

Did you know: February is the only month to have a length of fewer than 30 days! Though it's usually 28 days, February is 29 days long in leap years such as 2020 and 2024. January and February were the last two months to be added to the Roman calendar (c. 713 BC); originally, winter was considered a month-less period.

THE JAGUAR Journal

February 2022



It's On For Jackson!

Written and Photography by Rebecca Weisselberg

When it comes to school spirit, it always begins with the cheerleaders of the school. They bring the "Pep" in a pep rally. They are what school pride looks like. Being a cheerleader is no easy task as it is very demanding on the body. After weeks of competitions, participating in them has helped allow the cheerleaders to be ready for their biggest challenge to come. On February 13th The Jackson Memorial Cheerleading team made history. For the first time ever Jackson Memorial has successfully made it into the finals of the UCA National Championships.

On February 9th the cheerleaders left the school to get onto a plane that took them to sunny Orlando, Florida. While they had freetime to enjoy the Disney parks as well as Disney Springs, they did not allow that to distract them from the reason they came, to show what they can do. They were out on a mission to show to everyone why they successfully got a bid to Florida to compete. Every day the cheerleaders would get up and practice their routine to perfect it as much as possible. The preparation put into their craft can only be defined as hard work and dedication to have it look the best it can be. hard work and dedication. "We practiced almost everyday for about two hours for weeks before this!" Julia Mangano mentions.



On February 11th, 21 teams in large Division 1 went onto the mat to show off their routines. Only half of those teams would go on to compete in the finals. Among the 21 teams, Jackson Memorial was represented by our Cheerleaders.

After long hours of practicing, performing, and watching their competition, came time for the announcement regarding who will be moving onto the next day of competition. 10 teams would be announced to continue because they obtained the highest amount of points from their performance. Jackson Memorial was one of the 10 teams to move onto the finals.

As the competition thinned out the pressure began to rise but it wasn't anything the Jaguars couldn't handle. February 13th the Cheerleaders were set to go early in the morning to warm up. As fans filled the stadium the excitement was radiating, the fans wanted the finals to begin.



The announcer introduced our Jaguars as they came out with bright smiles and ready to show that they did not come to play. Flyers flew, bases based, and the cheerleaders cheered. With everything going to plan, the final pyramid was completed with bright smiles. As the music stopped playing and the crowd clapped for the Jags, they all huddled together knowing whether they got first place or 10th, that they just made history in being the first ever cheer team from Jackson Memorial High School to successfully get past the semifinals and compete in the UCA Finals.

Left over right laid the arms of the cheerleaders as their fingers interlocked. The nerves began to settle in. This was the moment that they have all been waiting for, to find out how well their routine was received by the judges and to get their final placement of the year. Names of the school's were listed off regarding their placement. Jackson Memorial was announced as the 7th place finalists in the country. "I was very excited about it," commented sophomore Ella Temple. "The cheer team never made it to finals before so that's a great accomplishment. We worked very hard for it and we deserved every second of it. Seventh in the nation is very good out of 20 teams" The coaches were ecstatic and were the girls as they were hugging their teammates and throwing high-fives to all around. The parents clapped for the team. These girls had something to be proud of! Judges handed the Jags their trophy that will be taken back to the school and put into a trophy case for display and for all the students of Jackson Memorial to see.

After they left the cheermat, they

gathered in front of the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex statue that can be found right as you walk into the complex. The coaches gave a speech telling the girls how proud they were of every single one of them and that everything they worked for has led them to this moment and they earned everything that they have. After the speech, the team lined up one last time for the cheer season to take a team picture in front of their newly won trophy.

Besides making a statement showing that the Jaguars were not to be messed with, more than just a trophy came out of this experience for all involved on the team. Kayla Canella states "This cheer team has definitely helped me make friends and also helped me learn how I can accomplish the things I want." The personal relationships that can be formed on a team are unbreakable. "The cheer team has helped me gain confidence and helped me gain a lot of friendships," Kelsey McCabe expresses. "It's also helped with motivation, the girls on the team are very motivating and are always there for you no matter what the circumstance might be and I'm so glad I had such an amazing team this year. Everyone felt welcomed on the team and I think that is something I am going to miss about this season's team!" The lessons that being on a team comes with can help you socially especially in the future when you have to collaborate with others for a project.

The captains of the team consist of Samantha Weisselberg, Hanna Kelly, Paige Hentz, and Jordan Clarke. All 4 captains have been on the team for their entire high school career. And what a memorable way to end it. They were apart and led a team to make history. This is something not easily forgettable and when looking back at the high school memories, this is one that will definitely be brought up. Due to their leadership skills they are a main contribution to this team's success this season.

Congratulations girls! All your hard work has paid off! We are proud of you!



