



Manasquan High School

# The Blue & Gray

## Manasquan Basketball Dominates their Competition

Juniors Brooke Hollawell and Ben Roy  
change the game for the Warriors

### *in this issue*

New Field House Gets Approved

Squan a Thon Is On!

Drama Club Prepares for Spring Show

Seniors Reflect on School Year

National Honors Society Projects Help People in Need

MHS Swimmers off to a Great Start

Murph Calls it Quits

and more...



Senior Andrew  
Solomon scores a  
championship win-  
ning shot for an  
emotional victory.



# The Blue & Gray Manasquan H.S. 2020-2021

## Issue Two

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# Security Guard "Murph" Retires, Leaves his Mark on MHS

By Erin Mulroy

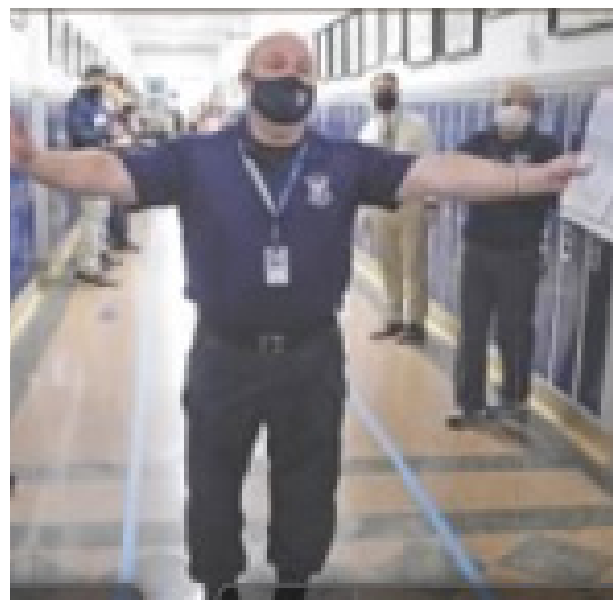
Smiling eyes and a laugh under a mask transcend as students and teachers alike pass Murph in the hallways of Manasquan High School. Jeremiah Murphy, also known as "Murph", was a school safety officer for the school district, assigned to Manasquan High School. His primary function was to provide students and staff with security during the school day due to his experience as a retired Manasquan police sergeant. But he was not just a security guard. He was a bright spot in all of our lives here at MHS. Regardless of who you were or if he knew you, when you passed that center hallway circle, you were greeted by a smiling Murph who always had something to say. Whether that be motivating you to keep going, letting you know it was almost Friday, asking you about your recent sports game, or anything else he could think of- it was one thing you could always depend on. Especially in times like these when school can seem so dreary and unsocial, that little bit of joy from Murph went a long way for so many of us.

"Murph did more than make the students and staff feel safe, he brought joy and positivity to the halls of MHS, and for that he will be greatly missed," teacher Mrs. Kozic said.

Mrs. Kozic recognized Murph's importance here at MHS and decided to do something to commemorate his retirement. She took it upon herself to put out an email to the faculty asking if anyone wanted to participate in a video goodbye for Murph. Around 10

faculty sent in videos and the final video was emailed to Murph. Additionally, Mrs. Kozic organized a clap out to show our appreciation as a school for Murph's contribution to bettering out school environment.

The clap out was a very magical moment; at noon on January 15<sup>th</sup>, his last day, Murph walked down the main hallway of MHS, smiling and waving, for one final



**Above: Murph walking down the hallway during his clap-out.**

time, surrounded by students and staff lining the hallways enthusiastically clapping for the special friend we had all made.

So Murph has recently moved on from Manasquan High School, retiring to Florida. He will truly be missed. He was very special in that he went above and beyond to reach out to the students at MHS. It was evident that he truly loved being here and interacting with the students. During lunch he would stand in the cafeteria talking to students as they stood in line to purchase food. If he saw someone

# The Return of Squan-a-thon

By: Miles Giegerich

It's springtime in 'Squan, meaning our decade-long tradition is right around the corner! This end of year season, our very own fundraiser, Squan-A-Thon is returning for its 12<sup>th</sup> year after going virtual in 2020. While pulling off such a large-scale event during any year is a big effort, the workload has surely increased this year due to all the changes that have been made since we last danced for a cure.

Squan-A-Thon, inspired by Penn State's annual Thon fundraiser, is an event MHS holds every year where participants raise at least \$200 each to help support local families affected by pediatric cancer. Once the money is raised, participants stay up all night in the school, from 8:00 pm to 8:00 am, dancing, playing on inflatables, getting face paint, and most importantly staying on their feet. The event has turned into a must-attend event for the majority of Manasquan students, who remember it as one of the best moments of every school year. It has also become an inspiration for similar clubs at other schools, who often watch in on Squan-a-thon events for their own fundraisers after seeing the totals we have collected over the years, including a record high of \$151,516.38 in 2019.

The event, usually held in mid-March was unfortunately scheduled right at the start of the Covid pandemic last year, meaning for the first time, students couldn't physically attend the celebration. Thankfully, hopes are high that this year will be unlike the last one, because of improvements with the pandemic and an increase in vaccinated faculty and staff.

Planning for the dance-a-thon has recently begun, although later in the year than usual, as it was unclear whether or not the celebration could be held. This has added both excitement and pressure to the committee, which is working restlessly to find a date, venue, money, and students to participate this year.

"Last year the hardest part was probably finding businesses to donate to the cause, because a lot of them had already been hurt due to Covid," committee member Abby O'Shea explained about the difficulties in putting together the fundraiser. "But this year it's been everything, especially just seeing if we can even do it."

Luckily, it looks like we'll be able to dance in some shape or form, but it may look different than it has in the past. Being on such short notice, the committee is looking for any way to salvage what they can of this timeless Manasquan tradition.

"We don't have a lot of information yet," said other member Bevin Cranley, "but the idea of it being outside from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm as opposed to the opposite has been thrown around," she shared.

While planning for the big day is still in early works, it's certain Squan-a-thon will be commemorated in some way this year. Committee members are urging students to end the year on a high note and join in the cause, so be sure to sign up when the flyers go out in the upcoming weeks.

**Images from Past Squan-a-thons: Mechanical bull riding, line dancing, and live music highlighted the nights of past Squan-a-thons. What will happen this year?**





# Silver Linings of the Times

## Drama Club Plans to Debut “Ensemble- Musical” for late April

By: Brooke Finnen

The Manasquan High School drama club is currently in production of its Spring musical. The 2021 production is *Silver Linings*, an original musical written by new drama club advisor Miss Schille. With the retirement of long-time drama director Mr. Weisert, this is the first school production in his absence. The current COVID-19 virus has caused the production to go through difficulties, as well as making changes to the way the musical is rehearsed, put on, and viewed.

*Silver Linings* is an original cabaret-style musical. “It travels through the lives of seven high school students before, during, and after quarantine and about something they have learned during the time, either about themselves, the world around them, or the people that they love” said Miss Schille, director and writer. “Everybody has gone through a conflict and now they are finding their resolution...we get to see their positive spins during this difficult time.”

Seven individuals share the leading role, in contrast to most plays in which one or two people have the lead. The musical stars Manasquan student Alex Quinn as Jayden, Mirabelle Elliot as Libby, Quinn Chapman as Felix, Reese Hearon as Kate, Bridgid McCarthy as Cara, Jack Hamilton as Scott, and Sophia Creed as Zoey. In addition to the leads, an ensemble

cast of additional students will share the stage. According to Miss Schille, “The show was written by design for multiple students to shine.”

Along with Miss Schille, two other teachers are assisting in producing the show. Manasquan dance teacher Mrs. Galano will take over the role of assistant director and choreographer, while Manasquan special education teacher Miss Badami will be leading the crew. Especially with the presence of the COVID-19 virus, the production has faced major setbacks, causing for major

solutions. “All of the choreography and dialogue is happening six feet apart and the actors are in masks the entire show. There is not a single time when somebody is not wearing a mask and even the dances were choreographed by design to not have people to touch each other,” said Miss Schille. “It has been super limiting and it super tough to do a show where kids’ faces can’t be show to the audience for singing and emoting reasons. However, it’s what we have to do in order to be safe.”

*continued on next page*

## “Lights, Camera, Action!”

### Ciara Berardi shines behind the scenes

By: Brooke Finnen

On a Tuesday evening at Manasquan High School, students are hustling around the school as singing is heard from the auditorium. Scattered around the school, groups are settled in classrooms, preparing for the spring musical. Senior Ciara Berardi checks on each student, ensuring that each cast and crew member understand their role in production. Independently, Ciara approaches the drama club advisors to devise plans.

As Stage Manager of the MHS Drama Club, it is Ciara’s role to help the directors make sure the rehearsals and show run smoothly, take notes on everything, and help the actors and crew have everything they need. “I also act as an ensemble member in the show, singing in some of the songs,” she said. Working as the club’s stage manager, production assistant, and ensemble member, Ciara diligently helps to keep the cast and crew working as one unit to guarantee the musical’s success. Dedicating her time and care, Ciara has been a part of the club since her freshman year at Manasquan. She spent her early years as part of the cast and crew, performing under the stage

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## Silver Linings

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The close-knit community of the MHS drama club has also felt heartbreak. Long-time drama club member - Olivia Morro - has recently passed. With a deep love and influence in the club, many students have struggled with the news. Silver Linings will be dedicated to her, as well as a GoFundMe page that had been set up in her memory. Through family wishes, the \$30,575 that was raised of the \$20,000 goal will go towards the club. "Because the show was designed to be extremely low budget [due to budget limit expectations], the funds that are being donated to the club in Olivia's name will be used for future productions, as well as possibly a memorial dedication to the stage," Schille stated.

The show dates for Silver Linings will be April 29<sup>th</sup>, April 30<sup>th</sup>, and May 1<sup>st</sup>. Seating will be limited due to safety precautions, but the directors will be attempting to livestream the production.

## "Lights, Camera, Action!"

*continued from previous page*

lights, but with hard work and talent, she has earned the role as Stage Manager.

