



# THE LANCER MESSENGER

THE STUDENT NEWS  
JAMES W. PARKER  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

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TO SEE THE MESSENGER IN COLOR...Go to 

## Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr. Comes to JWPMS!

by Lancer Messenger Staff

**G**et ready to dive into a magical underwater adventure as Disney's *The Little Mermaid Jr.* splashes onto the stage at Parker Middle School. With a stellar cast led by talented performers, this production promises to enchant audiences of all ages.

Audiences will be thrilled to see their beloved characters brought to life on stage. Aubrey Sturgis takes on the role of the adventurous and curious Ariel, while Kayden Walk-Beatty portrays the charming Prince Eric. Claire Gallagher embodies the devious Ursula, Liam Ireland brings the lovable Flounder to life, Charlie Gerlach squawks her way in as Scuttle, and Jay Ramey shines as the wise and musical Sebastian. With a talented ensemble cast filling out the rest of the underwater world, viewers are in for an unforgettable experience.

Ms. Polaski, the new Vocal and Theater Director at JWPMS, expresses her excitement for the upcoming production, stating, "The show will leave audiences singing, laughing, and dreaming of summer." With her guidance and the dedication of the cast and crew, this rendition of *The Little Mermaid Jr.* is poised to be a hit.

Mark your calendars because tickets for this underwater extravaganza go on sale in the third quarter. Performances are scheduled for **February 29th at 7 pm, March 1st at 7 pm, and March 2nd at both 2 pm and 7 pm.** Don't miss your chance to be part of this enchanting journey under the sea!

Break a leg to the entire cast and crew as they bring the magic of Disney's *The Little Mermaid Jr.* to life on the stage of JWPMS!



# THE LANCER MESSENGER

## Editorial Policy

**O**ur mission is to provide a form of media, in print and online, that represents all aspects of student life. Its purpose is to present news concerning Parker Middle School as well as to provide a forum for student opinion.

It is the desire of the staff to reach every student and tell as many of their stories as possible. We invite you to share your voice with us (500 word max). The Lancer Messenger will print as many student submissions as space will allow, but also reserves the right to not print a submission. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication.

We reserve the right to edit for clarity, brevity, accuracy, spelling and grammar. All submissions are subject to laws governing obscenity, libel, privacy, and disruption of the school process, as are the contents of this paper.

Send writing to  
[scotthutchison@generalmcclane.org](mailto:scotthutchison@generalmcclane.org)

\*Opinions are not necessarily those of the staff, nor should any opinion expressed in this public forum be construed as the opinion or policy of the General McLane School Board, administration, or faculty, unless so attributed.

## Lancer Messenger Staff Writers

The students of the Social Arts 6 exploratory class, along with many other guest writers throughout the school.

## Advisor

Mr. Scott Hutchison

# New Televisions

by Josh Spurlin

If you have eyes and even the most basic skill of observation, you probably noticed that TVs have recently been added to the gym lobby, as well as both the north and south cafeterias. After talking to Mrs. Anderson, she recently informed me that one TV has been installed in each cafeteria, and there is another in the gym lobby. Additionally, one more will soon be installed in the main lobby. The TVs are being installed as quickly as possible, but the material on the walls is making installation difficult. Nevertheless, they are progressing rapidly. I have learned that the purpose of the TVs will be to inform people between an-

nouncements in the morning. Students will be able to view the displays as they come into school and throughout the day. Hopefully, all students will now have a guaranteed way to stay informed about all things Parker Middle School and General McLane.



# 12-Inch Cookie

by Max Spence

There you are, enjoying a cookie, finishing the cookie, yet you're left with a feeling that your cravings just aren't satisfied. Fear not, for a solution is on the horizon. Recent rumors have been circulating about the introduction of 12-inch Cookies at Subway. As a Subway employee, I can confirm that 12-inch Cookies have made their way to our stores. Alongside them, we've introduced 12-inch Cinnabon Churros and 12-inch Auntie Anne's Pretzels, all served hot! The official announcement was made on Cookie Day in 2022, and these delightful treats are set to hit stores in early 2024. Get ready for a delightful eating experience! We interviewed a few students who tried them earlier, and here's what they thought:

"I really think that it's way too big for just one person to eat, but it's good to share. So, if you're having a party, you just buy a couple of those and you can just split them," said Caden Roth.

