.

Linn-Mar Athletic Director David Brown knew James was a natural fit for the opening, and reached out to him when the position became open. Among many applicants, Brown targeted James, feeling that he would fill the needs of the Lion football program. "We went after guys like Paul James who had a lot of experience building programs, managing them, running them, and taking them from the ups and downs in every aspect, from kids buying into [the] weight room to philosophies. He really stood out to me as the one who was the most experienced coach," said Brown.

According to Brown, James' experience in a public school setting, and his ability to develop home-

grown players and not rely on transfers, along with his track record of success really made him stand out. Brown also praised Coach James on his ability to connect and communicate with people, and was very confident in his ability to lead a youth program that can successfully feed all the way up to the varsity level.

As Athletic Director, Brown sees it as his job to put the right leader in place to run the football

program, and he feels like he has accomplished that with the hire of James, citing his ability to teach not

only players, but the coaches as well to improve the program as a whole. Brown expects to be competitive during James' tenure, as he would with any coach, but really emphasized the importance of graduation

and high participation numbers among players. He also emphasized preparing student-athletes for life.

"Preparing young student-athletes for life outside of football and teaching them lessons that they can use later in life is really one of the most important jobs of any coach," said Brown.

Coming off of a 3-6 season, Paul James recognizes the work in front of him, and is embracing it.

"I'm ready for the challenge," said James.

James also stated that he is working from the ground up, looking to bring the program back to the status it held under head coach Greg Purnell. James was an assistant at Washington when Purnell's Lions won state titles in 1985, 1989, and 1990, and has great respect for Linn-Mar's tradition.

"This program has a history of great football, and we need to get back to that," said James.

After being saddened by the retirement of Coach Forsyth, many current Linn-Mar football players feel

excited for the opportunity next season brings, and, due to his history of success, expect big things under Coach James.

"It makes me sad to see Coach Forsyth and most of our old staff go, but I'm really excited to see what Coach James has to offer. What he's done at Washington says a lot and I'm really looking forward to working with him," said Nick Abouassaly, junior.

Chayse Schultz, junior and key defender for the Lions this past season, feels like the program is headed in the right direction. Schultz believes that the right people are in place and the program is ready to compete.

"Coach James had a good career over at Wash and I think with some of the athletes here at Linn-Mar that he could turn this program back into a powerhouse," said Schultz.

Fellow junior and two-year varsity starter Cevan Walton is feeling anxious after the hire, ready to get

back onto the field and feeling motivated to perform well heading into his senior season.

"I'm excited for the 2017 season because it's my senior year and I hope to see my teammates and I be put in a position to make a statement

for our final season as teammates," said Walton.

The Linn-Mar football program appears to be headed in the right direction, and, according to Brown, the right leader is in place. "I think if you step back five minutes ago and ask 'who's the one coach in this area, and maybe the state, that would be the best coach you could get?' I think that would have been Paul James," said Brown.



Linn-Mar partners with Iowa Big

By Heather Hewitt

Linn-Mar has recently announced a partnership with Iowa Big for the 2017-2018 school year. Perhaps you have heard about Iowa Big from a friend, from LMTV or from one of your teachers, but you still may be thinking, what is Iowa Big all about? Iowa Big is an educational system based all around project based learning. The main goals of Iowa Big are to engage students in community projects, problems and opportunities. It also connects students more deeply to the people and resources available around their community. Iowa Big teaches basic skills in a regular school setting but also, most importantly, teaches how to apply those skills in a real world setting. Iowa Big also lets students explore and learn more about projects they are passionate about.

Since Linn-Mar has announced a partnership with Iowa Big, that means Linn-Mar students can experience this type of learning environment without having to pay extra tuition and all of our teaching staff is employed by the Linn-Mar School District. You might still be thinking, "is Iowa Big Right for me?"

According to Junior Jaelyn Bowers it was the right choice for her.

"Iowa Big is such a unique way of learning that ended up really benefiting me. Although I was learning the basic skills that the regular school setting teaches me, I wasn't learning how to actually apply

those skills and this really makes someone understand and learn the content rather than just memorizing

it for a test."

Iowa Big is also a great way to meet new people and it often opens the door for various student opportunities. It's even an easy way to get more involved in your community. A lot of projects that students are involved in are something that they themselves are passionate about. Junior Kaleb Cook has one project that comes to mind right away when someone asks him, What is your favorite Project at Iowa Big?

"My favorite Project is one called, 'Dancing Away the Stigma.' It helps lessen the idea that disabled people can't do the same things as everyone else. We throw dance parties at their school and it's a time where they can come and have fun without the worry of being constantly judged."

So if there is an organization or club that you are really passionate about you can pitch your ideas at Iowa Big and maybe that dream of yours will become a reality. If you are still on the fence about whether or not you should try Iowa Big or stick to the regular schooling style, these are a few aspects you want to take into consideration.

Junior Jaelyn Bowers, left me with this final thought.

"If you are a person who enjoys a structured class and usually likes everything done by the book and with a set schedule, then the public school system might be the right choice, but if you are more creative and want to try a learning style that's more project-based than I would choose Iowa Big."

Everybody has different teaching styles that work best for them so take all these points into consideration and hopefully you will then be able to decide if Iowa Big is right for you.

Blocker is a hidden gem at Linn-Mar

By Paige Harrington

Most people have seen or heard about the seven wonders of the world, and some can even name a few of them, but what most people don't know is that Linn Mar has its own wonder within the walls of its high school.

Ms. Rebecca Blocker is a hidden treasure some students will never find. Tucked away in the northeast corner of the building, she specializes in United States history, teaching only a portion of freshmen for US History 9, one class of 11th and 12th graders for AP US History, and the occasional group of seniors forging ahead to graduation with the required Government class. Ms. Blocker is quite reserved, and reveals very little about herself to her students, but where she lacks in sharing personal details, she more than makes up for with her teaching abilities and style.

Although only coming in at a modest five foot three, Ms. Blocker works just as hard as a horse. She comes in for work around six am every morning to go over her lesson plans and to get some extra work done before all the hustle and bustle that students and other teachers bring with them begins. Blocker says that one of her biggest strengths is very careful organization.

"I am very organized and like to have everything laid out in front of me. Some teachers are very go-with-the-flow and can adapt to a change of plans with a moment's notice, and don't get me wrong, they are all very good educators, but that's just not who I am."

Ms. Blocker knows what her strengths and weaknesses are and is humbled by them, but doesn't let them get in the way of her success, or the success of her students.

Ms. Blocker is also one of the very punctual teachers Linn Mar has to offer, and prides herself in getting all assignments, essays, and tests graded and returned to students the very next day.

"I don't like the idea of ungraded papers looming over me while I'm laying in bed." Blocker said, while in the midst of grading her U.S. 9 student exams at her desk.

Blocker is committed to her students and to her work, and will stay long after the bell has rung to finish grading, or even to just lighten the load that might have to be brought home. She spends her prep time intentionally, focused on what needs to be done for the next day, and for the future.

"During my prep period I'm doing one of three things: preparing for tomorrow, grading papers, or planning for the future."

Ms. Blocker puts a lot of effort into her work, not only for her peace of mind, but also because she loves her job and loves what she does.

"I love that every day is different. No two weeks are the same, no two quarters are the same, and no two years are the same. Every class is different, and every class has its own personality."

Blocker says she enjoys variety, and wouldn't want to teach the same class all day, every day, and it helps to have both ninth graders and upperclassmen throughout the day. In her eyes, teaching one is not better than the other.

"In comparison, the freshmen are not set in their ways like many juniors and seniors are at their age, but that makes it interesting because the freshmen are easily impressionable, and in some cases more apt to learning. I have nothing against the upperclassmen, and I enjoy teaching the advanced classes, but their age and experience can make a difference in the way they receive information," she said with a tone of reflection in her voice.

Although Ms. Blocker is quiet by nature, she has an enthralling collection of experiences that made her who she is today. Blocker grew up being the youngest of nine kids, the oldest being the only boy.

"Growing up, my brother kind of took me under his wing, but only for a short period of time because he is 13 years older than me after all, and was graduating high school by the time I was in kindergarten. Having seven older sisters made things fun and interesting, and all the estrogen gets going after a while, but they were and always have been good to me. We are all very close and always have been. I really wouldn't trade it for the world," Blocker said in describing the bond she has with her siblings. The entire extended family meets twice a year, both on Christmas and in the summer for a barbeque to catch up and to spend time together. All her siblings are as close as the eastern Iowa area to as far as a four-hour drive, but Blocker says they all see each other very frequently throughout the year, and that she loves being with them.

Ms. Blocker is very family-oriented and can attribute part of her decision to become a teacher to her parents and older sisters.

"My parents put a heavy emphasis on education, and I did very well in school. Partially, because I had the opportunity to learn from my sibling's mistakes and saw what worked for them, and then was able to figure out that it worked for me too. When the time came for me to make a career choice, three of my

older sisters had already become teachers, and enjoyed it. I knew that I was comfortable in a classroom setting from all my years in school, and thought that it might be a good fit as a career," said Blocker.

Ms. Blocker says time she spent interning at the Brucemore Mansion in Cedar Rapids also convinced her to become a teacher. Blocker enjoyed helping out by giving tours of the main house.

"What I really liked was when there was a group not too big and not too small, with very engaged and interested people who really wanted to learn about the history of the home. I enjoyed telling stories about the families who lived there and answering the questions these people had because they wanted to be there," Blocker explained.

"I didn't take the job for the money, I did it for the experience. At the time I wasn't even thinking about going into education, but I really enjoyed what I was doing because it was like teaching!"

While working at Brucemore, Ms. Blocker said she faced some strange encounters. The area where she was working on the display was somewhat secluded. The workspace was in the upper level of the servant's quarters where no one else should be, and could only be accessed by a single set of stairs.

"I would be working by myself, and all of the sudden I would hear people running down the stairs. I'd rush to the door to see who it was, and no one would ever be there." Blocker said this happened about three times total, and freaked her out every time.

Blocker says she doesn't believe in ghosts, but emphatically cried, "I am telling you this happened!!"

Despite the handful of mysterious occurrences, Blocker thoroughly enjoyed her time working at Brucemore and is thankful for the experience because it helped uncover a fondness for teaching.

Ms. Blocker has been teaching for 24 years, and has spent 17 of those years at Linn Mar High School. She says that the biggest lesson she has to take away from all her experience is to have empathy.

"Everyone has their own baggage, and while I probably won't know what it is, I have to acknowledge that it's there," said Blocker. She goes on to say that it can get hard in the midst of everything going on, but says that even with the most annoying students it is important to be aware of other people's plights.

"As teachers, we sometimes forget that there are lots of other things happening outside of our class that we will never know about, but that



are affecting our students. We can only try our best," she explains.

Ms. Blocker's approach to students reflects her passion for her work. She had a hard time choosing a specific historical event that is her favorite, but chose instead a category.

"My favorite type would have to be Native American history, but really any social issue is what I enjoy." Blocker also cited women's rights as a top favorite. "

Students who have had Blocker testify to her teaching abilities.

"I had her when I was a freshmen and I didn't appreciate her at the time, but I wish I would have because looking back now, I realize that she is a really great teacher," said Junior Katie Kreutner.

"I love her wittiness and her energy. She cares a lot about your grades too, it's all very motivating," said Senior Emilee McGowan.

"She just gets really hyped up about the lesson and what we're doing, it makes the class more fun," said Sarah Jones, senior."

Students in Blocker's class say they have fun, but also gain a deep understanding of the material.