Her love for theatre was sparked for by the movie *Little Shop of Horrors*. When she was younger, her dad played it for her, making it the first musical she ever saw. She quickly became obsessed with it, leading her to where she is today. During Ciara's time in drama club, her favorite production has been the musical *Big Fish*. "Not only was it an amazing show, but it was also where I got to have a small dance solo as a minor character and it was the year I started the Coal House fundraiser" she said. "Definitely a great memory for me."

With the retirement of long-time drama advisor Mr. Weisert, new advisors took over leadership of the club's productions. "The only determined people in charge are Miss Schille, Mrs. Galano, and Miss Badami. I am also considered a person in authority amongst my peers," Berardi stated. "With only the four of us, it is a little difficult as it's the first show with a new director, corona is still happening, and there's only the four of us so far." Despite the difficulties, she is determined to put on a great show and is excited to share the experience with members of the community.

Ciara dedicates herself to drama club and assisting members with whatever concerns they may have. Her love for theatre is seen by the actors and crew of the love and inspires others to work hard. Further in life, she plans to pursue theatre directing in college, possibly taking interest in playwriting and producing. Anybody who joins the club can easily find a tight-knit community with plenty of encouragement and inclusivity.





# National Honors Society Projects Inspire MHS Students to Help Those in Need

Not too long ago many students were proud to join the National Junior Honors Society back in elementary school, but for many members of this year's junior class, it's time for a bigger prize, the shining light on college applications, the feather in our cap of hard work. Entry to National Honors Society.

The National Honors Society is a nationwide organization for high school members to elevate upon academics, leadership, and community engagement. Members are selected after displaying scholarship, leadership, service, and character through service projects designed by the individual.

Students seeking acceptance to the society must create and complete a fifteen-hour individualistic service project by April 16th.

Although this past year was different than most, nothing can stop the perseverance and determination of eligible inductees. Many students have worked hard and long hours to accomplish this goal.

Sydney Taft may be recognized on the sidelines with Mr. Hyland helping with athletic training, but outside of school she helps her community by collecting all types of different bags from people at school or family and friends and donates them to kids in foster care. Sydney found her passion after scrolling on social media late at night and talking to a family friend that works with foster kids. He mentioned that kids moving house to house only have as little as a garbage bag to make the move.

"I couldn't imagine doing that and how upsetting it must be, so I want to try and make it a little better for them," Sydney comments.

Whether she is scoring goals on the field hockey field or playing music in her room, Meghan Cattani truly knows how to show her impact on the world. Through her NHS project, Meghan collects a variety of goods that range from small

By: Ginger Brown



**Junior  
Alex  
Strapp**

personal hygiene to canned foods. She uses these items to make care packages for United States soldiers overseas. The packages will be donated through an organization called Operation Shoebox.

Alex Strapp may be known for his contagious laughter and studious smarts, but for his NHS project, he goes above and beyond. For the project, Alex organizes multiple food drives for local food pantries and designs a website for people to visit that has healthy and cheap food ideas since not everyone can afford such items. Inspiration struck him because during the pandemic, millions were let go from jobs and have had a tough time making ends meet.

"I thought that with making a food drive it would help those in need during this difficult time," Alex vocalizes.

You may know her from defending her basket on the court, but for her project, Dorothy Loffredo is using her passion for basketball in order to raise awareness for Autism. Dorothy will be organizing a 3 v 3 basketball tournament on April 10th at St. Denis in Manasquan. Through this tournament, she will be donating money for the Autism Movement Project to help their program. Any age group can participate to share the love of basketball and work to support those in need.

I'm sure you've heard of the local fisherman Jake Palmieri, although his true passion lies in doing good for others. Jake has been a member of the Boy Scouts for his entire life, constantly working to improve the community, so given the opportunity to join NHS, he quickly came up with a unique project. Jake will be cleaning the headstones of approximately 300 veterans buried in the Atlantic View Cemetery in Manasquan.

"I chose to do this because I know several veterans and the boy scouts have a good relationship with the cemetery, so I wanted to do something nice and re



**Junior  
Dorothy  
Loffredo**



**Junior  
Sydney  
Taft**



**Junior  
Jake  
Palmieri**



**Junior  
Meghan  
Cattani**

# NHS projects continued...

spectful for both the cemetery and the veterans,” Jake shares.

Her smarts may shine in the classroom, but Mairead Martin loves to show off her talent in golf. Mairead is hosting a golf club drive and selling golf club headcovers to raise supplies and money for First Tee, an association that helps get kids involved in the sport that aren't normally exposed to it. Because of her efforts, kids that don't really have much money get the opportunity to play golf at a country club. Mairead's goal is to work and get more kids involve in the sport and right now this is the best she can do.

Rocco Razzino loves spending his time on the football field or in the weight room. Yet did you know of his passion and love for literature? Rocco loves to read and believes that everyone around the world should be given such an opportunity, so he ran multiple book drives through the schools of sending districts. He has collected hundreds of books and will donate them to Books for Africa, an organiza-



**Junior  
Mairead  
Martin**



**Junior  
Lara  
Shannon**



**Junior  
Rocco  
Razzino**

tion to help children in need of books.

Everyone appreciates the pets of our world, but Lara Shannon took it to a whole new level through her project. Lara handmade bracelets with a paw print charm in order to promote pet adoption. She sold them for \$5 apiece and donated 100% of the funds to the Associated Human Society. Lara uses her mission to spread the message of how many pets are in need of adoption. Whether it's dogs, birds, or pigs, all animals deserve love and affection from people.

“Most people think that mostly dogs are the ones who need adopting, but there are also birds, pigs, and other animals too that need our help. Unlike humans, animals cannot stand up for themselves and provide for their own well-being,” Lara states.

Because of these projects, people in not only our community but also around the world are helped by students at MHS. Help back our students with their projects by reaching out and supporting local drives.

## “Murph”

*continued from page 2*

eating alone, Murph would hang around and make conversation with those students.

Tyler Madonna a senior at MHS, said that he was very grateful that Murph was here while he was a student. “He left so soon, but it was still great knowing him,” Tyler said.

The staff too was impacted by Murph and his upbeat presence. Mr. Clayton, head of security at MHS, told us it was a great experience working with Murph that he was a friendly and positive person who was enjoyable to be around.

“He is a one of a kind person,” Mr. Clayton said. “He has a strong sense of pride with the level of service he provided to the district and deeply cared for the safety and security of each and every student. I know he misses being at the school but loves living in Florida.”

The hallways seem much quieter now that our special pal Murph is no longer around at MHS, encouraging us to smile and showing genuine interest in each and every one of our lives. We're all feeling the truth of the old saying: “You don't know what you got til it's gone.” Murph's absence has highlighted his wonderful presence, but we wish him the best in the Florida sun and as much happiness as he gave us. Allison Waters – “Murph was a great addition to MHS, he was always helping everyone in any way he could. He was involved with everything and made all the students feel so included. His jokes and the conversations he had with me were my favorite parts of the day. He will definitely be missed in the Squan community”

Maci Black – “I always loved seeing Murph in the hallway interacting with all the students. He always brought so much life into the hallway and made everyone laugh. He always encouraged me to do my best whether it was school or sports. Especially during this school year, he always had a smile on his face and was happy to be doing his job. He definitely left a statement of how involved he was in the school during the clap out on his final day. Murph will definitely be missed in the halls of Manasquan High School.”

*Editor's note: Junior Jo Anastasia Harkins wrote the following article to promote the High Fives Foundation, an organization of personal importance to her, as part of her National Honors Society project.*

# High Fives Foundation



By: Jo Anastasia Harkins

On a bitter, cold day in the depths of winter a seasoned skier caught powder sending him tumbling into the woods and hitting a tree.

The 22-year-old suffered significant injuries including a broken scapula, broken ribs, a punctured lung, a broken hip, a crushed fibula, and most harmful: a broken back with damaged vertebrae. The skier had to learn how to navigate life with his new injuries, being paralyzed from the waist down. While in the hospital, a visit from the High Fives Foundation inspired him to become the amazing person he is today. This is the true story of my cousin Dan, only one of the hundreds of High Fives athletes. This is why this organization means so much to me.

Kaizen (constant improvement), human-care, integrity, community, and honesty. These are the core values of the High Fives Foundation, a California based non-profit organization centered around injuries in the outdoor sports community. Since its commencement in 2009, the High Fives Foundation has been able to help 375 people nationwide with \$4.8 million distributed through multiple programs. Recipients have suffered life-changing accidents resulting in physical or cognitive disabilities. Surfers, skiers, and mountain bikers alike are adopted into the community where they are provided resources including adaptive sports equipment and grants.

The High Fives Foundation has helped numerous individuals deal with monumental changes throughout their eleven years of operation, but they also focus efforts in prevention. Athletes tend to feel invincible, trading safety for the thrill of adrenaline. It is so easy to forget essential precautions like wearing a helmet while skiing or con-

sidering currents before surfing. While the High Fives Foundation is known for its amazing grant programs and adaptive sports for those with disabilities, preventing said injuries is the greatest means of support. Over the past decade, the High Fives Foundation has launched multiple campaigns through B.A.S.I.C.S, Being Aware Safe In Critical Situations. The B.A.S.I.C.S program was created with the intent of educating young athletes, specifically skiers and snowboarders, on the importance of safety towards injury prevention. Each individual campaign focuses on different aspects that outline mountain safety, from helmet promotions to chairlift safety, and even avalanche awareness. Professional athletes and Olympians such as Cody Townsend and Daron Rahlevs have made videos in cooperation with the High Fives Foundation to advocate for the campaign giving their tips and tricks to ski safely while still having fun. The B.A.S.I.C.S's public service announcements can be found at <https://highfivesfoundation.org/programs/basics/>.

The High Fives Foundation invests efforts in both education and aid for athletes that take part in outdoor sports, as well as many other programs (such as those featuring disabled US Military Veterans and First Responders). With each campaign, grant, camp, and event, the High Fives Foundation helps countless lives in the simplest of ways. Next time you go skiing or surfing, or whatever it may be, assess the situation, be smart, and be safe.

To continue spreading awareness on social media, a virtual "high five" chain will be initiated later this month in which you can repost and high five your friends. Also be sure to visit <https://highfivesfoundation.org/> and @hi5sfoundation on Instagram.





