The Shot(s) Heard ‘Round the World: Students Take a Stand

By Kendra Grillo ‘21

All across America, a wave of voices has been heard from students and teachers alike. People are realizing that school shootings, despite how terrible they may be, must be discussed openly in society. Young adults pushed their message in events like the March 14th nationwide “Walkout” and the “March for Our Lives” protests that were staged in major U.S. cities last month.

Adding their voices to the protest for safe schools, many Oxford High school students joined the nationwide walkout on March 14, organized in by OHS senior Erin Cunningham. Earlier in the month, Cunningham tweeted Mrs. Potter to inform the administration about the walkout. This groundbreaking event was produced by students and for students. It took place on the one-month anniversary of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida. At 10 a.m., the participating students and teachers left their classes to meet in front of the school for 17 minutes—one minute to honor each of the 17 lives lost in Florida. The turnout was substantial, around half the student body chose to participate.

Students, including the organizer Erin Cunningham, delivered powerful speeches and poems calling for school safety. Others created signs to voice their opinions. Mrs. Potter delivered words of support, but the event was largely student-run.

School safety protests did not stop at walkouts throughout the nation. The “March for Our Lives” protest took place the following weekend on March 24th. OHS Wolveread Journalist Kendra Grillo was lucky enough to attend the Connecticut event in Hartford. Similar “March for Our Lives” events took place all over the nation, the most notable in Washington D.C. The Hartford rally was incredible, hundreds of people came together to demand protection for the nation’s school children. (Continued on Page 3)
Mero Comes to Inspire Students
By Madeline Haefele, ‘21

On March 9th, Marc Mero, a former wrestler and WWE Intercontinental Champion, came to OHS to give a presentation addressing bullying, wrong decision making, and the key to a happy life.

Using a variety of anecdotes, the speaker aimed to change students lives for the better and inspire them to make great choices in their lives. He addressed the events that have occurred in his life, including the misguided choices he had made, and how he got to them now. Continuously referencing his own old journal, he encouraged the students to write down their dreams and goals. By seeing this desire everyday, people become more motivated to actually achieve it. He was ultimately focused on helping the students become inspired to create a better life for themselves.

“Just because you have a bad chapter doesn’t mean it’s the end of the book” was one of the many inspirational quotes stated by Mero. His whole presentation consisted with a message similar to that quote. He strongly conveyed to the audience that everybody in the room is worth it and has the potential to do great things. This goes along with the name of his presentation, “BADD - Be Against Destructive Decisions” helping to give students the motivation they need to succeed in life. Hopefully students were able to recognize this important message embedded within his presentation and implement his lessons into their everyday lives.

The next time that you have a goal, dream, or desire, write it on a sticky note and put it somewhere you can see it everyday. Do not be scared of not reaching the goal, or falling short. As said by Mero, “Failure isn’t aiming too high and missing, failure is aiming too low and hitting it”.

Changes to Sophomore Demos Receive Positive Responses
By Luis Leon ‘20

Sophomore Demonstrations at OHS have had a major redesign this year. Before, students were required to follow a 10+ step guideline with a broad grading rubric. This year, the presentations are more streamlined; students present their work and achievements to their advisory classes in a PowerPoint presentation they have created. The changes are intended to make the presentations clear and efficient, and to give presenters and listeners a meaningful learning experience.

Since the school’s opening in 2007, Sophomore Demos have served as an opportunity for sophomores to present the work and accomplishments of their first two years of high school. It is an opportunity to pause and reflect upon the achievements they have completed and to set goals for new accomplishments in their high school careers.

Ms. Salvatore, sophomore class adviser, says that it’s “benchmark for Capstone,” a project all students are required to complete in their senior year.

Last November, Mrs. Batista and Mrs. Nisbet, Advisory Coordinators, asked the OHS staff for suggestions in revamping the demos. The system, at that time, was a decade old and the layout was adopted from past advisory coordinators who no longer work within the committee. As Batista put it, the project was “redundant and time consuming,” from the guidelines to the presentations themselves.

It became a noticeable trend that students didn’t put in the effort of reflecting upon ten assignments. The process that was intended to lead students to success was becoming formulaic and ineffective. In other words, students did it just to have it done. (Continued on page 5)
Chants echoed across the crowd as protesters marched around the state capital, chanting: “This is what democracy looks like” and “Not one more”, referring to the fallen people.

People of all ages held up signs voicing their concerns, and proving anyone can be an advocate. Most signs were homemade, phrases pasted on in bold letters like “I come to school for A’s not PTSD” or “Policy and change > thoughts and prayers”.

After a short march filled with yells for freedom and cheers, the group rallied in front of the capitol building to listen to powerful speeches from Senator Blumenthal and other student advocates. It was truly a thought-provoking experience and I would recommend anyone of any age to go to a rally to stand up for what they believe in.

The statistics of school shootings in America are shocking, especially compared to other countries. There have been 17 acts of violence in schools in 2018 alone, as compared to Switzerland, which hasn’t had any form of mass shooting since 2001. These astonishing numbers leave many citizens asking ‘How many more?’, ‘Why does the U.S. have so many more shootings than other countries?’, and students asking ‘Am I next?’.

Many feel that schools have not been safe for a long time; school violence is not new to Americans. Yet each time a school is attacked, it shocks us all. Why is it so surprising? All we do is lend our “thoughts and prayers” to the victims and just move on a few weeks later. There is almost no change; few nationwide solutions in mental health counseling and gun control; overall very little action. So why are we shocked? Nothing changes each time these tragedies occur, so we should expect our schools to magically be safer.

However, this time is different. Everyone who agrees with the cause for safer schools is standing up and fighting for change, so the Parkland victims’ names will not be forgotten. The organization “March for Our Lives” has pledged to keep fighting until justice is served and schools are safer.

Despite what many say, this is not a “red” vs. “blue” issue. It does not have to be one group against another, and the issues our country faces do not have to be political unless we make it that way. As one unified nation, the American people can discuss ways to make a stronger, safer society. Whether you think we should arm teachers or take away assault weapons altogether, almost everyone in the nation can agree some sort of change is needed to keep children safe. A big step to make change is to accept that young adults should have a say in the movement. After all it’s their lives on the line! Most of the young adults have some valuable things to say, so we cannot write them off as “stupid teenagers” who don’t know anything about the world.