"Even though it's an AP class she does a really great job explaining everything and making sure it all makes sense, which is really helpful for a subject like this," said Junior AP student, Ally Edwards.

It would almost be a challenge to fail in Blocker's class because of how well covered the material is, and because of her dedication to the students.

Blocker said in a light, cheery mood that she only drinks two or three cups of coffee a day, and despises tea of all kinds. She also related herself to a very popular pet in suburban households.

"My spirit animal would probably be a golden retriever. They are very loyal and can get excited easily but

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Trump presidency divides nation, and Linn-Mar

By Michael McGrew,

On November 8, 2016, Americans elected Republican candidate Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States over his opposition, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

The election brought out very strong feelings and opinions, including from people at Linn-Mar High School. Some of the rhetoric heard in the campaign outraged many students and staff, sparking discussions about political correctness and acting presidential. Others were energized by countless promises of change and prosperity. This election divided the population at Linn-Mar High School, leaving many optimistic, but others fearful and offended. Students and teachers were interviewed to discover how the election impacted Linn-Mar.

Who did you support in the 2016 election?

Julian Debrower: “Bernie Sanders in the primaries and Hillary Clinton during the general election.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Donald Trump.”

Mr. Swaney: “I supported Hillary Clinton.”

Anonymous LM Teacher: “I supported Trump.”

If you could use one word to describe Donald Trump what would it be?

Julian Debrower: “I have a plethora of negative labels for him but I’d have to settle with fascist.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Initiative.”

Mr. Swaney: “Populist.”

LM Teacher: “Driven.”

What about Hillary Clinton?

Julian Debrower: “Centrist.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Socialism.”

Mr. Swaney: “Experienced.”

LM Teacher: “Ruthless.”

Why do you think Trump won?

Julian Debrower: “He won because of apathy and because the Democrats nominated a weak candidate.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Because his mind wasn’t political but instead it was something new.”

Mr. Swaney: “Civil ignorance, nationalism, Russian intervention, James Comey, unpopular Clinton, celebrity culture.”

LM Teacher: “He was everything she wasn’t. I saw an awesome video that said, ‘Why are the Dems protesting Trump when the Dems are the one to blame!’ Trump should have been an easy Victory (for the Democrats). Instead they served up the same old people with no new message as a candidate.”

What were you feeling after his victory?

Julian Debrower: “I felt morally defeated and scared.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Triumph, like the people had spoken.”

Mr. Swaney: “Worried for American Democracy.”

LM Teacher: “Relieved; feel like my daughter may have a decent future and job market.”

Is he qualified? Why or why not?

Julian Debrower: “No chance in hell, he’s admitted that himself.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Yes because a politician’s job is to follow the wishes of their voters so if anyone can get as far as he did and win, he is more than qualified.”

Mr. Swaney: “Constitutionally, yes. Compared to any other President in our history, no. He

meets the constitutional qualifications. Nothing in his resume has been done for the public good.

It has all been done for private gain. For me, that is a disqualifier.”

LM Teacher: “People wanted someone with a fresh perspective and a NON-politician so I guess he is qualified... We need someone who can balance a budget. As you know the two prior

presidents overspent. Obama’s deficit is larger than all other presidents combined. Imagine if you did that with your personal finances.”

What is your biggest fear with him as the President of the United States?

Julian Debrower: “I think he’ll make it more difficult for certain liberal-leaning demographics to vote. Also I’m fearful that he will succeed at gutting the EPA and privatizing public land such as national parks.”

Jacob Lepsch: “He will separate the Democrats from Republicans instead of bringing people together.”

Mr. Swaney: “That he will use a terrorist attack as a pretext for shutting down civil rights and closing the channels of democracy and turn into an authoritarian regime, or an illiberal democracy.”

LM Teacher: “Not much; can’t be worse than Obama’s failed policies. My biggest fear is with other people- people that don’t accept his victory.”

What are you most hopeful for?

Julian Debrower: “I hope that, if Trump and the Republican-backed congress succeed at gutting the Affordable Care Act, they will actually have a great plan to replace it with something even better, like they claim.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Republican legislation and four more years of



going to the shooting range, as well as more military spending.”

Mr. Swaney: “The opportunity for the masses to organize in peaceful passive resistance and to rise in such numbers peacefully that he will have to give up power. It would be a great moment for American Democracy.”

LM Teacher: “Economic turnaround which has already started, secure borders.”

Is he a racist?

Julian Debrower: “Obviously.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Everyone is inherently a racist.”

Mr. Swaney: “I have no idea whether he is personally, but the policies he is pushing most certainly are.”

LM Teacher: “Absolutely not. Have you seen his cabinet selections?”

How has the election impacted the school environment?

Julian Debrower: “I feel as though it’s drawn out some extremists and created new political tensions.”

Jacob Lepsch: “Younger people have stronger political views, and have stayed up to date.”

Mr. Swaney: “I have found my students quieter this year. I think people are a bit afraid to talk politics because they don’t want to be labeled as being in one camp or the other.”

LM Teacher: “Many uninformed people who listen to the drive by the media and don’t research anything.”

How will it impact your life?

Julian Debrower: “I think that it will make it harder for me to get a college education if he guts colleges as much as it looks like he might. Also, as someone who enjoys travel, not having access to parks and Bureau of Land Management land would devastate (me) since they are some of my favorite places to visit.”

Jacob Lepsch: “For the better/ in my interests. Hopefully this broadens the people’s mindsets of who can be a good President.”

Mr. Swaney: “Well, if Betsy DeVoss gets confirmed as Secretary of Education today, that will have a big impact on me as a teacher. The Iowa State Legislature

and Governor actually have a bigger direct impact on my life than Trump will unless he goes really authoritarian. I’m lucky to be a white male living in Iowa - I’m not a direct target of Trump’s.”

LM Teacher: “Unfortunately I have lost a lot of respect for people who have behaved inappropriately. I have been vandalized and verbally assaulted in public... The general public is too lazy to dig deep for good answers and look into each candidate’s real history

Blocker, cont. from Page 4

aren’t like that all the time. Plus they have pretty golden hair... like me!” Blocker’s favorite food is chocolate, in any shape and any flavor.

“If there’s chocolate in front of me, it doesn’t matter what kind it is, I will eat it,” she guaranteed.

Along with her infatuation of chocolate, Ms. Blocker also loves to bake. Cakes are her specialty.

“If there’s a gathering or whatever is going on, I am always the one who brings dessert. I’m not one for bringing any of the savory things. I like to bake and I like that I can prepare it beforehand and then not worry about it.” Blocker’s students can attest to her baking skills, and they will come to class every once in awhile with a baked goodie waiting for them at the end.

Ms. Blocker may not be a common name around the school, but she is very well liked by her students. She is dedicated, hard-working, and wants all of her students to know that she will do whatever it takes to help them succeed and that no one cares about their success like she does.

As a high school student, it is easy to take any given teacher for granted, or to underestimate their dedication because of the small snapshot that is seen. On top of that, everyone goes from class to class and from teacher to teacher day in and day out, focused on anything and everything under the sun. If there’s nothing else to be taken away from the years one spends at Linn Mar, everyone should at least try to appreciate and recognize the work their teachers do for them, especially those like Ms. Blocker.

Controversial Alt Right group continues to grow

By Charles Petersen

The Alternative Right is possibly one of the most controversial political groups in recent times. Everything surrounding the movement breaths controversy, including simply defining what the Alt Right is. Hillary Clinton, during the campaign described the Alt Right as, “A loosely organized group mostly online that rejects mainstream conservatism, promotes nationalism, and views immigration and multiculturalism as threats to white identity.” However Ben Shapiro a Jewish, conservative, writer and speaker defined the Alt Right in a different manner. When asked in an interview he said, “Basically, the Alt-Right is a group of thinkers who believe that Western civilization is inseparable from European ethnicity—which is racist, obviously.” He goes on to say that they’re very different from traditional conservatism. Shapiro says the Alt Right fears Western society will be threatened with the inclusion of too many minority groups.

However, if you ask someone known to be a part of the Alt Right, they will give you a much different answer. Breitbart editor and writer Milo Yiannopoulos has



been the center of the Alt Right controversy. Many see him as the leader of the group even though he has gone on record saying that he doesn't consider himself a part of the Alt Right but he just used his platform to give the Alt Right a voice. Yiannopoulos has been met with great hatred and protests on his college tour, the most recent being an all-out riot at UC Berkeley, which caused his event to be cancelled. Protesters claimed that he is racist, sexist and even homophobic, despite the fact that he is gay. Supporters will argue that these claims are ridiculous and that he's never said anything racist,

sexist, or homophobic. Milo is also known as a provocateur, purposely saying things that will set people off. An example of this is when he started the slogan “Feminism is Cancer”. But ultimately, many people would agree that Milo is not a bigot.

Those familiar with the Alt Right movement say that the most rage towards the Alt Right come from head writer and spokesman of *Altright.com*, Richard Spencer. Spencer is a self-proclaimed white supremacist, has refused to denounce the Nazi regime, and has been quoted speaking ill of Jewish people on several occasions. Spencer made big news shortly after the presidential election where he held a conference in which he proceeded to yell “Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory,” proceeded with a Nazi salute. He more recently made the news calling Tom Brady the “Aryan Avatar.”

Like most political groups, the Alt Right seems to be a large mixed bag of individuals. You have both radicals like Richard Spencer and Moderate spokesmen like Milo Yiannopoulos. Ultimately, when it comes down to policy, the Alt Right believes in mostly the same things.

They believe in the protection of Western values, are for the most-open version of freedom of speech, including speech that could be deemed hateful. The group is anti-globalist, pro-nationalism, and are supportive of leaving the United Nations. They were for Brexit and are also for strict immigration, supporting both the travel ban and the building of the wall. The Alt Right became the main driving force behind Donald Trump during the election giving him the exciting fan base that Clinton had trouble maintaining. We'll ultimately have wait and see what becomes of this new Alt Right movement. Will they continue to grow and avidly support Trump or will they die out?



Education Secretary nomination causes controversy

By Charles Petersen

How does a woman who has never attended public school find herself the head of the Department of Education? This is just one of the many questions people have following the confirmation of Betsy DeVos this past week in a historic tied senate vote at 50/50. The position was then decided by Vice President Mike Pence who cast the tiebreaking vote for DeVos confirming her as Secretary of Education.

Betsy DeVos was born in 1958 in Michigan. She grew up in a multi-billion dollar family only ever attending expensive private schools. She grew up to marry Dick DeVos Jr., a multi-billionaire who inherited his wealth and his company. Betsy DeVos has been involved in the Republican Party since she was in college and has been a lifelong donor and fundraiser for Republican candidates. It's estimated that the family has donated close to 200 million dollars to the Republican Party. She has also been a long-time advocate of school choice, charter schools, and voucher programs. This system, supported mostly by Republicans, favors private schools and charter schools being funded with federal money and less funding for public schools. Many Democrats, including Vermont

Senator and former Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren have criticized DeVos for this. They claim that it hurts poorer kids who can't afford charter or private schools. DeVos and Republicans have argued that giving children more choice in their schools and allowing more competition to take place is more beneficial to everyone overall.

DeVos was nominated for Secretary of Education by newly inaugurated President Donald Trump. Her nomination sparked massive controversy on all sides of the political aisle. DeVos's nomination led to a long drawn-out hearing filled with moments that made headlines and that raised eyebrows. The most notable comment to get a lot of press was her comment involving guns in schools for protection against grizzly bears. When asked if guns had anyplace in or around schools, she responded by citing a school in Wyoming and saying, “I think probably there, I would imagine there's probably a gun in the school to protect from potential grizzlies.” She went on to say that she would support the President in getting rid of gun free zones.

