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ISSUE # 3

MAHOPAC MIDDLE SCHOOL

SPRING 2021

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**In this issue of The Torch**  
**Retiring teachers**  
**Poetry contest winners**  
**Photo contest winners**  
**High Honor Roll for quarters 1-3**  
**National Junior Honor Society Inductees**  
**Public Speaking Winners**  
**and more.....**

*A special thank you to Mr. Kozera and the Middle School Student Government for co-sponsoring the photography and poem contest and supplying the gift card prizes!*



## **Farewell Mrs. Felder**

**by Isabella Jimenez**

Mrs. Felder has been an incredible part of our middle school. We are so sad to see her go. Mrs. Felder has had an incredible career. She has been working in education for 26 years. She has been a social studies teacher at an alternative high school and after that she found a new job as a school counselor at MHS. Eventually she came here to MMS as a school counselor.

As a counselor she helps students find solutions to their problems, no matter their age or grade level. Everyone in MMS is glad she spent time at our school. Mrs. Felder loved making a difference in student's lives and having the privilege of being in a position to help. She loves the energy and curiosity of each student and she also enjoys working with people that have the same visions as her. The only thing she disliked was having a small office with no window, but she tries to make it as cheerful as she can.

She has a concern that the race for attention on social media will distract students from keeping up with the changing world. Mrs. Felder wants us to know that we should hold on to each other for the opportunity to learn and for living in such a beautiful and supportive part of the world.

Mrs. Felder will be a teen again when in retirement as she says she wants to wake up and be excited to explore the world. During her exploration she wishes to write a history book. If Mrs. Felder could she would do it all over again because her job has brought a lot of joy and allowed her to be the best person she could be. Mrs. Felder is going to spend her winters in Israel and invites everyone to visit her. We will miss you Mrs. Felder!



## **Mrs. Foley**

**by Isabella Jimenez**

Mrs. Foley is an outstanding school nurse. She has been in the school system for 14 years and has worked in both the elementary and the middle schools.

Mrs. Foley is originally from the Bronx. She is married and has three boys. For her nursing degree she attended Lehman College and then the College of New Rochelle. In middle school she was an average kid who enjoyed hanging out with friends.

Mrs. Foley loves her job but just like everyone there is one thing she doesn't like. She dislikes how much paperwork there is. On the other hand she loves caring for the students when they're sick and she also enjoys interacting with them. When asked about concerns for the future of Mahopac Middle School students she said she's afraid of the social anxiety students will be facing as they come back into more in-person learning.

She wants kids and staff to stay healthy, wash your hands, wear a mask, social distance, and enjoy the time here because it goes by quickly. Lastly she loves the age group in middle school and would do it all over again.

We are all sad to see Mrs. Foley go but you might see her around as she plans to do some part time nursing. She plans to stay local (for now) and she is looking forward to having more family time and traveling to places like Greece, Aruba and Hawaii. In fact, Mrs. Foley would like to end up living in Hawaii. We all wish her only the best in retirement.

## Farewell Mr. Flynn

by Chloe Lex



For 36 years, Mahopac Middle School was home to one of the best band teachers possible. Unfortunately, Mr. Flynn will be retiring this year. He is sad to leave, but is excited for what is to come in the future.

You might be interested to know that Mr. Flynn hasn't been just the band teacher here at MMS. He also has managed after-school programs such as the school newspaper, Jazz Band, and Steel Drums, and he's done an amazing job. We've all learned so much from Mr. Flynn; I think we are all sad to see him go.

One of Mr. Flynn's favorite parts about his job here is getting to work with different students. He has also really enjoyed creating and playing music with his classes. However, over his many years of working at MMS, the only thing he disliked about his job was having to teach remotely.

Mr. Flynn's concern about education in the future is that schools will remain well-balanced. In addition to that, he also hopes that the arts will continue to thrive.

During his retirement, Mr. Flynn plans to volunteer to help out the church and the community. He also wishes to play as much golf as possible. Mr. Flynn plans to stay in New York, and if he were to live somewhere else, he hopes it would be warm.

Some advice that Mr. Flynn would like to leave with his students is that life is a balance. If you have too much of one thing, life becomes unbalanced and proceeds to fall apart.

When I asked Mr. Flynn, if he would choose to relive these past few years, I believe he answered perfectly. "Yes, of course, I mean, what better job is there than teaching music? Music is in everyone's life from the background noise in commercials to what you first hear when you turn on a car. I think everyone should come to appreciate music because it will always be a part of life."

Farewell Mr Flynn, it has been a privilege and a joy to be taught by you. Thank you so much for all of your service to the school. Both myself and all of your students would like to wish you a wonderful retirement.

