



In this issue... Politics, Sports and More

BHS Baseball Plays Once-In-A-Lifetime Game

By Matt Tierney
Redcoat Review Writer

It isn't every day that a high school baseball team gets the opportunity to play at a professional baseball stadium, never-mind the top rated minor league baseball stadium in the country.

On Monday, April 19th, the Berlin Redcoats faced off against Windsor High School at Dunkin Donuts Park in Hartford. Coming into the game, Berlin was sitting at a murky 2-2 record, needing a big win to propel them forward, and they got exactly that.

Fueled by a dominant performance on both sides of the ball, Berlin mercied Windsor by a score of 12-2.

After a tough loss against Southington, this matchup felt like a playoff game. Windsor, a class LL school, notoriously good, was off to a hot start. Berlin had slumped out of the gate, but they always have championship aspirations. The venue added another level of excitement, making the game feel important.

Berlin turned to their ace, senior James Ellis, to take the mound. Coming off a rough start against Southington, Ellis bounced back, mowing down hitter after hitter, holding them to only two runs. The offense came out firing as well. Despite limited production from the bats the first few games, Berlin was able to turn it around and unload 12 runs on Windsor.



Photo Credit: Jake Ferland

The Berlin Baseball team lines up before facing Windsor at Dunkin Donuts Park, home of the Harford Yard Goats.

Senior Tyler Rice came up with a huge bases-clearing double early on that sparked the offensive output, nearly clearing the 320 foot fence. To the surprise of many, the biggest star on offense was not even a position player. Ellis shined at the plate in addition to the mound, helping himself out by driving in four runs and collecting two hits. Junior Garret Fallon capped off the win with a game-ending single, driving in senior Justin Piskorski to call it a mercy.

Following up the huge performance, when Ellis was asked how the pressure of playing in such an impressive stadium impacted him, he stated, "I had some nerves, but when I have nerves I pitch better. I was able to command my pitches,

take deep breaths, and get it done." Ellis also attributed a lot of his success on the mound to the success of his offspeed pitches.

As for his success on the other side of the ball, Ellis said, "I don't usually hit so it was kind of crazy for me to even have an at bat, so I went up there and just tried to swing as hard as I could, and good things were able to happen."

All in all, this was a huge win for the Redcoats, who are 12-3 through May 13. Berlin hopes to be in the mix to be competing for a state title once again come June. Regardless of how they fare, getting the opportunity to play on a minor league field was an experience that these boys will never forget.

Mamma Mia! a Showstopper in Senior Court

By Tia-May Summers
Special to the Redcoat Review

Have you ever thought of a musical theatre performance being held outside instead of in an auditorium?

This year with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, Berlin High School did just that, putting on *Mamma Mia!* outdoors for six performances in the Senior Courtyard during early May. The students performed in five shows, with one rainout.

The cast and crew had to think about how to set up the technology in an outside venue. This show was not only going to be outside, but the cast as a whole would be on the "stage" throughout, dancing from their seats three feet apart due to COVID protocols. It was difficult for some to sing while dancing and having to wear masks. However, by all accounts, the audience managed to see a terrific performance.

BHS Junior Tyler Chamberland, a representative from the crew, said that those who have seen past performances at



Photo Credit: Mr. Boyle

Members of the cast and crew of *Mamma Mia!* perform outside in Senior Court at BHS. Pictured in front from left are the senior lead cast of Alexandra Tzetzto, Tori Cascone and Abigail Ferland. The show also featured a junior lead cast as well.

BHS would see the same quality as other shows.

"We are trying to make it as good

as indoors but even with distancing and everything we are still making sure that the audience still feels the magic."



The Increase in Asian American Hate Crimes

By Lindsey Leary
Redcoat Review Writer

Throughout the pandemic, Asian Americans were at the forefront of hate crimes and targeted attacks. The organization Stop AAPI Hate, a group dedicated to protecting Asian American Pacific Islanders, reported that there were roughly 3,800 incidents of targeted hate crimes towards AAPI people over the course of the past year. Over 500 of those incidents took place in 2021 alone, according to NBC News.

The attacks on the Asian American community stem from many factors, but a large contribution to this discrimination is the COVID-19 virus. The virus first arose in China, leading to increased prejudice towards people of Asian descent, many of whom are actually American citizens.

While the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as a contributing factor towards rising targeted attacks on the Asian community, the attacks represent something larger— increased awareness of underlying biases and prejudice within American society and media.

The Asian community has consistently been the target of numerous stereotypes, racism, and xenophobia since Asians first began immigrating to America during the Gold Rush in the mid-1800s. The federal government passed multiple acts that restricted immigration and the rights of the Asian community, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and the Japanese-

Viewpoint



Photo Credit: Jim Wilson, New York Times

American Internment during WWII.

These actions in history laid the groundwork for the racism and prejudice towards the Asian community that is still prevalent today. Stereotypes and damaging tropes of both Asian American men and women in the media provided a negative perspective of Asian people.