"It smelled like heaven," proclaimed Carter Eastman. "It takes a lot to look that good, and it does look good." Overall, it seems the 12-inch Cookie is a big hit, according to our findings. If you are interested in giving one a try, head to any of the Edinboro Subway locations to experience the amazing feeling of craving satisfac-



## New Bathroom

by Lancer Messenger Staff

As you may have noticed, there has been some construction underway across from the South Cafeteria entrance. In addition to maintaining the original, yet now smaller faculty restroom, our building now has a single-user restroom.

This restroom isn't for everyone to use, so don't assume you can hop over to it during lunch due to a chocolate milk

traveling through you a little too quickly. According to the principals, you must have special permission from the office to use the new single-use restroom. The purpose of the restroom is to assist in situations where a student or adult may not be able to use a multi-use bathroom. "Creating this option provides us with more accessibility, which is always our goal," said Mrs. Anderson.

## Girls Wrestling Expands

by Lancer Messenger Staff



Girls wrestling has really expanded over the past two years. Last year, they had only two middle school wrestlers (Junior High) and one in high school. This year, there has been a huge transformation to the team. Last season, the girls didn't have a coach exclusively for them. The junior high team shared the two head coaches and two assistant coaches with the boys. The girls wrestling team now has its own two head coaches, Coach Zachrel and Coach Madison. This season, the girls have already gone to a couple tournaments with the many of the wrestlers coming home with medals. Coach Madison explains that she is very proud of the girls on her team. She is pleased with how all the wrestlers on her team try their hardest, even with it being so

**GO DIGITAL!**  
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## CosMc

by Josie Weber



Many Americans love McDonald's food, which is cheap, quick, and tasty to many. McDonald's is generally known for its consistency. McDonald's has recently launched a new project. They created a new beverage shop called CosMc in hopes to compete with other leading beverage shops such as Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts. Their menu includes many similar drinks to these places, such as energy drinks, lattes, cappuccinos,

and more. The first CosMc opened in Bolingbrook, Illinois, on December 7, 2023, where dozens of cars lined up in the drive-thru hours before its opening at 6am. The next few CosMcs are expected to open in Texas and San Antonio by the end of 2024. Although a CosMc may not open in Edinboro or McKean anytime soon, it is a brilliant idea, and we should be excited for it to head our way one day.

new to them. Coach Madison mentioned that she is proud of them for being a girl in wrestling. She explains how it's hard for a female to be in a male dominated sport. She tells us that wrestling is such a great sport because, even when you retire from the sport, you leave it with many life lessons on top of the specific wrestling skills learned.

As a team and school district, we are looking forward to seeing all the successes in this fast-growing sport of girls wrestling. If you get the chance, gather some friends together and come cheer on the team as they continue to push toward that next pin.

**If 13 and older...**  
You and your family can follow us on Instagram for instant student news:  
[@lancer\\_messenger](https://www.instagram.com/lancer_messenger)

# Basketball

by Caden Roth

Everyone who played basketball in elementary and early middle school holds onto the dream of making it to the seventh and eighth-grade basketball teams. This year, we are fortunate to have two outstanding teams, and the season is still relatively new. I had the opportunity to chat with Mr. Myers, one of the seventh and eighth-grade coaches, who shared insights into the team's performance. He emphasized the exceptional effort and commitment displayed by the players, noting that they are hitting their stride in the season. The players exhibit fantastic attitudes, follow guidelines by maintaining good academic standing, and adapt their lineup based on individual performances.

Upon interviewing seventh-grader Drew Curtis, he described the team's energy at the start of each game as akin to a championship match. Even after a loss, the team remains optimistic, driven by the determination to win the next game. Drew also pointed out the need for more focus during practices, urging teammates to minimize goofing off. Another seventh-grader, Nick Salvator, shared the team's half-time strategy when facing a deficit, focusing on devising a comeback plan to win the game. Wyatt Blair, also in seventh grade, expressed satisfaction with the season, high-

lighting a winning record of seven wins and five losses. He emphasized the team's supportive dynamics and detailed their practice routine, including layup drills, press breaker exercises, conditioning, free throw practice, and occasional scrimmages against the eighth-grade team. Switching focus to the eighth-grade team, I interviewed Sonny Washburn, who described the team's energetic presence during games. Their primary

rivals, the Girard Yellow Jackets, provide intense matchups. Sonny praised the team's cohesive play and excellent ball distribution.

