Boettcher retires after 34 years of teaching

GRACE SCHWOCH
Digital Graphics Editor

The clock reads 5 a.m. as Glenn Boettcher rolls into the parking lot. With just a few other cars in the lot, he finds his spot and prepares for the day. The halls are calm and empty as he enters the school. The clock ticks down as he waits for the halls to start bustling and the first bell to ring. Just a few more days, Boettcher thinks as the final bells of his career ring.

Boettcher has been an agricultural teacher at Stillwater Area High School for 34 years and will be retiring once the final bell of his career rings. Just a day and he enters the school. The clock ticks down as he waits for the halls to start bustling and the first bell to ring. Just a few more days, Boettcher thinks as the final bells of his career ring. Boettcher has been an agricultural teacher at Stillwater Area High School for 34 years and will be retiring once the final bell of his career rings.

Andrew Weaver, AP Environmental Science and Biology teacher explains a problem to a student. Weaver has been an integral part of the Stillwater school district for over 30 years and will be deeply missed when he retires at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Andrew Weaver retires after more than 30 years of teaching

MICHAEL FREDERICKS
Graphics Editor

The hallway was filled with the quietumble of students making their way to classes. A distant but familiar screech filled senior Adam McDonald’s ears. He smiled as he noticed the destination. The screeching continued as he approached it. He looked around the hall like a million different voices speaking all at once. Adam turned towards the open door and laid eyes on what was making the boisterous screeches. A majestic Finnish Goshawk, stood chained to his perch looking at him with its deep black eyes. Adam smirked at the stubborn bird that his teacher was trying to train. He then walked across the hall into his favorite classroom. The walls and shelves were full of mounted animals with hundreds of beady eyes that looked at him. Tables were filled with messily placed microscopes with samples of lake water for students to explore. He took a deep breath appreciating the beauty in chaos. It was science teacher Andrew Weaver’s room. His favorite teacher and he was going to miss him.

Boettcher, who has been a teacher for more than 30 years, announced we will retire at the end of the school year. His unique teaching style and the interesting skills he taught brought a legacy that will not be forgotten. He nurtures students’ love of the outdoors with his class and hopes to continue to do so even after retirement. His passions were what he taught and he helped students find theirs.

“The fieldwork that we do grows appreciation of the different fish, the different birds, the different trees so it’s really to better prepare these students to experience the wild and know something about it,” Weaver explained.

Over 30 years, Weaver walked into a school not to teach, but to perform music for an Earth Day program. He took a liking to the school and was hired as a science teacher at Stillwater Area High School the next fall. Due to an orientation class and help elevate their public speaking skills. Grace Grant, president of FFA, described Boettcher as a teacher who guides his fellow teachers to success but his co-workers as well. He helped guide his fellow teachers to success in teaching students. Since he started working students have looked up to him in many ways. He is dedicated to the agriculture lifestyle and how to live your life sustainably and continues to pass on his knowledge to the next generation.

“I admire his passion for what he does, and just the amount of knowledge he has about everything he teaches and how much he cares about his student’s success,” Grant explained.

Boettcher retires after 34 years of teaching

Photo by Grace Schwoch
Ag science teacher Glenn Boettcher with his growing greens class in the lab. He is teaching them the pH needed for plants to sustain life.

“His way of teaching us is through stories and just talking and it’s all very interesting and like you just pay attention because you just want to know what he’s talking about. And then you don’t even realize you’re learning.”

- senior Anna Bushlack

read more at sahsponyexpress.com
This April, Spanish classes worked with Monkey Island, a small island in Peru, to create a unique education opportunity. Through creating games, Zoom calls with the monkeys and numerous discussions, Spanish teacher Kirsten Carter was able to expose her students to something new and enrich their Spanish language skills.

Monkey Island is a rescue foundation located directly on the Amazon River in Peru. On the island, employees and volunteers rescue monkeys from bad situations or take them in if they do not want them anymore. Many monkeys that are rescued were purchased as pets when they were babies, but were abandoned as adults due to their high energy and activity levels. Another source to homeless baby monkeys is from zoos that are killing mothers for their tails to be used as dusters. By killing the mothers, they leave the babies abandoned and alone without sufficient life skills.

Monkey Island’s main goal “is to always rescue, rehabilitate and release” the monkeys, Carter explained.

Poaching has increased in the past few years, which has led to over 600 monkeys inhabiting the island. Most of the monkeys on the island live free in the rainforest and are fed from volunteers and employees placing large bowls of fresh fruit and vegetables. However, any interaction is left to a minimum to allow the monkeys to form independence in order to survive being released. Around 45 monkeys need to live closer to the people on the island due to their unique medical concerns or attachments. These monkeys are transferred farther away from the island otherwise they tend to return because of a learned dependency or form relationships with the people. The island is working to slow the rate of extinction due to poaching and deforestation.

“They are doing so many good things and I am happy to be doing my part in the preservation of these different species,” Carter said.