# Another Upgrade for MHS

## New Field House to be built on old softball field

**By: Erin Mulroy**

December 2021 a field house was proposed by the Manasquan school district during the Borough Council meeting. Their mission statement behind the proposal is that they want to “provide a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment where continual growth, perseverance, and rigorous academic standards are balanced with extensive extra-curricular opportunities and rich tradition through partnership with the community.”

The proposal was plentiful in reasons for needing the field house. This space is not just a want but a need in the district’s eyes. There is no proper wrestling facility in the area, as of now the wrestling team carries their mats to the cafeteria floor and practices there. MHS’s weight room is also very outdated, located in an old garage behind the elementary school that was converted. Another issue with our athletic areas are the lack there of. Because our limited space, practices for lots of our sports like soccer are held of campus at the Sea Girt Army Camp. The Army Camp is a town away and students need to find rides or walk to the fields after school to get to practice or their games. The limited space is also difficult when the weather is not fit as we simply have the gymnasium and the cafeteria. This is a much-needed upgrade in the eyes of administration before the gym floors and bleachers were replaced this year the gym had no

major upgrades since 1965. Another key point in the proposal is that the space would also be beneficial to the entire community not just

for our wrestling team. They are even planning to implement three retractable batting cages for the baseball team to be able to practice indoors, a golf simulator, and gymnastics equipment. This space will also include bathrooms and storage. The proposal also requests gym renovations and asks for locker room upgrades, baseball field upgrades, and cafeteria gym floor encapsulation as considerations. The proposal also suggests that it could be used during physical education classes in conjunction with the gym and fields.



**Above: Outdoor replica of the new MHS Field house.  
Balow: Indor replica of the new MHS Field house.**



other issue with our athletic areas are the lack there of. Because our limited space, practices for lots of our sports like soccer are held of campus at the Sea Girt Army Camp. The Army Camp is a town away and students need to find rides or walk to the fields after school to get to practice or their games. The limited space is also difficult when the weather is not fit as we simply have the gymnasium and the cafeteria. This is a much-needed upgrade in the eyes of administration before the gym floors and bleachers were replaced this year the gym had no

Manasquan High School; it would also serve as a recreational facility from anyone, “from children to seniors”. It could even be used as a space for Board of Ed and Borough of Manasquan events and meetings. This 5-million-dollar plan is a big one. With a 200’ x 160’ indoor training facility and a 160’ x 160’ indoor turf field that is full lit. The turf field will be lined for multiple sports so that it will serve as a very versatile and useful space. There will also be a state-of-the-art weight training room as well as a dedicated, sanitary wrestling space

This proposal was approved Tuesday March 16<sup>th</sup> and a \$4.8 million dollar contract was awarded to H&H Construction and Mechanical Inc for the construction of the field house. The project is going to be funded by the bond ordinance of about \$4.8 million as well as about \$900,000 of district funds bringing the project to an estimated construction cost of \$5,400,000. MHS community members like Dr. Kasyan, Manasquan High School’s super intendent are very excited for this project, “I am really looking forward to having a facility that we can hare with the community as well as furnish our students and staff with a space to exercise and train in doors” says Dr. Kasyan. It will be a big improvement to MHS’s athletic department as well as beneficial for the community and it is something to look forward to in the next year.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Seniors Who Shined Get the Spotlight

### A True Manasquan Warrior

By: Liam Haag

The bright green grass and white paint coated the field so that it looked like a Christmas tree. It was the season opener for the varsity football team against Shore Conference power Red Bank Catholic, and everyone was hungry for the season to start. There are always expectations for the Manasquan Football team, but this year was expected to be special. Team captain Shayne Leddy was ready for battle. What he didn't know was that the game wouldn't go anything according to plan.

Just a few plays into the game, Shayne took a handoff and battled forward for a couple of yards. He got up and went back to the huddle, feeling a little discomfort, but not thinking too much about it. He kept pushing through the pain. But soon he couldn't continue, and Leddy was taken off the field for the injury. It was devastating to see one of the best players on the team leave the field during the first game. You could tell that his fight and intensity was keeping him in the game, but he just couldn't go on.

Sitting on the trainer's table on the team sideline, Shayne said he thought to himself, "How could I be so unlucky?"

Days after the game, the results came about his injury. He had torn his anterior cruciate ligament, the dreaded ACL injury. He would be out for several months, the entire season. Shayne was devastated to hear the news and more annoyed that he'd be missing a lot of football,

the sport he loves.

I questioned myself, "what's the point of this sport anymore?" Shayne said. He doubted himself too. "Am I done for good?" he wondered. He was scared that he wouldn't be able to play again.

Eventually, Shayne picked himself up, got his head straightened out, and regained that killer mindset. The mindset to say, "I can do whatever I put my mind to, and, no one can stop me," Shayne explained.

Following surgery, he started to get more and more motivated to keep working on healing his injury. He missed his junior basketball season, but rehabbed for hours and hour and slowly got stronger. He was running around his hometown, Spring Lake, by springtime. He was lifting weights. As summer approached, and with it football practice, Shayne was ready.

"I knew this season would be my last so I wanted to make it count," Shayne said. After hours of hard work in the offseason, he overcame this torn ACL injury and returned to the football field.

Back on the field for his senior season, Shayne played with intensity and a vengeance from being injured and out last season. He had something to prove and he proved it. With Shayne leading the defense, the Warriors fought their way to a 5-3 record this season, against a tough schedule revised by Covid restrictions. Shayne earned 1<sup>st</sup>



Above: Shayne makes a tackle in a game against Point Pleasant Borough

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# Learning to Take Nothing or Granted

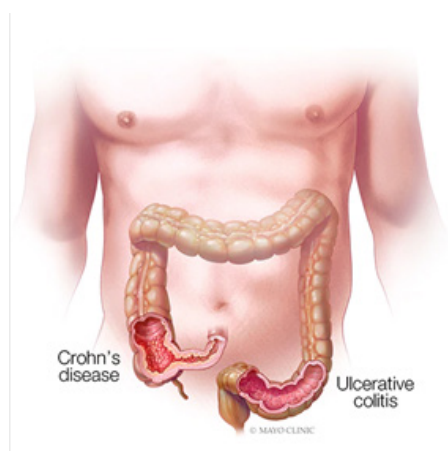
## Audrey's story inspires us

By: Riley Fisher

Growing up, we recognize bravery and perseverance through one's ability to play a sport, sing, dance, or demonstrate strong academic ability. Though Manasquan High School senior Audrey Hardmeyer possesses some of these abilities, she also has struggled greatly her whole high school career with unimaginable diseases that have tampered with her livelihood, and make her so much more than the typical success story.

In 2017 and 2018, Audrey had come to the realization that her health circumstances, that she found were "normal," were indeed not. It was actually my own mother who found Audrey's health decline abnormal and worth seeking medical attention immediately. With tests being done and many school days missed, Audrey had found that she suffers with Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease.

In Audrey's own words, and with many doctor's appointments to remind her, she describes her illness. "I have an autoimmune disease called ulcerative colitis. A chronic, inflammatory bowel disease that



causes inflammation in the digestive tract. Ulcerative colitis is usually only in the innermost lining of the large intestine (colon) and lower GI tract,"

she explained.

Ulcerative colitis affects Audrey daily with biweekly doctor appointments, rigorous examinations, and tiring medical treatments. When the appointments and treatments began in early 2018, she found herself falling behind in school and struggling in general.

"UC has affected me in many ways," she says. "Since my diagnosis in early 2018 I've become dependent on multiple medications daily, doctor's appointments, no immunity and getting sick often, and feeling alone."

Her early medication started with prednisone pills, then bi-weekly Remicade infusions which often weakened her and made her feel even worse. For the next year, she would continue this treatment, and during the summer of 2019, she contracted a rare eye virus which made her almost blind in her eye. Ulcerative colitis had deterred Audrey's immune system exceptionally which makes her incredibly prone to contracting things that people with heightened immune systems would never be plagued with. The struggle endured.

She recounts her experiences that is still being undergone, "... because of my immunosuppressant body, I developed an amoeba in my eye because I went to the ocean and my body couldn't fight it off." She continues, "So I became blind and underwent a year's worth of medicine and trips to Philadelphia to try and restore my vision. Fortunately, it is gone and now I have to wear a glass permeable contact that is supposed to fix the hole in my eye."

Before this diagnosis and the recurring symptoms, Audrey was incredibly involved in Manasquan sports. She played for the girls soccer, basketball, and softball teams. Unfortunately, her illness had become the leading characterization of her life.

When asked how it affects her on a daily basis, she tells me, "Prior to diagnosis completing every day tasks was easy. Now waking up, showering, doing school, working,



exercising, and anything in between has become a struggle. With the chronic stomach pain also comes severe fatigue, nausea, abdominal and joint pain, and many other illnesses which also has made me sick."

In Audrey's case, the struggle is real. Although her immense hardships and her life revolve around her illness, she seems to be finding her momentum in life again. This past year, she has participated in fall and winter Manasquan cheer, has found a balance in her school work, takes a new and less hardening medication weekly, and has a steady work and social life.

Audrey has proven herself to all of her peers and loved ones that she is an exemplary definition of bravery and perseverance. Her struggles and obstacles over the last few years with battling this life-incriminating disease has never dulled her vibrancy or talents. She is truly my heroine and displays optimism in even the most trying things in life.

To close, Audrey offered her newly reflected experience with her illness and how she feels looking in the past. "UC, I would describe, was kind of a blessing in disguise. Although my life is changed in many ways, I can see that I can't take anything for granted anymore. I am happy and very thankful for my health. You really have to learn to jump over the obstacles that you encounter in life, because in reality life isn't fair, but you can't let something stop you from living. My outlook has changed because now I see life as like I'm real-



# The Girl that Does it All

By: Christiana Yurkewicz

Everyone can relate to the feeling of 'not having enough time in a day', but how about the girl who does it all? Ambitious senior, Maci Black is a division one lacrosse commit, a National Honors Society Member, participant in multiple clubs, and starting varsity athlete for two sports. Not only is she able to pull herself in what seems like one hundred directions for academics and athletics, but she is also a full time employee at Sundae's ice cream shop in Wall, a loyal friend, and one of four children in her house. Maci has always had the determination and drive to strive for nothing short of success in her everyday tasks. Additionally, she is one of the most happy go lucky people you will ever meet. Her smile lights up a room, her laughter is contagious, and her dance moves off and on the court or field gets everyone fired up!