It is obvious that being part of the seventh and eighth-grade General McLane basketball teams is a rewarding experience. The players' dedication, positive attitudes, and teamwork contribute to a memorable season filled with challenges and triumphs.



# Intramurals

by Carter Eastman

For years, Parker Middle School has offered a variety of intramurals for the students. We already have amazing opportunities like soccer, football, playground games, Mt. Pleasant, bowling, and skating. For the first time ever, students who love to play games had another option. Ms. Kelly Allen, one of our school's guidance counselors, offered up the newest addition to the intramural list: Game Club. Allen explained that the purpose of our Intramural Game Club was to bring students in grades 5

through 8 together for a fun time filled with board games, card games, club games, and more! We, as a group, learned so many different games, held competitions, met new friends from all grade levels, and worked together as one big group to have the best time after school! We cheered each other on, watched one another play different games, shared friendship, and had a great few weeks.

45 students from grades 5-8 signed up for the club, and

about 40 students would come each time.

"This club was such a success," said Allen. "The students had a ball! It was a short-lived, 4-week course, but I will say all the 40-45 students who did come said they wish it would have lasted longer and said they are hoping it comes back again next year!"

With this activity being such a hit, it also sparked another after-school club. As many saw posted in Schoology, a GM

Dungeons & Dragons club will meet every other Wednesday after school starting 1/31/24.

The next intramural available will be skating up at Presque Isle Skating. This is a fun-filled time with skating and eating concession stand food.

Whatever your hobby, Parker Middle School is definitely not short of options for you. We look forward to seeing all the memories made through these opportunities.

# Sports Injuries

by Josh Spurlin

Every kid who loves sports dreams about being that elite athlete one day. We all know that with every sport we play, there are risks. While sports may be fun and exciting, it is important to stay safe while playing them.

There are different things that cause injuries such as not using the correct exercise techniques, overtraining, changing the intensity of the activity too quickly, running or jumping on hard surfaces, wearing shoes that don't have enough support, not wearing proper equipment, having a prior injury, having poor flexibility, and even playing the same sport year-round.

There are only two kinds of injuries: acute and chronic. An acute injury is a sudden injury that happens quickly, usually when you pull a muscle, get hit too hard, or fall on an area of your body the wrong way. The opposite is a chronic injury, which happens over a period of time, usually when you overwork an area in your body. Out of the two types of injuries, chronic injuries are the most common among athletes. They are the hardest to detect and treat the symptoms. The symptoms of acute injuries include extreme swelling or bruising, extreme weakness of an injured limb, a bone or joint that is visibly out of

place, sudden severe pain, and not being able to move a joint normally. The symptoms of a chronic injury are pain while you exercise, swelling, and a dull ache when you rest.



Common sports injuries usually occur in the shoulder, elbow, knee, leg, or ankle. This was true for 8th grader Maddy Pollard, who has recently had a high ankle sprain. She was playing a basketball game when two girls took her out. As a consequence of that injury, she now has to wear a boot when going about her day and she has to wear an air cast during physical activity to stabilize her ankle.

The rotator cuff injury is the most common among shoulder injuries. The rotator cuff is a group of muscles and tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint. The injury is caused when the tendons near the joint become inflamed from overuse or injury. The most common elbow injury among baseball players is called little league elbow and it is usually found in younger players. Ninth grader Hayden Spencer experienced this tragic injury last year. The injury occurred

when he was in the middle of pitching during a tournament. He had to wear a sling for a month and undergo physical therapy for 5-7 weeks. Although his injury has healed, he still feels numb when pitching.

The most common knee injury is called the runner's knee or the jumper's knee. It is a condition that causes pain or tenderness under the kneecap at the front of the knee. It mostly affects runners but also affects people who hike or cycle. Another common injury is in the leg, which is called the hamstring strain. There are three muscles that run along the back of the thigh and form a hamstring. Sports that involve a large amount of running and jumping can cause this injury. The most common ankle injury is the ankle sprain. The ankle sprain is when you roll or twist the ankle in an awkward way and it stretches or tears the ligaments in your ankle. It can happen when you land the wrong way while jumping or pivoting or when you're walking on uneven ground.

Although these injuries can occur, it's also important to focus on preventing them. After talking to Coach Myers, the 7th/8th-grade basketball coach, he explained some great ways to prevent injuries such as drinking plenty of water and getting lots of rest after physical activity. Sports provide a lot of joy and positive competition, but it can all come to a halt if the athlete isn't careful.