American society's depiction of Asian women is extremely harmful— in the NBC News study mentioned earlier, Asian American women reported twice as many anti-Asian hate incidents as men. Asian American women in media are often portrayed as submissive, quiet, and subservient— commonly referred to as “the lotus blossom.”

The American Psychological Association states that this hurtful character-

ization portrays Asian women as insignificant, invisible, and unimportant. The lotus blossom trope can be viewed as the result of white supremacy— overshadowing a group and culture so white people are viewed as more important and better.

On the other hand, the media also often creates a hypersexualization of Asian women. This stereotype creates a fetishization of Asian women, forcing them to only be viewed as sexual objects. This trope endangers women and places importance on their sexuality rather than the actual person.

Asian men have also faced negative repercussions due to their portrayal in American media. Andrew Kung, an Asian American photographer, described that Asian men are often characterized as “... passive emasculated boys lacking sex appeal and a voice.”

American society and the media has created a dangerous environment for the Asian community, and truly any minority group. But there is seemingly an increasing awareness for the treatment and characterization of Asian American people and the extreme harm and violence it brings to the Asian community.

The United States Senate recently introduced legislation that addresses the uptick of Asian American hate crimes, which passed with a 94-1 vote, a powerful step forward for the Asian American community. Organizations like Stop AAPI Hate and Asian Americans Advancing Justice are working to bring more awareness, and eventually an end, to anti-Asian hate.

DECA Students Compete Nationally in ICDC

By Nick Spinali
Redcoat Review Writer

In April, members of Berlin High's DECA chapter competed nationally in the first ever DECA virtual International Career Development Competition (ICDC).

The Distributive Education Clubs of America program, or DECA, is a program that aims to educate students in the field of business by allowing students to apply real-life business scenarios to their learning.

DECA students compete in annual competitions related to a number of different business careers with the chance to compete nationally in the ICDC.

After competing in the Connecticut competition earlier in the year, DECA members that placed in the top 3 of their respective categories were given the opportunity to compete in the ICDC. Berlin competitors that advanced this year were Josh Bois, Jessica Boucher, Jon D'Amore, Sal Dastoli, John McGeever, Trevor Miano, and Nick Spinali.

The ICDC competition allows students the opportunity to experience competition on a national level and engage with DECA members from around the globe.

The competition also allows students the opportunity to sharpen leadership



skills by elevating their understanding of business operations in a real-world scenario.

“DECA's ICDC helps emerging leaders and entrepreneurs around the country display knowledge in the different areas of business and teaches the skills of leadership, communication, problem solving, and teamwork,” said Bois, Berlin's DECA president. “The competition enables students to be recognized at a national level and can be very beneficial for their future careers.”

Competitions were based on six main career clusters: business management and administration, hospitality and tourism, entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, and personal financial literacy. Based on which competition was selected, students were tasked with completing written entries, taking tests and recording oral presentations. Official DECA judges were responsible for assessing the student submissions and determining which sub-

missions were worthy to move on to the ICDC.

After judging for the Connecticut competition was complete, a virtual ceremony was held to name the winners of each competition, where students that gained eligibility for the ICDC were announced.

As part of the ICDC, students that moved on were allowed to receive feedback from the judges that assessed their submissions.

Using the feedback, students reconfigured their work and resubmitted. Students will then be judged again, and any students who are eligible to move on will participate in a virtual competition along with DECA students from around the nation.

Along with the competitors, senior Briana Dastoli was recognized as one of two Connecticut recipients of the DECA Emerging Leader Honor Award.

The award provides recognition to graduating DECA members studying marketing, finance, hospitality and management for being an academically prepared, community oriented, professionally responsible, experienced leader through participation in DECA.

Students interested in joining DECA should contact either Mr. Parisi or Mr. Jones, the BHS club advisors.

Learning Extends Beyond Academia

By Ian Saunders
Redcoat Review Writer

We as students are all at a moment in our lives where everything is presented before us: every opportunity, grade, friendship, and self discovery. But what about after that? We are responsible for making our own decisions after high school. We are responsible for the rest of our lives after we graduate.

Viewpoint

So, what do we do then? Although you may not feel the need right now to learn about history and math and English, in the future this knowledge will make us better members of society because learning is the basis of our advancement as a species.

Here at Berlin High School, many teachers have masters and doctorate degrees and have gone to prestigious colleges and universities. But, that does not mean that college is the only pathway for future generations.

Mrs. Robin Minor, a faculty member in the Math Department, discussed her views regarding the ways education impacts our lives and how it plays a role in people's life experiences. Mrs. Minor teaches Geometry, Algebra I, and Algebra IIA and has been teaching for seven years, including five at McGee Middle School.

When asked what schooling means to her, Minor replied, "It's an ongoing learning of skills and life experiences." There is no stopping point in Minor's personal definition, regardless of the career choice or higher learning pathway

that is taken. Instead, 'experiences' are anything that contributes to our understanding of how to navigate the world.

We cannot rely only on a formal education to determine how to go about the world, but rather utilize opportunities to better understand how life works. Society is changing, and not just at an academic level. We have become more tolerant of diverse pathways and opportunities to learn and develop the skills we want to harness.