***The members of the Torch would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe summer. To all our Eighth Graders we wish you only the best as you move on to the High School!***

# HIGH HONOR ROLL FOR THE FIRST 3 QUARTERS

## GRADE 6

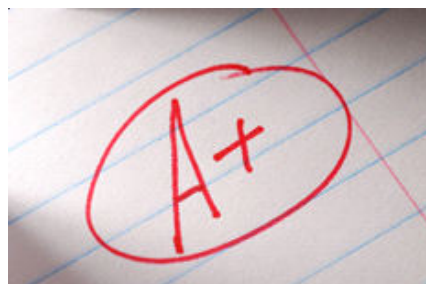
Dylan Arbeit  
Finn Atkinson  
Alyssa Bagen  
Thomas Baron  
Justin Bayne  
Eileen Bergerson  
Ella Biolchini  
Paige Bonder  
Justin Cabuhat  
William Camperlengo  
Anna Carinci  
Eva Cuomo  
Sofia Dealmeida  
Emma Dicob  
Robert Egan  
Courtney Evangelista  
Gavin Ferrante  
Cira Graap  
Cooper Grimm  
Alysia Gutierrez  
Matthew Hettinger  
Carolyn Hopstaken  
Sullivan Hunter  
Samantha Itzla  
William Jones  
Aiden Kugler  
Chloe Lex  
Tyler Long  
Nicholas Lucia  
Saoirse McGregor  
Rylan McIntyre  
Kyle Meyers  
Fallon Minnich  
Gloria Nelson  
Giana Puckhaber  
Kylie Quackenbush  
Connor Rosolen  
Edward Saccente  
Vittoria Sedita  
Isabella Silkowski  
Alexandra Silva  
Isabel Stoecker

Matthew Torrey  
Kira Waring  
Nicholas Weiss  
Sydney Weiss  
Pace Zeiler  
Vivien Zucchi

## GRADE 7

Leona Ademi  
Christopher Alonzi  
Matthew Aquilino  
Michael Aquilino  
Gabriella Bartholdi  
Jake Bednarczyk  
Kevin Behrendt  
Connor Behun  
Zoie Borrero  
Ariana Cabrera  
Nicholas Camuto  
Celeste Capellini  
Robert Catalano  
Amauri Cenit  
Emily Chin  
Justin Chin  
Claira Chung  
Angelica Curcio  
Isabella DeChico  
Julia Decker  
Ryan Elliott  
Ryder Ettere  
Julie Fraser  
Julia Gustin  
Lucy Hernandez  
Erin Hirsch  
Ryan Hodge  
Olivia Hoyt  
Riley Hughes  
Dominick Iacono  
Fiona Kelleher  
Niamh Kelleher  
Nicholas Kenneally  
Ashley Koch  
Jake Lauro

Lola Lauro  
Joshua Leviner  
Jake Lomas  
Sophia Lombardi  
Connor Lowery  
Sofia Malichek  
Vincent Margiotta  
Bryan Margolis  
Ryan Marino  
Nicholas Masciarelli  
Nathan Mascoll  
Alexander Mastellone  
Angelina Mazzella  
Mia McConnell  
Jeremy O'Keefe  
Sahvahna-Lin Orellana  
Joseph Pellegrino  
Sophia Perillo  
Alex Piccioli  
Annibel Pope  
Mia Reitzen  
Madison Romeo  
Sabrina Roselli  
Jake Sampson  
Jake Sorrentino  
Franklin Soto  
Adam Spinella  
Olivia Spinella  
Matthew Steckle  
Anastasia Villani  
Celina Wendler  
Camdyn Wilson  
Lindsey Woolley



## Congratulations N.J.H.S. Inductees

### GRADE 8

Sherlyn Alejandro Pena  
 Amanda Atton  
 Andrew Baker  
 Madelynn Behrendt  
 Liam Bergerson  
 Emily Biagini  
 Violet Bicaj  
 Hayden Biolchini  
 Andrew Boga  
 Ava Brady  
 Matthew Camara  
 Caoimhe Crisci  
 Ethan Csakany  
 James Dannolfo  
 Lia Dimase  
 Andriana DiVincenzo  
 Anthony Eppolito  
 Cassian Fabbie  
 Kevin Finer  
 Olivia Fitzsimmons  
 Patrick Gagne  
 Adam Geller  
 Brennen Golden  
 Kaitlin Grow  
 Keira Hammond  
 Madeline Hanlon  
 Erin Harney  
 Melania Hracs  
 Sydney Hughes  
 Maeve Keenan  
 Sabrina Kenneally  
 Lucas Lambertson  
 Maya Lewis  
 Jason Liebowitz  
 Adelina Lika  
 Isabella Lofaro  
 Angelina Longhitano  
 Derek Lorusso  
 Gianna Lucia  
 Merylyn Maiuzzo