Another moment in her hearing which raised many people's

concerns was when she was asked by Minnesota senator Al Franken whether she thought test scores should be used to measure student proficiency or their growth. DeVos said “I think, if I am understanding your question correctly around proficiency, I would correlate it to competency and mastery, so each student according to the advancements that they are making in each subject area.” “That's growth,” the Senator interjected. Many Democrats argued that this moment showed DeVos's severe lack of knowledge for the job. The debate between measuring students based on growth compared to proficiency is important within the education community. How could she be the head of education when she doesn't even know the basics of a huge debate surrounding the education system?

Betsy DeVos was so controversial that two Republicans in the Senate voted against her, causing the tie. But Senators haven't been the only ones to oppose DeVos so vividly. After her confirmation, DeVos made headlines once again when she tried to visit a local public school in Washington D.C. but was blocked from entering by protesters. She quickly retreated to her vehicle as a small group of protesters screamed at her, displaying their displeasure.



People all throughout the nation have taken online to voice their displeasure with the newly named Secretary of Education. Though ultimately, most of their worries may never come to fruition, considering the vast majority of education policy is done at the state level. Concerned teachers and parents may just have to trust in the checks and balances of our system or hope the Republican-controlled Congress votes to get rid of the Secretary of Education position, as they've wanted to do for quite some time. Otherwise, people of the opposition may be in for a long four to eight years.

Mather successful in the pool and in class

By Kate McInroy

Senior Matthew Mather is a Linn-Mar student, swimmer, and snoozer. He is just like the rest of us; he faces the same struggles, has the same goals, and is just an overall relatable kid.

A typical day for Matthew, during swimming season, starts with his alarm going off at around 5:30 am even though morning practice is at 6:30. This is because he hits snooze on his alarm a couple times. Next, eats breakfast which the parents provide for the swimmers, and then he is off to school. Matthew is currently in AP Chemistry, AP Statistics, gym, Physics, and an online Kirkwood class called Medical Terminology. During his block off at the end of the day, he completes school work and then he heads back to the school for more swim practice, which even he admits is sometimes hard to do.

When at home, one could find Matthew watching Grey's Anatomy or Shameless, his current favorite shows on Netflix.

In his free time, Matthew and his friends have some interesting pastimes, like pulling a desk chair behind a car with a rope or going off-roading. He and his friends also engage in "fight night" which led to a hole in Matthew's wall that I noticed quickly as I entered the basement.

Matthew has been a Linn-Mar swimmer for the past four years and has done club swimming with Linn Mar Swim Club in the off season. He was also a member of Bowman Woods and Marion YMCA club swimming when he was younger. He puts his swimming expertise to good use, lifeguarding in the summer at Bowman Woods and the YMCA and instructing swimming at the YMCA.

Matthew and his teammates just

got back from competing at state, where they placed 14th. Matthew participated in the 200 freestyle, the 400 freestyle, and the Medley Relay. How did Mather feel about the team placement?

"Overall, not the greatest. The team had more motivation at districts (where they beat Washington's winning streak), I think we peaked too early."

Matthew reflected on his relationship with swimming.

"It's a love-hate relationship. I hate practicing, that's why I like meets and why I do sprints (short swimming events). Overall, I'm just lazy but I like showing off what I can do."

Would Matthew ever compete in a different sport?

"Yes and no. Swimming is not as popular as other sports like football or basketball. It is sort of sad that I don't get to show my talents to classmates. It would be cool to have a student section up in the stands watching our meets."

One advantage to swimming is that Matthew has formed strong bonds on the team. Almost all of his closest relationships are other swimmers on his team. He said he is close with his coaches, girl swimmers, and even swimmers from other schools. One of Matthew's close friends is Senior Zach Vana, also a swimmer.

Well, he's my best friend and my college roommate next year, so it says a lot that I am committing this far in advance for next year," says Zach. "I can talk to him about everything under the moon and get a response, which sometimes sucks but it is really good in the long run. But, yeah, he's a really good friend and I respect him a lot."

Matthew and his assistant coach Chad Derlin have a very close relationship and even snapchat each other on a regular basis.

This year was the last competitive season for Matthew, who says, "I will continue to swim for fun and to stay in shape but this is the end of my swimming career." He says that he feels bittersweet about the end of his career.

When not swimming or at school, one might find Matthew at St. Joe's youth group where he has been involved for the past four years. This group meets every Wednesday and does prayer services, quiet nights, activity nights, etc.

Matthew says he likes youth group, not just for the religious aspect but it gets me away from homework and I get to meet new people."

Next year, Matthew is attending the University of Iowa and looking at a major in the medical field. He has considered nursing or even becoming a doctor.

"My parents went to Iowa and they both majored in the medical field. The medical field is always needed and provides a good salary. The human body interests me a lot, and has for a while now."

Matthew says the medical field is becoming more and more competitive and that is a little stressful, but like the rest of us, he questions a lot what will happen in college. For Matthew, his concerns include grades, time management, success, and failure.

Matthew, although facing the stress we all have about college, is also excited for what his college years have in store for him. He plans to participate in intramurals like volleyball, flag football, basketball, swimming, and Iowa's infamous 'Canoe battleship.' He also said he is interested in looking at fraternities at Iowa.

Looking forward in life, Matthew said being a prestigious doctor or surgeon would be a dream of his



and mentioned that the respect, the responsibility and the salary that come with those jobs are a nice touch.

Looking back, Matthew has some proud and some not-so-proud moments in his life. He remembers getting on the state podium, which meant he was one of the top six swimmers in the state at an event. He counts this as one of his best successes. He also is very proud of his grades and maintaining a good GPA.

Matthew says if he could go back and study and prepare for the ACT more he definitely would. He even said that was the one thing he would do over in life so far. He always says he wishes he were more involved.

"I wish I would have tried a couple more sports. Maybe soccer, football, or show choir. I would have done more clubs, I think I lost some opportunities to meet new people."

Just like the rest of us, Matthew has his little quirks, like not being able to sit still, which leads to him gnawing on his pencils or fiddling with his hair. He says he also can take showers that can get up to 20 minutes long when he's blasting his favorite music.

Linn-Mar's Cook wants to "Dance Away the Stigma"

By Heather Hewitt

Dancing Away The Stigma is an initiative from Iowa Big in partnership with the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena and Camp Courageous of Iowa. The goal of the program is to celebrate diversity through dance. By striving to help lessen the stigma that individuals with special needs face, the project stresses that those with disabilities can do a lot of the same activities as those without disabilities. *Dancing Away the Stigma* is also a great way for high school students to get involved in their community. The program is run by seven students from Iowa Big but was founded by Linn-Mar High School student, Kaleb Cook.

According to Cook, "I started

Dancing Away The Stigma because I have always been interested in making a positive change to the world and also, specifically, in helping special needs kids. It's what I hope to do even when I'm older and to be able to help make an impact now is amazing."

Part of the program involves going to different districts around Eastern Iowa and surrounding areas and teaching dance therapy classes to special needs students and to anyone else who wants to help lessen the stigma of disabilities. The kids will also have an opportunity to perform their dances at dance parties, organized by the project. The next dance party will be held at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena on

April 15th, and will be helping to raise money for Camp Courageous, a year-round camp for individuals with special needs.

According to Cook, "The dance party was created to help those whose lives are affected by mental disabilities and to help raise more awareness in the special needs community."

Kids can get together with others and embrace their love of dance and of course, help lessen the stigma. It's also a way for others in the surrounding communities to make a difference in the camper's lives. There will be a live DJ, free snacks, games and dancing. There will also be education on opportunities for people with special needs. The

program hopes that they not only lessen the stigma regarding special needs kids, but that they also show those without disabilities what special needs kids sometimes go through, and how they can help them.

Cook said, "I have always loved getting to interact with special needs kids and I'm hoping later on in life I maybe can even become a pediatrician that specializes in helping kids with disabilities."

If you want to get more involved with *Dancing Away The Stigma* you can buy tickets for their next dance party at www.datsdance.com.

Linn-Mar show choir follows themed show trend

By Izzy Nanke

Show choir has always been an activity filled with beautiful dresses and at least one uncomfortable dance partner, however, this activity is changing. Throughout the last three or four years there's been a new phenomenon sweeping across the world of show choir: themed shows. Kennedy's Happiness Inc, Ankeny Centennial's Spectrum, even Linn Mar's Tenth Street Edition are all examples of this curious new sensation. Nearly gone are the days of traditional shows. Instead, one is seeing shows that depict the adventures of passengers on board the RMS Titanic or the life through the eyes of a rebellious cult member. What is this going to do to the world of show choir?

According to Adam Miller, director of Ankeny Centennial's Spectrum, "I think moving forward, we will start to see more developed story shows in the Midwest. Like I said, this is still a new concept for the Midwest. As more groups explore options, I think we will see both more and better story shows."

And many people agree with Miller. The world of show choir is competitive so it is constantly changing, meaning this is not the last change that those involved in show choir will see. Throughout this season, everywhere Linn-Mar has competed at has housed at least two

other varsity leveled themed shows. This just shows how prominent themed shows are at this time.

Although it is hard to deny that themed shows don't have the potential to be Grand Champion worthy shows, not everyone is completely sold on this idea.

Says Lexi Robson, a well-known choreographer and judge, "I will say having worked with many non-themed and themed shows, it is much harder to produce a successful themed show, there are just so many moving parts."

Watching Tenth Street Edition's themed show this year prompts a range of emotions, starting with a sense of loyalty to the cult leader, Senior Nick House in the beginning, to the rebelliousness emitted from the main female soloist Senior Niharika Annira. There is a sense of longing in their ballad and then the show ends with the feeling of defiance. The audience hardly has time to breathe or blink during their show in fear of missing something.

"Before Tenth Street even steps on stage I get flutters in my stomach from the excitement. As they step on stage, my whole being is overflowed with joy because I know how amazing they are. Their show just makes me really really happy," said Junior Cailey Fisher.

There are so many moving parts, and so many emotions that it is hard

to keep focused on the important aspects of a successful show: singing and dancing well. That's the criteria on which show choir groups are most heavily judged.

So there are pros and cons to both types of shows. Traditional shows are often viewed as easier, but can be executed in a cleaner way. This is quite the opposite for themed shows. Typically, they are more difficult and in turn, sloppier. But if effort is put into both shows they have an equal chance at the Grand Champion title.

Ultimately though, the choice of themed versus traditional shows doesn't come down to the directors of the shows, or the choreographers. This title of Grand Champions that every group is striving to get is given to a group by the judges at that competition.

Judges judge based off of their own opinion, but Robson said, "When I'm judging a show, I look first and foremost at what the kids have put on stage and evaluate the things that are in the kids' control." Most judges stick to this principle. Theme does come into play at most competitions, but it is of low priority for most judges. The judging has and most likely will always be based mostly on how well the group sings and how well they execute their choreography. It is called show choir after all.

So, is the transition from traditional shows to themed shows actually happening, or is it just the newest bit of show choir drama? Whichever one it is, show choir will always be changing and ready for the next best thing someone has to offer.



Linn-Mar show choirs bringing home hardware

By Kate McInroy

Over the weekend of January 28th, Linn-Mar's Show Choir Department set their foot in history. All three show choirs at Linn-Mar: Hi-Style, In Step, and 10th Street Edition hauled home first place trophies. Along with three titles of "Grand Champion," Hi-Style was awarded best choreography and best vocals in their unisex division. 10th Street Edition also brought home best choreography and vocals as well as best band, best ballad, and best female soloist, Niharika Annira.