**Note from the writer:** As a high school student, I believe we should be involved. I do not want to be scared to go to school everyday, paranoid something may happen. Schools should be a place of learning, not a place of fear. Students should be worrying about what to wear to the school dance, not about being shot. So many students, including young adults from Parkland, have valuable ideas and views that can change our flawed society. They should have a chance to speak up. Events like the walkout and rallies provide an outlet for young advocates to get involved in a way never before seen. Older people and politicians can say we are inexperienced all they want, but we will keep fighting for our right to be safe in school. We are not “self-righteous kids screaming on TV.” We are the future of this country.
**Students Step Up to Donate at Blood Drive**

By Morgan Hines ‘19

More than 36 OHS staff and students gave the gift of life when they donated blood at a Red Cross Blood Drive, hosted by National Honor Society last month. Red Cross workers, including nurses, phlebotomists, and clerical personnel turned the OHS gym into a donation site, complete with cubicles for private counseling and stretchers for donating.

This is the second blood drive hosted by NHS this year. At the October 2017 drive, the Oxford High School community donated 20 pints which helped to save 60 lives. In total, contributions at the high school, including high school and Oxford community members, totaled 48 pints.

“We sincerely appreciate all that you do to ensure that your blood drive is successful and to support those patients who need blood,” said Tasha Coleman of the American Red Cross Services. The blood donated at the drive will be put to good use. It will be given to those who are affected by severe injuries, cancers, and diseases that cause a patient to be in need of blood. All donations are sure to save lives.

Though there were many generous donations in the drives done this year, the Red Cross encourages everyone to donate. They all also ask that those who donated encourage their friends and family to the same, for every donation counts.

If you didn’t get the chance to donate this year, there will be two other blood drives in next year’s school year. They will be run by two of NHS’ new officers Aniela Olbrys and Marissa Dilulio.

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**Students Strut Their Stuff in Fashion Show**

Kassidy Schiavi ’21, Luis Leon ’20, Melina Donlon ’21

Students strode along center stage, flaunting eloquent dresses that are recommended for prom. Their fellow classmates sat in the audience laughing and clapping in awe of the spectacle. The annual Prom Fashion show was held on March 9th, showing off a variety of outfits modeled by student participants who would be attending this year’s prom.

Drew Adames, a junior, coordinated the event with the class of 2019 officers. Mrs. Fetzko and Mrs. Kennedy were the class advisors. It took place in the auditorium in a series of displayments. Student Sophie Kritemeyer was the MC for the event, announcing all the models and their styles. The first session consisted of a selected wardrobe that was recommended to wear to prom. It had extravagant dresses and suits that were donated by Ken’s Clothiers in Southbury and the models had makeup done by Oxford Academy of Hair Design.

“I think it went great,” Mrs Fetzko stated when asked about the show, “I think it was a good idea to sell prom dresses and I hope they continue to do it next year.” Hopefully, the fashion show will be a future tradition here at Oxford High School.

“I really thought the tux was designed well and definitely had some style.” Said one of the male models, Patrick Mucherino, commented when asked if he liked the clothes given to model during the show. Good news for Ken’s Clothiers, who were also selling the clothes featured in the show.

The following segment took a turn for a comical approach, exhibiting clothes of “what not to wear” to prom. Models came out wearing athlete uniforms, intentionally unappealing wardrobe, and outfits which one would wear at a completely different occasion. Students wore sweatpants, jeans and T-shirts, and other apparel that filled the auditorium with laughter.

Finally, the last portion concluded with an encore. Each pair of models came out wearing a new set of outfits that were equally, if not more, stunning as the first set. At the end, all the models lined up on the stage and did the Cupid Shuffle as practice for dancing at the prom, which members of the audience happily joined in on.

The fashion show was an event giving students an opportunity to observe and buy dresses. Mucherino says his favorite part about being in the show was, “Probably getting ready and fooling around with everyone before, after, and at the intermission of the show.” It was a fun fundraiser for the contenders as all the money raised would be going to their prom. Adames says, “for the most part it was successful. The more students who could have attended, the better it would have been.” Despite having a small turnout, the Prom Fashion show is to sponsor companies and support students.
‘Debation Nation’ Strikes Again
By Stephanie McNamara ’20

The OHS debate team has just concluded the debate season—and with great success.

After two months without debating due to weather-related cancellations, the team finally had the opportunity to put hours of practice to use.

“When you debate you usually pick up a routine, and by not practicing you kind of lose your rhythm,” said Luis Leon, sophomore. “But eventually the team got back on track.” The debaters had to face many challenges throughout the season. The months in which they were not able to compete put other schools’ debate teams at advantage, as many of them were able to attend competitions in other locations. Also, many OHS students that did not go to the competitions in the fall tournaments were entering halfway through the season with little to no experience. However, these challenges did not stop the OHS debate team.

James Miller, a debater in his sophomore year at OHS, ranked 11th out of 108 novice speakers in a February competition at Daniel Hand High School, getting 82 points out of a possible 85. “I went into [the competition] blindly think I’d immediately fail and have to learn, but it soon became apparent that you just need to be confident and pay attention. It’s actually really fun,” James said after the tournament. To some, debating may be intimidating. However, the Oxford debaters seemed to get a grasp of the process and the tactics quickly.

The team of Madeline Haefele and Ohm Patel, two freshman debaters, also impressed many with their accomplishments this season. They not only scored 3-0 in a competition in March at Wilton High School, but as a team they came in 3rd place out of 40 novice teams. This led them to state finals, an exceptional achievement for Oxford.

All these great accomplishments were not handing to Oxford’s debaters; they worked hard for their success, without question. Before each monthly competition, the team met and rigorously practiced in order to improve their skills. “It’s helpful to run through the proper format of a debate,” Madeline explained. “It helped Ohm and I get comfortable with the flow of a debate and how we should present our arguments using our own strengths and weaknesses.”

With the season now at a close, the Oxford team now looks back on the successes of their first year with pride. Growth and improvement is expected in the years to come.

Sophomore Demo (continued from Page 2)

For example, parts where students were to be tested on presentation skills turned to droned out scripts that gave no value. On top of this, advisory structures were also different in past years. A single class would contain 16 students, all in their sophomore year; so getting through all the presentations would take months.

“[We] streamlined the sophomore demonstrations,” Ms Batista said. The committee reviewed the layout and cut the guidelines in half or, “chopped it up,” she claimed. Areas that reflected the least amount of effort were cut. The ones that offered value and substance for the students stayed in the new layout.