"I think in some forms for society to function, everyone needs some sort of education," she said. "Not everyone needs to go to college, but everyone needs [life] skills and experiences."

Mrs. Laurie Pieciewicz shared a similar view. She teaches Advanced English 9 and UConn/ECE Seminar in Academic Writing and has been an English teacher for twenty-three years, teaching grades seven to twelve. Mrs. Pieciewicz also served as the principal of Saint Paul's School in Kensington and has been the Berlin High School English department supervisor since 2012.

Pieciewicz describes education as "more than a formal experience. It's a combination of your school and life experiences. Education is also a combination of learning to show empathy



and kindness. It's learning to see the world from someone else's perspective."

Empathy and kindness play a large role not only in learning but also in preparing students for the reality outside of school. Besides us preparing for life outside of school, we should not just rely on higher education to give us the key to the future. Statistically, the number of students pursuing college level education has been decreasing. In the fall of 2020 college admission numbers dropped 2.5 percent according to the National Student Clearinghouse, a system dedicated to verifying degrees and certificates. This decrease may be due to more pathways students are considering and taking, or the cost of college and university.

"I think there is an increased demand for education in the technical area," Pieciewicz said. "Most careers and jobs do require a college degree and higher learning. Even if it is some form of tech school, you're still advancing your education."

Knowledge has been a major part of a functioning and successful society. Education is not just higher learning, but a pathway we all take.

When asked about the place of higher education in our society and if it is necessary, Pieciewicz stated, "Yes, in some ways. But, it's not the formal school curriculum that teaches us to be kind to others, that teaches us to be open minded."

"Learning to work with others, listen to others, and see things from different perspectives help a functioning society... formal education is important, but ultimately those soft skills are just as important. Maybe even more."

Lucky Senior Wins BHS Golden Library Pass

By Dan Lamoureux
Redcoat Review Writer

When most high schoolers first enter their hallowed halls of education, they see the learning experiences they will have there as little more than steps on the journey to their dreams. However, sometimes that cycle is reversed and we achieve so much greatness in high school there is little hope that anything following in life could ever measure up to it.

Parody

One person who recently reversed that cycle was Berlin High senior Matt Tierney. When Tierney first walked through the doors of BHS as a wide-eyed freshman with limitless potential, I doubt he even would have been able to predict just how high he would soar. Yet, in spite of this uncertainty, Tierney cast his bracket in the 2021 Library March Madness, to either be honored with the golden library pass or have his failed bracket be mercilessly cast into the library recycling bin.

Thankfully, Tierney's gamble paid off, and he achieved victory amongst a crowd of other hungry bracketeers

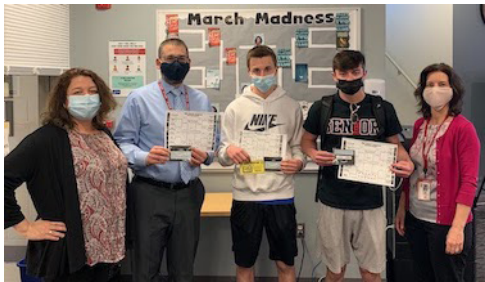


Photo Credit: Mrs. Niro

Mrs. Pappas and Mrs. Rice pose with this year's winners: Mr. Leonard, senior Justin Skates and senior Matt Tierney. All three winners received Amazon gift cards, but Tierney alone won the coveted Golden Library pass.

looking for a piece of the action. After his victory, Tierney had this to say: "It definitely came as a surprise to me. But I was very happy to hear the news." When asked if he ever had any doubt that he would be victorious, Tierney said, "I definitely was a little uncertain after the first few rounds, but after I saw the final matchup I knew I had a good shot at bringing home the hardware."

The March Madness book bracket contest is an annual event at Berlin High School in which students make an educated guess of what books are the most popular amongst BHS students. The vic-

tor wins a Golden Library Pass and a gift card.

The library pass awards the student with unlimited access to the library during study halls, making it easily one of the most sought after items on the Berlin High School campus. But it is both a blessing and a curse.

Sadly - as is often the case with victory - there have been some negative consequences of Tierney's triumph. Sinister outsiders are constantly trying to gain access to the hard-won Golden Library Pass, with Tierney being accosted many times both on the track and in the classroom. The *Redcoat Review* staff wishes Tierney all safety in his war of attrition to hold onto the Library Pass into the future.

On a personal note and in all seriousness, I wish Matt all the best. He has been a terrific friend, teammate, captain, and role model during my time at BHS. His victory in the Library March Madness book bracket contest is just another addition to the list of things I am sure he will achieve.

It is easy to treat all our achievements in public schooling as a joke, but their prestige is really no proof of anything other than the conscientiousness and intelligence of those who win them.



Time to Unlock the Outdoors

By Ben Schulz

Special to the Redcoat Review

While snow lovers begin to let go of any hopes of another ski trip this year, people might feel the itch to get back outdoors and make the most of these warm spring days. Especially after a cold winter that felt even longer with COVID restrictions, people want nothing more than to get out on the baseball field or go for an exciting mountain bike ride through the woods.