What helps Maci to really do it all and have it all is her attitude and mental toughness. When talking to Maci I put it simply and asked, "how do you do it all? Where do you get the energy and motivation?"

She replied, "I never really thought about it. I'm always busy, but I love being a part of everything."

Maci's dream job is to be a teacher. When she reflected on her time as a student in "Mr. K's 7th grade class" Maci remembers that Mr. K was the coach of the basketball team, raised a family, and she knew she never wanted to leave Monmouth County after college. Seeing her teacher's happiness and success encompassed everything she wanted her life to be.

Starting in 8th grade Maci

was taking Geometry. Following this she took Algebra II as a freshman, Precalculus Honors sophomore year, AP Calc AB as a junior, and is taking AP Calc BC as a senior. While she flew through these ad-



**Above: Maci signs her letter of intent to play lacrosse at Sacred Heart University Below: Maci celebrating a victory!**



vanced math courses she managed to take nine honors courses, one AP History course, and made it up to Spanish IV Honors as a junior.

Maci's dedication extends beyond the classroom as well. She is hugely involved in extracurricular

activities. Freshman year, Maci was on the junior varsity soccer team, and played varsity basketball and lacrosse all four years at Manasquan High School. During this time she was a member of National Honor Society, Spanish and French National Honor Society, executive for the Girl's Basketball in Warriors Athletic Leadership Club, the Academy of Finance, and International Club. The cherry on top is that Maci is an employee at Sundae's Ice Cream Shop in Wall.

Through Maci's success there was also struggle. She will never forget, the fifth game of the lacrosse season freshman year against rival Wall High School. Maci got time in the varsity game not knowing it would be her last for a while. The second half of the game started and she was pushing the ball up the sideline to get it to the attack. She's running, she switches direction, and Maci's knee pops. She fell straight to the ground and needed to be carried off the field.

The same day, she got an X-Ray. Two days later, she got an MRI. Ten days later, Maci had surgery. "It all happened so fast that I barely had time to wrap my mind around everything that just happened" Maci said.

She went from an all time high of being given varsity playing time as a freshman just to have it stolen from her by a torn ACL. Maci was obviously not planning something like this to happen and it was not fun in the slightest for her. She kept her chin up and knew she had a long road to recovery so that she could be back and better than ever.

*continued on next page*

Maci was out of sports for a year and rehabbed her way back to starting her lacrosse season sophomore year. Maci explained that freshman year summer was very important for recruiting, but the rules for recruiting had changed so that college coaches couldn't talk to the class of 2021 players until September 1st of their junior year. This helped Maci while she recovered from her injury. Once she started to play again, coaches wanted to see Maci playing without her knee brace, and it ultimately took a big mental toll on her during this recovery process where she transitioned back into playing.

Maci did intense physical therapy for seven months and stopped right before her sophomore year basketball season began. Most of this season she sat out because she didn't feel she was mentally ready to play again after everything she went through. Maci thought long and hard about her decision and she said "it broke [her] that [she] had to sit out, but knew in the long run it was worth it" Maci said.

That season her position on the team had shifted since she was no longer on the court with her teammates. She felt she had to find another way to be a part of everything. She did this by showing up with a smile on her face, made sure the other girls were in the right mindset, and was there for everyone while she was overcoming her own battles. Maci said she is grateful for that year because it allowed her to become closer with her coaches, and it changed Maci's perspectives on being a team player with a team mentality.

Today, Maci is committed to play division one lacrosse at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut. She immediately fell in love with the campus and always dreamed of

being able to say she was a "D1 athlete". Maci knew this would allow her the opportunity to compete at the next level. She saw seniors on teams with her who were committing to playing sports in college while she was a freshman, and that is what really sparked her interest. From that moment on she had a goal to set out for.

Maci has always looked up to her sister because of her hard work and dedication. Gill also tore her ACL, so Maci knew she could always talk to her during her recovery process which was comforting. She has shown Maci to be the best ver-

a good mother always is, she was always there though the best and worst. Maci grew up seeing her mom be a mother to four kids who are all unique was inspiring and taught her the importance of family. Maci says her mom "always comes home with a smile on her face for us kids even when she had a bad day at work which shows me the enormous amount of strength she has as a person". Maci's loving family encourages and inspires her in her everyday life and aspirations.

Maci's secret to managing her time to allow her to complete difficult courses in school along with balancing clubs, sports, work, and friends is making sure to put herself first. Maci grew up playing all different sports and went from one practice to another. Because of this she was used to having to manage time for her homework. Maci always made sure her schoolwork was done first if she didn't have practice right after school, then would enjoy her free time. Maci embraced the opportunity of lunch time and study halls during school to get her homework done. She says that this helped her immensely.

"I think being involved in so many things really forced me to time manage my work which kept me organized and on top of things" said Maci.

In Maci's future she looks forward to meeting new people and finding more opportunities in life. She is excited to move on, grow up, and find herself in the real world. Maci hopes to form new connections, and have experiences that she can cherish forever. She is sad to leave MHS being that it has impacted her greatly in shaping the person she is today, it has guided her into her next step along her journey, and she is prepared to leave.



**Above: Maci showing her excitement on the basketball court.**

sion of herself that she can be while focusing on her short term and long term goals. Maci believes she wouldn't be the person she is today without Gill's footsteps to follow in.

Maci's mom is her number one fan and biggest supporter through everything. She is someone Maci can always lean on. Like



# SENIOR ADVICE: How to get by in High School 101

By: Abby O'Shea

*As a graduating senior at Manasquan High School, I've seen it all. From four different bell schedules to completing school from my bed, there isn't much I didn't experience at my four year at Manasquan High School. Here are some tips and advice that I thought helped me most throughout my high school career!*

## **Get involved as soon as you can.**

Getting involved in different school clubs and activities helps you meet new people and may even bring you some of your best friends. Taking part in different clubs and activities looks great for colleges and also shows that you want to be a part of your school environment!

## **Focus on your academics!**

A good report card gets you into a good college and attending a good college often allows you to find a good job. Although you may love a sport or have other hobbies, your grades are just as important. By setting a goal of a certain average on a test or final grade for a class, it allows you to push yourself and work harder in the subject area.

## **Learn time management skills.**

The most important thing in high school is balancing your grades with your social life. Keeping a calendar so that you don't lose track of your schedule each day is extremely helpful. Setting reminders in your phone of important tasks you need to do can also keep you on track.

## **Explore different subject areas and find your passions.**

Take the classes you're interested in - don't take the ones you're not. If you feel like this subject area may be a future career for you, take all of the classes that you can so that you can discover what this career is all about!

## **Push yourself in your stronger subjects.**

If you know you love a certain subject area and are good at it, don't take the easier class because you know you are going to do well. Take the harder and higher-level up class so that you can push yourself to be your best, even if it means not receiving an A in every class you're taking.

## **Prioritize your most important tasks!**

Technology is clearly a distraction for the youth of today, so when you are trying to complete your work, put your phone away so that you can be productive! I recommend pushing yourself to do at least 20-25 minutes of work and then allowing yourself 5 minutes on your phone. This allows you to stay up to date on your social media, while also getting work done in a good time frame.

## **Use your resources**

Get to know your guidance counselors and teachers as soon as you get into high school. You don't realize how important they are until you're an upper classman. If you are struggling in a class and need assistance, go to extra help! It is one of the easiest ways to get back on track in a class you may be falling behind in.



# Wondering how to get started in your college search? Read on!

By: Alexis Sackariassen

*Hey Juniors, listen up! Now is the time to begin your college search. So here's some advice for you.*

The first step to take when applying to colleges is making a list of the colleges you feel are a good fit for you. Not just a college your parents or siblings went to, but a school that has people who share the same interests as you and are like-minded.

I started by finding 3 reach schools, 3 that I felt were my level, and 3 safety schools that I liked. This way you start with 9 schools, which is a normal amount to apply to, and you have a good chance of getting into at least one of them.

There are many more important steps, but the one that I found the most important is writing a good college essay. College essays are vital since the school has no idea who you are except for a sheet of paper with your name, transcript, resume, and essay. The essay should give the college an insight to who you are and what is different about you compared to the thousands of other students across the nation applying for your spot. Especially if you are not confident in your testing skills, make sure that your essay stands out. It could be the reason you get accepted over someone else.

Unfortunately with the challenges of the pandemic this year, I was only able to visit one out of the ten colleges I applied to. That one I visited ended up being my favorite, because I got the chance to immerse myself in the college life. This is why I feel it is so important to visit colleges you are interested in. It is essential to get a feel for where you will be for the next four years.

Pretty much everyone knows how important the SATs are. Usually you start studying for them junior year, take some test prep classes, and maybe even take the test a few times until you get the score you want. Of course, due to the pandemic last year, SATs were cancelled for students across the nation and many colleges decided to let students go test optional. I ended up taking the SAT once my senior year, getting a score I wasn't too excited with and never submitted my scores when applying. For anyone else, I strongly suggest studying for the SATs, because this score is one of the most important things on your application. After you're done with all of this you can begin filling out your Common Application.

Common App is a website you will use a lot since it is the way you will apply to most schools. Your college essay, extracurricular activities, SAT or ACT scores, and all other information will be stored on Common App. The other website you will use is SCOIR which sends your transcript and teacher recommendations. Make sure to connect your SCOIR account correctly to your Common App account. Once you select the colleges you are applying to in SCOIR make sure to send your guidance counselor an email to acknowledge or confirm your college selections. This basically means that these colleges will be getting your information.



In fact, your guidance counselor is an important resource to use throughout the entire process. Talk to them!

One important thing I learned along the way is making sure you know which colleges have extra essays. On Common App some colleges will have an obvious extra section for a supplemental essay and some won't. These essays you should take time writing carefully, making sure it's all grammatically correct. I began by writing down which colleges had essays. I made separate documents for each essay, copied the prompt, and copied the word limit. Next is where the important information comes in.