At the beginning of the year, Carter was given her Bethel University’s 21st Century School plan which included what topics her classes needed to cover. One topic that caught her eye was the environment. While reading through the criteria, she came to the conclusion that it was very repetitive compared to many other environment lessons in other classes.

She wanted to avoid the constant cycle of similar information each year. “Approaching this year, I was trying to create some new ideas on how I could make it more engaging,” Carter said.

Rutherford Elementary creates new playgrounds
SYNDY RODD
Layout Editor-in-Chief

Rutherford Elementary is currently fundraising to replace the school’s two original playgrounds from 1998. The new playgrounds will better suit students and create a more inclusive playground experience.

The initial fundraising for the playgrounds was done with the help of the district and the Rutherford community. All extra donations are going towards long-term maintenance funding. Rutherford will install the new playgrounds for the 2022-2023 school year.

The two existing playgrounds are over 25-years-old and not all students can play on them. Pieces of equipment that fall into disrepair are not replaced due to the age of the playgrounds.

“The playgrounds reached 25 years old. If you think of how advanced technology is in the last 25 years, and even thinking of anything that’s sitting in the elements for 25 years and not as safe as safety standards are today,” Kate Berg, the playground committee chairperson, said.

The big playground will have a new surface away from the school. It will move to the field behind the building to minimize disruptions to classrooms. Students will have a larger space for motor activities such as kickball, football and soccer.

Kindergarten teacher Kelly Taverna said the school was originally busy about the new location due to the loss of field space. The big playground is being built in the area of the field that is used least. Physical education classes will still have students still using the fields and the trail even if other students are on the playground.

Rutherford’s current students had a say in parts of the new playgrounds. The students got to decide on what the freestanding parts of the playground would include. A ninja warrior course with fun obstacles was chosen in a vote, as well as other freestanding pieces.

“Every single child from pre-K through fifth grade to have six different stations on the island and five different pieces of equipment,” Berg explained. “They all got to have a voice, and the ones that were the most popular, those are the ones that we’re going to put in.”

The new playground will be ADA-compliant and accessible to all students. The current playgrounds are not accessible, with ramps that are off the ground and an uneven woodchip surface underlying the structure.

With the new playgrounds and rubber surfacing, students will be able to play on the playground together. Play on the new playgrounds will become inclusive of every student.

Berg explained she is passionate about students seeing how important it is to be inclusive of others. Many of the students can play just fine on the playground, but some are unable to. Students will learn to work hard to include others. They will see the importance of inclusivity and accessibility for others at a young age.

The current space for the big playground will become an outdoor learning space with a brick patio. Community members, alumni and current families have the option to purchase custom engraved bricks placed on the patio. The bricks are a way to honor incoming and graduating Rutherford students, as well as teachers, staff members or alumni.

“We’re going to try to take that whole area and repave it with just bricks,” Taverna said. “Each family that wants to can have their name on one of the bricks. We’re going to try to put down an awning out there so kids can even be sitting under the awning.”

Students are excited for the playgrounds to be installed for the 2024-2025 school year. Thanks to the district, Rutherford can update their playgrounds to be safe and create a more inclusive playground experience.

Community members and larger space for field activities, the big playground is suitable for Rutherford Elementary’s growing student population.

Freshmen start fairy garden business
CAMRYN HANDBERG
Staff Reporter

“Believe on wheels we fly” is the motto for the group of freshmen known as the Pixie Park Crew. Founder freshman Cathleen Costello started building accessible fairy gardens in her yard three years ago. She dreams of building this love of all things fairy into a business for her future. Costello has developed wonderful friendships with a crew of girls who share her passion for fairies and all magical creatures. The Pixie Park Crew has been creating and supporting inclusion together since 6th grade.

They entered their first adapted fairy amusement park in Da Vinci Fest in January winning 1st place as grand champions. After their win, the Pixie Park Crew started building fairy gardens for the spring fling craft sale at SAHS. Costello stated that this sale was the crew’s first business endeavor.

“We plan to continue building gardens in the future. Since our workshop at Oakdale, have only made three pop-up sales, and be part of the Faires in the Park event in Oak Park Heights this July. We also plan to participate in the fall craft sale at the high school this October,” she said.

On April 5, the crew received a visit from local business owner Tara Cadenhead. After seeing a post from Erin Mathaus reaching out for fairy supply donations, Cadenhead asked to come and see what the crew was creating. Cadenhead later stated in a Facebook post that she was so impressed with the creations and the teamwork of the girls. During her visit, she gave the crew business advice and took pictures that she later posted to promote the spring fling craft sale that the crew was preparing for. Cadenhead also gave the crew a donation of fairy supplies that the girls put to good use in their magical creations. Costello and the crew hope to work with Cadenhead on future business opportunities.

One of the goals of the business was Cathleen’s Creations. As more friends joined the team the crew decided to change the name to Pixie Park Creations. With a crew of nine, they continue to imagine, design, create and build accessible fairy gardens and magical landscapes for all.