Soon enough, people will be waking up to the sound of birds chirping and the warm morning sun peeking through the curtains, and with the spring of 2021 upon us, here are some creative and COVID-safe ways to get out and enjoy the nice New England weather.

People young and old will all enjoy a low impact hike around Crescent Lake. This reservoir located in Southington, CT has several miles of easy walking trails that bring great views of the water. The cozy lakeside loop trail only takes about 30-45 minutes to complete and when you finish the walk, you can relax at the picnic tables right next to the parking lot.

Avid outdoorsman and Berlin High science teacher Mr. Hanna knows plenty about getting outside and making the most of nature. "I just discovered Mt. Higby and the view from the ridgeline gets both the sunrise and sunset," says



Photo Credit: Todd Van Hoosear

Summit of Mt. Monadnock State Park in New Hampshire.

Hanna. When timed well with the sun patterns, a normal hike can turn into a beautiful sunset experience.

For people looking to try new activities, outdoorsman and teacher Mr. Arnold has suggestions. He teaches Lifetime Activities and inspires teens to learn about new ways to engage in the outdoors.

"I started hiking at night with headlamps. My favorite hike was from Besseck Mountain through Mount Higby in Middlefield. The trails are wide open and it's amazing to see all of the wildlife tracks in the snow. Deer will clear the snow around small areas to make beds for themselves to lay down in. We saw eyes light up on the mountain side and as we got closer, we saw a herd of deer. The views are amazing at night in a different way. Great times!" said Arnold.

Night hiking will become much more popular as the warm spring days begin to yield temperate nights.

If you're looking for something a little more extreme, try mountain biking around Crescent Lake's many mountain bike trails. With varying levels of difficul-

ty, riders of any skill level will find something to enjoy, whether they're looking for wide flat gravel trails or hard packed high speed jump trails. If you don't have a mountain bike, beginners can find rental options at Cutting Edge in Berlin, CT.

If you are up to the challenge of a full day trip, my favorite day hike is Mt. Monadnock, near Jaffery, NH. If you leave in the morning, you can complete the 4 hour hike with plenty of time to get home for dinner.

The 3.8 mile trail is great for all ages and extremely popular for families. The summit, at over 3000 feet, yields breathtaking views and serves as a great place to have lunch. You can't go wrong with a day trip to Monadnock.

We all need to keep in mind how important it is to keep each other healthy, so even though these outdoor activities may seem safe, it is still important to wear a mask near others and travel in carpools of only people within your "bubble." I know I can't wait to get outside and have a great spring and summer, so don't be afraid to try something new this year and make the most of the great weather!

Berlin High Welcomes Back Mr. Francalangia

By Allie Nawalaniec & Taylor Desmarais
Redcoat Review Writers

This year, Berlin High School welcomed several staff members, including Mr. Francalangia, the Athletic Director. Read on to get a glimpse of his teaching life, personal life, and why he believes students should take advantage of their high school years.

Mr. Francalangia discovered a strong love and passion for sports at a young age. Most of his childhood years consisted of playing sports, from baseball, to golf, to soccer. He grew up playing baseball and played in high school at BHS. During his junior year, the team won the state championship. In addition to his passion for baseball, Mr. Francalangia had a passion for soccer as well; he played for the BHS soccer team.

In addition to athletics, Mr. Francalangia enjoys gardening, tackling outdoor projects, spending time with his family, and making homemade pizza.

Before his exciting return to Berlin High School, Mr. Francalangia wore a variety of hats that laid a strong foundation for his current position. Early on in his career, he worked at BHS for 13 years as a Social Studies teacher and three



Allie Nawalaniec, left, and Taylor Desmarais have some fun interviewing Mr. Francalangia on his return to BHS.

years as a department chair. During that time, he coached men's soccer and was the assistant coach of the track team with Mr. Hanbury. After his time at BHS, he joined the Lewis Mills community where he became the AD for six years, assistant principal for a short time, and girl's soccer coach. The BHS community now welcomes him back to his Berlin roots!

Considering Mr. Francalangia has found his way back to BHS, we asked him what exactly made him want to be back. He says he loved his time here as both an educator and a coach but also as an athlete. Growing up in Berlin also influenced his return back to BHS. He was granted a scholarship and attended Villanova University.

He said, "Berlin High School prepared me for both an academic and athletic lifestyle at Villanova University." Not only did his athletic experiences ease him back to BHS, but the influential people did as well. "I continue to have values that I hold in my heart, and I have learned a lot from many special people," he said.

As BHS welcomed students and teachers back into the building in September, there have been many new and challenging protocols put in place. He says it was quite challenging and took him some time to settle in.

On his first day here, he says he did not have much time to adjust. His days consisted of many meetings, preparations, and planning. He was meeting with the CIAC two to three times a week to ensure a successful sports season for the students.