Many colleges you apply to have questions and information you will fill out specifically for that college. One thing I noticed is that some schools will have a writing portion at the end of the "questions". Some students only fill out the questions when they are ready to apply, so it is a shock when they learn they must write another essay. These prompts I also made documents for and made sure to know the word count for these essays. Writing the supplemental essays, I believe are so important, because most of the time they are questions that reflect who the college wants going to their school. To summarize, it is crucial to know all the colleges who expect written responses. Time will creep up on you quickly so don't push these off till a week before the applications

are due.

For all of the essays, my advice is to write without the word count in mind and go back and eliminate unimportant information. It is harder to restrict yourself and write than it is to go back and cut parts or make changes later on.

Lastly, if you have a dream school in mind, make sure that school knows they are your priority. This does not necessarily mean applying with early decision. I did not do early decision to any schools (only early action to some) but I did make it known that I was very interested in my top school. I attended many virtual information sessions and took part in zooms that the school hosted. It may be a different system without a pandemic, but there are still ways to make yourself known to any school. You can follow them on Facebook or Instagram, respond to their emails, and click on their links. This is not a guaranteed way to get accepted, but it might be worth a shot.

Finally, it's important to remember to work hard to get into college, but not let it affect your mental health. There are so many colleges to apply to, and transferring is extremely common. In the end, you will find where you belong and look back at all of the stress as a distant memory.

# Four Years of Growth and Foundation

By: Christiana Yurkewicz

Delphinium are flowers that are tall, blue spikes of bloom; in terms of flowers, they generally symbolize spiritual growth and change. Much like the delphiniums students grow, change, and learn from their classroom experiences along with real world experiences. Coming into high school as a freshman many students spoke of their personal experiences expressing that they were nervous, excited, thinking about 'new beginnings', new friends, a new chapter in life, and a time to mature. High school is the shaping and foundation for students graduating to go on to their skills or trade, college, or whatever path life may offer them.

One thing that people don't realize until reflecting on their experience in high school is how much they've progressed internally as well as externally. Many people look at photos of themselves side by side from freshman year and senior year and can't believe how far they've come (and even sometimes cringe at what they used to look like).

So, how do students progress and change during these four pivotal years? At MHS students responded to this question emphasizing that everyone matures, learns from their experiences, students begin to find themselves as individuals, find what they enjoy, and what they may pursue following their time at MHS. Along with these major changes students shared, students feel that their peers have all come so far from where they began as freshman.

I personally notice more weighted deliberate decision making, increase in confidence, self improvement, and communication skills developed through socialization among peers during the progression of students throughout their high school careers. Some of these skills and improvements can be learned in a classroom, but many paramount lessons teens will take with them from these four years are solely from personal experiences. This being said many students, family members, and teachers firmly encourage teens to stay involved in extracurriculars such as athletics, clubs, volunteering, jobs, etc.

Along with these changes I

tend to notice, maturity shows through friendships and the way students interact with one another. When everyone comes into high school there is the intimidation of "who am I going to be friends with?". As time progresses friend groups begin to form and even become cliques that can be considered a bit exclusive. No matter what school a student attends, this is a common part of growing up and maturing to realize it is not right, and everyone should be treated equally. The commonly highlighted 'cool kids' or 'popular group(s)' in movies, on TV, or in real life can create an intimidation factor in high school.

At the end of the day, the students who have matured the most are



able to display equal treatment among all peers regardless of any previous history or judgements. Everyone goes through their own personal issues on a daily basis and by senior year most students can come together to have a good time, all be friends with one another, and make it to the finish line with a smile rather than issues.

In high school, freshmen have to adjust to the new learning environment they are placed in, and along with this comes much larger responsibilities, obligations, and expectations. Students that apply themselves and learn good time management skills tend to remain the happiest, healthiest, and the most successful in their academics and everyday tasks. High school is a time when many children learn the importance of accountability, dedication, hard work, and to become a goal setter.

Like many other things in life, high school or any type of education, whatever the student is willing and

able to put into it is what they will take out of it. This being said, studying, putting in the time and efforts to succeed will lead to better habits and results. These productive activities and skills are applicable in everyday tasks no matter how big or small, and aid students during their adaptation into college, living on their own, working, or anything else graduating seniors decide is fitting for their next step in life.

This year's 2021 senior class at Manasquan high school have been through several obstacles in making it to their graduation much like many other graduating seniors. Students adapted to a different schedule each year during high school starting with block scheduling, following with "drop and rotate" scheduling, virtual learning for the end of junior year, and hybrid in person and virtual learning due to the current COVID-19 pandemic for senior year having eight periods a day, shortened lunches, and greatly grieved loss of the senior privilege to leave during their lunch period.

Seniors hope to experience a "semi-normal" finish to their senior year and now things are panning out to look like this may be a possibility. As of right now, March 2021 many events that had to be cancelled last year will be taking place following guidelines such as all students returning to school everyday with one another, prom, the Academy of Finance fashion show, and sports seasons were able to resume under implemented restrictions.

Every year of high school proves to be crucial in development and maturity over time, but one thing students time and time again share is that high school flies by. In the moment it can feel difficult and never ending, but it also serves as the best and worst years in growing up for high schoolers that molds them into the adults they grow into. Seniors living through the pandemic tell students in grades below to enjoy every moment, make the most of it, and go to any and every event because you take the little moments for granted; next thing you know you are graduating after the blink of an eye and can't make up for any lost time.

# If You Want to Be Smart, You Got to Do Your Part

Year in and year out, Manasquan High School prepares students for their journey of life inside and outside of the classroom. In the past five years alone, Manasquan has sent some of its best students to some of the nation's most prestigious universities such as Pennsylvania, Princeton, Cornell, Rutgers, Seton Hall, Villanova, and so much more.

On the other hand, for the class of 2021, the journey was much different at Manasquan High School, as the students in the class of 2021 experienced 4 different schedules and almost a year and a half worth of virtual school. With that being said, remaining focused and keeping grades up was a struggle for many students given the circumstances. However, some students went above and beyond the rest, determined to persevere through the situation, and kept their grades up in order to appeal to colleges and trade schools.

One of these determined students is Manasquan senior and band member, Kevin Swanson. A Brielle native, Kevin is described by his friends as a down-to-earth, kind kid who always puts others before himself. Upon the conclusion of eighth grade, Kevin made the decision to enroll at Manasquan. The moment he set foot onto campus, he became an academic rockstar, as he was the class valedictorian upon the conclusion of his sophomore year.

"I always made sure to fully complete every assignment and treat every single one like it was a very important part of my grade," Kevin claimed. "By doing so, it made me more prepared for all of my tests and assessments."

After getting into a routine with this mindset and everything going fantastic in Kevin's life, March of 2020 struck, where the country announced that our country would be going into lockdown, the whole outlook on the remainder of the school year changed. Many students thought this

By: David Smith



*Above: Kevin banging the drums at a basketball game last year.*

was a two-week thing- but it wasn't. It ended up lasting the rest of the academic year and carrying into our lives today. The immediate and sudden adjustment wasn't easy for any student, as we'd never experienced virtual school before. Nonetheless, Kevin kept his same mindset, kept grinding, and kept his GPA up for his junior year, arguably the most important academic year in a student's life.

When you work as hard as Kevin, you need something else to turn in order to balance your work with something you love. As a member of the Warrior Band, Kevin plays the drums, and has attended all of the Warriors sporting events since he was a freshman.

"Being in the Warrior Band is one of the most important things to me in my life," Kevin states. "It provided me with a distraction from all my schoolwork and studying and it was a place where I could have fun and express

my creativity with playing."

Since he's such a talented, nice, and hardworking kid inside and outside of the classroom, the future looks very bright for Kevin. When questioned upon what he plans on doing upon graduation, he smiled, looking extremely excited.

"I have a ton of options, but I plan on staying somewhat local and studying computer science. I'm very excited to see what my future has in store because I worked so hard over the past four years, so I'm really hoping that I become successful."

In a four years of several twists and turns, it was easy to come up with excuses as to why you could not succeed- yet Kevin put his head down, didn't make excuses, and grinded, putting himself in position as the class valedictorian and to make a university very lucky with his presence.

## Shayne Leddy

*continued from page 10*

team All-division, and 3<sup>rd</sup> team Shore Conference for his efforts.

"All the work that I put in after my injury finally paid off and I was just happy to be back on the field again," Leddy exclaimed.

Impressively, Shayne rejoined the basketball team after football ended, and is currently taking ad-

vantage of the second winter sports season, by joining the wrestling team. On Friday, March 26, Shayne pinned his opponent from Neptune for a satisfying victory. He plans to join Track for the Spring season, meaning he'll earn four varsity letters in a single season.

"It is crazy how many goals you can achieve when you really work for it," said Shayne. "And what obstacles you can overcome using a great work ethic". His hard work is something we can all live by. The lesson here is to always get up and push through the finish line. For the rest of his life, Shayne Leddy will remember this time as a period of resilience and growth as a competitor and athlete.





## Teaching Science is Only One of Mr. Wasnesky's Specialties

By: Bobby Marks

The beaming smile of those select few in the world who can brighten a day with just a look is a sight that each and every one of us is privy to. Whether it be your mom, dad, or grandparents, maybe a sibling, friend, or role model, we all know the one person who can brighten anybody's day with a smile. Unfortunately for us in school, that's something that we can't experience to its extent anymore, with masks covering up our smiles that would have been seen before, but not so much now, especially with the somber state of the world in pandemic. This does not take away that experience completely though, and a perfect example of that is right here at Manasquan High School, with Mr. Wasnesky,

Anatomy, Lab Marine, and AP Environmental teacher, tucked into his own little room right across from the bathrooms in the science wing.

A mask is a bummer, it takes away our ability to see things like smiles, or frowns, wide full toothed laughing and sorrowful lip quivers. Mr. Eric Wasnesky throws this idea into the dumps, with greetings from his 6+ feet away booming around the classroom and his smile shining bright even underneath that awful face covering. Not once have I seen the effects of quarantine life slow his role as a teacher and role model for his students and how they should act.