**CLASS OF 2027** **RHP** **3B**  
**Hayden SPENCER**  
 General Mclane (HS) · PA  
 5-11 · 210LBS · R/R  
 Travel Team: Ohio Elite

when he was in the middle of pitching during a tournament. He had to wear a sling for a month and undergo phys-



<b>82.6</b> FB MAX	<b>2047</b> FB SPIN RATE	<b>69-71</b> CB	<b>75.5-78.3</b> CH
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# Concussions

by Caden Roth

It's not uncommon for an athlete to wake up in a hospital or wake up from a lying down position on a field, realizing something bad must have happened. Often, this is the result of a head injury that caused them to black out or become delirious.

Concussions occur when you hit your head directly on something or someone at 85g (g-force). The main cause of concussions is hitting the ground, not sports, which is surprising considering how dangerous rugby and football are. The three usual causes of concussions are motor accidents, falling, and sports, with football being the most common sport. To know if you have a concussion, you would want to look for some of these symptoms: dizziness, headache, sensitivity to light or noise, vomiting, and/or confusion or memory loss.

two weeks to recover fully from his concussion.



According to doctors, it usually takes 7 to 14 days to recover from a concussion. After eighth-grader Graedy Sharp's concussion, it took him a week-and-a-half to recover after he fell off his stairs at home.

come out and that he's not throwing to him because of his injury.

If you want to heal quickly, you will want to rest, stay hydrated, eat more protein, avoid unnecessary movement of your head and neck, limit exposure to light and loud sounds, and reduce the amount of time on electronics. Don't watch electronics, avoid moving your neck, don't play sports, and definitely don't go to concerts, school, work, or any other loud areas. If you have a concussion, don't wait at home and think it will get better. You need to go to the hospital immediately because if you don't get it looked at, you can possibly have these symptoms for the rest of your life, affecting your everyday life. What is the chance of getting a concussion? Well, if you play football in high school, you have a 20% chance. You can die from concussions if you have too many in a short period of time. Sports are trying to prevent this with neck strengthening, proper gear, and no above-the-shoulder tackles in football. Car designers are putting in better safety features, and for children, better booster seats.

In one of eighth-grader Seth Mulligan's games this past season, he was running straight up the middle of the gap, dove at the running back head first to try to make a tackle. In the process, he got a severe concussion from hitting the running back's pads head first. He got back up, realizing he was dizzy as he put his fingers in front of his face. Over on the sidelines, he got cleared by the trainer, and went back in on offense. On the field, Graedy Sharp told Seth to go back to the sidelines because he was almost falling over in the huddle. Graedy yelled to the coaches that Seth needs to



Concussions are a big deal, and we need to take them seriously. They can happen



Sixth-grader Winston Gast had a couple of concussions. When asked what happened, he answered, "This little kid came up and head-butted me while I got a steal playing basketball." It took him

when we play sports or even just by accident. It's super important to wear hel-



# SQUISHMALLOWS

by Suzanna Bruno

Imagine walking into a bedroom when suddenly, piles of soft, round plushies fall on you. You struggle to breathe as you are drowning in the hoard, desperately trying to claw your way out. But it's no use – the Squishmallows have already consumed you, and you will never see the light of day again.

Launched by Kelly Toys Holdings LLC in 2017, Squishmallow has become a widely adored brand of stuffed toys designed for all age groups. Distinguished by their extraordinary softness and round features, Squishmallows come in a range of sizes, from 3.5" to an impressive 24". They can take the form of animals, foods, and characters from TV shows and movies.

There are over 1,000 unique characters with their very own backstories. According to Nikita Charuza from People Magazine, the top 5 most popular Squishmallows are Cam the cat, a white cat with patches of black and brown; Lola, a purple and pink

tie-dye unicorn; Fifi the fox, a red fox; Winston, a teal owl; and Avery the Mallard duck. The popularity of these toys has soared, with enthusiasts building collections that never stop growing.



One collector is my friend Julia, who now has a collection of 35 Squishmallows that started in 2020. Though it doesn't sound like an enormous number, it's truly remarkable. Julia first saw Squishmallows on TikTok, she says "They are cute, fun

looking pillows, and I wanted to make my bed a cozy place." Her favorite Squishmallow is a 16-inch avocado named Austin, he was a Christmas gift in 2020. Ever since then Julia received more as presents for birthdays and holidays, occasionally buying them with her own money. Julia personally named each of her 35 Squishmallows, disregarding the names on their tags. Her favorites include Austin the avocado, Toby the triceratops, Brice the blueberry cow, Cameron the cow, Connor the orange cow, Bailey the black bat (a gift from me), and Kevin the Kiwi.