"I was shocked! Obviously I was excited, but I couldn't believe it especially, watching all of the other amazing female soloists," said Annira.

The show choirs at Linn-Mar are chosen through an audition process and then participants are placed in one of the three groups: Hi-Style being the youngest unisex group, In Step being the mixed-prep group, and 10th Street Edition, the varsity mixed group.

"Auditions are a tough process, especially with all the talent at Linn Mar," said Mr. Trent Buglewicz, the director of Hi-Style and 10th Street

Edition.

The groups competed at Ankeny on the 7th of January, hosted Supernova at Linn-Mar on January 14th and then competed in LaCrosse, Wisconsin on January 28th. On February 11th, they competed at Washington High School's MoShow competition, and on February 18th, In Step and 10th Street performed at Davenport's "Great River" competition.

The life of a show choir performer can be hectic. For example, all the kids involved in the LaCrosse competition were at Linn-Mar at 4:45am so they could arrive in Wisconsin around 7:30am. Around 11pm the kids loaded back onto the buses for the journey home and arrived back at Linn-Mar around 2:15am, completing their almost 21 hour day.

Group members from all groups were very excited about the results at LaCrosse. Nathan Nowzari, a senior from 10th Street Edition, said "At first I didn't really have any emotions because I was so surprised, but after a few seconds I just felt proud for everyone because I know the group had worked so hard. I couldn't help but feel overjoyed as the hugs commenced."

Senior Annabelle Luke, a representative of Hi Style said, "I was shocked by the vocal award because I felt like I personally did not do my best during the vocals. The band award surprised me because I knew that they made a lot of changes during the practice. The dance caption award made me very happy because that's what I'm most passionate about and I felt like our cleaning that we did that week paid off."

Mrs. Hussey, In Step's director, said "I was impressed with our groups as well as the other groups at the competition."

This was the first time all three show choirs from Linn-Mar have won under the direction of Mr. Buglewicz, the director of Hi-Style and 10th Street Edition, and Mrs. Hussey, the director of In Step. Both of the directors expressed their excitement, "I believe that the kids worked very hard for their placements and they were well deserved," said Buglewicz.

This year, Hi-Style has turned their show into a spelling bee, having three soloists, Megan Harkin, Madi DeJong, and Precious Kimbrough competing to win the spelling bee.

Their show consists of the songs: "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee", "R.E.S.P.E.C.T", "What Do You Mean", "This is the Moment", and "Queen Bee". Hi-Style rehearses once a week outside of school.

In Step's show revolves around the idea of time. Their songs include "Clocks/One Minute More," "All the Wasted Time" with soloist Joel Peterson and Emma Geneser, and "Do You Remember the Time." In Step's guys feature soloist is Isaac Langley, and the girls feature soloist is Izzy Nanke with "Time Machine" and "End of Time". In Step rehearses once a week outside of school.

10th Street Edition's show follows the story of a crazy father figure, soloist Nick House, and his followers (the other choir members) until one of those followers, soloist Niharika Annira, decides to break away from the ways of the group. Their show consists of the songs: "Gray", "All of London", "Rhythm of Life", "Latch", "Pull Me Down", "Flight", "Paradise", and "City of Delusion". 10th Street Edition rehearses twice a week outside of school.

Doomsday Clock gets closer to midnight

By Jet Ly

On January 26, 2017 the Doomsday Clock moved forward 30 seconds, from three minutes to two minutes and 30 seconds away from midnight. This is no ordinary clock; midnight on this clock signals global catastrophic destruction. The clock started as the cover of the June 1947 cover for *The Bulletin* journal. The time began at seven minutes from midnight and since then has been moved 20 times. Why seven minutes?

Martyl Langsdorf, artist of the *Bulletin* cover, said she chose the time seven minutes because it “looked good to her eye.”

The closest we have ever been to hitting midnight was in 1953, when the United States and the Soviet Union began testing hydrogen bombs, weapons far more powerful than atomic bombs and the decision to move the clock to two minutes was made. The furthest we have been is 17 minutes from midnight, when countries agreed to reduce nuclear arms in 1991. The decision to move the hand is made each fall and the decision is then announced every January.

The clock was created in 1947 as an analogy for the threat of global nuclear

war by the *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* Science and Security board. Since its creation, climate change and biosecurity have been added as potential life-ending events.

According to Kennette Benedict, senior advisor of *The Bulletin*, to determine whether or not the clock should move closer or further away from midnight, members of the board analyze the amount of nuclear weapons in the world, temperature change, carbon dioxide levels, emerging dangers such as bio threats or artificial intelligence, and leaders and their citizens efforts to reduce dangers. According to *The Bulletin's* statement regarding this January's change in time, “A rise in strident nationalism worldwide, President Donald Trump's comments on nuclear arms and climate issues, a darkening global security landscape that is colored by increasingly sophisticated technology and a growing disregard for scientific expertise,” were all contributing factors as to why the time was moved closer to midnight.

When asked about the Doomsday Clock, many students said they have never heard of it before. Is there any reason to fear it?

According to Tim Beadle, senior, the clock should be seen more as a way

to stay informed and learn about what was happening during certain time periods and should not be heeded.

“It's Y2K and 2012 all over again,” said Beadle. “These events predicted the end of the world and when the time came, nothing happened.”

“As long as nuclear weapons exist and can be used, the risk that we could destroy civilization also exists,” said Bennett. “Humans invented both nuclear weapons and the fossil-fuel powered machines that contribute to cli-

mate change; we know how they work, so presumably we can find ways to reduce or eliminate the harm. But we need concerted cooperation worldwide to prevent calamity.”

According to Bennett, there are ways that ordinary people can help in moving the clock back. First, get smart about problems. Second, share what you've learned. And third, tell your government representative that you do not want your tax money spent on nuclear weapons and fossil fuel equipment.



On January 26, 2017 the Doomsday Clock moved forward 30 seconds, from three minutes to two minutes and 30 seconds away from midnight. This is no ordinary clock; midnight on this clock signals global catastrophic destruction.

Electoral College votes cause election controversy

By Maddie Bliet

On November 8th of 2016, Americans all over the country voted for their presidential pick in the 2016 United States election. After the polls were closed and the votes were counted, it was announced that Republican candidate Donald Trump had won the presidency over Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton. However, some Americans expressed anger after it was revealed that despite Clinton having won the popular vote, Trump won the presidency due to receiving the majority of the electoral votes.

Many Americans upset with the results of the election began to call for the removal of the Electoral College. Following the 2016 election, it has become clear that there is a significant amount of confusion over what exactly the Electoral College does and how it works. According to a national survey taken in January of 2011 by NBC Los Angeles, only 57% of those who have held political office know what the Electoral College does, while 66% of the public got the answer right.

In order to fully understand what the Electoral College is and how it works, it is important to look back on its history. The person most credited with the creation of the Electoral College was Founding Father Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton had a distrust in the

common people of America and did not think them capable of making the right choice when voting for a president. Hamilton suggested the idea of the Electoral College at the Constitutional Convention. The Framers of the Constitution chose this idea of indirect election of the president through a College of Electors over the idea of a popular vote. It was feared that voting citizens would not be informed enough to make the right decisions when casting their ballot. At this point in history, a majority of the population of America was illiterate and it was assumed that most citizens would simply vote for the candidate that came from their state.

The most basic definition of the Electoral College is a group of people that elects the president and vice president of the United States. Electors in the College are appointed by political parties in each state. If a candidate from the Republican Party wins the popular vote, then the electors that the Republican Party has chosen in each state will cast votes for them in their state capitals in December after the popular vote has taken place. Today, it takes 270 votes or more to win the presidency. There are 538 electoral votes in all. The amount of electoral votes a state gets is based upon its population. Iowa has six electoral votes. The state with the most electoral votes

is California, with 55 total electoral votes.

In the 2016 election, Trump won 304 electoral votes to Clinton's 227. In terms of the popular vote, Clinton received roughly 65.8 million votes while Trump received about 63 million. Trump won several large states such as Florida, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin by very narrow margins. Clinton also won several large states including California, New York and Illinois. Trump won the popular vote by the seventh smallest winning percentage since 1828, when presidential campaigns began to resemble those of today.

The last time that a popular vote winner lost the presidency was in 2000 when George W. Bush won the Electoral vote despite his opponent, Al Gore, winning the popular vote. In that election, Bush received 271 votes to Gore's 266, while in the popular vote, Gore won 537,000 more votes nationwide. This situation of winning the popular vote but not winning in the Electoral College caused a similar reaction in 2000 as it did today. In both cases, recounts were called for, however in the 2016 election, the Clinton campaign denied requests that they sought a recount in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Those in favor of the keeping the Electoral College in place claim that it requires a president to have trans-regional appeal as well as

preventing an election in which no candidate received the majority of the votes cast. A week after winning the election, then President-elect Trump sent out a tweet praising the Electoral College and calling it “genius” in that it brings all states into play. Those against the Electoral College say that the distribution of electoral votes per state is not equally dispersed and that it allows someone to win the presidency by winning only 21.8% of the popular vote. In an article from the Huffington Post, Tyler Lewis says, “by electing our President solely based on who the majority of our population selects, without the inclusion of an Electoral College, the vote of every American citizen would hold equal weight and significance.”

Following Trump's win in the 2016 election, a Gallup poll shows that 47% of Americans say that they want to keep the Electoral College while 49% say they want to amend the Constitution to allow for a popular vote for the president. Despite the outbreak of protests against the Electoral College and some Democratic officials calling for the Electoral College's removal, the percentage of Americans that approve of the Electoral College is higher than in past years, leaving the country sharply divided on the issue.

Mrs. Benda, the sub every student wants to see

By Michael McGrew,

Enid Benda sits cross-legged in her chair, wearing a purple striped sweater, striped socks, boat shoes and her famous smile. She is one of Linn-Mar's most beloved substitute teachers, an eighty-four year-old master of classroom management. Mrs. Benda has always been a hard worker, and she says that this characteristic can be traced back to her childhood, growing up in Southern Iowa.

From a young age, Benda was taught the importance of a job well done. She grew up on a family farm, where she was constantly running around doing chores. In her free time, she worked in a small store, where wide ranges of items were sold. Her jobs there included stocking shelves, keeping the store clean and assisting customers. Mrs. Benda says that both working on the farm and her first job in the store helped to make her the focused hard worker she is today.

"I get to school at seven. I've just always been an early bird about my job," said Mrs. Benda.

After graduating college, she took up a job at a Cedar Rapids middle school where she worked until she retired. Retirement did not sit well with Mrs. Benda. Her love for students and the classroom made her realize that she never should have left teaching at all. She then began to substitute teach at Linn-Mar, where she has been teaching ever since. Mrs. Benda enjoys teaching at Linn-Mar more than anywhere else she has ever taught at.

"The students here actually care about learning, which makes it so easy to teach. Teaching science at my old school, I used to have all blank faces tilted like this (to the side). That doesn't happen at Linn-Mar," said Benda.

The students at Linn-Mar love Mrs. Benda as much as she loves teaching them. To every class, she brings with her a bag of snacks and treats for each student in her day. She passes one out to everyone before the end of each class. She makes sure that the bag contains healthy options as well, and she often advertises the sugar-free gum, organic gummies and other healthy options. She cares about her students and they love that about her. Because these snacks have become such a large part of her reputation, I wondered how it all began.