Mr. Wasnesky loves his curriculum just as much as he loves the interaction with students. The greatest teachers are those who are passionate about the subject they teach, and this is no exception for Mr. Wasnesky. It is engaging for a student to watch their teacher and see how interested they are in the topic, which just overall allows them to have fun with the teachings and how they present the information.

A conversation starts between students and one of them turns to Mr. Wasnesky looking for his input. Mr. Wasnesky, laughing, frowning, or reacting in any way to the comment the student had made, gives back to the conversation that he had just been invited to. The students are intent on listening to their revered teacher and are glad he interacts with them how he does. There is no cutting off on either side, students don't cut off Mr. Wasnesky from work, and after work is done, Mr. Wasnesky does not stop students from having fun, because students respect his work and Mr. Wasnesky respects students' right to being happy.

The connection between Mr. Wasnesky and his students is one that just doesn't appear very often. Added to his understanding attitude and meaningful teaching, the perfect balance of work and home life can be seen in how Mr. Wasnesky conducts himself in a way that allows him to take care of his two

children and integrate them into his teachings and conversations with his learners, and teach his children some of the things his class learns. The thing I find so inspiring about this, is the fact that he practices what he teaches, and he does not just make it a class thing, but he lives his lessons and this contributes to his comfort with teaching and effectiveness of having fun with it.

The patience seen in Mr. Wasnesky is also something that should and can be praised extensively. The way he works with everyone whether it is when he repeats instructions for those who missed them or outlines the work to make it easier for his students to understand, Mr. Wasnesky is always taking the time to do the correct thing.

This includes in different countries with his students as well. That's right, Mr. Wasnesky is a traveler, and to many places at that. Over the years he has taken Environmental Club students to different countries, including Costa Rica and Thailand, during spring break. Although that's not an available option in this day in age, it goes to how he creates a strong bond between each of his students who want to learn more about the curriculum and himself.

The trips were for educational and environmental reasons, but that did not take the fun out of him being able to spend time with students in an environment that can teach them more about the world and how it works. Whether its planting trees to save the soil in Thailand in 2010 with his students, or visiting New Delhi in 2012 to observe their culture and industrial effects on the city, or even making it all the way to Guatemala in 2008, it is an experience that he takes pride in accomplishing, and that he can teach to his students. He always takes his time to answer their questions and is always looking for ideas on what they should do next.

Now imagine, being on a trip with your teacher, having fun and learning at the same time, smelling the cultural smells, and getting

your hands dirty to help out those who truly need it.

Say a student raised their hand here, in a random place unknown to Mr. Wasnesky and the student who needs help, it would seem to any of us that the common thing to do is let someone else handle the problem. Mr. Wasnesky would instead decide to walk over to said student and try his best to help them out with whatever resources is available to him and that student. Reaching into the mud and digging up roots to plant a certain type of tree, or collecting garbage and checking maps to keep everyone on track, or just relaxing in the new environment and having fun, laughing and teaching as he would do any other day he spent with is students. These aren't perfectly specific examples, but they are thoughts on what h would most likely do, and that is just the best way to describe it in order to explain the way Mr. Wasnesky works to all of you who have not had him.

All of this may seem super average to those of us that travel every year for vacation, or that think its easy for someone to just say hello and smile, but the testament is not to his actions his whole life, but rather how that spilled into this COVID lifestyle and how he let nothing get him down. He has admitted to our classroom that yes, just like everyone else, he does get upset in our current climate, but he takes his time and makes it worthwhile for those he can affect positively.

No matter who you are today, that is commendable, and it deserves to be written about, even it is just one single example, because thinking on the behalf of most students in MHS, a teacher who can keep us entertained and in awe on a subject today is one who is doing it right. Mr. Wasnesky, and other teachers who have the same effect, I hope you read this and it promotes you to continue doing good work, because it truly does make a difference for us students, even if we don't talk about it.

***Pictured on page 1: avid fisherman Mr. Wasnesky in his role as Fishing Club advisor; at right: Mr. Wasnesky with Environmental Club Members at MHS, and (far right) in India back in 2012.***





# Students Tackle *The Blue & Gray* Editorials

## Issues in the World

### New Law Created to Combat Suicide

By: Abby O'Shea

48,344 committed suicide in the United States in 2018. About 1.4 million people attempted suicide the same year but less than half of them happened. For every 25 suicide attempts, there is one suicide that occurs. These statistics are all from the year of 2018. It is predicted that with the global pandemic that all suicide statistics will go up.

Mental health is something that we as human beings learn to deal with on our own. On the other hand you may look to others for help or advice. For Adrio Romine, a 17-year-old boy who took his own life, this is exactly what he had done.

Adrio Romine was the valedictorian of his high school



*Pictured above: Paola Jordana (left) and her son Adrio Romine (right).*

class, a boy with lots of friends, and was extremely sociable. Paola Jordana, Romine's mom, said how she never knew how much her son was hurting inside.

After Romine took his own life in 2019, his mother began to look into his social media to look for things that she could have missed. While she was looking, she found texts from conversations that Adrio had been having with others about killing himself.

According to 9NEWS, Jordana paraphrased that one of the texts read, "You want to do it at this part of the temple. You want to have

it this particular angle." She was completely in awe of what she was reading. To see a grown man encourage her son to take his own life rather than to seek help and try and save him.

In an interview with ABC15, Jordana said, "It is disgusting. I was angry and just in disbelief that this really happened."

Jordana, and many others, feel that those who helped Romine and many others take their own lives

should be punished. She sought help from her community after coming up with a law that stated it to be a felony for an adult to intentionally aid or encourage a minor to take their own life.

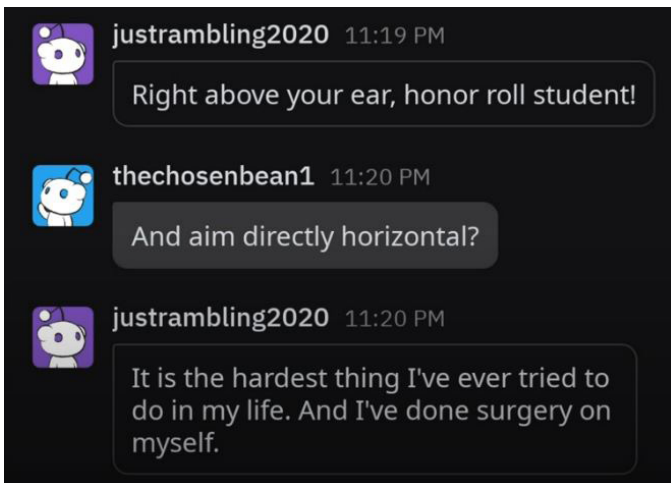
More than 50 people answered her call to action on Facebook and wrote letters supporting the amendment along with her efforts to make such behavior punishable by law through the Laloboy Act.

Jordana is presenting HB 24 before lawmakers on February 3rd. She's hoping that there will be a change in the system that makes it punishable by law for anyone who lends a virtual hand in the undertaking of another person's life.

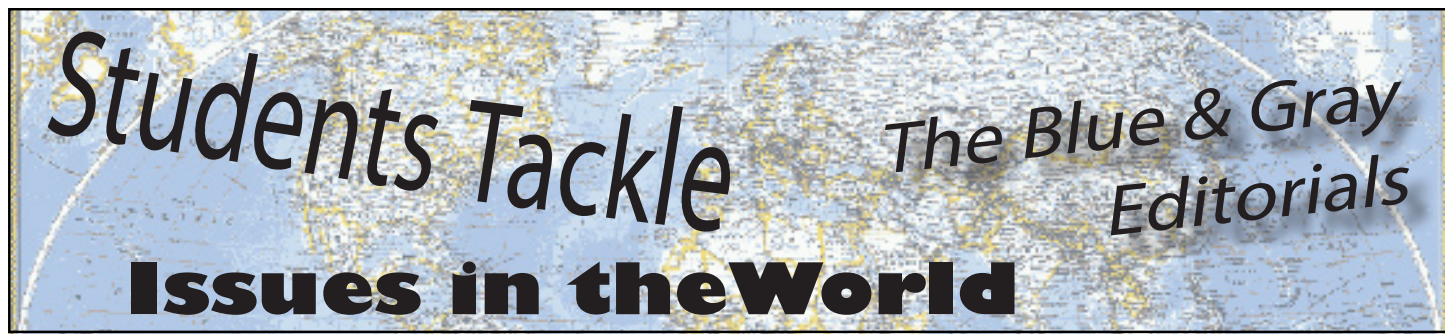
Personally, I feel that suicide is an issue that needs more attention. Clearly the United States loses thousands of people

*continued on next page*

*Pictured below: some of the messages that Jordana found on her son's phone.*







## An Immoral Lawmaker and an Impossible Situation

By: Evan Lloyd

You've heard everything and anything said about politicians. That they're all "liars, crooks, the same", you name it. Sometimes, a politician is the stellar example of what it is to be a patriotic American, and even a human being. However, there are times where you get the worst of society, the ones who betray our trust. This is one of those unfortunate times.

A newly elected member of the Missouri house, Patricia Ashton Derges, has been indicted on twenty charges for fraudulently selling her "potential cure" for coronavirus for profit. The charges, according to *The Washington Post*, includes wire fraud, violations of controlled substance laws, and fraudulent statements, to name a few.

So, how did someone pull off this seemingly impossible scheme? Well, after getting elected as a state representative for Missouri last year, Derges used her position as an assistant physician and state representative to promote a new stem cell treatment at clinics she owned or worked in all over the state as early as April of last year. This caught the attention of authorities at the Department of Justice, who began looking into these claims to see if they carried any weight.

Aside from claiming that this was an "all-natural, alternative cure for coronavirus" in the earliest stages of quarantine, Representative Derges also made it clear to her patients that this treatment could alleviate a range of health issues, like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease while she "treated" her victims, according to NBC News.

The worst part of it all maybe how much money she scammed out of these hopeful patients. While she claimed to be using special stem cells that would cure almost any ailment under the sun, it turns out that she was using cheap,

amniotic fluid that she would purchase from the University of Utah for around \$300 per canister. The amniotic fluid had *no* stem cells in it, and Derges would charge about \$1000 per canister for treatment, tripling what she bought it for.