Despite the comfort and cuteness of her collection, Julia has now decided that it has grown larger than she has space for. She will still accept more Squishmallows, but she won't be asking for them.

Squishmallows still continue to fill homes and hearts, and they are here to stay. It's never too late to make a new fuzzy friend!

# Gym Every Day

by Josie Weber



Looking around the school, everyone is built in many different shapes and sizes. This is mainly because not all kids are physically active. We only have gym class for 2 out of the 4 quarters, and we only have gym for a little bit of time. Many students don't utilize the other half of the year to be active. I personally like having gym, but wish we had it for a longer period of time.

Having gym class every day could potentially divert time away from other classes, yet it boasts numerous benefits. Daily gym class can significantly enhance a child's physical and mental health. Often during discussions about our weekends in classes, many students mention spending most of their time on video games. When

younger, excessive video game use was possible due to a faster metabolism. However, as one grows older, prolonged gaming can lead to excessive weight gain.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, children aged 6 through 17 should engage in at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Regular physical activity can boost bone and muscle strength, improve fitness levels, and reduce body fat. Having daily gym classes can help children meet these recommended activity levels. Not all kids participate in after-school activities or sports and might have packed schedules after school. Regular gym classes could assist these children in staying active.

Additionally, daily gym classes could significantly contribute to enhancing kids' mental health. Participating in competitive games during gym class instills sportsmanship in children. Furthermore, having daily gym classes provides children with the opportunity to run around and unwind. Following extended periods of sitting in class without recess, children can become restless and anxious. Gym class might serve as a means for these children to relax and enjoy themselves.

These represent some of the advantages of incorporating daily gym classes. We can't guarantee that we will get gym class every day, but everyone has the power to be physically active. What choice will you make for you?

# Miss Jen

by Suzanna Bruno and Max Spence

The beloved school librarian, Miss Jen, is a cherished figure among students for her kindness and willingness to help them find the perfect book. But, there's more to her than her role in the library. Miss Jen is not only a dedicated librarian but also a loving mother of two kids, both finishing college. Her daughter is 28, and her son is 25. Furthermore, Miss Jen is a grandmother, with one grandchild and another on the way. Beyond her human family, she extends her love to four cats: Stewie, Dewey, Laszlo, and Baby Kitty. Miss Jen also has chickens. Yes, chickens! Miss Jen begins her day by waking early in the morning. She then spends her morning

sipping multiple cups of coffee, watching TV, and working until it's time to head to



school. After a day at work, she feeds her pets and chickens. Following that, Miss Jen prepares a snack and sits down with a good book. Obviously, Miss Jen loves to read, and her favorite books are "Scythe"

and "The Hate You Give." She also loves nature and being outdoors.

Before becoming a librarian, Miss Jen worked as a counselor, assisting kids in the Child Welfare service or on probation. She loves her job as a librarian; getting to know each and every student is one reason. Miss Jen makes the library a safe space for everyone to enjoy.

From her roles as a mother and grandmother to her love for pets, reading, and kids, it's evident that Miss Jen is an exceptionally extraordinary person. A library without Miss Jen would be like a glass more than half empty.



# Band

by Carter Eastman



Ba-dum, Ba-dum, Ba-dum – the rhythmic beat of the drums echoes as you stroll past the music room. The enchanting melody ensues, initiated by the skilled trumpet and trombone players. Soon, you find yourself enveloped in the harmonious blend of instruments, creating a captivating symphony. Welcome to the world of band class.

In middle school, the opportunity arises to join the band class, and as you transition to high school, the musical journey continues with the option to participate in the marching band, jazz band, concert band, and even the opportunity to play in the parade at Disney World. Surprisingly, participating in a band demands a substantial amount of dedication and hard work for success. Mastering the fundamental skill of reading musical notes and maintaining consistent practice is crucial, as it is the sole pathway to improvement and mastery.

According to Mr. Roden, our middle school band instructor, the most commonly chosen instruments among middle schoolers include percussion, saxophone, trumpet, and flute. Don't fear, as you can always explore options before settling on something you want to invest your time into. Roden explains, "the journey of becoming a playing musician starts with inspiration: seeing something great being performed, or being close to someone (family or friend) that plays, and wanting to perform!"