From left to right:
Jordan Clarke
Hanna Kelly
Paige Hentz
Samantha Weisselberg

Photography Club: Revival

By Jacob Hickey

There is hardly a modicum of life that was not touched in some way by the pandemic. Nationally travel was suspended, global production was halted, and people world wide became shut in for the long hall. Locally, people did much of the same. After a short time work went on from home for some adults, and children resumed school over the internet with the help of video call platforms like Google Meets and Zoom.

Sadly with great change comes great oversights. Such change in such a short time caused many things that could not be done over the internet to be left behind and forgotten. Among these things was the Jackson Memorial High School Photography Club, which was forced to cancel all further meetings over a lack of participating members. Although the loss of such a club disappointed those who remembered it, the club has recently been resurrected!

As it is the club is still relatively small but is afloat and growing. With

every meeting that goes by it grows larger and more organized. There is a real passion being grown there and it would be in everyone's best interest to help it to flourish. The club as of the publishing of this article has had a grand total of 3 meetings. During the first meeting there were roughly 7 members, however by the time the second meeting rolled around the group had a rough growth of about 40%. This number had increased even further with the happening of the third meeting.

The club is advised and run by Ms. Donna Brown, who teaches various different art courses. This is Ms. Brown's first year teaching at Memorial. She has an associate's degree in photography and is one of the most competent leaders the club could hope to have been revived with. When someone joins the Photography Club they can expect to learn how to effectively photograph objects and people, and subsequently learn to edit what they take in either Adobe Light-

room or Adobe Photoshop. Both programs are provided by the school and will be accessed on Macs in room 404.

If you wish to join, the next meeting is likely to take place after school on Wednesday March 2nd in either room 400 or room 404 which can be found bordering the Memorial side of the school and the Fine Arts portion. Meetings typically take place every other Wednesday. For further information you can email Ms. Brown. All are welcome!



The Return of Gnocchi, the Therapy Dog

By Mike Lattie and Elias Craig

February 25th marks Gnocchi the Therapy Dog's second visit to JMHS, his first was earlier in the month on February 11th. Gnocchi walked the halls of the school bringing joy with every wag of his tail. We had a chance to speak with Mrs. Kearney and Mrs. Donner about Gnocchi, and yeah, we got to pet him too!

-Who came up with the idea of bringing Gnocchi to the school?

He used to go to Rosenhaur to read with the kids. Mr. D had the idea to bring him here, and Mr. Perrino (Goetz Middle School Principal) agreed.

-This is Gnocchi's second visit to JMHS, so the first visit was clearly a success. What is the purpose of bringing Gnocchi to the school?

His job is to simply make people feel good.

-How has the school's population reacted to Gnocchi?

The response has been beautiful. Overwhelmingly positive!

-What sort of training does a therapy dog receive? What makes him a therapy dog as opposed to someone's pet?

Gnocchi actually is a pet. He went through some training, but he was always

a chill and calm dog.

-Do you feel it's only a certain breed of dog that can be like Gnocchi?

I believe any dog can be a therapy dog.

-How long has he been a therapy dog?

For about five years now.

-Do people outside of schools seek comfort from Gnocchi?

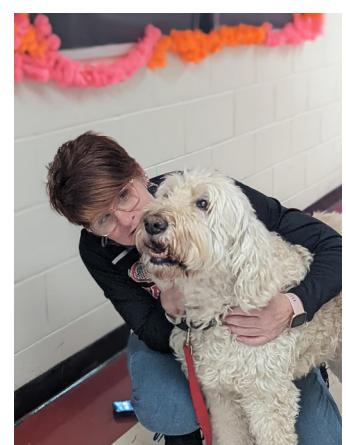
People always pet him and seek comfort from him.

-Do you think that dogs can feel when we are sad?

I do believe all dogs can sense when we are upset.

-Are there any plans to bring Gnocchi back for a third visit?

If they can make it work, we would love to bring him back!



The Importance of Teenage Interaction, From a Shy Junior

By Megan Anderson

I can't think of one teenager who hasn't gotten a headache after hearing "It's because of that phone!" or "You need to get out of the house more!" Kids from all over have been heckled by their parents to do more, but they crumble at the thought of leaving their homes. This generation is more isolated than ever. It's easy to point fingers and blame different things for reclusive tendencies, such as the internet. Too many people forget the importance of putting yourself out there and trying new things. I was once there too. Being susceptible to change and allowing yourself to interact more with new people is one of the most beneficial things that could happen to someone.

I can easily speak from experience, and I want to share my own story in hopes to get kids, just like me, eager to explore the possibilities and opportunities of life. I used to shake at the thought of speaking in front of a group of people and I'd become mute when faced with new people and experiences. I eventually pushed myself past those shy walls I had built and got a new job. It was one of the scariest things for an introverted me to go through. What I thought was going to be one of the worst things to ever happen to me ended up being one of the best.