United States Attorney Tim Garrison said in a news release that Derges "abused her privileged position to enrich herself" through deception. "As an elected official and a health care provider..." he continued, "she deserves to be held to a high standard. This grand jury indictment exposes her deception and holds her accountable for her actions."

With this deception made public, there has been more evidence of fraud, especially with the exposé by CBS news revealing illegal distribution of hard drugs like Oxycodone and Adderall without prescriptions, and over two hundred thousand dollars being collected since 2018. Derges is set to face trial on March 22 and has since stepped down from her position of representative.

Even though many of are unaffected by this as individuals, and it's not a politician or scandal in our state, I believe this speaks volumes about the underlying greed that unfortunately resides in everyone, even the people we elect to office. I get annoyed thinking of "Doctor" Derges and disgusted with how she spat in the face of her supporters and continued to, even after she was elected by them. I suppose no crime goes unpunished but, think of all the people she supplied hope to and didn't sincerely mean it; only wanting their money. I've had many a times where I felt like there was no hope in my medical care, and the fact that she creates a false sense of immunity for these people is abhorrent and repulsive. People could've died because they thought they were free of sickness. Think about if it were yourself or your friends, because they'd be out of money, health, and hope. Good luck "Doctor" - You'll need it for what you've done to the people who trusted you.

### New Law

*continued from previous page*

ple to suicide every year. Those are people's siblings, parents, friends, etc. that people are having to say goodbye to, day after day. What Paola is doing by creating this law is a remarkable thing. By attempting to help others avoid what she had to go through, she is going to change so many people's lives. I feel like you never

know what people are going through, like Paola, if she had known how much her son was hurting, she would have helped him try to get better. If you know someone is hurting or going through a hard time, just offer to listen, to help them get help, or offer advice on how to deal with the situation.

Update: After this story was written, it was announced that HB 2459 passed 10-0 out of the House Judiciary Committee. It'll now go to the House floor for a full vote, and then to then Senate.

# The Oscars are Coming!

After the continuous delays of this pandemic year, the Oscars and their nominations are finally here. The ceremony of awards is set to take place on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It will be the 93<sup>rd</sup> Academy Awards Oscar ceremony.

Overall the Oscars awards are for the actors and focus on their performances, the performances of



**Chadwick Boseman**

the supporting roles, best picture, best music, best screenplay, etc. In addition to all these awards that are very important achievements, there are people who made history with their nominations in this year's Oscars as well. For lots of people, the actors of a movie or a show is what makes everything so good. When you have a great actor or actress, others feed off that. For this year's Oscars, the best actor nominations will go to Chadwick Boseman, Riz Ahmed, Anthony Hopkins, Steven Yuen, and Gary Oldman. Hopkins stars in a movie called "The Father", Boseman stars in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottoms", and Gary Oldman stars in "Mank".

For the actresses this year, the nominations for best actress in a leading role will go to Viola Davis, Andra Day, Vanessa Kirby, Carey Mulligan, and Frances McDormand. Davis stars in "Ma Rainey Black Bottoms",

By: Liam Hagg

Carey Mulligan stars in "Promising Young Woman", McDormand stars in "Nomadland". Last but not least, Andra Day stars in "The United States v. Billie Holiday" and Vanessa Kirby stars in the movie "Pieces of a Woman". These are achievements that these actresses and actors will remember for the rest of their careers.

This recent Monday, history was



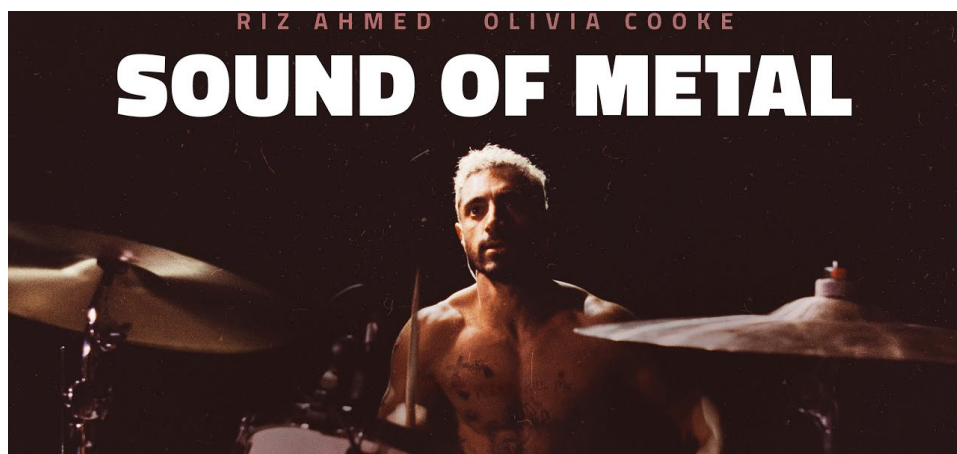
**Steven Yeun**

made when Steven Yeun became the first Asian American actor ever to be nominated for best actor for the Academy Awards. In the movie "Minari", Yeun plays a Korean immigrant who moves his family from California to an Arkansas farm in pursuit of his American Dream.

What makes the whole story so moving is that Yeun even said, "I was in tears. Seeing the words of how a life similar to mine could be put on a page was very liberating." Just because he was nominated doesn't mean he'll win, but what matters is the hard work he's put in that has let him change history.

Another great performance this year came from Riz Ahmed, who starred in the movie "Sound of Metal". Both nominations mark the first time two men of East or South Asian descent were recognized in the same year for nominations. This is a huge milestone for the Oscars and the actors as well. Hopefully the award ceremony continues to recognize actors all around the world, whatever race or ethnicity they are. Only three other East or South Asian actors have been nominated in this category before these two stars rose up.

Every year the Oscars are special. This year, just like past years, there is so much talent to choose from and not even close to enough awards for these deserving candidates. This year is even more different though due to the variety of performances and the vast range of personalities of the nominees. This will make it one of the most historic and interesting Oscars ever.





# Fashion

## Womenswear Trends of 2021

By: Riley Fisher

2020's fashion was all about the edgy early 2000s looks, leather jackets, loungewear, and tie dye. Icons like Britney Spears and Paris Hilton were emulated this year, although on behalf of every girl, we beg that low rise jeans don't ever come back! Since 2020 was such a critical, yet uncritical year in the fashion world, there's high hopes for 2021 to revitalize fashion in all its glory.

Many people know that thrifting has been in for the past year and will continue to be as our planet takes great strides towards sustainability. It's always the most reassuring feeling when you walk into a thrift store and find an oversized leather jacket, a pair of corduroys, or that vintage sweater that could go with literally anything. Plus it's a way to get out of the house! Going forward and with the pandemic still alive, online thrift agents such as Depop and Poshmark have grown significantly and have popularized throughout 2020. On those apps, you

can find deadstock apparel and one of a kind vintage items from high end fashion brands for lower price ranges. As an example, one time I bought a pair of dated pink and brown Nike Air Forces for forty dollars, whereas on places like Goat or StockX they resell for almost 500 dollars. It's always a good idea to explore other options for unique finds which are proven to get you loads of compliments and still stay trendy.

Aside from thrifting, there's been an unfortunate move towards fast fashion with brands such as Shein and Zaful, who offer trendy clothes for seriously cheap prices. Speaking from experience, sometimes it's hard to afford sustainable friendly brands due to higher prices and are left with no choice but to shop with those unethically bad brands. Unfortunately, fast fashion is a trend.

Trends that many throughout the fashion industry are predicting are patchwork, distressed sweaters, trench coats, screen prints, patterned baggy pants, neutral tones and also loud tones, tie dye, blazers, reworked denim, corsets, and platform and knee high leather boots. A lot of these trends have been brought back in the 90s, where in the past year, plaid has been brought back in mini-skirts and flared pants, as well as corduroys. Arguably the most foreseen trend among the masses is casual suit attire and the leather blazer. These two trends have already been prominently seen throughout the fashion seen and it's as though they'll never go away. Esteemed online fashion site, Who What Wear, discusses these trends more in depth with their own readers giving



Above: Model styles black blazer trend

input on this year's trends.

Renia Jaz, reports on [Who What Wears](#) article that, "To my delight, though, I was happy to find that the suit trend is not going anywhere this season,"... "I have a weakness for suits in any form (from the leather suit versions to the skirt suits seen across S/S 21 runways), and I'm planning on opting into this trend heavily by pairing leather suit separates with trainers, skirts, and statement accessories." Let's cross our fingers that this trend remains because there's no argument when it comes to a blazer and some leather trousers!

Grunge is the new casual, which can be seen in a variety of apparel; from baggy jeans, Dr. Martens, chunky chokers and rings, and oversized denim jackets and darker toned sweaters. Everyone wants to look like a knock-off Kurt Cobain. Of course, the early 2000s trends won't fall off too soon; it's never a bad idea to wear a baby tee or a fuzzy zip up.

There's a spectrum of fashion which doesn't allow for conformity, it's the way to self express rather to be repressed. So go out and look cinched or unhinged, because fashion is a statement for yourself and not for others. This year, there's optimism for fashion to return to its runways and create Earth-shattering new looks that will define this year of new hope.



Left: Model walks in patchwork denim pants



# M Warrior Sports

## A Season to Remember

### Senior Andrew Solomon ices incredible OT victory against Marlboro to wrap up undefeated season

By: David Smith

It was an already emotional season for the Manasquan Warriors boys' basketball program prior to their victory over Marlboro High School for the Shore Conference Pod "A" Final. The Warriors head coach, Andrew Bilodeau, laid in the hospital after testing positive for COVID, so current Junior Varsity coach Ryan Ritchey served as interim. Moreover, earlier in the season, Warrior brothers Matt and Andrew Solomon's father also passed away due to the virus.