Dominic Marangiello  
 Jayson Mayer  
 Molly McGourty  
 Carly McKirgan  
 Jack Moeller  
 Giuliana Morris  
 Angela Narcissi  
 Ethan Niewinski  
 Danica Parent  
 Donika Popaj  
 Maya Rejman  
 Gabriella Reo  
 Addison Rooney  
 Sophia Rutigliano  
 Samantha Salomon  
 Joseph Sbuttoni  
 Samantha Shanahan  
 Abigail Sieland  
 Ross Silver  
 Stella Svrcek  
 Nicolas Tardio  
 Kelsie Thimm  
 Brayden Torrey  
 Daniel Walsh  
 Alexandra Weiss  
 Madison Wyman  
 Oskar Zalesiak

Andrew Baker  
 Madelynn Behrendt  
 Liam Bergerson  
 Emily Biagini  
 Violet Bicaj  
 Hayden Biolchini  
 Ava Brady  
 Caoimhe Crisci  
 Ethan Csakany  
 James Dannolfo  
 Cassian Fabbie  
 Olivia Fitzsimmons  
 Kaitlin Grow  
 Keira Hammond  
 Erin Harney  
 Melania Hracs  
 Sydney Hughes  
 Maeve Keenan  
 Lucas Lambertson  
 Maya Lewis  
 Jason Liebowitz  
 Adelina Lika  
 Isabella Lofaro  
 Derek Lorusso  
 Gianna Lucia  
 Merylyn Maiuzzo  
 Jayson Mayer  
 Molly McGourty  
 Jack Moeller  
 Giuliana Morris  
 Angela Narcissi  
 Tara Neubauer  
 Danica Parent  
 Sophia Rutigliano  
 Samantha Shanahan  
 Nicolas Tardio  
 Kelsie Thimm  
 Brayden Torrey  
 Daniel Walsh  
 Alexandra Weiss  
 Madison Wyman  
 Oskar Zalesiak



**1st Place**



**Landon Varley**

**Second Place**



**Michael Aqualino**



**Third Place**



**Emma Westcott**  
**Fourth Place**



**Nathan Strauss**

# **The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes**

**by Chloe Lex**

For those of you who have read the *Hunger Games* trilogy, you probably already know that Suzanne Collins is a phenomenal author. But, I bet you didn't know that in May of 2020, Collins released a prequel to the series called *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.

Unlike the previous series, this novel is written in third person, once in a while glancing into the mind of President Snow. In this story, we get to explore the adolescence of 18-year-old Coriolanus and answer some of the questions you may have had after reading the trilogy.

The prequel takes place in Panem during the 10th Hunger Games where Coriolanus is signed up to mentor a tribute from District 12, a girl named Lucy Gray. However things start to change when Snow begins to develop some odd feelings about his tribute while she is in the arena.

I don't want to give away any spoilers, but you have to be a patient reader if you plan on reading this book. At 517 pages, some parts of the book might be a little bit dull, but on the whole, the book is quite interesting. I must also warn you that in my opinion, this book is not as compelling as the original trilogy.

For those of you who have already read this book, you might be eager to hear that *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* is in early production of being adapted into a movie. The director Francis Lawrence will be returning to direct this film as well. Unfortunately, Lionsgate has not yet sent out a release date to the public or any of the casting information.

I hope this passage was both informational, entrancing and you will look into reading Suzanne Collins newest novel.



**Marianna Filicko**



**Cody DiCerbo**



## **First Place**

### **If I Die Young**

**by Chloe Lex**

If I die young,  
Lay me in a bed of flowers  
Play my favorite song for hours  
Beneath the old oak tree.

If I die young,  
Tell my mama that I loved her on the inside  
Tell my daddy that I'm proud of him because he tried.  
Tell my sister that she's special  
So much more special than me  
Tell my siblings that I'll love them for all eternity

Give a big hug to my best friend  
She's an angel in a girl.  
Don't let any boy ever change her  
Because one day she'll change the world.

Pay a thank you to my hometown  
The place where I would play.  
And I know that it's not perfect  
But if I'm honest that's okay.

And make sure you know I'm not foolproof.  
Truth, I'm not even close.  
But it is all the little things  
That I love the most.

If I die young, don't you cry.  
You want to know?  
I'll tell you why.

I am who I am today because of you  
And if I really know you  
You won't need to cry  
That's true.