Sure, I learned how to work a register, make sandwiches, fry chicken, etc., but I learned so much more beyond that. My social skills were built immensely through communicating with customers and co-workers. Learning to adapt to the different situations I'm presented with on a daily basis had a major impact on how I navigate through life. Improving my social skills through interacting with hundreds of different people made living in general so much easier. I can talk to people now without overthinking and having an anxiety attack. I can present in front of classes without shutting down. Not only that, but meeting new people and seeing how diverse they are is something so intriguing and life-changing. There's always something new to learn from someone. The different array of people that exist simply amazes me. And what's even more bewildering is that if I didn't push my limits and get a new job, I wouldn't have met them. If I didn't push my limits, I wouldn't have learned those valuable lessons and I would be scared to do practically anything, just as I once was.

Now with that being said, at heart, I'm still shy. I still get nervous at the thought of big parties and presentations.

But I've gathered plenty of new skills that help me calm myself and prepare for what is to come. It's all through interacting with other people. Watching how other people navigate through things and practicing speaking through these public outings is more beneficial than you would think. It all comes down to practice. The more exposure you have to social situations, the easier it is to work through them and grow from the introvert that sits inside of you. You won't be able to ace a test without studying, so what makes you think you'll be able to make new friends without getting out of your comfort zone?

It's definitely difficult to jump straight out there. It's necessary to take it all one step at a time. Changing your setting that fast could be very stressful for certain people and meeting new people in bulk still could be very scary. However, it's important to remember how beneficial this leap could be. A new sense of sociability and motivation will be built. Doing things will appear easier than before. You'll learn many new life lessons, acquire necessary skills, and more. In the grand scheme of things, taking that final leap is all you need to unlock a whole new path of life.

Unitedly: It only Takes One

By Faith Minozzi

It only takes one person to have an impact on someone else's life. You can make a difference for someone just by smiling at them in the hallway or helping someone carry a bag. But what if you took it one step further? Unitedly is a club based around helping people in need. Creator and student Joseph Cotroneo started this club because of the passion he has for helping others.

Unitedly was started by this student solely based on his compassion and empathy for others. He states "I love to help people and there are a lot of other people in this school in particular that also love to help people. So the idea was to get a bunch of people together who have the same passion to help, and that was the desire to start it". Cotroneo also states, "It doesn't matter what they look like or where they've been, the goal is just to help people". Mr. Tedeschi added "not in an abstract way, but by actually doing things to help them. It's not just about sitting around saying we should help them but actually going out and helping them."

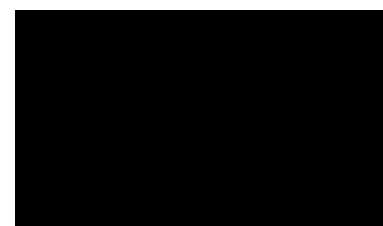
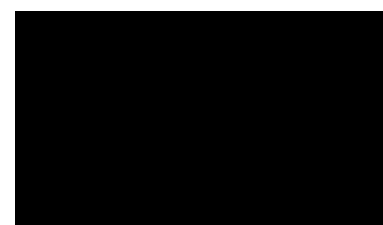
The idea for this club came from a real life experience of Cotroneo. He was working at a restaurant called "The Edge" here in Jackson and he explained that there was a customer who was crying and

having a problem with something. So, Cotroneo went over to the customer and started talking to him and the customer started told him, "You should help people. You should do something."

It was this interaction, right there and then that sparked the idea for the Unitedly club. This event happened the week before school started and when Cotroneo went home and took out a notebook and wrote down different ideas on what to start. Then he remembered that he could start a club in the school and that's just what he did. The process of getting this club together was not easy. Cotroneo had to find advisors before he could even progress with the idea of this club. That's when Mr. Tedeschi and Mrs. Connell took on this position. Mr. Tedeschi originally had joined to be that extra body in the room for the board meetings they had to attend. Mr. Tedeschi really started to realize the passion that Cotroneo had for this and he decided to stay. But after all of that, and multiple board meetings and decisions, Unitedly was made.

This club has had up to sixty five people attend meetings, which is almost a record for this school. More and more people keep coming out to join this club

and take part in what this club stands for. Unitedly has a great message for people and you can become part of this club too! If you are interested in joining this club, contact Mrs. Connell in room 514 or Mr. Tedeschi in the Guidance office for more information.



Update: Mask Mandates

By Mr. Apa

With school mask mandates coming to an end, the Jackson school district has elected an optional mask policy for students and staff beginning March 7th.

The school mask mandate set in place by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy is coming to an end on March 7th. At that point masks in school will no longer be required in the Jackson school district, but will be optional for students and staff.