Senior wing Jack Collins was outstanding, finishing with 12 points, 11 rebounds, 6 assists, and 3 steals. As great as a player he is on the court, he's an even better teammate and friend off of it. When questioned about the impact of this game surrounding the circumstances given his close relationship with Andrew and Matt, he became emotional. "All season we said as a group that we were going to do this for Mr. Solomon as he made so many people so happy in his life," Collins claimed. "We just wanted to be able to give Andrew and Matt a happy fun outlet day in and out."

The first half of the game was all Big Blue. Going into the break, the Warriors commanded a double-digit lead, leading by 10. Watching the Warriors was a thing of beauty, as the unselfishness and chemistry was evident, as several buckets were a result of hustle, extra passes, and energy. Ben Roy, junior point guard, who recently made First Team All-State, finished the game with 21 points, 5 rebounds, 5 assists, and 3 steals. "Offensively, we just needed to come out with energy, as we were flat the past few games we've played," Roy claimed. "Basketball games are typically won by who wants it more, and based on the circumstances, I know for a fact that we wanted it more going in."

However, in the second half, the tide turned, and Marlboro fought back. The Mustangs were led by junior forward Jack Seidler and junior guard Jonathan Spatola. Seidler finished the game with 19 points, 8 rebounds, and 2 assists, while Spatola finished with 16 points, 5 rebounds, and 6 assists, to go along with stel-



lar defense on Ben Roy. In the end, the Mustangs were able to claw all the way back, forcing overtime as Ben Roy missed a deep three at the end of regulation.

Overtime was no different than the last couple minutes of regulation; back and forth. The Warriors and Mustangs traded buckets, and even in a crowd with strictly family members and media access, the place was rocking. However, the Warriors seemed to deliver the final blow to the Mustangs when senior guard Casey Mulligan stepped into the lane to draw his second charge of the game on Jack Seidler, which fouled him out of the game. Mulligan is known for his hard-nosed, team first approach to the game, as he's always willing to give 150% in order to make every play.

When questioned about the charge that fouled out Marlboro's player, Mulligan laughed. "To be honest, I really wasn't thinking about anything when I saw him driving to the cup. I'm so used to stepping in and drawing charges, so it was almost a second nature for me. Prior to the game, however, watching film and reading scouting reports, we knew that they were a drive-heavy

# M Warrior Sports

## Lady Warriors Record Yet Another Impressive Season, Finish 13-2

By: David Smith

It was another season to remember for the Lady Warriors on the hardwood, but not necessarily in the best possible way. The Warriors have dominated the Shore Conference on the upward of ten years now, with memorable players such as Dara Mabrey, Marina Mabrey, Michaela Mabrey, Faith Masonius, Lola Mullaney, and many more.

At the beginning of the season, the Warriors didn't have that star they've had in previous years to pull them to victory. The Warriors squad was very young, with their core being made up of mainly sophomores and juniors. Expectations were still very high due to the fact that they've been so successful over the years. However, at the beginning of the year, nobody projected for them to compete with St. John Vianney, St. Rose, or Rumson Fair Haven, all of whom are very experienced with very talented rosters.



However, the Warriors didn't allow their pre-season ranking to dictate their post-season ranking.

They finished the regular season 11-1, with their only loss coming in the beginning of the season in a split to St. Rose. After that, the Warriors swept Ranney, Manchester Township, and Wall, while also recording victories over Lodi Immaculate, Life Center, Stuart Day, and Montclair Immaculate.

In the Shore Conference Tournament, the Warriors drew Rumson Fair Haven in the quarter-finals, a bitter rival in recent seasons. This was a game of the year candidate as junior Dorothy Loffredo hit two free throws in Overtime with two seconds left to put the Warriors up 2. "It's really a mental thing, those free throws," Loffredo said. "I can practice those as much as I want, I do it all the time at the end of my practice and on my own shooting, but when you get there and you're staring at the rim, you're like, 'Oh shoot, here it is.' It's something that I have to work on but it's more of a mental thing."

But the real drama occurred before the overtime. Led by Loffredo, junior Brooke Hollowell freshmen Hope Masonius, sophomore Georgia Heine, and junior Mary Elizabeth Donnelly, the Warriors seemed unbeatable, as the chemistry was clicking, and everything was firing on all cylinders. Hollowell sent the game to OT with a game tying three after Rumson split a pair of free throws with seven seconds left.

"We set it up "She came out with the mentality out of the timeout ready to knock it down. She did a great job. She got herself set, she got nice and squared up and it looked good right off of her fingers. I'm happy for her in being able to knock that down," head coach Lisa Kukoda claimed. All the momentum quickly shifted to the #7 ranked Warriors side.

But on the first possession of overtime, right after her heroics, Hollowell went down with a knee injury, and was ruled out for the rest of the game. The Warriors would win the game with the help of Loffredo's clutch free throws, but Brooke's knee injury put a shadow over the win. In the end, it turned out to be a Torn ACL, which would require surgery upon the season's conclusion. Impressively, the Warriors still managed to come out on top without their star guard, but from



# M Warrior Sports

## *Lady Warriors continued...*

there, it was an uphill battle, as the winner was set to face one of the best teams in the state, St. John Vianney, led by Richmond commit Katie Hill and Shore Conference Player of the Year, Madison St. Rose.

After such a thrilling game against the Bulldogs, the Warriors looked extremely burned out against the Lady Lancers, as they were forced to play without their lead scorer and point guard against the number one seed. The Warriors lost by a score of 64-47, where the Lady Lancers dominated the entirety of the game.

However, the Warriors still had one game left in store, against the St. Rose Purple Roses. The Warriors bounced back, pouncing on the Purple Roses and closing the season in style with a satisfying blow-out victory. Even though the Warriors season didn't end with a championship, what they accomplished given the circumstances of COVID, their experience, and strength of schedule is truly remarkable.

## *Boys Basketball continued...*



team, so I knew the opportunity would present itself."

Seidler was devastated to say the least, as he began crying on the bench, but still cheered on his teammates. The reigns were given to Spatola, who hit several big shots down the stretch, whether it was the step back 15-footer or drive to the cup over Andrew Solomon and Connor Walsh.

In the final 20 seconds of overtime, Jack Collins was able to secure a timeout after collecting a long dead ball



rebound by the sideline with the score tied. By now, it was up to Coach Ritchey to draw up a play for the final shot. He put the ball in the Roy's hands for an isolation. Everyone expected him to take the shot.

When they exited the huddle, Roy approached Andrew Solomon. "Have your hands up. You're going to be getting the ball, the defense is going to collapse, and you'll be wide open." Roy did just that, as he made his move, got to the foul line, passed out of a shot into the hands of Solomon, and BOOM! Warriors up 2, and as Connor Walsh blocked the Mustangs' inbound pass, ending the game, Squan had earned the victory, winning by a score of 58-56.

Solomon pointed to the sky directly after the layup, and as the final buzzer sounded, he approached his mother with his brother Matt, and they hugged on the side of the court. The rest of the team joined them, as everybody in the gym began to shed a tear, including myself.

"To be able to hit that game winning shot in a game as big as this one, to end the season after the passing of my dad and hospitalization of Coach Bilodeau, it's truly surreal. I'm so happy I could make both of them, the rest of my family, and my teammates proud to cap off a perfect season," Andrew said.

Many say stuff like this only happens in the movies. However, the "movie" ending happened to the Warriors, for real, as they finished off an undefeated season, won the Shore Conference Championship, and ended their season in style in an incredible way, honoring the late Larry Solomon and Coach Bilodeau.



# Swim Teams Finish Undefeated Seasons

The Manasquan Swim Team has been swimming diligently over the last couple months to uphold their prestigious reputation. This year has been unlike any other with the Covid-19 restrictions that have been affecting their practices and their meets.

Manasquan has a reputation of being a great swim team and Craig Murin, the head coach of the Manasquan Swim Team, has no intentions of letting Covid-19 get in the way of another great season. Coach Murin had been working since November to make sure the swim team would have a place to practice and be able to compete for the coming season.

Manasquan's first meet of the year was away against Point Borough. For the first time ever the boys and girls would not be swimming together and would be having two separate meets. Every other year the teams would be swimming at the same time but competing separately.

This first meet set the stage for how the rest of the season would go for Manasquan. No in person spectators were allowed at the meet and all who wished to spectate had to do so on a subpar livestream.

This meet also set that stage for Manasquan as it was the first time there were able to compete since last year. Manasquan came out strong and

By: David Smith

both the boys and the girls had a marginal victory over the Point Borough swim team.

Not only the meets have been affected by the corona virus but the way the Manasquan Swim Team practices has changed drastically as well. Only 25 swimmers are allowed to swim each day meaning the whole team cannot practice every day. This change is just one of many that the swimmers and coaches are having to deal with this year.

Swimmers must wear a mask before and after entering that water with no exceptions. This can make it hard to breath for the swimmers, but the Manasquan swim team has been doing everything they can to help keep themselves and others safe from the corona virus.

Although all of the meets have been separated between boys and girls the time was finally able to swim as one at their meet against Manchester. The meet was at the Ocean Country YMCA which is a very spacious pool. Senior swimmers were allowed

to bring their parents and the boys and girls both won against Manchester.

This meet is not one to be forgotten easily as Manasquan was on top for the entire meet but highlight of the meet was swimmer Sarah Eldredge who broke the high schools 100-yard breast-stroke record.

The Manasquan Boys and Girls team are both currently undefeated and are expecting another perfect season. The boys and girls will be having their last meet March 27<sup>th</sup> against Donovan Catholic and the Manasquan Swim Team will be saying goodbye to some of their favorite senior swimmers.

Swimmers like Andrew Chernmark, Max Noe, and Ethan Hinds will be leaving the team this year after contributing multiple years to the Manasquan Swim Team. Chernmark, known for his breaststroke, has been a four-year varsity swimmer for Manasquan, Noe joined as a Junior but instantly made an impact on the team. His freestyle abilities put up point in multiple meets, and Hinds has been an impact in every event he swam with his impressive swimming skills.

The girls will be saying goodbye to a handful of senior swimmers as well. Kennedy Driscoll joined as a freshman and hasn't missed a meet since. Maddie Starkey joined as a Freshman as well working for the swim team in and out of the pool. Jillian Spalt has been making an impact in the pool for the last four years as well.





# Manasquan High School

## Warrior Athletics