As happy as he is to be back and running sports here at BHS, he unfortunately has not been able to see a normal sports experience for the students. He hopes for the upcoming seasons to be more exciting both for him and the students. However, he says his number one goal is to keep the kids safe and healthy. All together, he says his transition back to BHS was a rewarding one.

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Long Story Short: A Look Back at 4 Years

By Gina Scalaro
Redcoat Review Writer

As I walked through the doors of BHS for the first time, I had no idea what was in store for me: the opportunities I would be given, the friends I would make, the things I would learn about life.

Now, as I am about to walk out of the doors of BHS for the last time, I want to share with you what my time here has been like.

To start, I would not be who I am today without being a leader within my class and the community service I have done through Upbeat. I have been my class's secretary since sophomore year of high school, and it has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have advocated for my class and tried my hardest to give them everything they want with the opportunity they gave me by electing me.

As an officer, some of my favorite moments are seeing our class come together for hallways and so many people who normally would not hang out come together to make something spectacular for our class.

While COVID-19 did extremely alter my high school experience as an upper-classman, I feel as though my class did our best at trying to make our last years in high school memorable. The pandemic taught me to not take the little things



for granted like seeing someone in the class I don't usually see outside of school or eating lunch in the cafeteria with my classmates.

For Upbeat, I did not start getting involved until my sophomore year of high school when I met people who taught me how to enjoy community service. Now I am an Upbeat Coordinator. I have grown as a leader in a plethora of ways because of my work in Upbeat; I will always be grateful for that. I have learned, not just in Berlin but in the world, that for some people, being in a leadership position is just a title to show you have power. For me, I do not look at it that way. It is about what you do with the power you possess. You can either use it to show you are better than others or use it to make others better. I chose the latter option and will always choose the latter option.

I have also learned many things about myself that I might not have learned had it not been for people that I met during my time at BHS.

As a sophomore, I met someone who taught me how to not be someone's sidekick. They taught me not to let anyone make me a side character in my own story. They taught me how I should value myself and not let anyone make me feel less than who I am. All it takes is one person to believe in you, something everyone needs in high school.

Finding someone who helped me live for myself allowed me to have one of my best years of high school with amazing friends.

There are a few things I'd like to

share with those reading this, especially students. Don't do too much so that you can't breathe, and try not to grow up too fast. Stay a kid for as long as you can, and enjoy the free time that you have or else all of a sudden you are a young adult wondering where the time went.

Make time to drive around town listening to "Fearless (Taylor's Version)" - or whatever music you want - with your friends. Surround yourself with those who make you smile when you think about your time in high school. If you can, manage your time well so you are not doing things right before a deadline (easier said than done, I know... I am currently writing this article a day before it's due).

Now my final pieces of advice are for everyone. Stick up for yourself. Say something if you feel shut out. Don't discount your feelings if you're hurt because you're too scared to offend someone. People get jealous of success, but don't let that deter you from putting your all into things. Educate yourself. Use your voice and never let anyone silence it. Fight the good fight.

With that, I leave you with my senior yearbook quote which I feel encapsulates what I've learned in high school about how to live your life:

"When you stop fighting, you stop living. We all need that thing that's worth fighting for. Maybe it's a certain someone, or a special place, maybe just an idea. So find your fight, and fight like hell, 'til your battle is won." ~ Brooke Davis

Spotlight on Medical Club

By Ian Saunders
Redcoat Review Writer

Are you interested in a career in the medical field? If so, consider joining Berlin High School's newest club, the Medical Club! This club is open to anyone with interest in medicine and how the medical field works.

Every meeting focuses on different careers through live presentations (done through Zoom this year). Students can also learn about different pathways within the medical field through inventories and videos.

The Medical Club has held seminars with a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, and a physical therapist so far this year. Upcoming seminars will include a physician, pharmacist, paramedic, and medical student.

The club also plans to volunteer in hospitals in Connecticut. In the meantime, you can learn how to perform life saving skills such as epipen usage, how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED), and CPR training is arranged for later this year.

Meetings are held Thursdays in the Library after school. Reach out to BHS club president Shree Patel, vice president Noah Miller or secretary Tamarah Almozani for more information. Or contact Mrs. O'Rourke, club advisor.

BHS Welcomes Newcomer Ms. Day

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Despite all the challenges and differences this school year has brought, Mr. Francalanga has had a positive transition back. He says the students have been awesome, and he loves watching them play. Although COVID has made it tough, he enjoys building relationships with the students and staff.

Through Mr. Francalanga's journeys in sports and student life, he leaves us off with a few things. As a high school athletic director, he says "The years go by quickly. There is always something to look forward to, so embrace and take advantage of your high school years."

Another great staff member, World Language teacher Ms. Day, was welcomed into the Berlin High community this year. Read on to get her perspective on this school year and to get to know her more in and out of the school setting.

Ms. Day always had a love for sports, especially basketball. She started playing basketball when she was four years old and still loves to play to this day. Her passion and love for the sport led her to play basketball in college at Quinnipiac University and later coach.