Roden explains that what makes band participation rewarding is the collaborative effort of individuals of different ages, backgrounds, and skill levels coming together to create something harmonious. "[You get to] communicate deep feelings that go beyond words!"

If you are interested in joining band, stop by and talk to Mr. Roden. You won't regret it.





## Quest 3 by Max Spence

We all know Fortnite, but it isn't very immersive. Thankfully, there is a solution. Recently, one of the biggest breakthroughs in VR technology has been made: the Meta Quest 3. The Quest 3 is a successor to the Quest 2 and has many improved qualities. One of the Quest 3's most significant enhancements is mixed reality. For those unfamiliar, mixed reality incorporates your current surroundings and introduces elements that didn't previously exist, crafting an engaging experience. Additionally, the Quest 3 boasts superior controllers and tracking. This is achieved through three rounded rectangular cameras on the all-white shell and strap of the Meta Quest



3. The distinctive white ring around the top of the Quest 2 controllers, used for tracking their location, has been eliminated in the new Quest 3.

My belief in the widespread popularity of VR stems from its ability to offer an escape from our everyday reality. Many individuals, myself included, often find themselves

stressed by the demands of life and school. Virtual reality provides a temporary respite from this stress, enabling us to immerse ourselves in a different world. This, I believe, is one of the primary reasons the Quest 3 has gained such popularity. It offers an escape yet allows users the flexibility to choose their level of engagement, whether this be using hands or controllers, depending on personal preference. Furthermore, the Quest 3 delivers improved graphics in a more compact form. However, the only drawback to this powerhouse of a device is its \$500 price tag. This hefty cost has deterred many potential buyers, myself included. So, with all these considerations, will I find you on Amazon making a purchase?

## Mean Girls

by Josie Weber

Have you heard of *Mean Girls*? No, I'm not talking about the nasty girls in your grade who only care about themselves and don't worry about being cruel to others. I'm talking about the movie! *Mean Girls*, which was an enjoyable classic that came out in 2004, created the iconic quote, "And on Wednesday, we wear pink." Recently, Paramount Pictures has been working on a new project. They are planning on releasing a new version of *Mean Girls* that premieres on January 10, 2024. The first *Mean Girls* movie had grossed over \$130.1 million worldwide. The movie starred Lindsay Lohan as Cady, Rachel McAdams as Regina, and many more. Paramount Pictures hopes

to get the same attention they did before. This new movie stars Angourie Rice as Cady Heron, Renée Rapp as Regina George, Bebe Wood as Gretchen Wieners, and many more. According to the top movie review site Rotten Tomatoes, the movie has a 66% average rating, which isn't the best, but still is a must-go for any *Mean Girls* fan. For those who haven't seen the original movie, it is about a homeschooled girl who moves from Africa. A few of her peers make her pretend to be friends with the popular girls, hoping to take revenge against them. This new movie is available in all theaters, and I personally am super excited to see it!



ON WEDNESDAYS  
WE WEAR  
PINK

## GLOW PARTY

by Lancer Messenger Staff

The PTSA sponsored GLOW PARTY was canceled due to bad weather, but has since been reschedule for **Friday, February 9th**. According to glowpartyworld.com, "When selecting what to wear for a black light party

you want to find glow party outfits and materials that are either white or fluorescent. The brighter the neon color the greater the chance that the item will glow. Fluorescent green, pink, yellow, and orange are the safest bets."

# Who Will Run Against Biden?

by Jay Ramey

The primary and caucus system is how candidates for each political party in the United States are appointed. Each party, the Republicans and Democrats, has a group of candidates come forward. Although the process differs slightly between the parties, one common aspect is that one candidate is selected and put forward as the nominee to run in the national election.

On the Democratic Party side, Joe Biden enjoys the right of the incumbent, or the idea that if a person has just won an election, they should get to run again without competition for their nomination. While this is not an official rule, Biden has been running unopposed for his nomination, at least so far, and it would be unlikely for such a late entry.

So, we are left with the Republicans. At the time of writing, there are three major people left in the race, and one more of a lot of interest who has dropped out. Let's delve into their positions, ideas, and my opinion on their chances of winning.