"Actually, the idea was given to me by one of my old friends. I asked him for advice and he said to just give them a little treat or something. It started out with Jolly Ranchers and just grew from there," said Benda.

Teachers at Linn-Mar also agree. They often ask her to sub because they know she will keep the students focused while also allowing them to enjoy the class.

"She just subbed for me last week. She has a great rapport with the students and is a familiar face in the school," said history teacher Mr. Jordan Printy.

"The students love her. Mrs. Benda is everything," said Spanish teacher Sra. Shindelar.

Mrs. Benda has a husband who she has been married to since her twenties. She says that when she first met him she thought he was a bum. That thought changed after her then-boyfriend suggested that he give her a ride one day. She has been with him ever since. She says that their personalities balance out very well in the relationship. They never had any kids, but that does not bother her.

"No, it doesn't. It just never worked out. You guys are all my kids," said Mrs. Benda.

The joys of her life launch well beyond the classroom. She enjoys music, books, driving her BMW, and most of all, travel. Although claiming to have no musical talent herself, Mrs. Benda likes all kinds of music, one of which is rap. She enjoys listening to Jay Z and Eminem especially.

"I kind of like the rhythm of rap, I just don't always understand the words, they go so fast," she said.

Books are an essential part of Mrs. Benda's free time and she rarely goes anywhere without them. She enjoys reading non-fiction the most, everything from ancient history to modern biographies and sciences. The fascinating thing about her is that the learning does not stop at books. She will often travel to these places, and has been to dozens of countries all over the world, too many to count. From these trips she will bring home souvenirs that now line the walls in her home. For example, her living room is covered with local tapestries from the



Middle-East and another bedroom contains all findings from many Central American countries.

Does Mrs. Benda have any regrets in her life? She plays with a rubber band between her fingers and explains that no, she does not. She has made mistakes of course, such as failing Algebra, but all mistakes have led to who she is today. She lives in the moment, only worrying about what will affect her now and in the future.

During her eighty four years of living, Mrs. Benda has witnessed many changes in society. She is always very optimistic, pointing out that kids today are better educated, healthier, and more responsible.

"Everyone seems to have goals now. They don't just wander loose and see what will happen. I think they're smarter," she said.

Burger joint provides good food with a zombified twist

By Joshuwa Kilts

As I walked into the building, I quickly noticed the mural of zombified Iowa fans in front of the Old Capitol in Iowa City. This is part of the décor of Zombie Burger, a fairly new zombie-themed restaurant chain with five locations scattered around Iowa.

Zombie Burger specializes in "extraordinary" options when it comes to making a burger or shake, with extraordinary names to match. Consider these menu options: "They're Coming to Get You Barbra", "The Walking Ched", and "Juan of the Dead". These reference some piece of zombie pop culture.

The price of food can be a bit expensive for a burger joint, with burgers ranging from \$5-13dollars, and with fries and drink bought separately. Fries and drinks end up being a couple bucks each.

The burger I bought on my visit was the "They're Coming to Get You Barbra". It featured two patties cooked on a flat top grill, American cheese, bacon, caramelized onions,

their special "Zombie Sauce", and two grilled cheese sandwiches for the buns. I also got the Tallahassee shake, featuring vanilla ice cream, a Twinkie, blended cherries, and cherry Kool Aid powder.

The wait time for my food was around ten minutes, which seemed pretty fast for the large number of people, who were in the restaurant at the time. As my server gave me my food and I looked at it, I could feel the amount of calories I was about to consume. The Burger looked like the outcome of someone allowing a five year old to have whatever they wanted for dinner... and I loved it. The amount of onions and bacon made it start folding over the sides of the grilled cheese buns that were also oozing because of the amount of cheese packed into each one. This was a burger that was meant to be eaten with no regards to how messy it got.

As I ate it, I found that the taste was a little above average. It tasted like a normal bacon cheese burger with a few extra notes of flavor from

the Zombie sauce and a very strong taste of cheese. It could have used some more sauce to help balance out the large amount of cheese, or a more varied type of cheeses.

The shake was a highpoint, though. A friend had recommended this particular shake and told me it was good. I was expecting a weird texture from the use of a Twinkie and Kool-Aid powder but found that the shake had been blended pretty evenly and smoothly. The contradicting flavors of real cherries

and the Kool-Aid cherry powder gave it a unique tartness that was improved upon by the sweetness of the ice cream and the Twinkie filling. And for the price of \$5, it was a great deal compared to the price of the \$10 burger.

Zombie Burger is a great place for the occasional visit and for out of the ordinary dining options, but not really worth the trip to Iowa City for your average night out. The food is good, the shakes are great, and the atmosphere is zombifying.



Bunney has triumphed over adversity

By Zoey McDonald

"I'm a huge nerd. I hate saying this because it sounds arrogant but the first thing that comes to mind is I am intelligent and have a gift for math and science. I am quiet if I don't know you, but more outgoing when we're friends," said Senior Michael Bunney.

Bunney is the son of Rick and Rachael Bunney and is the oldest of four children in his family, his siblings being Matt, Max, and Meghan. He does not relate well to his brothers, but says that he and his sister are a lot alike.

"Both of my brothers aren't so academically inclined, but my sister loves school and is very intelligent for her age," said Michael.

Michael has an English bulldog named Georgia and is involved in tennis, orchestra, and show choir.

One struggle Michael has had to face is living with diabetes, which he was diagnosed with 16 years ago. It does not normally inhibit him from doing activities, it just requires him to be more careful and he must monitor his blood sugar, as well as the items he consumes. Michael has also struggled with epilepsy for the past eight years, which can cause him to have seizures. In the summer of 2016, Michael decided to have surgery in order to remove the focal points of his seizures. Now after over six months, he has not had a single seizure.

"Technically I was never conscious while it [his skull] was OPEN, but I was conscious while it was stitched closed and healing. It was EXTREMELY painful. Having a ponytail of wires coming out of your head doesn't exactly feel good."

Favorite childhood memory?

I don't know... getting to meet my sister for the first time.

What do your hobbies include?

Tennis, learning from the science channel and other shows, and the occasional video game binge.

Are there any new interests you want to pursue?

Ever since 9th grade, I became obsessed with the science channel and have been pursuing science ever since, so nothing new exactly, just more.

What do you do in your free time?

I usually sleep because I'm busy at other times, but otherwise I watch TV and work ahead in my classes so I can relax later.

Do all of your interests relate to one topic or do they vary?

Generally, my interests revolve around science, music, and tennis, and that's basically my life.

Did diabetes have any effects on your childhood?

It taught me to be more responsible than most kids. I learned to take

care of myself at a very early age.

Any benefits? Disadvantages?

After sixteen years you have to learn how to look at the "positives" even though there aren't really any. It gives me the ability to fake a low blood sugar if I ever need to.... overall I think it made me a better person. Basically, everything that comes from diabetes is a disadvantage.

I was walking home from a friend's house with my family and then we checked my blood sugar and it was 28. This is the lowest I've ever been in my life and I shouldn't have been conscious.

Side-effects of having seizures?

Over long periods of seizure activity, they cause damage to your brain. This is over the course of possibly decades.

Specific instances having seizures that you can recall?

Too many to say. Once I had a seizure in the middle of a biology presentation in 9th grade. That was my peak seizure activity time in my whole life. I recorded a max of about 11 a day, I think.

Did it affect your daily life?

I tried not to let it control my life. It can definitely be difficult when I start having seizures during sports, music, or while taking tests because it screws me up for awhile, even after the seizure has ended.

Were there any risks to having surgery? Was it worth it?

Infection was the greatest risk, but it is for any surgery. It was more than worth it.

How long were you in the hospital for? Were you nervous?

26 days. I was absolutely terrified.

Did you learn anything from it?

They may not make sense without the stories behind them but I learned quite a few things that may sound pretty deep. Always appreciate the little things in life, because when you're missing them you'll realize how much they matter. Always tell people you love them and try to live an honest life. Just try to keep your regrets to a minimum because life is unpredictable and some days may be your last chance to do or say something and regret is the worst feeling. Finally, take a day to go down to the hospital and volunteer. Just spend a single day to help those who are fighting something and it will make you a more compassionate person.

Did it leave anything behind?

I have a giant scar on my head and it is a bit deformed now... but otherwise it actually took something away rather than left something behind. It made me a better person.

Did it prevent you from participating in certain things?

Naturally, I missed out on 2 months

of summer with the surgery and recovery combined. My recovery was almost more difficult than the surgery. Having a pool at my house, I couldn't swim and I couldn't play tennis either.

What good came out of it?

I don't have seizures anymore and I can't communicate to someone who doesn't have seizures how amazing that is. Also, it helped me get rid of a crazy girlfriend.

Any specific moments you can remember?

Again, too many to say. It was the source of some of the greatest memories of my life. I'll choose one that was the sweetest thing ever. My sister got me a little bear from the gift shop and when you squeeze it, it says things. So I squeezed it and in this little kid voice it goes, "I hope this makes your booboo better!" It almost made one of the researchers cry.

How long have you been involved in orchestra?

Eight years and I play the Viola.

Would you say you are good at it?

Within our program, I'm average, but out of most other schools, I would say I'm better than average. We have a very good program.

How do you feel about the orchestra environment?

Everyone is friendly and welcoming.

Who is your favorite director?

Rez. The one and only. He can be a little hard to deal with sometimes, but I respect how great of a director he is and his dedication to his job.

How long have you been participating in show choir and what do you do?

Three years. I play viola in the band.

Has it helped you in any way?

Social or ability wise?

Socially, I have made a lot of friends and ability-wise, it teaches you how to play in a different type of ensemble.

Favorite show choir memory?

We were in Davenport at Great River and my friend dropped her phone in the river.

How long have you been playing tennis and what is your estimated ranking?

Eight years, I think. My guess before the season even starts is roughly 10-12 range.

Have you improved over the past few years?

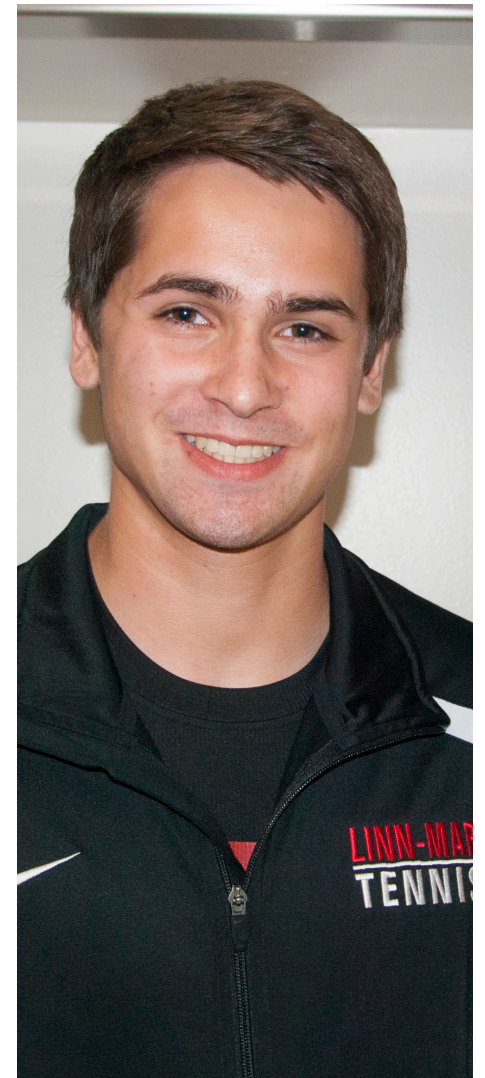
Quite a bit. I learned how to hit a lot harder.