Throughout Ms. Day's time as a student, she always looked up to her



BHS students, Allie Nawalaniec, left, and Taylor Desmarais, have fun interviewing Ms. Day, who is the newest member of the World Language department at Berlin High School.

teachers. She admired them and wanted to be just like them in the future. Ms. Day became the advisor for the Future Teacher's Club, in hopes of inspiring students to follow their dreams of becoming a teacher.

Like all of us, Ms. Day definitely faced challenges in adjusting the COVID protocols of teaching students online and in person. This is Ms. Day's first year teaching, and she was thrown into a lot considering it was her first year. However, Ms. Day is an excellent teacher and is doing amazing! Keep up the terrific work, Ms. Day!

Remaining Positive More Important Than Ever

By Ava Dubuc
Special to the Redcoat Review

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to leave hundreds of Americans' mental health hanging by a thread,

Viewpoint

thousands of people have discovered ways to remain productive, active and all around happy despite adversity.

During such difficult times, cultivating self love and personal happiness may seem outlandish, but studies prove that it is more important now than ever before.

Americans all across the world have been put to the test. How can one remain positive through such devastating times? How is one supposed to remain physically healthy and happy when an individual can't even hug a family member goodbye? How can one fight the overwhelming sense of anxiety and depression when going to the grocery store could lead to potential exposure to a fatal virus?

So many people feel as though they are stranded and alone in a losing battle, but many forget that everyone is fighting in this together. In the end, the victory over COVID-19 will leave individuals minds opened up to a perspective full of love, new healthy habits and a deep sense of gratitude.

Attending school and obtaining strong social connections despite the limitations the virus poses on students across the globe continues to leave many students struggling to prosper through-

out their educational career.

Jessica Ingenito, a senior at Berlin High School, watched her senior year trickle out from under her. She discussed the importance of finding the good throughout the bad. Family, friends, and fitness were, and continue to be, a significant part of her everyday life since the coronavirus obliterated her old lifestyle. Ingenito describes herself as motivated and always on the go, but, when the pandemic hit, she said, "It made me open my eyes up to how much we had taken advantage of the things we had before the pandemic and how much freedom we had."

This statement couldn't be any closer to the truth. The pandemic has forced people into a position in which their lives are restarted. A complete reboot to the way things used to be. Individuals had to think of new ways to remain productive and happy, leaving behind their old ways - the old ways that were once taken for granted.

Facetime calls with friends and family, walks with her dog, and journaling became the new normal for Ingenito. She was able to see her friends in person while remaining the proper distance apart, following CDC guidelines.

"Something about being able to see them in person, even though we couldn't do much, kept me going," she said. "Eye contact does a lot more than one thinks."

Despite Ingenito's senior year lacking homecoming, pep rallies and more, students like her all across America gained new values, perspectives and priorities.

Meghan Hickey, a counselor at Berlin High, discussed how COVID-19 has impacted her and said that remaining active and social has been her coping solution. She too, has faced many issues since the spark of the pandemic. She said that turning to friends and family in a time of need brought out the best of her, and despite all that has changed, she describes the virus as a "learning opportunity" for all.

With this being said, many students facing struggles with mental health lack the urge to seek help due to feeling as though everyone is going through tough times. To an extent, this is true, but monitoring and validating one's emotions as well as receiving support from another individual may benefit those struggling to cope with the oncoming changes and new ways of life.

It is essential to understand that each day isn't a given, and if it comes, it won't always be easy, but every step is progress. Hickey recommends to all those struggling to go for walks, get some fresh air and remain positive no matter how hard it may be. "Things always get better," Hickey remarked.

Every step of the way everyone is fighting this virus together, whether that be physically, or mentally, from the small town of Berlin, all the way to countries all across the globe.

The coronavirus that struck all of America and spread worldwide has resulted in just as much love as it did fear. Values have shifted and productive and positive solutions have been discovered.

Scenes from Spirit Week



Photos Courtesy of Berlin High School

President Biden Brings Students Back to School

By Emma LaFrance
Redcoat Review Writer

As part of President Biden's first 100 days in office, he wanted to reopen schools fully within the remaining months of the school year. As of the end of April, 12 states have ordered schools to be full in person.

These 12 states, along with the other 38, have been given 10 billion dollars from the Biden Administration to prepare and get students from all states back in person. This 10 billion-dollar stimulus package passed, specifically for COVID testing within a school. This money will be used for diagnostic tests for teachers, students, and staff, who have possibly been exposed to someone with COVID.

The money will also be used to ensure schools can conduct "serial screening testing" that would help in detecting COVID in teachers, students, and staff who don't have symptoms.

Along with this resource, the American Rescue Plan is going to provide 130 billion dollars to assist schools in provid-

ing a safe and positive reopening, as well as hitting upon the academic, social, and emotional needs of students. On March 19th, a new policy went into effect stating that students in elementary, middle, and high schools should and will remain three feet apart where masks are universal, instead of the six foot policy at the start of the school year. This will help students and teachers to come back in a safe and more comfortable way.