The new advisory system established this year is expected to also be more efficient in working in the demos. Instead of having one class entirely of sophomores there are now advisories with only 1-3 sophomores who will present these demos. As a result, not only will presentation time be shortened, but freshmen students in advisory class will learn from the presentations; and juniors and seniors will be giving advice for the upcoming Capstone.

Seniors who have experienced the old system find the new demos to be much better as well. “The 10 pieces were redundant and oftentimes 1 piece was used for the purpose for 2 purposes,” student senior Corinne Cude claims. “If it’s in the name of efficiency, I’m glad they changed it. If it means gaining a better project and less stress for sophomores, I hope it goes well,” says another senior Chelsea Hidalgo. This year’s sophomore demos have concluded March 28th and presentations began April 10th.
By Kassidy Schiavi ‘21

As students may have seen, the gym and lobby have been overrun - by artists showcasing their pieces.

On the night of March 5, an art show was hosted in our very own high school, featuring the arts of many talented artists who yearned to share their passion with their peers. The gym and auditorium were filled to the brim with talented artwork by students from all schools of the Oxford Public School system. The show was open for one night and one night only, and it attracted hundreds of Oxford parents and students to see their child or friend’s pieces of art.

“[I wanted] to have people notice how art grows with the people throughout the school systems.” Said Mrs. Aldrich, one of the art teachers in charge of organizing the show, when asked why an art show was put on, specifically why at the high school. Though she also added that Oxford High School was chosen for its large open space so they could fit the hundreds of entries into the art show efficiently.

The theme of the show was “many hands.” Without explanation, the theme can confuse some, but luckily Mrs. Aldrich clears up any puzzle-

ment with a very fitting explanation. “Yes, many hands. In other words it was done by many different types of hands from preschool up to high school.” The theme went along with the motivation, in order to show the growth of ages through the schools.

Out of the many people that entered out of the schools students, most pieces came from the elementary schools, Oxford Center School and Quaker Farms School, contributing to the estimated 1,000 entry pieces with multitudes of artworks, ranging from a tree made of spoons to finger paintings, so put by Mrs. Aldrich. The hard work of each artist paid off well, as hundreds of Oxford residents flocked to view the brilliant artworks of their fellow peers. The pieces shown off either came from an artist’s personal collection or an art class project, and some artists showcased a multitude of works. The art media ranged from fingerpaintings to a tree sculpture made of spoons.

The art show was a great opportunity for young artists to put their work out there for others to see.
A pair of culinary social media celebrities recently visited Oxford High School to speak about careers choices, overcoming doubt, and what success really means.

Stephanie Tornatore and Adam Bannon, known on the Fit Couple Cooks, visited OHS on March 28th to share their life experiences before, during, and after becoming YouTube sensations. The married couple turned social media stars emphasized the importance of choosing a career path that brings happiness, while also discussing what it was like to face hurt and doubt on the path to gaining more than half a million subscribers across multiple platforms.

Tornatore mentioned how she started her journey 15 minutes away in Southbury, CT, where she graduated high school and went on to college to become a musician. Weight was a struggle for her growing up, which prompted her to start eating more healthily at college. Bannon similarly faced issues with his weight in his native Australia, as well as difficulty with reading and understanding concepts. He mentioned that his fifth grade teacher told him that he, “wouldn’t amount to anything,” and he faced bullying at his school. With the assistance of an interpreter who helped him during his junior year of high school, he was able to graduate and go onto trade school to become a chef.

Bannon stated that he eventually decided to become a personal trainer. At the recommendation of a friend, he began selling dietary supplements through a company called Isagenix, which turned out to change his life by introducing him to Tornatore. At the time, Tornatore was also working for the company in the U.S., and the two hit it off after connecting on Facebook. Tornatore had also developed a YouTube channel called Chef Steph, where she curated healthy meals. After a few years of communicating, Bannon moved to America to live with Tornatore, and the two were married before developing the current channel for which they are known.

The couple stressed to the audience that although their career paths didn't work out in the beginning, their lives have been enlightened for the better. They described how people underestimated the impact of their channel, which was hurtful for a time. However, their current subscriber count suggests that they are making a difference in people’s lives, which is exciting for them.

Tornatore and Bannon currently live in Connecticut and run Fit Couple Cooks full time. They recently released a book called Healthy Meal Prep, and will soon be embarking on a book tour.

Follow Fit Couple Cooks at the following links:
- Youtube: Fit Couple Cooks
- Instagram: @fitcouplecooks
- Twitter: @FitCoupleCooks
- Facebook: Fit Couple Cooks

Photo Credit: Youtube.com
Mr. Pecka, the debate team coach, introduced his students to the structure of debate this past month, holding mini debates in class. Being constantly exposed to the format of a debate, Mr. Pecka was inspired to include it in a classroom setting, the particular classes being his English 9 Honors classes. With the help of myself and Ohm Patel, he judged the rounds himself. The debate resolve was whether Odysseus was justified in killing the suitors in a scene from The Odyssey. When interviewed he said he was interested to see how many of his students would be able to successfully present their argument, while tearing down the other side’s. Many students stood out during the debates including Paige Davis, Kathleen Manning, Leanne Sepanek, and Kendra Grillo. In both classes, the negative side won, however, it was very close in his 5th period class. There was only a three point difference between the affirmative and negative teams.

Although he said that trying to apply it to a classroom setting was “very, very challenging [...] that's also part of what makes it I think enjoyable the fact that so many students can get involved in it.” This challenge resonated with the large amount of students within a class. Rather than the standard of having two teams of two against one another, there were two teams of ten or eleven. Looking forward to implementing this format into a class setting in years coming, Mr. Pecka enjoyed introducing his students to this structure of argument. Hopefully many of his students liked the experience as well and will considering joining the team for next debate season.

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**Club Feature: VEX Robotics Club**

By Alexander Hess, Class of ’21

Oxford High School has a VEX Robotics Club. The robotics club meets every Tuesday after school in Room 208 until 3:30 p.m. The club is led by Senior Liam Gerrity and advised by Mr. Ouellette. Members can learn to build and program robots with different functions. During meetings, members get to all help out whether it be making programs for the robot to use or physically build the robot.