Check out Cathleencreations.com to see some of their amazing creations and to find out about upcoming events and sales.
Kalka departs for North Dakota

U.S. history teacher Joseph Kalka is moving to North Dakota to be closer to his family. He has been teaching and acting as speech and debate coach at Stillwater for two years.

SONJA ANDERSON
Field Reporter

Field Reporter

Kalka is well known for his contributions as a coach on the speech and debate team. He has made a large impact on his speech and debate students by pushing them to be their best, but also making sure they have fun in the process.

Senior Erica Bartkey has been on the speech team for four years under his leadership. “I’m going to miss having somebody so passionate about what he does, and because he cares so much for not just speech, but also the students doing it. He has also built the Stillwater speech team to one of the best in the state and overall,” Bartkey said.

Kalka is also feeling a lot of emotions surrounding leaving his speech team at the end of the year, as he has developed a close connection with those students. “I’m going to miss my kids that I’ve developed kind of another level of working relationship with on the speech and debate teams, as I’ve towards her classmates becoming a choir we are towards her,” senior Ashaunti Murray said.

An example of this is when the Belle Chanter Choir went on tour in Chicago during the month of April. She made a presentation beforehand of a special deal she was giving to students to spend $15 for two cookies from eight different flavors per day during the trip. It instantly became popular within the group, over 75% of the students participated. It was a huge step towards her classmates becoming aware of her business.

Besides students, teachers are also impressed with her successful business. She has made desserts for her teacher’s weddings and baby showers, along with giving them some during class. Choir teacher Katelyn Larson has immensely enjoyed her desserts since the first time she tried them. “It was one of her cake pops that she was selling to students, but she just gave me one kindly and it was amazing,” Larson said. “It was so good that I asked to buy another one the next day and bring them home!”

Being able to help bring joy and connection between others is very rewarding for Elzen. She is doing good for her community while also expressing creativity and passion through something she loves. It is a great motivator for becoming an even better baker.

“When I get home, and I have a free moment, you best believe I am going to be spending it baking,” Elzen said. “It’s like a huge stress reliever for me. And it’s something that I know that I’m really good at and it just makes me really happy.”

Elzen’s business has really impacted her life in so many different aspects. She hopes to have a future in baking, maybe owning her own bakery one day and being able to spread that joy to all of those who try her dessert. “She will be super successful if she decides to go into this as a profession,” Larson said, “because she’s awesome.”

Student shares baking with community

Junior Madelyn Elzen owns a baking business called Mooing Munchies. One of her many ways of selling her baked goods is by going around the school, carrying her box filled with treats and selling them to fellow students. From the large variety Elzen has some of the favorites among students are her strawberry cookies, cake pops and iced shortbread cookies. Besides this, she also makes cakes, candy, pastries, cupcakes and more than a dozen flavors of cookies.

Elzen did not just start baking recently though. She began at 8-years-old, watching Food Network and other cooking shows with her family throughout her childhood and taking an interest in the activity. “It was kind of just the next step that I would end up baking,” Elzen said. “I’ve just been doing it for so long that I’ve gotten good enough to where I feel confident in selling my products.”

One of Elzen’s primary places for selling her products is in both Belle Chanter and the Stillwater Concert Choir, which she also participates in. The students enjoy being able to be there for and encourage her, along with getting to try some of her tasty treats.

“It just shows how supportive as a choir we are towards her,” senior Ashaunti Murray said.

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The Pony Express

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Blades on Broadway: SCVRC hosts annual Ice Show that wows audience

The annual prom dance is coming up on May 20 and students and advisors on the prom committee are planning and preparing for an amazing night. Planning prom takes a lot of time and commitment to make it a safe environment for a night to remember and that is all taken care of by the prom committee. This year, the prom will be at the Inwood Event Center in Oakdale. There will be a live band and a DJ and this venue because it is nicer than the Myth and it can hold all the students planning to attend prom.

“I have been trying to get out of the Myth for a few years because it is dirty and disgusting. The Inwood Event Center is pretty inside and more formal, and it can hold 1500 kids,” Daisy Dennis prom committee advisor.

Prom is a dance that only seniors attend, but anyone younger or from another school can attend only if asked by one of the seniors. Once a dance is specific for these kids it makes the night super special for them, but very stressful for the prom committee to make a perfect night.

“Prom is the last time decides graduation where you will be all together in one place. Not in a school environment,” Dennis said.

The prom committee has been working hard planning prom and getting all of the details to come together. They have been organizing and planning prom since the beginning of the school year. They have been meeting every Monday since September to plan a smooth prom.

Prom committee member junior Mikael Johnson explained that she is most excited to see all the hard work that they have put in since September pay off.

Prom planning can be stressful when it comes to decorating, booking a venue, dealing with guest contracts, etc. There are many details to keep in line and it can be very stressful to make sure everything is getting done and running smoothly.

On a scale from one to ten how stressful prom planning is, Dennis explained it is an “eleven and a half.” The hardest part is dealing with the guest forms which are kids from other schools. They all want to have fun and seeing their hard work pay off is just a bonus.