"Students learn best in schools. Our top priority is to make sure America's schools continue to reopen as safely and as quickly as possible, and our job is to provide states, districts, educators, and families with the resources they need to do so," Secretary Miguel Cardona stated in a press conference for the U.S. Department of Education. Steps are being taken to make this transition to full in-person possible, but will it be enough?

In Connecticut, the majority of schools have chosen to reopen fully, but still offering the remote model for students. Berlin High School is one of these schools who have followed this plan, and taken the proper precautions, and so far

there have been no massive outbreaks of COVID. Teachers and staff members at Berlin High School have been given the opportunity to get vaccinated, which has only increased the safety measures taken to fulfill students' last moments in person this school year.

Along with President Biden wanting to reopen all schools fully, he wanted all teachers and staff members to be vaccinated by the end of March. Now, as we are near the end of May, Biden's plan nearly succeeded with getting 80% of teachers, school staff, and childcare workers at least one shot of the vaccine as March came to a close.

"Our push to ensure that teachers, school staff, and childcare workers were vaccinated during March has paid off and paved the way for safer in-person learning," says CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH.

As for the 12 states and some that are getting ready for all students to be full in person, President Biden can say he is getting certain things back to normal, even if it isn't in the time frame that he hoped.

Join the *Redcoat Review*: It is a Worthwhile Experience

By Matt Tierney
Redcoat Review Writer

As a senior reflecting on my time with the *Redcoat Review*, I feel compelled to share my experiences within the school newspaper club and tell you, the reader, why you too should consider joining the *Redcoat Review*.

Initially, I was reluctant to join *Redcoat Review* because I was worried writing wasn't necessarily my thing, and I feared I would have a lot to write and contribute to the club on top of an already heavy school workload. Nonetheless, at the end of my sophomore year, after Mrs. Rice's consistent recruitment and seeing a few of my friends join, I tried it, and I am very glad I did.

It turns out that both of the worries that kept me from joining the *Redcoat Review* were completely unfounded. First, writing doesn't need to be your thing at all in order to join. Sure, if you love writing, this is a great fit, but if you like to read, or if you are interested in either photography or layout, this is also a great fit for you.

A common misconception of the *Redcoat Review* is that you will only be obligated to write, but that is not true. You will have the opportunity to take photos, help layout the paper, and help edit all of the stories if you so choose. Furthermore, my worry of the *Redcoat Review* being a big commitment also turned out to be untrue.

What is nice about the club is that there aren't hard pressing due dates to get pieces in by, but rather you just write at your own pace over the course of the

quarter. It is manageable with school since you have plenty of time to contribute.

The other big component of the *Redcoat Review* that I wanted to highlight is the experiences I have had by being a part of the club.

First and foremost, I have improved my writing skills and learned how to write professionally, both of which helped me along the way in the college admissions process. I also was able to improve my ability to work in a group environment because we constantly work together, reading each other's pieces, trying to help each other out. Being a part of the *Redcoat Review* also was a very nice component of my resume when applying to colleges. It helped me look well rounded, and when I told admissions officers that I wrote for the school newspaper, they were very impressed.

That is not all of the experiences I got out of the *Redcoat Review*; in fact those are the more mundane benefits, if you will. What was really cool about the *Redcoat Review* is who we were able to meet.

By being a part of the *Redcoat Review*, you will have the opportunity to attend field trips at various universities as a part of their High School Journalism days. They often have guest speakers and other intriguing workshop activities in which students can take part.

What resonated with me are two specific people we had the opportunity to meet. The first was Dom Amore, one of the head sports writers for the *Hartford Courant*, who also makes frequent appearances on Connecticut news stations.



Photo Credit: Jake Ferland

BHS seniors Tim Lewis, left, and Matt Tierney show off their *Redcoat Review* Press Pass during the baseball game at Yard Goats Stadium in Hartford. Jake Ferland also attended the game for the school newspaper.

This was really interesting for me because I am a huge sports fan, and I often read a lot of his work. To meet him and to hear what he had to say about the behind the scenes in the sports industry was really eye opening.

The other person we met was Darren Sweeney, meteorologist for NBC Connecticut. I am sure if you have ever watched the news you know who I am talking about, but what you may not know is that he is actually a journalism professor at Central Connecticut State University. Meeting him was a great experience not only because he was a 'celebrity' if you will, but he also had a lot of great information to relay about what it takes to be a successful journalist.

All in all, both of these experiences were fabulous, and I am sure there will be more opportunities like this should you choose to join the *Redcoat Review* next year.

If you are interested in joining, reach out to Mrs. Rice or Mrs. Glass. Additionally, I would be more than happy to answer any questions you have about the *Redcoat Review*, and you can email me at matthew.tierney@edu.berlinschools.org.

After 35 years, Mrs. King Says Goodbye to BHS

By Matt Tierney
Redcoat Review Writer

It seems as though every year the Berlin High School community has to say goodbye to a beloved faculty member, and this year is no different.