Members also enjoy getting to spend an afternoon conversing with others that share a hobby. They enjoy learning new skills and making new friends. This year, members are building and programming a robot that will be able to lift and move cones onto stationary and mobile goals. The robot is programmed to move and lift cones. The club also plans to compete at multiple events. There they would be paired with another team facing against two other robots to see who can score the most points in the allotted time.

The members have taken an interesting approach this year by using a linear motion kit to move a contraption that will be able to lift and move the cones instead of the original idea of using a claw. Also, the OHS VEX Robotics Club received a grant this year that allowed them to purchase many new and spare parts, as well as an entire arena field. This will allow members to get a hand on how to control the robot and learn some strategies to assist them in future tournaments.

Overall, the OHS VEX Robotics Club is a great time for people that have a background in robotics, or even if you are just starting out wisely.
By Allison Degree, Class of ’21

American Sign Language, or ASL, is a language that many people don’t know much about. Most of the time sign language only impacts people who are deaf and the people around them. Because of this, people don’t tend to have the desire to learn it. However, there are about 70 million deaf people in the world. Therefore, there is a chance that you will meet at least one deaf person in your life. Sign language is also overlooked a lot. People believe that it is very simple and easy to learn, however that is not the case.

There are hundreds of different signs to memorize, some of which are very similar. This means that whoever is signing has to know how to differentiate between the signs so the people watching are not confused. Also, sign language is different everywhere you go. Different signs mean different things from country to country. It can even vary between every state as a sort of dialect. So, the sign for a word in Connecticut may be similar but different than the same word in New York.

There are over 200 different types of sign languages around the world, and even some that are no longer in use. At Oxford High School, we have a club where you can be taught how to do American Sign Language. The advisor of the club is head of the English department, Mrs. Evans and president of this club is junior Micki Geffert. I interviewed the two of them about the club and some of their responsibilities in it.

Mrs. Evans was kind enough to give the WolveRead the following interview.

Q: How long have you advised this club?
A: For two years, since it began.

Q: What made you interested in helping?
A: I liked how it was mainly the students spearheading it because it could be seen that they really wanted to be doing it.

Q: What made you interested in helping?
A: I not only wanted to learn more sign language, but also I felt that the community that would be created would be impactful to me.

Q: How did you become president?
A: Rachel Videra had started the club as her Capstone project, and my mom was her mentor. I was close friends with Rachel and she asked me if I would like to run the club when she left.

What I mainly do is make copies. Meetings are always on Mondays, so Micki and I work together to schedule the meetings based on what days work for the two of us. At meetings I just hang out.

Q: Is it a lot of time commitment?
A: No, like I said I just have to be at the meetings and make some copies.

Q: What made you interested in being a part of it?
A: I not only wanted to learn more sign language, but also I felt that the community that would be created would be impactful to me.

Q: How long have you been part of the club?
A: I have been a part of this club since it started in October of 2016.

Q: What is unique to this club compared to others?
A: This club has students trying to actually learn something and to me, that is super cool to watch.

Q: In three words, how would you describe the club?
A: Motivated, energetic, and active.

Micki Geffert also granted us an interview.

Q: How long have you been part of the club?
A: Since it started in October of 2016.

Q: What commitment is required as the advisor?/What are your responsibilities?
A: There are few responsibilities.

that can be done after the signs are learned. (Continued on page 10)
Q: What are your responsibilities as president?
A: As president of ASL club I have to create a topic that many signs fit under such as food or family members. I then try to find an activity that can be done after the signs are learned. I also have to keep the Google Classroom updated in order to inform members when the next meeting will be, or what was done at the meeting if someone was to miss it.

Q: Is it a big commitment?
A: I would say that running ASL club, along with any other club, takes a lot of commitment. I try to be dedicated to running it to make sure that the members have the best experience. As a leader you need to be able to express that you want to be there and that you are fully committed to, in my case, teaching the members sign language.

Q: How do these responsibilities differ from those of a member?
A: There really aren't any responsibilities as a member, there isn't any homework or requirements, but it is suggested that you show up to meeting, are open to learning, and hopefully have some fun. My responsibilities as the leader are more to be encouraging and helpful, as opposed to the members are to be open to learn.

Q: Is there any community involvement?
A: ASL club is currently involved with only OHS students. I would love to be able to open it up a few times to maybe the OHS senior center and even the other schools in the Oxford District. I think that if we were get the community involved we could possibly all come together and learn a song that can be performed for the senior center or the other schools. Another way I would love to get ASL club involved in the community would be to invite local citizens who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to a meeting to be able to interact with and maybe even be taught by someone who is deaf.

Q: Why do you think this club is important to have?
A: I believe that there are so many people out there who know about sign language, but never thought it was a language that they could ever learn. I think that by informing high school students about ASL is impactful. So many people are like “Woah, you know Sign Language! Can you teach me?” This desire and passion within students is what really drives the club. By spreading the knowledge, it can open up paths for people that they didn’t even think of.

Q: Do you like being president?
A: I love being the president of ASL club. It not only gives me a leadership position, but I love being able to inform people. I am very passionate about ASL and even I would like to learn more, but being able to spread my knowledge while putting smiles on students faces really makes this club worthwhile.

Q: If you could change one thing about the club, what would it be?
A: I would change the amount of involvement. There are only about 10-15 students currently in ASL club. I would love if the club could grow and create a larger following. If this were to happen so many more individuals would be enlightened about how amazing ASL really is.

Q: In three words how would you describe the club?
A: Fun, informative, and a community.
Faculty Profile: Mrs. Donlon

By Leanne Sepanek 21

Mrs. Donlon is a teacher many students at OHS are fond of. She is one of our most passionate-about-her-subject teachers. When asked if she has always had a love for science, her answer was an enthusiastic “Yes!” When she was in high school her love for science grew. In her high school, there were labs much greater than the ones that OHS students conduct. But she was not always the outgoing spirit we see today. Apparently, when her teacher neared during one lab, her and her lab partners started to whisper about all of their statistics and their experiments. She thought that because he hovered so long that they were doing something wrong. So she asked that same question. Her teacher quickly said “No, you’re talking about science and I love it!” This further sparked her interest in the scientific world.

In high school, her favorite subject was biology, she was truly “in love” with that field of science. After her schooling was done, she worked at a water treatment plant. She was actually the first woman to work there. She was “astonished” when she heard the town selectmen say “I don't know why they want to hire a woman” her response to this was “Why not!” She said that working in a water treatment “never occurred to her as being a man's job.” To be the first woman to work at any division of work takes strength, and our fellow teacher procured that strength over and over again to work at an all male job.