“I think one of the most exciting parts is where you get to see who was nominated [for prom King and Queen] and who gets to become the position,” Adedayo explained.

“We’ll get to see all of the dresses and see everyone’s outfit. I’m excited to see what people put together,” Adedayo added.

Tickets are being sold differently this year. Last year we did online tickets through the hometown app or something. This year you buy a physical ticket,” Adedayo added.

With prom being under control by the prom committee, they are hoping for a great turnout. Prom should be a night students will never forget.

OLIVIA WILLIAMS
Podcast Reporter

GRACE CHENY
Photography Editor

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French students will head to France soon

LEO DOWLING
Social Media Editor

Throughout the year, the robotics team has been improving constantly in building skill, programming quality, and now they are ready to share a season recap.

The robotics team’s main season goal is to create a functional robot that can compete in a specific game with rules made by the association administrators. They are given a roughly six-week building period (Jan.-April) to build the most functional robot possible with the given challenges.

During the competition season, students meet every day beginning from around the U.S. to see who has the most functional robot with the given tasks. Usually, there are two big competitions during the building period where competitors meet at big venues like the University of Minnesota or other closer locations.

“So we are competing with teams worldwide and all over the U.S.; that is kind of what we do, otherwise were working on our projects,” team captain junior Fredrick Ribolzi said.

During this building period, club members put many hours in the building room, perfecting their robots.

“During the actual competition season, we meet pretty much every day, including weekends. On school days, we are probably meeting until eight; the latest we have been is the latest, but at least ten at the latest. Then on the weekends, we will stay there all day. There have been days I have stayed there until two in the morning on weekends. That six weeks to build a robot is insufficient, so we are there a lot,” Ribolzi added.

Sophomore Mya Brainard is a part of the business side of the robotics club; in that end-of-production, students focus on “contacting sponsors and like giant multimillion-dollar companies.”

One of the best things about the robotics team is the close-knit community. The team works off each other’s backs, helping each other. “It is like one giant chaotic family, yeah we go on team dinners, and we go bowling and stuff, it is enjoyable,” Brainard added.

“So we are competing with teams worldwide and all over the U.S.; that is kind of what we do, otherwise were working on our projects.”

One of the primary jobs of the coach is getting members familiar with robot mechanics and teaching them the fundamentals behind the building.

“The team meets and talks with members, and you know, they go out and talk about who would be good leaders and who would fit where, and then talk about and then ask the group who is interested in doing different roles, and then basically, try to assign people to roles they are interested in that people that we think will be good fits for those roles,” head coach Todd Kaposer said.

This robot was this years build and competed at the U of M competition. It competed against many other Minnesota state teams but it did not win. It has been updated and re-built throughout the season by the robotics build team.

Photo by Leo Dowling

Robotics team shares future goals

SARA J. NORTON
Broadcast Editor-in-Chief

After five years, an opportunity of a lifetime has come about. Seeing part of the world that French classes IV and V have been learning about for four to five years has become a reality again this year.

“I’m just ready to get out. I’m very adaptable to change, which helps me go with the flow, and whatever happens, happens. So I’m not really scared,” senior Eva Stafne said.

French classes IV and V are going on a 14-day trip to France this summer. This year, 20 students and French teachers Jackie Parr and Amy Buldoin are attending. The first three days begin in Geneva, Switzerland, with cheese tastings and touring historic towns. Then they will head to Lyon, France, for a five-day family stay. Lastly, the group ends the trip in the famous Paris, France, staying among some of the most famous places in the world.

“I understand more about the world. I’ve only been to other countries once or twice. I think I’m going to be different from learning more about other people and other people’s cultures,” junior Kelsey Kaper said.

This school trip usually happens every other year, but the last time this trip took place was in 2018. With COVID-19 hitting in 2020, it impacted the trip’s inability to happen in 2021 and 2022. There has been immense planning done by Parr to make this all possible again. Parr plans every day’s itinerary and even what the group will do when there is not much to do. This takes a lot of time and will do when there is not much to do. Parr plans every day’s itinerary and even what the group will do when there is not much to do. This takes a lot of time and planning, and there is a ton of planning.

As the trip is quickly approaching, French students are preparing by practicing the new experiences to come. Students will learn so much about themselves as people and other people and different cultures and way of living. “I’m not nervous, I’m excited to watch everyone’s reactions to everything,” Parr said.

French student Jacki Parr speaks on the trip to Spain.

In addition to the main project, students work on mini-projects, focusing on different areas of programming and building.

“So we are going to elementary and middle schools for presentations. We were just there yesterday. We have been building many bots... Tom and Jerry bots, we have been working on our 1-shirt cannon and all of our robots chilling in the corners,” Brainard said.

With the season ending not too long ago, the members have time to reflect on their accomplishments and what they have achieved while working together. From the beginning of their competition robot to the final product, many changes took place to make it the best it could be.