## Donald Trump:

Former President Trump is in the lead by a considerable margin. He is well known for his theatrical presence. As a lifelong businessman and reality show star, he has developed a public identity as a crude and direct man. This direct behavior often makes people see him as a common man, which helps him, as he mostly focuses on common, trade-working, typically middle-aged families. However, due to criminal charges being leveled against him, much of his candidacy has been more like a court case than an election. Despite lead-

ing the polls by wide margins, I'd be foolish not to say I believe he has a high chance of winning, but I don't think it is a guarantee, not yet at least.

## Ron DeSantis:

DeSantis is the governor of Florida and is competing behind Trump. In the polls, he has been flip-flopping with Nikki Haley for second place. DeSantis is a lot like Trump. He also focuses on the common American family, with one of his main issues being parental rights over education. Thinking about this, I don't think he is likely to win. He is running in the same lane as Trump, and even if he is better than Trump, people prefer the original. This is why he flopped at the Iowa Caucuses, which led him to drop out and endorse Trump.

upper-middle class more than those who work in manual jobs. While DeSantis is a lot like Trump, Haley creates her own lane that is not about hating Trump but is also opposed to some of his behavior and is more professional. Now, the race is between her and Trump, who has the endorsement of most other candidates.

## Vivek Ramaswami:

Ramaswami was the youngest in this campaign, at only 38, and is a businessman, also of Indian descent. He is very active and vital, often using social media as his advertising platform. He is quite the personality, and he is betting on young people to get him votes. However, after a large defeat in the Iowa Caucuses, he has dropped out and now is campaigning for and endorsing Trump. I do wonder if he may be the nominee for Vice President, but that is a wild guess.

There were two other candidates, Asa Hutchinson and Chris Christie, who do not have much relevance, and Christie has now dropped out.

While the primaries start in January, we will have to wait until June before we get our result, but most of the primaries will happen

in March and April, so we can make some good bets then. As for Pennsylvania, we have our primaries on the 23rd of April, so it will be interesting to see what candidates our citizens endorse, but typically by then, the candidates are already decided and usually there is only one candidate standing. Whoever each side selects, 2024 is going to be an interesting and exciting year in the political world.



## Nikki Haley:

Haley is another major contender for the nominee. As a woman of Indian descent, if nominated, she will be breaking plenty of barriers as the first Republican nominee for president. Nikki Haley is the former Governor of South Carolina and has also been a secretary to the UN. In contrast to the others, she often presents herself in a more upright way, campaigning to the educated

# Mt. Pleasant Program by Lancer Messenger Staff

For many years, JWPMS students have been going to Mount Pleasant after school. This year is no different. Students from 5th-8th grade are currently taking part in the six-week After School program at Mt. Pleasant. Advisors, Mr.

Roden, Mrs. Berchtold, and Mr. Hutch explain that it's an amazing experience for students to get to enjoy the outdoors while skiing or snowboarding with their friends. This is the same program that Roden and Hutch did when

they were students at Parker Middle School. Many students also participate in the lessons, led by General McLane high school students each week. Lessons are separated by ability, so all students can grow, whether they are an expert or

just starting. In addition to the fun on the slopes, many students also enjoy buying food and drinks in the lodge and just hanging out together. It's definitely one of those activities that create special memories.



This QR takes you to Parker Podcasts on YouTube



# Caffeine Addiction by Jake Williams

## The Parker Podcast Parallel

Imagine the gentle morning breeze stirring as you feel that familiar craving for a cup of coffee. You make your way to your favorite spot—perhaps Dunkin', Starbucks, or Tim Hortons—anticipating the sweetly bitter taste that awaits. But amidst this daily ritual, have you ever paused to consider the potential health implications of your caffeine fix?

In contemporary society, caffeine reigns supreme as the drug of choice for many. Statistics reveal a staggering truth: the average American consumes over two Americanos' worth of caffeine each day. It's a habit deeply ingrained in our culture, often dismissed as harmless. However, the reality of caffeine withdrawal paints a different picture. Symptoms can range from mild drowsiness and headaches to more severe muscle pain, depression, and irri-

tability, lasting up to nine days after the last cup.

But it's not just coffee drinkers who should be wary. The rise of soft drinks like Coca-Cola in the 1960s introduced a new avenue for caffeine consumption. While the caffeine content in soda may be lower than in coffee, it's still significant. An 8 oz. brewed coffee contains roughly 135mg of caffeine, while an 8 oz. Red Bull boasts 80mg—a dose equivalent to what a 10-year-old typically consumes in a day. Shockingly, teenagers often consume four times that amount daily, according to a 2005 study. The ubiquity of caffeine raises important questions about our collective health and well-being. Is our reliance on this

stimulant masking deeper issues? Are we fully aware of the impact it has on our bodies and minds?