Another surprising fact is that teaching was not her first choice of profession. In fact she was quote “tricked into teaching” and never thought about being a teacher. Many throughout her life said that teaching would be an excellent job for her, but it did not occur to her as her true passion. She always thought that she was too shy, a hard fact to believe because of her outgoing appearance. Her husband actually was the one to trick her. Saying that’s he had to go to a board meeting. Little did she know that the specific board meeting was about finding a new biology teacher, which she was well suited to do, and she did. Before becoming a teacher, she was going to be an environmental scientist, but alas teaching stole her heart and she has been doing it ever since. She would like to get her Ph.D. in a field such a bioengineering. She said that if she had the time she would “absolutely go back to school” without a doubt.

Finally, she leaves her students with this piece of universal advice “For all students, number one, learn how to read and enjoy it, because most kids today don’t. If you can read well, then the world is open to you. Secondly do whatever is in front of you to the best of your ability every single day. Then you are always ready for wonderful opportunities when they come.”

Faculty Q&A: Mrs. Dzienkiewicz

By Yianni Constantinou ‘21

Q: What is one that best describes you?
A: Energetic.

Q: What is/was your favorite sport to play or watch, if any?
A: I was a cheerleader in high school. I know some still argue that it isn’t a sport, but I would say that competitive cheerleading definitely is. It takes a lot of talent to be able to do what cheerleaders do today. As for sports to watch, Major League Baseball is my favorite (Go Yankees!) and I do love to watch my nieces and nephews play soccer.

Q: Do you enjoy sweet foods or savory foods more? What is your favorite food?
A: Definitely savory. I honestly love all food, but if I had to pick something I could eat everyday without getting sick of, it would be pizza.

Q: What is your favorite TV show?
A: “Friends”!

Q: What advice or warning would you offer to teenagers today?
A: Make smart decisions. Don’t do anything you do not want to do just because your friends are doing it.

(Continued on page 12)
Mrs. D. Q & A (Continued from page 11)

Q: Some may not know that you have been teaching here since the school opened in 2007. What has kept you in this school district for so long?
A: I can’t say there is just one thing that has kept me here. I have seen a great deal of change at OHS since the beginning and I have learned as lot as well. Overall, the students here are great. I have formed some great relationships with students and love seeing how they grow and change (and mature!) from their freshmen to senior year. I also have a very close bond with the staff that has been here from the very beginning. I can clearly remember meeting them all for the first time before school started back in 2007 and we all instantly bonded. It’s pretty special to be part of the original staff here at OHS!

Q: What is your favorite memory as a teacher here?
A: There have been so many! The very first day of school back in 2007 (I honestly still remember it and remember my classes). The day when our students filled the time capsule which will be open in 2057. The day our first graduation class walked across the stage. (As you can tell a lot of firsts!)

Q: What have you found your favorite history class and grade to teach?
A: I love teaching 10th grade U.S. government (AP and Civics).

Q: What made you want to become a teacher? What would you recommend to any students considering to become a teacher?
A: For as long as I can remember I always wanted to be a teacher. My sister and I would play school all the time. When we would go to my grandmothers after school on Fridays we would quiz her on the continents and oceans. She still talks about it today. As for students who want to become teachers, I would say go for it! People generally think teaching is easy because we get summers off, but it definitely can be challenging, yet is so rewarding at the same time.

Q: With the rising threats against school security, what do you think will be the best way to make our school more secure?
A: School safety is clearly an issue that needs to be dealt with as a whole. OHS has always strived to ensure the safety of their students and staff and are constantly working to make sure we are safe. I think it’s important for students, staff, and parents to speak up if they have any concerns.

OPINIONS

Student Thoughts on Gun Control

The following articles contain student opinions both for, and against the topic of gun control. These articles were written following the events of the Parkland, FL shootings.

The Case for Gun Control
By Piper Geffert, ‘21

After the recent events of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting that took place on February 14th, 2018 in Parkland, Florida, there has been much controversy over what the correct plan of action is. This marked the eighth school shooting since the beginning of 2018. With these school shootings becoming more of a normality, it’s hard to tell when action is going to be taken, but this time seems promising. Accessibility to guns is a huge part of school shootings, and no child should ever fear going into a place of education, yet everyday children are murdered by guns in their classrooms. Arguably enough, I believe knives would have not been able to kill that many people. The students from the school in Parkland, Florida have started a movement that has affected the whole nation. Across the United States, children and teens are speaking up because adults won’t. We, the children of the U.S., are the future of this country and if anyone can make change, it’s us.

Some of the varying opinions revolve around having tighter gun restrictions, getting rid of military grade weapons for citizen’s use, getting people with mental illness the help they need, or not even changing anything. There may be many ways to deal with this situation, however, I think there need to
more gun restrictions, so not everyone can own a gun. It should be harder for people with mental illness to buy guns, but unfortunately in 2017, Donald Trump overturned a rule put in place by Barack Obama that made it harder for the mentally ill to buy guns. Time and time again, guns have been used to commit deadly actions, whether it be killing other people or committing suicide. Enough is enough, and something needs to be done to stop these actions from being committed.

The common trend that is seen across the board from the Sandy Hook shooting all the way to the Las Vegas shooting, was that these shooters used an AR-15, a semi-automatic rifle. These military grade weapons do no belong in the hands of everyday citizens because there is absolutely no need for them. Even hunters do not use these types of guns because of how powerful they are.

Now, this idea isn’t talking about a ban on all guns, but tighter restrictions on them. I understand that the NRA (National Rifle Association) stands by the Second Amendment and that’s why they don’t want to see change to gun laws, but the Constitution is supposed to change with the times. In 1791, when the Second Amendment was adopted, semi-automatic rifles and things like bump stocks didn’t exist, nor did many people use guns for the wrong reasons.

However, in present day America, there is little gun control and these laws are being abused. I also believe it is ridiculous that in some cases, you can buy a gun before you can legally drink. For example, the law in Florida states that someone 18 and above can buy a gun, which is why Nikolas Cruz, the Parkland shooter, was able to buy and use his gun, slaughtering innocent teens. This law also applies when trying to buy guns at many convenience stores like Walmart or Dick’s Sporting Goods. After recent events though, many places have been raising their age limits to 21 and older. Too many innocent lives have been taken from semi automatic rifles that it has become overlooked, but now is the time we take action and demand gun control.