“I am most proud of this season is the, I would say, just like the iteration we went through on the robot this year, the difference between our robot at the end of the six weeks versus after the first competition versus after the second competition is amazing,” Ribolzi said. “So a lot of the things that ended up with many problems at the first competition we worked through it, we troubleshooting, and then during that two weeks we worked on things we changed like we have our end effector or like grabber that we can use to pick up game pieces changed completely. We completely redid the design, spent a bunch of time whiteboarding and figuring out what was wrong with the first one at the competition, and completely redid it at the second. It worked a lot better. We still have other problems, but we worked through it, and like on the last day of competition, we had a very, like, a good working robot.”

“You can come up with zero knowledge of anything, and we will teach you how to use everything well; we will have a fun time,” Brainard added.

Robotics is a bonded community working together to improve the future with the current level of...
This spring, staff and students say goodbye to five teachers who have made a huge contribution to the school community over the past several decades. From Spanish to industrial technology, staff have positively impacted students in so many ways. Congratulations to Glenn Boetcher, Paula Harrison, Mary Hurvick, Todd Kapsner, and Andy Weaver.

**Marie Hurvick**

Leaves Big Shoes to Fill in Spanish

Jackson Bonnswana

**Digital Graphics Editor**

Spanish teacher Mary Hurvick has been brightening students’ days since August of 1989 when she began teaching Spanish students in the Stillwater community.

At her start, her days began at an entirely different building that we all find ourselves in today. Believe a $2.5 million dollar bond granted by the citizens of District 834 allowed our current campus to be built. Stillwater Middle School held high school students and Hurvick. While at the middle school, Hurvick did not not see a classroom, but something a little more exciting; she was a learning machine on wheels.

“I had a cart that I would travel with to four different classrooms with everything I needed to do it on it,” Hurvick said.

Her first years were not limited to a classroom, but an entire school.

After four years at the middle school, she moved to the brand new Stillwater Area High School in 1993 and was able to finally settle down in a classroom and lay down her less mobile roots.

With a classroom that now held 22 kids, her class required a consistent set of characters. This creation of a more stable and permanent environment opened the door for Hurvick to establish new friends and promote and develop long term bonds with students and families. Gone were the days of where she would roll the cart down the hallway in a classroom, what she lost in variety, she made up for relationships.

“I get to meet entire families which is just amazing,” Hurvick said.

The impact of this was easily articulated by Hurvick as to her, a big part of teaching isn’t just helping students learn, but helping students grow.

“The best years were with Hurvick’s in the hallway and see how they’ve just matured,” Hurvick added.

Her focus is not just teaching, but connecting, is an admirable trait as this aspect is often overlooked.

Apart from teaching Spanish, travel has always been an important part of Hurvick’s life. From Brazil to Madrid, she even went on a exchange student adventure can be sent only in her personal life, but in the way she educates students. In almost every foreign culture she visits her best to incorporate not just the language, but the culture as well.

“In every Spanish is only a little bit of what I teach,” Hurvick said.

Learning the language is merely half of the battle when looking at what is needed to use the language successfully. Incorporating a method dubbed “Comprehensive Input Spanish”, Hurvick teaches through methods such as speaking, listening, reading and “anything that gives them input in the language”. This crossbred a focus on culture integrated with the language itself greatly improves students’ ability to learn and utilize the language effectively.

“It’s storytelling” as described by a long time friend of Hurvick and fellow Spanish teacher Julie Cashin.

As the year rolls to a close, Hurvick prepares to change careers, a snack and warm affirming support for her.

“Everything she’s done for the program and all the students she’s impacted through it. That’s all something she will be remembered for, for starting all that,” -Ryan Bartosiewski

**Todd Kapsner**

Helps Students Learn Life-Long Skills

David Caloerone

**Online Editor**

This summer, industrial technology teacher Todd Kapsner plans to retire from teaching. Kapsner has spent the last 32 years teaching industrial tech classes. He then transferred to Bemidji State so he could get a degree in technology and later earned his Masters degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He has been teaching at Stillwater ever since.

“Some of Mr. Kapsner’s best traits are his ability to use his knowledge of woodworking and apply it to help students with projects. He also helps make you a better person in life outside of school,” sophomore Vincent Vaccano said.

Kapsner is “hopeful” that he has changed people’s thought process on fitness. One of the gym classes Harrison teaches is Unified PE. She enjoys seeing unified students having fun and being included in activities.

“In Unified gym, we start doing basic skills that the students need to work on who aren’t in the class and I show them how to adapt and make the activity work for all of the students depending on if they are in a wheelchair, if they are having visual problems, if they have trouble with their grip, catching or throwing. I modify things to help those students,” Harrison said.

After 28 years of teaching, students are sad to see her go. There have been a lot of memories and connections for many different students.

“She brings out the best in students and she and the gym give them a lot of memories that they can keep with throughout their whole life,” junior Nick Hornbuckle said.

Harrison has been loved around the community ever since she started teaching. She knows how to have fun with her students and it has a big impact on them.

Hornbuckle thinks she is a good teacher and knows how to connect with students and have fun.