Is it something you could see yourself participating in later on in life?

I will probably play tennis for the rest of my life.

What is your favorite subject?

Physics and Astronomy, because they are awesome and explain everything about the universe and I



love understanding the universe.

Do you pursue it outside of school?

I guess? I have a habit of working way ahead in class and I love learning about it from the science channel and online sources.

What classes have been your favorite throughout your education so far?

AP Chem and AP physics

What do you believe are your greatest achievements?

I survived AP Chem with a 5 on the test. I also participated in the most "blocks" of research with my research team ever during my surgery. This essentially means I did the most experiments with them of all their participants. Hopefully, it helps people like me in the future.

What are your plans after high school?

Get a bachelor's in physics, then a masters, and then a Ph.D. in some specialty and then pursue a career doing my own research.

What college do you plan on attending?

Most likely Iowa State, but we'll see if I'm accepted to the University of Chicago.

Where do you want to end up?

Hopefully doing research for some high clearance government projects or simply doing my own research somewhere in the world.

What is your goal in life?

I don't care about making money or being famous, I just want to do something to leave my mark on the world and help create a better future. I don't want my job to feel like a job. I want it to be something that I enjoy doing every day.

Transgender bathroom bill must be overturned

By Shane Skvor

President Donald Trump is in the headlines yet again, for causing conflict concerning transgender rights. He recently changed a law passed by the Obama Administration, which federally allowed transgender individuals the right to use public restrooms or locker rooms according to their gender identity. Trump and his administration decided to give states the power to decide this matter which has outraged the LGBT community as well as other political rights activists, organizations, and supporters.

The Obama Administration saw this law as promoting a fundamental and necessary right. Transgender individuals across the nation were ecstatic when Obama first enacted the law, because they knew that they would no longer have to suffer embarrassment and be seen as someone they're not. Obama was praised for changing the lives of transgender people nationwide. Time went by without any major news stories pertaining to Obama's bathroom bill, until Donald Trump stepped into office and changed it. News story after news story, from the *L.A. Times* to the *New York Times*, bashed Trump with harsh criticism. Nearly every major news source in the country is still routinely reporting on this topic.

Trump and his administration made the decision to take away federal guidelines, and to let the states decide their own bathroom bills. Several states have passed bills requiring their citizens to use public restrooms or locker rooms corresponding with their biological gender, and more states are soon to follow.

Supporters of transgender rights say Obama's bathroom bill should be put back into effect for multiple reasons.

First, they argue that transgender individuals get stressed out and embarrassed using public bathrooms. Because their bodies can appear as the opposite gender, transgender people don't know how other people will react to seeing them, which often leads them to become stressed. If they do encounter others, they are likely to become embarrassed as well. Supporters of the bill argue that it makes "normal" citizens feel uncomfortable, or weirded out. These feelings could make citizens question transgender individuals, or anger them to the point where transgender people could be put in harm's way. Those opposed to the states deciding the law say this is unfair treatment that is depriving transgender individuals of equal rights depending on one's zip code. They also argue that no harm would be caused if transgender people use the public bathroom based on their gender identity. Since no one would know they are transgender, no one would question them and there would be no reason to get stressed or embarrassed. Ultimately, these people are bashing Donald Trump for the decision he made, and they wish he would reconsider.

First of all, Donald Trump is getting too much backlash for the alteration he made to the bathroom bill, mainly because the arguments made by people who support transgender rights are simply untrue. Trump should have repealed the bathroom bill altogether, so that everyone would have to use public bathrooms according to their biological gender. Most people are understanding and accepting of differences. There is always discrimination, no matter if it's based on race, gender, or sexual orientation. Transgender individuals should never have to feel stressed or

embarrassed, because they have the same chance of getting discriminated against as anyone else. If transgender people are granted the right to use public bathrooms based on their gender identity, than anyone (transgender or not) could simply say they identify as the opposite gender and be granted access to the other gender's bathroom. If this is law, one can't question a person who says they're transgender, even if they're not. This would be extremely dangerous, because non-transgender people would be granted access to the opposite gender's bathroom. These people could have intentions

to murder, kidnap, or rape victims of the opposite sex, and the chance of getting away with those crimes would be dramatically high. What if students at Linn-Mar started going into the opposite gender's bathrooms and sexually assaulting people and getting away with it? That's a real problem; Trump making an effort to cut down on transgender rights is not.

As of now, some states allow transgender individuals to use public bathrooms according to their gender identity while some don't. Trump desperately needs to repeal Obama's bathroom bill, so lives can be saved.



Vaccinations provide many benefits, should be mandatory

By Zoey McDonald

Staying home for a real sickness is no fun. No one wants to be coughing, groaning, or moaning at the pain when they could be doing something interesting or adventurous instead. Not getting a vaccination makes it harder for your body to fight off illness. A vaccine is a substance used to start up the production of antibodies and provide immunity against one or several diseases, without actually inducing the disease.

Vaccinations should be mandatory for all individuals before reaching school age due to the increased time spent with large groups of individuals. All public schools currently mandate that children have specific vaccinations before attending. This is to prevent the spread of diseases and to encourage vaccines. However, in some cases, exemption forms are offered for children not to be vaccinated due to the personal or religious beliefs of their guardians.

There should be zero acceptable excuses for not getting a vaccination other than having immune system deficiencies or other medical reasons. Currently, people are allowed to opt out of vaccinations due to personal or religious beliefs. These exceptions should be abandoned because the benefits of requiring vaccination outweigh the possible detriments. The way the law stands today, someone could refuse a vaccine simply because they have a fear of needles. This needs to be changed. Minor reasons for not wanting to get a shot should not take precedent over the benefits of a comprehensive and safe vaccination program.

"I think that vaccinations should be mandatory because if someone does not get vaccinated then they are putting other people at risk of getting diseases, including themselves," says Annie Sood, senior. Not getting vaccinated for personal or religious beliefs puts other people at risk, especially individuals that have immune system dis-

orders and who cannot physically handle being vaccinated. These people are even more sensitive to contracting diseases or illnesses from others. Senior Morgan Francis says she also thinks that vaccinations and flu shots should be mandatory because it would help prevent the spread of diseases.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 732,000 American children were saved from death and 322 million cases of childhood illnesses were prevented between 1994 and 2014 due to vaccination.

Vaccines also protect future generations. According to Vaccines.org, some vaccinations can not only reduce the number of cases of a specific disease around the world but in some cases, they can also be eradicated completely. For example, the smallpox vaccination has helped completely wipe out the disease worldwide and will prevent future generations from getting infected. The human race working

together as a whole to try and prevent diseases and illnesses with vaccinations is an incredible and worthwhile achievement.

While vaccines come with many pros and benefits, they also have some cons. Some people feel vaccinations can potentially cause children to develop autism. This theory has consistently been debunked by credible doctors.

Getting vaccinations can help individuals economically as well. Vaccinations are typically covered by insurance, however the treatment of these preventable diseases could be expensive.

Vaccinations are the answer to preventing certain diseases and illnesses. Vaccinations are easy to get and are recommended by the medical community. If there was a preventative vaccine for cancer, most humans would gladly get it. Vaccinations for other diseases should be viewed in the same way.

Americans must educate themselves to back up their opinions

By Michael McGrew

In 2017, Americans have access to more information than they have ever had before. For example, a simple Google search of “United States” generates more than three billion results. This gives everyone the opportunity to access facts and opinions about every topic imaginable. It also prompts discussions and arguments about various politicians and policies, especially Donald Trump. Everyone seems to have strong opinions on Trump but many lack the research and facts to back them up. How is it that when arguing about the election, many Americans on both sides have become so narrow-minded that their only evidence to support their point is to shout, “He’s racist” or “Lock her up”? The answer is simple. They are ignoring facts and failing to do proper research.

The 2016 election gave birth to a broad range of teachable moments in American classrooms. New topics and arguments were discussed and a new spark in youth political involvement was observed across the United States. While many became more interested, it is a shame that much of the rhetoric commonly used by both students and adults is still uneducated and oblivious, focusing too much on labels and not enough on facts and policy.

Although both sides of the political spectrum fell victim to the media’s agenda to brand the two main candidates, failure to back up claims was mostly seen on the Democratic side. For example, one common

attack against Donald Trump by Liberals was to call him a racist. More specifically, they say that he hates Mexicans and African Americans. It is more professional to actually take a look into those claims.

Donald Trump began his campaign by saying that Mexico is sending rapists and criminals to the United States. Many people twist these words into a whole new meaning, saying that Donald Trump called all Mexicans rapists. Let this first be debunked by realizing that it is impossible for anyone to hate Mexicans while publicly loving and tweeting about taco bowls. On a more realistic note, weak border policies have been allowing gang leaders and drug lords to cross into America, so doesn’t he have a point? Leftists did not like that Trump was one of the first politicians to describe this harsh reality to Americans, so instead of acknowledging the facts, they pulled out the racist card. They chose to defend the feelings of illegal rapists and criminals over the spoken facts of an American.

Cries of “racist” get even more confusing when people say that Donald Trump hates black people. These claims are, of course, not backed by evidence. One situation that led many to this belief was when Trump was endorsed by David Duke, former leader of the Ku Klux Klan. The media was quick to call out Donald Trump for this, leading the public to believe that the endorsement branded Trump as a racist. There are two points that prove these allegations to be untrue. First, Donald Trump disavowed this endorsement, showing he did not want

to be affiliated with the KKK. Second, David Duke endorsed Barack Obama in 2008. When has anyone used that to call Obama racist?

One other heated issue today is the apparent wage gap. Modern feminists argue that men get paid more than women, while others argue that the pay is equal. Many feminists only use one talking point to back this up, saying that women only get paid 77 cents to every dollar that men make. That figure is simply untrue. If it were true, it would violate anti-discrimination laws and be investigated. None of that is happening. To truly understand the “wage gap” it is necessary to look into where the number comes from. If one was to add up all of the wages earned by women in America and divide that by the wages earned by men, the result would be a number in the upper seventies. The 77 cents claim does not come from equal paying positions, as feminists argue.

One real world example of feminist propaganda was shown in the aftermath of an Audi commercial during the Super Bowl. In the commercial, the voice of a father plays saying, “What do I tell my daughter? Do I tell her that her grandpa’s worth more than her grandma? That her dad is worth more than her mom? Do I tell her that despite her education, her drive, her skills, her intelligence, she will automatically be valued as less than every man she ever meets?”

There was immediately backlash to this advertisement as many pointed out that Audi has a wage gap of its own. Audi responded in a tweet, “When we account for all the various factors that

go into pay, women at Audi are on par with their male counterparts.”

The factors they are referring to are the facts that women work fewer hours per week than men and take more time off. If feminists simply did the research and understood these facts before entering the discussion, they would fail to embarrass themselves just as Audi did in this video and more time could be spent discussing real social issues plaguing the United States.

It is time to bring intelligence and facts back to political discussions in America. Members of both parties have failed to perform proper research while still insisting that their opinion is the correct one. To those people, it is time to do some research. Instead of calling Donald Trump racist, watch his speeches and challenge yourself to find actual proof. On all other issues, simply start using resources. Don’t resort to common talking points without evidence. Once Americans start to do this, new and better ideas will be formed.

If someone doesn’t like a policy? Fine. Doesn’t like our political leaders? Great. Figure out what is actually going on in the world, what the best response would be, then come back to your discussions with points to back up the opinions. Nothing can get done when people are misguided. Change can only come when Americans take the responsibility to thoroughly educate themselves on the topics they are passionate about and speak about such topics.