The Case Against Gun Control
By Zachary Fleishman, ‘21

Gun control is a rising, extremely controversial topic that is being discussed all around our nation on a regular basis. After the horrific events that have unfolded in the recent past, the debate whether we need more gun control has flourished.

I believe that we still need guns in today’s society. The world around us is far too dangerous to live without a weapon to protect ourselves with. Having said that, I do believe there should be a longer, more complex method to purchase a weapon, but not impossible to buy one.

Weapons can serve a great purpose, and without them we might experience a more dangerous world we face even with guns. Guns can be very useful, and one topic discussed is self defense. Using guns for self defense can be life saving in some situations, and in the end may eliminate robberies as a whole. The NRA (National Rifle Association) is a large, non profit organization that is against gun laws pointed out that another topic being discussed from political standpoint is federal abuse towards gun owners.

By passing a bill that prohibits guns, there is a chance that man people would become felons overnight, who may not have realized the bill has been passed. This can lead to violent armed home invasions on innocent people. States are trying to do everything in their power to pass laws for gun control, but they are not looking ahead on the impact eliminating guns can have in the long run.

The controversy for gun control has sprouted so much that students and teachers are coming together at capitol buildings protesting the government for not doing anything about guns. But how can these people fight hate with more hate? Protesting isn’t the solution. More complex laws and common sense is the solution to this rising problem.
After recent events (like the Parkland shooting), what actions do you think should be taken to prevent it from happening again?

“There should be methods of looking out for possible dangers towards schools such as violent actions of students not being blatantly dismissed or not ignoring threats made towards the schools, faculty, or students. Schools should not be so easily accessible by anyone from the public, and mental health should be taken seriously before it becomes an excuse for these incidents.” - Freshman at OHS

“I don’t believe there are any actions to be taken. I think perhaps we can be a little more precautionary in that we spend a little bit more time with students we think are troubled or have serious mental health issues. I don’t know that I think there is only one answer. I think the issue is much more complex than let’s find this one tangible solution which is gun control or the mental health and health care system. We can be a little bit more open-minded as to what needs to be done and maybe we could make some sort of progress. I don’t think gun control is the end all, be all” -Mrs. Evans, teacher at OHS

Do you think that teachers should be armed in schools? Why or why not?

“No, teachers should not be armed in schools. Allowing for teachers to carry would only increase students anxiety and feeling of insecurity and lack of trust towards the people they should trust if anything were to happen. Fighting fire with fire should never be a viable option in this situation.” -Freshman at OHS

“I do think that teachers should be armed. In the amount of time it takes law enforcement to get to the location of the attack, the damage has likely already been done. The idea that another person in the school may have a weapon can scare a shooter away. If it doesn’t it also provides another line of defense to at least slow the threat and allow law enforcement to reach the location.” - Sophomore at OHS

“No, because there should be no reason to protect against guns with guns.” -Junior at OHS

“I do not support the arming of teachers. Many teachers are uneducated themselves on anything firearm related let alone self defense or tactical situation related. The vast majority, growing up and living in a safe and stable country, do not want or feel no need to learn. I do, however, feel that our schools should be armed and protected, but I think this job should be given to military combat veterans of a certain age bracket who are willing to hold this position and who prove capable both physically and mentally (as ptsd is a very common issue nowadays). This would help to employ our veterans and in a skillset they have already become accustomed to more or less, and keep firearms from being held by those unfit and unwilling to use them around children.” -Senior at OHS

Absolutely not. More guns leads to more chaos. Frankly, you have to ask yourself, which teachers would you want to be armed and why and if they aren’t all armed what’s the point. I think also it’s fair to say, we don’t have any idea how we would respond in that situation that’s that traumatic and even with all the training in the world, we may not respond appropriately, so there could be more deaths.” -Mrs. Evans, teacher at OHS
Gymnastics Team Enjoys Stellar Season

By Nicole Bobbie, ’21

Oxford High’s Gymnastics team competed in the Pomperaug Invitational at Pomperaug High School on January 6. All-around competitors were juniors Emily Baktis and Jenna Chasse and freshmen Nicole Bobbie and Kiana Pinckney. Other competitors were senior Christina Constantinou; junior Tarren Diaz; and freshmen Lexi Chmiel. The Wolverines placed fourth in the team competition with 129.6 points.

In the individual results, Emily Baktis took 5th in the all-around (35.150); 5th on vault (8.9); 6th on bars (8.2); 3rd on beam (9.25); and 6th on floor (8.8). Jenna Chasse tied for 5th on floor (8.9).

The following week, the team competed against Newtown and New Milford at New Milford High School. In a close competition, the OHS team finished first (127.25); Newtown second (126.85); and New Milford, third (126.4).

In a third tournament on January 22, the Wolverines at Jonathan Law High School, the girls gymnastics team won another meet against Newtown and Law with their second highest team score of the season (132.7). On February 2, the team traveled to GCAC in Fairfield. After a tough and long competition, Oxford placed third (132.05); Newtown placed second (132.65); and Fairfield Ludlowe placed first (134.95).

Baktis took second in the all-around (35.5); vault (9.1); and first on beam (9.2). On Thursday, February 8, the Wolverines traveled back to New Milford High School to compete for the South-West Conference title. They competed against the following schools: Joel Barlow, New Milford, Newtown, Nonnewaug, and Pomperaug.

The Wolverines dominated the floor. In the individual events, Baktis won first in vault (9.4) and Bobbie placed third in vault (8.7). In the uneven bars, Chasse tied for third (8.5) and Baktis was fifth (8.3). On the balance beam, Baktis tied for second (9.2) and Chasse was fifth (8.65). On floor Baktis was fourth (9.2). In the all around, Baktis placed first (36.1) and was named the most outstanding gymnast in the SWC for 2018.

Two team gymnasts--Baktis and Chasse--earned 2018 All-SWC team. Three team members received Honorable Mention: Bobbie, Ana Gulliet, Diaz. The team placed first in the conference (135.7). For the first time in school history, the gymnastics team had won SWC’s title.