Once people retire, it opens a lot more time and opportunities to do something fun. Harrison plans to do a lot of things after retirement.

“I love being with my family, my son just had a little boy and we’re going to be able to travel and have a lot of granddaughters here in town I can visit. Whatever I want to do on my own schedule which is nothing specific,” Harrison said.

Even though Harrison is leaving after this year, she has left a huge impact on students and the community.

**Paula Harrison**

Made Her Mark: With Unified PE

Soed Riser

Social Media Editor

Physical education teacher Paula Harrison had an astonishing career teaching PE and will retire this spring.

She helped a lot of people throughout her career. Many students view school and life differently now because of her.

“She has changed people’s lives. I have been working with her for four years and she has changed my life incredibly. She opens a lot of doors and creates lots of opportunities for kids who have not had in the past,” senior Tom Blair said.

It is important that every student gets adequate fitness. Harrison wants to have a big impact on students and make fitness fun and enjoyable for them.

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The National Honor Society hosts spring Coffeehouse performance

MILENA SANDSTROM
Podcast Reporter

The National Honor Society hosts a biannual coffeehouse show, which allows students to perform their talents in front of a crowd for everyone to enjoy. The revenue collected from ticket sales goes to a chosen charity picked by NHS officers. However, this year was special because science teacher Andy Weaver chose this year’s charity cause. The spring coffeehouse was quite successful and a beautiful display of the community’s talent.

Coffeehouse has been around for many years. The idea formed when a former NHS advisor, who was a French teacher, proposed the idea of a French-themed coffee house, which is when people gathered or watched members of their community perform in a small, personal setting. “It used to be a very intimate, small event held in the Black Box, which is right behind the stage. It got so big we couldn’t hold it there anymore. Now we hold the event in the auditorium,” Becky Mazzara, NHS teacher and NHS advisor said.

Senior officer Katelyn Stack approached Weaver to provide him with the opportunity to pick a cause to donate the proceeds since he will be retiring this year. Weaver suggested the money go to the Zach Sobiech foundation, fighting the illness of Osteosarcoma. 2023 honors the tenth foundation. Weaver suggested the money to go the Zach Sobiech foundation.

“Zach Sobiech was a former NHS advisor, who was a science teacher Andy Weaver,” Mazzara said. “I’ve noticed with some of the past remakes that it’s a little bit of casting for the film, there were some fans away because people go to see the movie for the roles of Ariel and Eric such as Anna Kendrick and Steffany Stils. Venske explains these celebrities would drive some fans away because people want to see the movie, not for which celebrity is in them, but because they like the plot. They also think original fan bases would be disappointed and go see it to make fun of the celebrities, not to enjoy the movie.

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Boys tennis team ends with success

ALISON KEELER
Layout Editor

The boys tennis teams worked hard this season while also having great success this season. The teams aspired to do well this season by practicing hard and playing to the best of their ability. Boys tennis takes place during the spring sports season. Players practice and hold matches on the many tennis courts located behind the school.

The junior varsity boys tennis team consists of about 30 to 35 players this season, with some moving between junior varsity and varsity. The varsity field about 10 to 15 players during official matches this year.

“We’ve got players who want to be competitive JV and we have the players on varsity. We have players that just want to be on the team. A lot of people are there in the spring, enjoy the weather, have fun, learn how to play it’s a lifetime sport so anytime you get in, you can play it for the rest of your life,” junior varsity coach Bryce Ellefson said.

Having a large tennis team may sound great to some, but in reality it can be a struggle. Because of the number of boys interested in playing school tennis this spring, the coaches have found it difficult at times to get all of the boys enough playing time.

“My best memory is getting a straight 25 at nationals,” junior Melanie Johnson said. “A 25 is a perfect score and is the highest meet that they can get to. That is a very big accomplishment.

“My favorite memory is getting a perfect 25 for the first time,” junior Paul Hartmann said. This can be a rewarding feeling because it is a big deal. Athletes get a patch for their vest and a lot of congratulations from teammates.

Clay target has successful season

AVA BIEDERMAN
Photography Editor

The clay target team teaches athletes shooting tips, improving shooting, accuracy, focus, determination and perseverance. They do this not only for shooting, but in the real world too.

The clay target team will teach athletes a lot and will create memories that will last a lifetime. They continue to grow as a team and as individual athletes as the season continues.

The season recently started and the clay target team is already off to a great start. The team works hard at practice one to two times a week, shooting two rounds per practice. In just 20 minutes, two of the athletes got a perfect 25.

Clay target head coach Valerie Stickan reveals that the team is currently first in their division. This is a great kick-off to the mid season.

Clay target creates so many memories not only for the individual athletes, but for the team as well. Many students will remember these memories for the rest of their life.

“Every memory is different because the opponents usually have to play twice for all of us to play once. However, normally we have extra courts to play around on,” freshman Mathew Harvey said.

An interesting fact about the tennis team is that the coaches do not cut players from the team. It is one of the only sports at the school that does not cut. They still hold tryouts to see each student’s team placement and to test their skills.