Is Islam too taboo to talk about?

By Charles Petersen

Today’s Regressive Left must stop defending an ideology that goes against liberal principles. In today’s political climate, few topics are as taboo to talk about as Islam. Many people are afraid to talk about Islam or to criticize it in anyway. That’s because a large portion of the modern-day Progressive movement has deemed it bigoted or even racist to do so. But why? Islam is not a race, it’s a religion or a set of ideas so criticizing it could not be deemed racist. Still, many Progressives have deemed it so. They often throw around the word “Islamophobia” which is defined as: “Dislike or prejudice against Islam or Muslims.”

This is where a lot of the confusion arises because dislike for Islam the religion is way different than prejudice against Muslims as people. This is a very poor word choice that lumps legitimate criticism of a set of religious ideas together with bigotry toward people who subscribe to those ideas. This leads to those saying anything dispar-

aging about Islam to be automatically labeled a bigot. A famous instance of this was in 2014 on *Real Time With Bill Maher* when author Sam Harris was talking to Bill Maher about Islam. Harris said that it is totally ridiculous that criticism of Islam gets conflated with hatred towards Muslims. This infuriated something in Ben Affleck, another guest on the panel, who then called both Harris and Maher “gross and racist.” Harris was labeled a racist for criticizing a set of ideas. Both Harris and Maher attempted to explain the difference to Affleck with no success.

Another aspect of today’s Regressive Left abandoning liberal principles is with their large support for Islamic apologists. Probably the biggest example of this is the Muslim head organizer of the Women’s March, Linda Sarsour. One would think that since Sarsour was an organizer for the Women’s March she must be very progressive and pro-women, but she’s far from it. She is pro-Sharia Law, which implements laws from the Quran and the Hadith and requires all citizens to ad-

here to them. Most countries that have Sharia Law are horrible when it comes to the rights of women and homosexuals. In countries with Sharia Law, such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, etc. it is illegal to be gay which can result in imprisonment and even death. In Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to drive, in Yemen women are considered only half a witness and are not allowed to marry without the approval of their male guardian. The list goes on and on. None of these laws or principles are the slightest bit progressive and propping up people who support these ideas is not progressive, but rather regressive.

Linda Sarsour has even attacked Islamic reformist Ayaan Hirsi Ali saying, “I wish I could take her vagina away, she doesn’t deserve to be a woman.” This is all the more awful when you realize that Ayaan Hirsi Ali was born in Somalia to a fundamentalist Muslim family which subjected her to genital mutilation. Apologists like Linda Sarsour are not the least bit liberal. Another example of a Liberal Apologist is

Keith Ellison who was one of the top two contenders for the DNC chairmanship. Ellison, the farther left choice to lead the DNC, is a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization determined to spreading Sharia Law throughout the western world. Ellison ended up losing the DNC Chair to the more moderate candidate Tom Perez.

Liberals and Progressives need to stop being afraid to criticize Islam and the acts being committed in its name. We must start promoting the true reformists of the religion, people like Maajid Nawaz and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Muslims who will stand up for liberal principles and who aren’t opposed to criticism of their faith.

It’s time the left become truly liberal again and to stand up for women’s rights and gay rights all across the United States and the world. It’s time to defend freedom of speech and expression against those who try to silence and intimidate critics. True Liberals fight for the rights of all people, not just those they deem to be oppressed.

Kids must get jobs to gain real-world skills

By Kate McInroy

If a kid didn't read or write for 18 years and was then expected to go to school and do well, society would think that absurd. In that case, why do we expect a teen that has not worked during high school to be successful in the workforce in college or after? One can't truly have much success in jobs later on in life if one doesn't have job experience before going into the workforce. This is why having a job as a teen is vital to development and success later on in life.

According to *TeenLife*, a job allows a teen to be submerged into new groups of people which can be eye-opening to the teen and to those around them. Teens also feel empowered and independent when they hold a job, which allows for the teen to experience what adult responsibility is like. Having a job as a teen also teaches life skills and teaches them how to deal with issues that may arise at work. Teens with jobs also have more appreciation for money management and for money's worth. The US Department of Labor said, "By the time teens graduate from high school, 80 percent will have held a part-time job at some time during the school year. The average high school student works 20 hours per week, and about 10 percent work full time (35 hours or more)." If so many students are working, it is obviously because it is useful to the development of teens and a crucial step in one's life.

Although it seems like most teens are working nowadays, teen employment has actually dropped over the last few decades. According to the Pew Research Center, 2014 was the lowest rate of teen employment in the last 40 years. Over time, the number of teens having jobs has consistently dropped. According to a Twitter poll, 28 percent of teens do not hold jobs as high school students, which may seem like a low number, but in reality, every teen should be working.

As for teens at Linn-Mar, there is quite a mix of kids who have jobs and ones who don't.

Senior Elli Hartzler did not hold a job through high school but now holds one. "I was so busy, but now that I have found time I absolutely love working." Hartzler says that she was lucky enough to find a job she loves and that works with her schedule.

Senior Noah Martin said his job can be tough and at times he doesn't like it but he is learning how to handle lots of different situations that he wouldn't experience if it wasn't for his job. He also mentioned the money doesn't hurt either.

As wonderful as it is to make money, to learn, and to have new experiences, there are some downsides to having a job as a teen. For one, when you are in high school, you are told to go out and get involved. For some, this means having a practice every night after school, meetings in the mornings, and a weekend jam-packed full of activities. This kind of schedule is not ideal for those with a part time job. Along with that, lots of businesses and employers will not hire those with low availability. Some turn away job candidates who are under the age of 16.

The stress of a job can be enough to put anyone over the edge, especially a full time student. The expectation and responsibility that comes with a job can be too much for a student trying to balance other activities and school work. Add on other activities and it becomes even more of a struggle.

Sometimes when a student works at a business they can be subject to scrutiny or humiliation from older workers; although this doesn't happen at all workplaces, it can unfortunately be a problem teens face while working.

In a perfect world, teens would be able to balance all of the aspects of school, social life, and a job. Stress as a teen is almost inevitable, but having a job can offer perks and benefits in the long run.

Senior Autumn Wedemeier works 30 hours a week. She is also taking two Kirkwood classes as well as a couple classes at the high school. This schedule can be hectic and challenging at times.

"I often attempt to play catch up a lot of the time." Even with this kind of crazy schedule, Autumn says that she believes having a job in high school is beneficial in the long run.

"I not only have learned how to manage my time but also to choose my battles. I have learned that a job is more important for me, even when that means giving up free time."

Overall, having a job as a teen teaches valuable lessons that can be used for the rest of your life. Not only do these skills help you become a better worker, but they also improve how you interact with others and help you to become a more well-rounded person. A lot of students balance a job, school work, and activities perfectly fine and are learning valuable lessons about time management.

So if society expects kids to learn to read and write before high school, society should also expect our teens to work before going into the "real world."

Animal testing can save lives

By Jet Ly

Penicillin, an antibiotic known for curing many bacterial infections, would not have been discovered without the use of animal testing. According to animalresearch.info, Oxford scientists Howard Florey and Ernst Chain used rats to test Penicillin's effectiveness against bacteria. Animal testing has led to advances in breast cancer, leukemia, and Parkinson's disease.

The animals that we test on are extremely similar to human beings in many different ways. According to the California Biomedical Research Association, "In fact, chimpanzees share 99% of their DNA with humans, and mice are 98% genetically similar to humans." Because of how similar they are to us, they are susceptible to experiencing and contracting the same diseases and illnesses that humans do.

A report published by NVWA, the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority lists 479,580 procedures conducted on animals for scientific purposes. Now, people get angry when they find out about all the animals that die for science but this number is nothing compared to the animals that we kill for food. Nine billion chickens are eaten every year by people in the United States, but only 26 million animals are used for testing, a mere fraction compared to the number we eat.

There are many cases where people claim that animals are mistreated and that animal testing is not regulated. This is not true. In 1966, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. This law required animal handlers to be licensed and registered and as of 1985, all facilities that are affected by the AWA are required to have a special committee that has at least one veterinarian and one non-company staff member on site to address animal issues. This committee, known as the

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), are found at every institution that does animal testing.

"IACUCs approve and review research protocols, ensure that anesthesia and postoperative medications are used when appropriate, and that alternatives to animals are sought out and integrated into studies whenever possible," said amprogress.org.

According to Nature Genetics, animals that are stressed produce unfavorable test results and it is in the best interest of the tester to not cut corners when it comes to safety and care. For example, dogs at the Cedar-Sinai Medical Center are given exercise breaks and are put on a "toy rotation" program to ensure proper care.

For a facility to receive funding they must comply with the US Public Health Service policy.

While animal testing has allowed new medicines to be made, it is not always successful.

"Over one hundred stroke drugs have been found effective in animals in the lab, yet all have failed in humans. Over 85 HIV vaccines that worked in non-human primates failed miserably when tried in humans," said Aysha Akhtar, neurologist.

Animals are often used when ethics come into play.

"Lives of human volunteers should not be in danger unnecessarily," according to speakingofresearch.com. "Experiments that involve genetic manipulation would be unacceptable to impose on humans before animal testing."

"It's not a good thing, but it is a necessary evil," said Hunter Beyer, senior, on animal testing.

While animal testing isn't perfect, it has advanced the human race by discovering new technologies and new medicines.



EDITORIALS

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Embarrassing moments turn into funny memories

By Paige Harrington

If you ask any student they'll likely be able to tell you the most funny, disgusting, disturbing, or cringe-worthy moments they've seen within the walls of Linn Mar High School. But why doesn't anyone ever want to talk about their own awkward and terrifying memories? Ten of Linn Mar's students and staff got down and dirty to talk about the most embarrassing things to happen to them, either while teaching, or while being an active participant in the classroom.

Some were very reluctant to answer, and others have specific moments ingrained in their minds. Their responses are below.

Ms. Lindsay Vogt, an English teacher, was one of the teachers that received new furniture in the beginning stages of the building reconstruction, and has all new chairs and tables.

"There have been a few times where I would be sitting at my desk and I would literally fall out of my chair. These chairs are just slippery I guess! There was also a time back in the old English hallway where I was walking back to my room during my prep and I tripped and fell flat on my face while there were other classes going on."

Senior Amy Flieder is involved in choir and show choir.

"One time, during a choir rehearsal, Mr. Anderson went on and on about how I was "yelling" instead of singing in front of the

entire class. I promise you I wasn't, but he thought I was so that kind of sucked."

Mr. Terrell is one of three band directors in the music department.

"Back when we first opened up the Color Guard to all students to audition, there was a sign-up sheet on the wall in the hallway. And, as high school students will do, there were names on the list that were false, and more importantly, inappropriate. After school one day I was standing with one of captains of the Color Guard asking her about the students that I didn't know because they weren't in band and I was curious if they had any previous experience that could help them in this program. The thought of any of these names possibly being an innuendo had totally slipped my mind, so I said one of these names out loud without even realizing, and totally embarrassed the captain and made myself look like a fool."

Luke Sloterdijk, senior, is involved in National Honor Society and SODA.

"There was one time I had to fart but I didn't want anyone to notice, so I tried to cough at the same time as I farted to cover it up, except I coughed really loud and then farted, drawing attention to myself."

Mrs. Tiede is another band director in the music department.