Physical Education and Health teacher and girls basketball coach Mrs. Sheila King is retiring after a long career in which she impacted the lives of so many in a positive way. Mrs. King has spent a total of an impressive 35 and a half years teaching in Berlin, and needless to say, she will be greatly missed.



Despite such a long and successful teaching career, King was equally successful outside of the gym, accumulating an illustrious career as a coach. King started out as a girls soccer coach for several years at the beginning of her teaching career, and later went on to serve as an assistant indoor and outdoor track coach for 17 years.

However, what she is best known for is her role as the varsity women's

basketball head coach, a role that she still occupies. King has been wildly successful throughout her time in the program, including four conference titles and one state championship game appearance. More importantly, she has been a phenomenal leader and a role model for all her athletes on and off the court.

Despite her retirement from teaching, King does intend to return for the basketball season next year for another year as head coach.

As King reflects on some of the best parts of her job, she states that she has "enjoyed getting students moving, laughing and smiling through physical activity" and that she hopes that she has made "some students who don't like PE learn to enjoy it and grow and maybe learn an activity they will do for life."

She says that there was "great satisfaction in teaching students the importance of being physically active. It is a skill for a lifetime and it always leads to health and wellness for them. I can't think of anything more important for a happy life."

Mrs. King has mixed emotions about retiring.

"It is exciting and at the same time a little unnerving; it will be quite a lifestyle change after teaching for 35 and a half years," she said. "I will find plenty of

things to do to keep me active that is for sure. Taking care of my granddaughter, golfing, home projects and travel will be tops on my list.

"It will be very nice to call my time my own and do with it whatever I want. No more bells and schedules! I will be sad to leave this wonderful staff that has become my extended family. So many friendships and good times I have shared with so many of them. I will also miss seeing and interacting with all the incredible students here at Berlin High, sharing fun times in class and learning about what makes each and every one of them unique. There is just something about how special Berlin High students are."

Finally, as for what Mrs. King will miss the most, she says that it's the people.

"I am not sure all school districts have what we take for granted here, an incredible culture of support, kindness, energy and pride that is unique to being a Redcoat," King said. "You never know what you have until you don't have it anymore, so come next August/September I am sure it will be a funny feeling not to have a first day of school at Berlin High. Go Redcoats!"

On behalf of all the students and staff at Berlin High School, we congratulate you on your retirement Mrs. King and wish you all the best. You will be missed.

Lady Redcoats Enjoying Successful Season on Renovated Softball Field

By Julia Oakes
Redcoat Review Writer

Berlin Mayor Mark Kaczynski cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Sage Park softball field on April 14th, 2021.

The long-awaited renovations included a new infield, leveled outfield, improved drainage system, equipment shed, new fencing and backstop, a new scoreboard, a flagpole, and bullpens on either side of the field.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, the Lady Redcoats earned a 14-0 win against Northwest Catholic, adding another win to their record.

The Lady Redcoats have maintained a successful season thus far, scoring 159 runs in only 15 games. An early season loss against Rocky Hill proved insignificant - a bump in the road that only motivated the team to work harder.

Freshman leftfielder Jess Petit has proven to be a valuable asset to the team, boasting a .451 batting average. Petit kicked off her varsity career with a three-run homerun, allowing Berlin to take the lead over Bristol Eastern in their opening game.

Sophia Fazzina has also played a key role in the Lady Redcoats' success. With seven home runs and 38 RBIs, Fazzina is



Photo Credit: Nadya Korytnikova

Members of the Berlin High softball team help Mayor Mark Kaczynski cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Sage Park field.

an offensive powerhouse, helping the team in nearly every at bat. The softball team is off to a 14-1 record, hoping to continue their winning streak as they face increasingly challenging teams as they head into the postseason.

Co-op Hockey Team Wins CCC South

By Tim Lewis
Redcoat Review Writer

After a hard won semifinal game that went into five overtimes, the Newington Co-op hockey team dominated in the CCC South Championship game against Tri-Town (including the towns of East Windsor, Somers and Ellington).

Newington rallied five goals over the duration of the game to lead them to the CCC Champion trophy.

The team came out strong with two goals in the first 4:30. After that, Berlin High sophomore Mikey Deegan says, "We were just trying to hold them off at that point. We knew that we had the chance to do this coming into the game

so our objective was very clear."

The team did just that and more by scoring three additional goals. Perhaps more importantly, the team held off Tri-Town from scoring any goals or rallying any sort of momentum later in the game.

Leading into this game, Newington Co-op had a five overtime win over Wethersfield that lasted almost four hours.

BHS junior Blake Blackwood described this win as "extremely exhausting. They were a good team and it came down to who could get the puck in the net first."

This important win was not only necessary to move the team into the Championship round, but it was also a necessary confidence boost that proved



Photo Submitted by Mrs. Blackwood

Berlin High School hockey players, from left to right, Blake Blackwood, Gavin Jordan, Jack Reynolds, Mikey Deegan, Josh Grimm, Derek Heckler and Zack Wall are members of the Newington Co-op Hockey team.

that Newington had the determination required of a championship-winning team.