“We don’t cut because we’ve got enough court space. We have enough coaches and we cater to all skill levels.” Ellefson said.

Since many schools have smaller teams, many of the players from other schools have to play more than one match. The team is a lot larger than last year so it has not been a struggle before.

Junior Mason Warlick explained that he thinks the team is bigger than last year. The main reason being is because the freshman class here is so big. Personally for him, this year, playing time has not necessarily been an issue. Aside from some struggles, the boys tennis team has had a successful season. Many players improved a lot and reached their personal goals.

“We had one match against Mounds View that I think was really difficult. Other than that it’s been pretty smooth. [For a goal] I just wanted to make upper JV this year and hopefully varsity next year. I reached my goal this year and made it pretty high up on JV,” Harvey said.

Additionally, the team worked on some technical skills that would help them improve. For some players, it was just about getting out and hitting the ball.

Warlick said that he “kind of tried to take a more strategic approach while playing. I think about the game more than just trying to play. Getting the edge that gets my opponent I think is one of my greatest creative strengths.”

The recent section tournament that the junior varsity team attended took place on May 13. All of the players did well and played to the best of their ability.

Before the tournament, Warlick said, “I think we can do well and do just fine. Hopefully, I can contribute to that hope of victory. In the past, we’ve done quite well in tournaments and whatnot.”

Many athletes have been involved in their sport for many years.

Proceeds from Aquafina Vending Sales supports the Stillwater Area High School

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Clay target lets athletes create many skills that can help them throughout their whole life. It teaches them not only about shooting, but life lessons as well.

“It really helps kids grow their confidence, social skills, and shooting ability while practicing a difficult and fun sport,” Stickan said.

These lessons can help them navigate life even after they graduate.

Senior Carter Sampson has been a key player throughout this time on the team. He is a hard worker and a talented shooter. He has achieved many perfect scores over the years and has many great accomplishments.

“Carter Sampson actually won the entire state tournament last year,” Stickan said. This is a big deal because he was up against some of the best people in the state.

Athletes have learned many tips and tricks to help improve their shooting game. There are little things they change from hunting or other kinds of shooting.
Office hours calls for future changes

Bellevue Harding
Layout Editor

For some, there is a desire to challenge themselves academically when it comes to picking classes. Gifted programs or advanced placement courses are a way to do so. These help with credibility on applications, preparation for higher levels of education, and the real world. Overall, these classes seem harmless but when these courses stack up on each other, there are harder challenges that arise.

Academic burnout is a specific amount of burnout that comes with prolonged academic stress. It shows up in many different forms depending on the person. Students who have been placed in advanced classes experience extreme burnout. This can lead to not being able to function to completion. Sophomore Grace Connors is in multiple AP courses and is experiencing this first hand. She explained how she was able to overcome some of this academic burnout when it became too much to handle.

“I was just kind of done and I felt so overwhelmed. I do not even know where to start with trying to get myself out of that academic hole I put myself in. I am still kind of getting out of it even now,” sophomore Grace Connors explained.

Advanced classes can be helpful in moderation. They show detrimental effects when students are continuously placed into these programs. Shawna Clemens is a senior and has experienced this for most of her life. Although tough to measure, over a long period of time this can show up in many forms including grades. When it came down to her AP test scores over time, she saw that with prolonged academic stress, she began to do worse. “I feel like I did a lot worse on these AP tests than I did last year and with advanced placement my ninth grade year simply because of the stress that put it that was put on me,” senior Shawna Clemens said.

It is not always the letter grades that show if a student is struggling to keep up, most of the time it is inter- nal. Connors explained that schools focus only on the letter grade. This is instead of how they are handling things. It is difficult to learn time management when you have no time left in your day.

Sophomore Zoe Meletiou has been in these advanced classes for most of her life. She was able to keep up with this stress for a while because she found things that worked for her. When after school activities became a factor, it was simply too much for her to handle.

“I think for me, it’s more of a mental game. I am still able to get good grades because I get my homework in but for me, it’s the issue of balancing everything. Balancing it with ballet and a lot of very high expectations for my director and then balancing it with other things is just a lot,” sophomore Zoe Meletiou added.

Most of the time there is more than one advanced class being taken. Along with this, after school programs and activities play a key factor in taking up a person’s time. With very little time to relax, academic burnout rates changed the office hours schedule this causes issues for those seniors. This is one of the only parts of the new office hours schedule that makes it difficult for students. Since office hours has been so successful these past couple years and there has been more positives than negatives. Bach is planning to bring it back for next year.

Office hours hours calls for future changes

GEORGE PALM
Graphics Editor

GARIN WARNER
Podcast Reporter

Office hours is an important tool that has been implemented for students to make sure they have dedicated time to catch up on any school work they might be missing. Even though it is a very useful to many, the problem is that it’s not for everyone.

This is the second year of office hours and it has been changed three different times to optimize efficiency for all students. The office hours schedule that is taking place this year has been better than the others, but there is still room for improvement.