"I once tried to lighten the mood and make my students more comfortable about me being their teacher by telling a story about my band class in college. The story is,

during a concert my band professor, whom I knew very well, introduced my solo as "The Hot Saxophone player". I thought it was really funny but the students interpreted it as me having an affair with the professor. When they told me this I was mortified, they obviously did not get the joke, and I was only trying to break the ice!"

Senior Megan Burr only began attending Linn Mar her freshman year.

"This happened like during the first two weeks of school, AND I was the new kid. I was sitting in class and I sneezed, except it was one of those that just kind of went everywhere, it was so awful."

Erin O'Hara is a sophomore involved in all things music, and who is dedicated to her school work.

"I ate something bad in the cafeteria one day and I think I got food poisoning. Anyway, I was taking a test in one of my classes except we had a sub that day who really didn't know what was going on. I asked him if I could go to the bathroom because I thought I was going to throw up. He told me no because I had to finish my test. Towards the end of class I threw up in the trash can because I wasn't allowed to go to the bathroom. I did really badly on that test too and I wasn't allowed to make it up, either. I blame it all on the sub."

Senior Emilee McGowan is a varsity volleyball and tennis player.

"In my US History 1 class my freshman year, our teacher was

trying to explain the relationship between these two countries that we were talking about. He said something along the lines of 'Basically they had sex and don't talk to each other anymore'. I think they forgot that it was a classroom full of 9th graders and they were pretty embarrassed. I felt kind of bad."

Mrs. Axen is a teacher in the English department and she loves to shop online.

"It was one of my first years teaching and I had this really awesome denim skirt on with a zipper in the back. My 9th graders were working hard on a project and I was walking around observing. As I was walking, I noticed that my skirt was getting longer and longer, until eventually it slid straight down to my ankles. It was really embarrassing but none of the students noticed because they were working so hard!"

Junior Katie Kreautner is involved in almost all of the organizations and clubs at Linn Mar, and absolutely despises bugs of any kind.

"I was sitting in class one time and the girl next to me told me that there was a spider on me. I thought she was just trying to mess with me and was all 'no there isn't' but when I looked down there was a small sized tarantula on my sweater and I completely lost my mind. Everyone thought that I been shot or something but nah, it was just a spider."

Robotics remains fun despite being challenging

By Jet Ly

The crowd is riled up. The music is loud. Thousands of people fill the stands cheering for their team. Six robots are waiting on the field. The countdown starts, 3...2...1. The buzzer goes off and the FRC match has begun!

According to Firstinspires.org, Dean Kamen founded FIRST in 1980 to inspire children and students in technology and engineering. FIRST stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology."

"FIRST is a way for students to get excited about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, or STEM," said Phil Kelsey, senior and lead designer of FRC Team 967.

Kamen was joined by Emeritus Flowers, better known as Woodie Flowers, an MIT professor, in 1990. Flowers helped to create

the course 2.007, Introduction to Design. This was a project-based course for students that ended in a robotics competition. Kamen wanted to incorporate the excitement of sports with the fun of science and engineering into a game. In 1992, Kamen and Flowers created FRC, FIRST Robotics Competition, a game geared towards high school students.

According to Team20.com, there was only one event in Manchester, NH and there were 28 teams present. Today, there are over 3,100 teams, from the United States to Vietnam, and more than 145 events. One of these teams is Linn-Mar Team 967, the Iron Lions.

According to Dan Niemitalo, a teacher at Linn-Mar and coach of Robotics, the team was started in 2002 by Mr. Lough, a teacher at the time. At that time the team was known as the Mean Machine. The 2008-2009 season was the year that

Niemitalo began coaching and in 2010 the team took on a new name, The Iron Lions.

Noah Etzel, better known to his team as Kim, is a Linn-Mar senior and a member of Robotics. Etzel is the safety captain and human player for the drive team as well as one of the machinists for the team.

"I ensure that everyone in the environment is being safe and treating others with mutual respect," said Etzel. "My other role, human player, is a member of the four-person drive team that interacts with an object that is a part of the current-year game, as well as communicate between team members."

According to Kelsey, this year's FRC game is called Steamworks. In this game, two alliances made up of three teams work together by attaching gears to their robot "airship" and scoring balls, or "fuel", into goals in order to score the most points and "take off."

Robotics may seem fun, but it does not come without its challenges. FRC has a six-week build season, January 7th to February 21st, where teams must design and build a robot to perform and complete certain game elements.

"It's rough," said Nick Winter, senior and leader of the pit crew. "The build season can sometimes be more stressful than finals."

FRC is not the only Robotics program that Linn-Mar offers. It also has three FTC, FIRST Tech Challenge teams: teams 4324, 4150, and 10107. According to firstinspires.org, FTC is a smaller scale, more affordable FRC, but just as fun.

Interested in Robotics? You can see the Iron Lions compete along with 53 other teams from March 22nd through March 25th at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls.

Cubbies give fans long-awaited World Champions title

By Robert Read

2016 was a year Cubs fans will not soon forget. For the first time in 108 years, the Chicago Cubs are World Champions after defeating the Cleveland Indians in game seven of the World Series. The Cubs had not been to the World Series since 1945, and had not won the fall classic since 1908.

Coming off of a promising 2015 campaign, the Cubs had high hopes for 2016. The Cubs were expected to not only win their division, but also the World Series, expectations not seen on the North Side in decades. These expectations were not only met, but were exceeded as the Cubs owned the best record in the major leagues from circuit to circuit, tallying 103 wins on the season in route to their first division title since 2008.

The 2016 season also brought terrific individual success for many Cubs players, as Kris Bryant was named National League Most Valuable Player, and players like Anthony Rizzo and Kyle Hendricks had the best seasons of their careers.

In the playoffs, Chicago defeated the San Francisco Giants in the divisional round, and the Los Angeles Dodgers in the National League Championship series. By defeating the Dodgers in game six at Wrigley Field, the Cubs clinched the pennant and advanced to the World Series to play the Cleveland Indians.

The World Series offered a matchup between two franchises with long championship droughts, the Cubs at 108 years and the Indians going 68 years without winning the World Series. The Indians got off to a commanding lead, taking a three games to one lead in a best of seven series. The Cubs then gained the momentum, winning the next three games of the series to ensure The Commissioner's Trophy would be brought back to Chicago.

The Cubs had not always had this success. The "Lovable Losers" were for decades believed to be cursed, which served as an explanation for their crushing losses and unbearable moments. Bad luck seemed to follow the Cubs from generation to generation. Collapses in 1969 and 1984 cost the Cubs the chance to play in the World Series, and in 2003 star hitter for the Cubs Sammy Sosa tested positive for performance enhancing drugs and was revealed to be using an illegally corked bat. Each Cub's failure had a curse attached to it, whether it be a billy goat being removed from Wrigley Field, a black cat walking in front of the Cubs' dugout, or an

innocent fan named Steve Bartman going after a foul ball that was still playable. The Cubs seemed doomed to never be champions again.

Despite these misfortunes, Cubs fans always stuck by their beloved team. No matter how awful the team, or how terrible the conditions, Cubs fans have remained faithful through and through, making sure the bleachers at the "Friendly Confines" were always full, and the team was always being supported.

The year 2016 was not only big for the Chicago Cubs, it was also a big year for the fans of the Chicago Cubs. Linn-Mar is home to a number of Cubs fans, each having their own way of taking in the feeling of being champions. According to Drew Martin, junior, he didn't know what to do.

"At first I didn't know how to react," said Martin. "Then I realized, I had just witnessed history."

Ben Delagardelle, junior, sat in disbelief after the final out, astonished at what he had just witnessed.

"I was amazed. The Cubs just won the World Series after a 108 year drought, and I was able to watch it happen," said Delagardelle.

Emotions got the best of David Carey, junior, who could not control himself once the Cubs had won.

"Being a lifelong Cubs fan, seeing Kris Bryant record the final out made me lose control, I started screaming and crying, I just couldn't believe it," said Carey.

The Cubs are in position to be successful for years to come. Many

of their best players are not yet 30 years old, and are under team control for the next several years. Cub's fans have suffered more than any other fans over the past several decades, and now the team is finally able to reward them for their faith by playing good baseball and bringing a championship to Chicago. After generations of a losing tradition, the Cubs appear to be headed toward future success, with more championships that are inevitably on their way to the "Windy City".



Patriot Super Bowl win surprises nobody

By Robert Read

For the fifth time in 16 years, the New England Patriots are Super Bowl Champions. The Patriots cemented their victory over the Atlanta Falcons 34-28 in Super Bowl LI with a two-yard touchdown run by running back James White in the overtime period.

The Falcons, led by league Most Valuable Player, quarterback Matt Ryan, caught fire in the second quarter, scoring 21 points and taking a commanding 21-3 lead into halftime. The explosive plays continued for the Falcons at the start of the second half, and the team gained what seemed like an insurmountable 28-3 lead over the mighty Patriots. New England then began clicking on all cylinders, with quarterback Tom Brady and wide receiver Julian Edelman playing some of the best football of their careers. With the clock ticking down at the end of the fourth quarter and the Patriots down a possession, Brady led a 10-play, 91-yard-drive capped off by a touchdown and game tying two point conversion. Heading into overtime, the Patriots would again have the ball, this time with the opportunity to score a touchdown and win.

This year's Super Bowl was historic for a variety of reasons. The Patriots trailed 28-3 halfway through the third quarter, but rallied to overcome the 25 point deficit to defeat the Falcons in overtime, completing the largest comeback in the history of the Super Bowl. This

year also marked the first time in the 51 year history of the Super Bowl that the game went into overtime. Patriots quarterback Tom Brady set Super Bowl records for passing yards, attempts, and completions in route to winning the Super Bowl Most Valuable Player award for the record fourth time in his illustrious career. Both Brady and Patriots head coach Bill Belichick made history as the first quarterback and head coach in NFL history to win five Super Bowls. This was also Belichick's seventh Super Bowl title overall, as he had also previously won two as an assistant coach.

In a year where the Chicago Cubs and the Cleveland Cavaliers defied expectations and won Championships, the New England Patriots win came as a surprise to nobody. The Patriots have compiled a historic run of success and are considered to be one of the greatest dynasties in not only NFL history, but in sports history. Since 2001, the Patriots have appeared in seven Super Bowls, winning five, and have had 16 consecutive winning seasons.

While being a very successful franchise, the New England Patriots have also been met with controversy during their championship runs. The Patriots have been labeled "cheaters" by many fans around the league, due to their reputation to bend the rules in order to gain a competitive advantage. In 2007, the league investigated and punished the Patriots for illegally videotaping

opposing teams' coaches.

This past season, the Patriots were stripped of their first round draft pick, fined a million dollars, and had their franchise quarterback, Tom Brady, suspended four games as punishment for the "Deflategate" scandal, where the team supposedly tampered with the air pressure in the footballs before a game. Both punishments were met with controversy as critics cited a lack of evidence and maintain that very harsh punishments were given out for what is considered to be very minor incidents that appear quite often in the NFL.

Several Linn-Mar High School students were rooting for the Patriots to lose the Super Bowl.

According to Reed Zahradnik, junior and NFL fan, he was rooting against the Patriots due to his annoyance at the team's cheating scandals, and the fact that the Patriots always win.

"The Patriots always win, and the Falcons are a new, exciting team that I would have liked to see win," said Zahradnik.

The Patriots have made their mark as one of the most successful organizations in the history of the NFL, but with winning comes jealousy and controversy. Opposing fan bases will not feel the excitement for the Patriots' victories like they did for the Chicago Cubs or any other long-time failing franchise. People like to root for the underdog. For now, the Patriots are at the top, and they set the standard for what it means to be successful come.