Senior, Constantinou said “Winning SWC’s was definitely the highlight of my entire gymnastics career; I felt so ecstatic and overwhelmed with pride for my teammates. It was especially exciting to me because it was the first time in my 4 years on the team and the first time in school history that we won this title.” A few weeks later, the gymnastics team traveled back to Pomperaug to compete for the Class S State title. The team put up a good fight and placed third (130.5) in the class S division.

This was Constantinou’s and Rinaldi’s last high school competition. All season, Constantinou appeared in both the beam and floor lineup. A team member since her freshman year, Constantinou said: “I think we did really great this year, definitely an improvement from last year. We had much higher team scores and we were stronger all around.”

On the team’s strongest and weakest events, Constantinou said, “Our strongest event was floor and our weakest was definitely bars. We have a lot of powerful tumblers which helped with floor scores. But bars is just a tough event overall.”

Although this gymnastics season has been one of the best, it is still bittersweet for seniors. According to Constantinou, “I felt so many emotions, sad thinking about it being my last time ever competing my routines and happy that I could end my season on such a high note. I performed to the best of my abilities and had a lot of fun with it, so I couldn’t have asked for a better ending to my high school gymnastics career.”

As the sport of gymnastics continues to grow, Constantinou believes that next year’s team will be even stronger and more talented.
Girls' Basketball Season Overview

By Paige Davis ‘21

The girls’ basketball season was kicked off with the teams first game being against Shelton High School. The game ended in a loss for the Oxford Girls Basketball team of nine players with the final score being 14-38. Following their first loss, the girls played their hearts out for their next eight games, finishing each of them off with close scores, but still not managing to win any of the games other than a forfeit against Westbrook. Many times the girls finished those games with the scores only having as few as a three points difference.

After more than a month of continuous losses, the Oxford Girls Basketball team ignited their fire and on January 18th, they won their first game on the court against Woodland by ten points. The final score was a hard earned 47-37. The girls’ next five games followed after them as a winning streak, beating teams such as Kennedy, Ansonia, Watertown and even Derby who they had lost to earlier on in the season. Their original game against Derby was ended in a close loss at 45-49, but the girls came back with a vengeance and made up for their first game by finishing their second round against Derby at 42-30.

After losing two games to Saint Paul Catholic and Seymour, the girls had two more games left in the season, and needed only one more win to qualify for the States size M School Tournament. The pressure was lifted from their shoulders as soon as they finished their game against Wolcott. Coming back from a losing score at halftime, the girls shot back and finished in the nail biting score 45-41, secured by foul shots from Molly Smith and Kelly Shpak.

Senior night for captains Laura Trombetta and Sam Kostek ended in the teams ninth win against Ansonia at 42-39. All that was left for the team now was States, and they were not going to give up easily even though their first round game was against Saint Paul Catholic, who had already beaten them twice in their regular season.

On February 26th, the girls faced off at Saint Paul Catholic High School and were leading the scoreboard in the first three quarters, until Saint Paul kicked back and beat Oxford by six points, leaving the score to finish at 37-43.

Although the team only made it to the first round of States, it was the first time for it to happen in three years, now with a smaller team and new coaches.

Cheer Team Nabs Second Place at States

By Alena Kica ’21

The OHS Cheer Team pulled off a complicated routine at their recent states competition, placing second in their division.

The team competed in the States competition at Hillhouse High School in New Haven on March 3. Coaches Jen Miller and Haley Daurty were on hand after guiding the team in a series of rigorous exercises and practice routines for more than 8 months.

“One once the opening stunts hit, I knew that we were good for the rest of the routine,” said Coach Miller. The hard work paid off, as the team placed second out of 20 teams. Coaches Miller and Daurty said they couldn’t ask for more, and the team has been making their coaches proud daily. Members of the team were thrilled to achieve a perfect routine.

This competition was an emotional moment for both the cheerleaders and the coaches. All involved said it was Oxford’s best performance. The coaches expressed excitement and nerves, all at the same time. “I cried, the kids cried,” said Coach Miller. “It was one thing I hoped for, for a long time.” It overall was just an overwhelming feeling for the entire team.

Coach Miller stated that one of the main reasons the OHS cheer team has had such a successful year is that they work together as a family. Everyone on the OHS cheer team has always treated each other as best friends and they love each other like their own family.

Besides the two coaches, the team is led by seniors Maiyah Jarren and Alexis Tramontano. Both of these seniors have been on the team since their freshman year.
Preparing for show time, the set and actors for 'Little Shop of Horrors' stood in the dimmed stage lights, anticipating the beginning of the show. With a total of four showings, the musical was performed at the Oxford High School auditorium from Thursday, March 22 to Saturday, March 24, 2018.

Months of practice led to this Drama Club production, which was directed by Mr. Abbott. The main character of the musical, Seymour Krelborn (Joseph Hines, ‘21), is a poor orphan who works in a flower shop owned by his cranky boss, Mr. Mushnik (Jeremy Lang, ‘18). He spends his days tending to the shop along with his love interest, Audrey (played by both Beth Whitehead, ‘19, and Olivia Potter, ‘19). Throughout the play, the events are narrated by a trio of harmonizing female singers, played by Ariana Keller (‘19), Maya Ribeiro (‘19), and Isabelle Lucarelli (‘19).

In the musical, Seymour obtains a mysterious Venus flytrap plant, and names it Audrey II after his muse. Seymour learns this outlandish plant requires blood to survive, and decides to feed it with his own blood. As the plant grows impressively, he quickly gains a rapidly growing customer base, fame and notoriety, and affection from Audrey. When the plant grows to massive proportion, it demands more blood than Seymour can provide. This leads to Seymour going down a dark path, targeting Audrey's abusive boyfriend, sadistic dentist Orin Scriverlo (Ryan Rovasio, ‘20). Suspicions arise, and Seymour finds himself trapped between pleasing Audrey II and living peacefully with Audrey.

The main cast of the play were very skilled in conveying the emotions of their respective characters. The audience could clearly tell and were moved by the emotions Seymour went through during his experience with the plant. He felt guilty, but desperate for Audrey's love. You could tell what these characters personalities were like, not only from their lines spoken, but the way they spoke the dialogue in the appropriate tones depending on the situation they were in. Many of these emotions were conveyed through the memorable songs throughout the play, performed to perfection by all cast members.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the play, the depiction of Audrey II was also extremely well executed. A total of four puppets were used: two for the plant's smaller forms, and two for the much larger stages of the its lifespan. The larger puppets required full-body puppeteering by Lucas Connor, ‘18 and Victor Ives, ‘19. These puppets were professionally made in Pennsylvania, and acquired by the play's director, Mr. Eric Abbott. The realistic movements and puppeteering were handled by Lukos Connor (‘18) and Victor Ives (‘19), and the booming voice was supplied by none other than the OHS's Vice Principal, Mr. Robert Schumann. Despite not being seen onstage, you could tell that Mr. Schumann was enjoying his role tremendously.