Office hours happens every Wednesday close to the end of the school day from 1:18-2:10 p.m. Each class period is shortened to 40 minutes so all classes can fit within a day without making the day longer. One notable difference from the other years is students attend the sixth hour before they go to their fifth hour. "Lunch is a big constraint for us. Lunch is very very difficult to sched- ule, and right now our lunch is built around period five,” Principal Rob Bach said. Bach said there is a challenge of rescheduling lunch since there are four different lunches and almost 2,800 stu- dents. It would be difficult to remake a whole new schedule, so they decided to make it around lunch. The main goal of office hours is to help students get caught up on homework, tests or be able to check in with a teacher.

"After we implemented it, our grades and data metrics that we have tracked have been trending in a good direction," Bach said.

Office hours has shown it is beneficial for many students and teachers and is proven to help because of the extra time everyone has to do their work. Last year, during the first semester, office hours was in the middle of the day between third and fourth hour. However, “that just wasn’t working well for teachers / students / they weren’t able to get the help they needed during the time,” Bach said. During the second semester they decided to try something new so put it at the end of the day from 12:30-2:10 p.m. and students did not have to stay for lunch.

"The early release helps us target the students that actually need it. That’s why it’s better”, Bach added. There are always improvements to be made. Bach said the idea of this office hours schedule was made because of the recommendations from stu- dents, teachers and parents through surveys. This year’s office hours gives students a lot more freedom of choice. "I like the freedom it gives students to make that choice for themselves," history teacher Ryan Miller said.

This is one of the main differences from last year, which has made it better. With office hours, if a student has below 70% they are supposed to stay and get help, but if it’s higher in every class, they are able to leave. Teachers have seen an increase in students from last year to this year, which means "students have wanted to improve and take advantage of these hours and have done a great job doing so," Miller said.

It is true the attendance during office hours is higher, but the attendance of office hours is still relatively low. "There’s still pretty light attendance from what I’ve seen," Miller said.

Last year, several students were skipping office hours and going home early because they did not want to stay and do extra work. In this year’s office hours has for the most part fixed this issue. There are many seniors who do not have a sixth hour, and since they

“As a senior who doesn’t have a sixth hour it’s kind of annoying for me to have to sit in the main forum for like, however long we’re supposed to. I feel like it’s just kind of a waste of my time to be honest, because it’s really loud and no one really gets their homework done.”

-Brady Benning

Pressure put on gifted and talented students

Belle Lapos
Layout Editor

Other than the academic stress that students have to deal with, the pressure that students who are gifted and talented have to deal with. These students doing a variety of tasks during office hours. They can choose to go to any teacher for help during the hour long time period.

The Pony Express
The Pony Express
June 2, 2023 | The Pony Express

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Staff Editorial: School start times possibly changing

PONY EXPRESS STAFF

In the upcoming years, there is a possibility school start times may change. The school board is re-discussing if they think moving start times back would be beneficial for students. Studies have shown high school students do better mentally, physically and academically when they start school later than 8 a.m.

In order to keep a similar bussing schedule the idea is to switch the elementary and high school start times. Although some people believe changing start times would be a hassle, older students would be able to sleep more and be better prepared.

A different school in the area, St. Croix Prep starts school at 9:30 a.m. for grades K-12. School Board Chairperson, Alison Sherman has two kids at St. Croix Prep, one high schooler and one in elementary.

Sherman explained that her high schooler loves the later start time as she can sleep in, but the kid in elementary has more energy early in the morning that gets wasted. High school-age students are more likely to stay up later, but they also need their sleep. Most high school students would benefit from moving start times back and getting more sleep in the morning. On the contrary, elementary students may like the early start time to get all of their energy out.

When talking about SAHS start times, Sherman said, “Probably one of the most discussed topics with me, when I talk to students is we start too early, and the impact on mental health and the impact on academics.”

If the school board votes to change start times there would be a lot of switching around and moving things around for the district. At the high school clubs, activities, and sports would all have to be moved back.

“As far as practice times and things like that, those would all get pushed back,” Principal Robert Bach said.

At the elementary schools, they would have to move around childcare, adventure club and some sports.

“Other high schools are making it work. There’s gotta be a way that we can make it work,” Sherman said.

Editorial

The Pony Express is a publication of Stillwater Area High School. This paper is an open forum for the community and students’ views. Letters to the Editor are encouraged. The Editorial Board reserves the right to publish editorials, columns, and letters to the editor. Letters to the Editor are subject to editing for length and clarity.

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The Pony Express print and online newspapers strive to provide a form of media that embodies the strongest professional standards while working to present current and relevant stories about the community, inside and outside our building’s walls. The goal is to adhere to all legal and ethical standards of best journalistic practices, while informing, enlightening, and entertaining our publication’s readers.
The girls track and field team prepares for upcoming meets. They regularly work on improving on the events they participate in. The team has continued to thrive this season, with multiple girls participating in True Team State on May 19-20 and section finals on June 1.

Photos by Ella Belland