While it will be a relief for students to no longer have to hear the “pull your mask up” mantra adopted by many of the staff, it will also come as a relief for staff to no longer have to monitor that masks are being worn properly, or worn at all.

As the option to wear a mask is still in place, it is up to the students and staff to keep in mind that some people are not ready to discard this layer of protection just yet. Please be understanding that masks will still be worn by some people and that is a personal decision that no one should question or make comments on. Everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable.

Masks will become optional, but there are still some exceptions to consider. As stated in the district email sent out to staff and district families, the exceptions are:

Masks must still be worn on school buses, due to a federal mandate

from the U.S. Department of Transportation. If and when this federal requirement is lifted, the district will not require masks to be worn on school buses. Any student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID must wear a mask in school for days 6-10 following the onset of their symptoms. This is in accordance with CDC guidance for positive individuals.

Even though the mask mandate is coming to an end, not every district in New Jersey has decided to lift their own district's mandate. As of the writing of this article, students and staff in Hillside, Plainfield, Camden and Newark school districts will still be required to wear masks in the schools. Other districts said they are surveying their communities before making a decision whether to lift the mask mandates or not.

Celebrating Black History Month

By Victoria Henriques

To acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of African Americans towards our nation we recognize the February of each year as Black History Month. Throughout the month, like any historical holiday, American's look back and reflect on our nation's mistakes and triumphs. Specific to this month, we recognize the long and treacherous enslavement of Africans and their journey to freedom alongside the figures who shaped history for the better.

Slavery in America was first introduced in the early 17th century. Since then we have learned year after year about the immoral practice. As American students, we are no strangers to our nation's dark past and sometimes that overshadows the positive efforts that still remain present today. The ever recognizable Martin Luther King Jr. influenced the people through his speeches and protests. Though he died a martyr fifty four years ago, his wise words still manage to remain just as impactful as when they were first cultivated. As a result of the efforts during the Civil Rights movement and prior, we were able to move forward and progress toward modern day Black American victories.

In 1992, Mae Jemison became the first female African-American astronaut to travel to space. In more recent years we had our nation's first African American President, Barack Obama in 2008.

Since the Civil Rights movement much progress has been made towards equality of the races. This should be celebrated but it also shouldn't leave room for ignorance in our modern day society. Prejudices are ever present and should be addressed. Our history should be a reminder of how a country that thrives on thoughts of hatred and supremacy will ultimately fail.

However, though this holiday was started and most recognizable in America we aren't the only ones that celebrate it every year. “Since [the first Black History Month in] 1926, other countries have joined the United States in celebrating Black people and their contribution to history and culture, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands.” Though February is nationally recognized for Black celebration, people, schools, and museums continue to recognize the history all year round.

Jackson Memorial High School
Presents ...

Big Fish

SCHOOL EDITION

Book by *JOHN AUGUST*
Music and Lyrics by *ANDREW LIPPA*
Based on the novel by *Daniel Wallace*
and the Columbia Motion Picture
written by *John August*

Originally produced on Broadway by Dan Jinks, Bruce Cohen and Stage Entertainment with Roy Furman, Broadway Across America/Rich Entertainment Group, John Dome, The Nederlander Organization and Edward Weisen in association with CJ E&M, Dancing Elephant Productions, Parthead Productions, Harvey Weinstein/Carde L. Haber, Pat Andrew Lippa

Friday, March 11th
at 6:30 pm

Saturday, March 12th
at 6:30 pm

Sunday, March 13th
at 2:00 pm

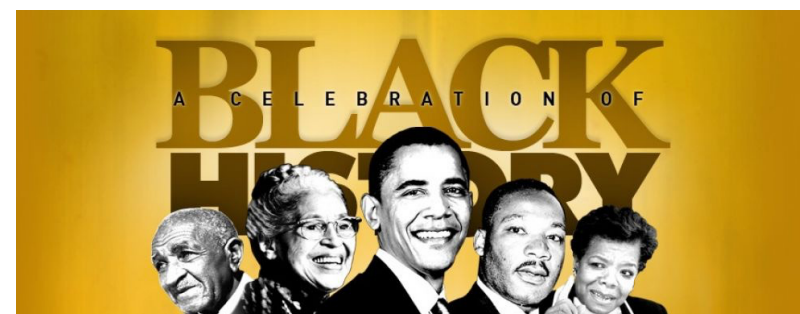
\$12.00 for Students
and Seniors

\$15.00 for Adults

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Springing Into a New Semester

By Rebecca Weisselberg

Brand new schedule, all new classes
Teachers getting new stacks of passes
Homeroom changes, and educators too
Walking down different halls, everything feels so new
Different faces appear where you once sat
Getting new skills in your life to make an impact
Grades reset, new notebooks ready
First week is the easiest, so keep it steady
Brand new friends, finding the group where you belong
Let's do this Jags, finish the year strong!