Lastly, the tech crew had done a good job at making the scenery of the play seem real. The props were both distinctive and effective, especially Orin’s laughing gas helmet. I also particularly liked the usage of the lighting, which added extra emotion to the more dramatic scenes of the play.

All actors and crew members who contributed did an excellent job at telling a story. From the expressive performances by all of the actors to the dramatic stage scenery and props created by the tech crew, the tireless efforts of everyone involved made the Oxford High School presentation of 'Little Shop of Horrors' a truly great experience for all who attended.
Racism and intolerance are just some of the controversial topics the band Green Day deals with. That was Green Day’s message just a few years back, before they began work on their first album in half a decade. Band members, especially frontman Billie Joe Armstrong, are extremely political. Consider the fact that their most popular album was titled "American Idiot", an album that tells a story of a world trying to deal with the aftermath of 9/11 and the presidency of George Bush, who they considered incompetent.

After almost seven years without a hit album, in 2016, Green Day finally released one of its biggest and most direct statements to date. In this new album, the band wanted to make an even bigger statement with songs that directly call out the problems with society, get people talking, and start a revolution. With the tragedy in Parkland, Florida and the discussion between the White House and the NRA, America needs this breath of freedom and rebellious spirit. Every song on the album talks about different controversial topics that no one wanted to talk about, but Green Day wanted to rip apart and make apparent to the public. Here are a few examples of some of their statements:

“Somewhere Now” - Starting the album, the song discusses a time of confusion where government officials make promises they seldom deliver. The lyrics take a turn where the singer decides to take a stand: “All we want is money and guns, A new catastrophe, Here goes nothing, When there's nothing to lose, It's a small price we pay” With a hopeful tone and great guitar work, "Somewhere Now” definitely sets the tone of the entire album. It is a collection of songs to get people to look at the country from the band’s perspective and to make the changes they want to see happen.

“Say Goodbye” - There's definitely a change of tone once this song comes up, but it still makes a blunt point. This song deals with the way the band thinks police brutality affects people across the country. Some people feel isolated when authority figures begin to seem like they're against the people, and Green Day addresses this issue with “Say Goodbye”. It’s very slow and repetitive, but the lyrics say it all: “Kindred spirits sing, For the sick and suffering/The city of damage control”. This song contains the best guitar solo on the entire album; it just makes the song worth listening to.

“Outlaws” - This ballad comes a little out of nowhere, but I don’t hear anyone complaining about it. Outlaws tells the consequences of not enjoying your youth while still living in it. Many people feel while they’re adults that their childhood is the best time of their lives, and this song portrays that exact message. “I'll plead my innocence, But that's my best defense, When you are young” While you’re in high school, enjoy the people you meet, the things that you learn, the people you love, because you may have no idea what could happen to all of those things once you grow up. Not only that, the guitars and pianos really set a melancholy tone of nostalgia, as it just forces you to remember those times when you were a young, cynical kid.

“Still Breathing” - We have another ballad coming off the album, but it takes a more serious approach than songs like Bouncing Off The Wall or Somewhere Now. The frontman of Green Day, Billie Joe Armstrong, said he wrote this song to remind himself that he has gotten this far in life, so there’s no point in ending his run. The song also doubles as an anthem of survival that talks to people who feel that the world is against them all the time, and there’s nowhere else to turn. With its banging guitar and drums the song tells the listener that if you’ve come this far, why stop now? “I'm like a son that was raised without a father, I'm like a mother barely keeping it together, Oh, I'm still alive”. Anyone can connect to “Still Breathing," no matter how huge the tough times in their lives.

“Troubled Times” - One of the most political songs of the modern era, getting much controversy after its lyric video was released, Troubled Times definitely encourages the listener to find a voice when controversy screams loud. “What part of history we learned, When it's
repeated/Some things will never overcome, If we don't seek it”. This bass-heavy song discusses the fear many Americans experience over the current controversies. Troubled Times show that many people are afraid with events such terrorists groups, nuclear threats, racist controversy, and many more becoming a normal trend. “What good is love and peace on earth?, When it’s exclusive?, Where's the truth in the written word /If no one reads it?” This song really gets people thinking about what they could do to prevent future tragedies, to prevent future souls from being taken away. Green Day thinks that other countries around the world have peace, and asks, “why not us?”

It is significant that bands such as Green Day, with albums like Revolution Radio strive to make a statement about their strong opinions through their music. Many artists today, don’t really want to say anything through their art. While this music appeals to many people, it fails to call attention to societal issues. Artists have been expressing their views through music since the 60’s, when protesting the Vietnam War.

As for the album’s music, its lyrical content is prolific and significant. Almost every single song on this album reveals great effort and energy and highlights the talent of each member. The drum work from songs such as “Revolution Radio,” “Forever Now,” and even “Troubled Times” is extremely noticeable from the first beat until the final track. The guitar work from Billie Joe Armstrong, being able to fit the tone of each song, really kicks up the message and adds to the song in a way that Green Day fans have grown to appreciate. Songs that stand out in this category include “Troubled Times,” “Bouncing Off The Walls,” “Still Breathing,” and especially “Revolution Radio” (the title track). Billie Joe’s vocals have the emotion the band is known for, using the range of his voice to express his feelings on certain topics that’s evident throughout the album.

Not many bands can say that they’ve been this bold in their messages. If artists think that something’s not being done about gun control, racism, or war, then they should be free to say that they're not happy. If you haven't listened to this album, I highly recommend starting with songs like “Revolution Radio,” “Bang Bang,” “Forever Now,” or “Troubled Times.” You'll really get the experience of a lifetime.

‘Circle of L(anier)ife’, by Joseph Hines, ‘21
Don’t forget to follow Dr. Philomena for advice for our next issue! Follow her on Twitter at @OhsDoctor, and DM her with your questions!

Members of the ‘Little Shop’ cast in between performances.

Madeline Haefele and Ohm Patel celebrate their third place win in the CDA March competition.

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