For those seeking opinions, the Parker Podcast may be your source. Tune in to hear the thoughts of a few people, including Vice Principal Anderson. Just remember, watch your caffeine intake.



## Give Some Chips

by Hailey Williams

People would think that just because you act happy, sweet, or nice means you are happy, but a lot of the time, that's not the case. People tend to act like they're happy, so others don't worry, but little does everyone know they're not. Everyone has good and bad days, but some are worse than others. Coming from someone who was depressed from a very young age, I can say right off the top of my head that, like many people, I pretended to be happy most of the time. This can all lead to suicidal thoughts and self-harm. People often fake smiles to make their friends, parents, and teachers think that everything is fine, but even if someone is smiling, it doesn't mean they're happy. Last year, there were over 700,000 suicides caused by depression, suicidal thoughts, etc. A lot of this is because of stress, such as

family issues, trauma, anxiety, school, and just general stress.

One thing I want to focus on is how stressful school can be. One thing I think about is a video called 'When the Chips Are Down' by Richard Lavoie.



Picture students' self-esteem as poker chips. Each kid starts the day off with a different amount of poker chips. Picture this: waking up in a warm bed in their own bedroom with two parents telling them there's breakfast downstairs. Imagine that as starting with 100 poker

chips. But there are a lot of kids who wake up with only 15 or 20 poker chips. Over the course of the day, there are going to be some good and bad things that happen, like seeing your best friend. This adds a few locker chips, while bad things like failing a test take a few away. Now, for the student that started with 100 poker chips, losing a few isn't a big deal. But for the kid who started the day with 15 or 20 poker chips, it is. That kid will come into the room with his head down, be too tired to get his work done, and he'll fall asleep. Classmates will make fun of him. 5 more chips gone. He'll realize his parents forgot to pack him lunch. 2 more chips. The problem is teachers have an opportunity to give that kid

some poker chips, but a lot of teachers will see how that kid is acting and knock them down a few more times and say stuff like 'how could you be so unprepared, how could you be so disrespectful, just act your age.' Just like that, that teacher knocked that student down to zero poker chips. And the teacher will still act shocked when that student acts up. So if we can get educators to realize not every student starts the day with 100 poker chips, maybe we can get students to stop looking at school as being in a prison. My point in writing this is to spread awareness because even though it may not seem like it, people are really struggling. The reasons could be small or big, so always be aware just because someone is smiling doesn't always mean they're happy.

### YOU CAN HAVE HOPE • HERE ARE SOME NUMBERS TO HELP

\*You can also find an adult you trust to help you. We are here for you!

#### Need to report a TIP?

**SAFE SAY SOMETHING**  
It's on your school iPad

**SEE IT. REPORT IT.**

- 1 Submit a tip without being named. We'll make sure the right people know. That's it.
- 2 Report an anonymous tip. Crisis Center may ask a few questions to understand what's going on.
- 3 Within seconds the right people will be notified.

**Need to Talk?**

**NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE**

**988**

**SAFELine 814-456-SAFE**

SAFELine, Erie's new community resource to assist youth who are victims of bullying or dealing with other difficult situations.

**BEING BULLIED?**

HIGHMARK **CARING PLACE** finding hope in grief (866) 212-4673

Crisis Services at UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor

When you're having a crisis — such as depression, anxiety, or thoughts of suicide — call 814-498-2014 or 1-800-300-9888.

**What is a Crisis?**

- Examples of a crisis include:
- Thoughts of suicide
  - Uncomfortable symptoms of mental illness
  - Loss
  - Stressful events (trauma, job loss, homelessness)
  - Relationship problems
  - Substance abuse
  - Family concerns
  - Parenting needs
  - Feeling overwhelmed
  - Depression or anxiety

**Crisis Hotline**  
**(800) 300-9558**

**Want help in school?**

Ask the office for a **SAP (Student Assistance Program) Referral Form.**

- Academic concerns
- School related concerns
- Social/Peer related concerns
- Emotional/Behavioral concerns
- Transfer student/Transition concerns
- D & A concerns
- Health related concerns
- Other