## **Second Place**

### **Time is Moving to Fast**

**by Leona Ademi**

Time is moving to fast

It feels as if just yesterday I had started 7th grade,  
now we are here in the month of May

As i watch the sunset  
I remember the good times I didn't leave behind,  
I guess the old saying is right,  
time waits for no one,  
a moment wont forever stay,  
just like the moments made today

Time is precious, but in its place,  
forever in each passing day,  
your beating heart afflicts the soul,  
time comes with every story told

In reality,  
time is free, but it is priceless, you see,  
moments are the shadows time has left behind,  
then yet again another day goes by

Time is moving to fast

### **Public Speaking Contest**

Team 8A ran their annual public speaking contest virtually this year. The contestants were judged in two groups: 6th grade and then 7th&8th grade together. Congratulations to all participants. Here are the winners:

#### **6th grade:**

First Place-Chloe Lex

Second Place- Ella Biolchini

Third Place- Giovanni Mirable

#### **7th&8th grade:**

First Place-Celina Wendler

Second Place- Dan Walsh

Third Place-Lola Lauro



**Dylan McKee**

## **Third Place**

### **Speeding Car**

**by Kylie Quackenbush**

My mind is a speeding car  
Going at 5000 miles per hour  
Never pausing to take a break at the red lights  
Running away from problems like they are cops  
Staying on the highway instead of taking the back roads  
Ignoring the signs telling me to stop  
Swerving around the big trucks honking at me  
Rushing to get to all one thousand places I need to go  
The brain process never stopping even when I'm sleeping  
Not worrying about gas refills, and eventually needing a pick-up truck to refuel me  
Pushing the car to the limits, breaking down on the middle of the road  
My mind is a speeding car

## **Fourth Place**

### **The Place You Call Home**

**by Sabrina Dealmeida**

What's a place to call home?  
A place that feels safe,  
A place that's filled with joy, and love, and  
hugs that you embrace.  
The smell of your parents cooking,  
Dances around your nose,  
The feeling of this comfort,  
Makes me feel happy and so close.  
I look outside my window,  
And the breeze hits my face,  
While covered in blankets,  
feeling hugged and nicely safe.

A place where its special,  
A place that brings glee,  
Any place can't compare to this place,  
cause this place was made for me!  
People might say it's different,  
"It's only just a house."  
I might agree, but I can see the special  
Things around.  
You might not agree too,  
But i'm not one to judge!  
But I can state one thing,  
And this one thing I love.  
You may have your own place,  
A place on its own,  
This is not a ordinary house,  
It's a place you call home.

# Minecraft Updates From 2009-2021

by Louis Cassara

Minecraft was born in May of 2009. Minecraft didn't have much to offer back then and the game was named Cave Game. It had trees and ores. That's about it. Later in 2009 glass, flowers, diamonds, tools and crafting tables became a reality.

Minecraft 2010 Minecraft added some many things that make the game the way it is today. They added dungeons, the ability to farm, armor and the infinite world option. Later that year they started the alpha stages of minecraft.

Minecraft 2011 added some key things that made it so well known. In the Beta format note blocks, cake, beds, repeaters. wolves, a new Minecraft logo, the ability to gain achievements, powered rails, maps, trap doors, pistons and sticky pistons, and hunger were added.

Minecraft 2011 adds some pretty cool things as well. The ability to spawn, jungles, iron golems. trading with villagers, desert temples, anvils & command blocks.

Minecraft 2013 added more redstone components, quarts, horses, new biomes and world generators.

Minecraft 2014 added ocean monuments and guardians. Then Microsoft bought Minecraft.

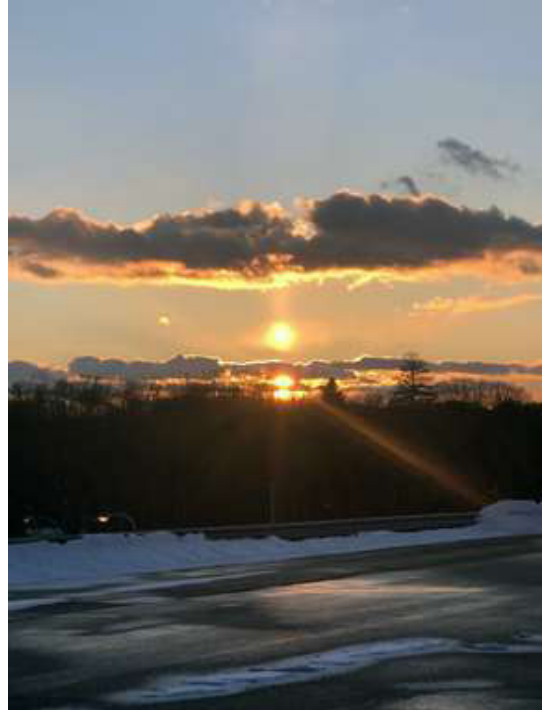
Minecraft 2016 added end cities, elytra, combat changes, polar bears, magna blocks, woodland mansion and shulker boxes.

Minecraft 2017-2020 1.12 added colorful blocks, parrots, ocean overhaul, phantoms, villager overhaul, new textures, bamboo forests, bees and honey blocks.

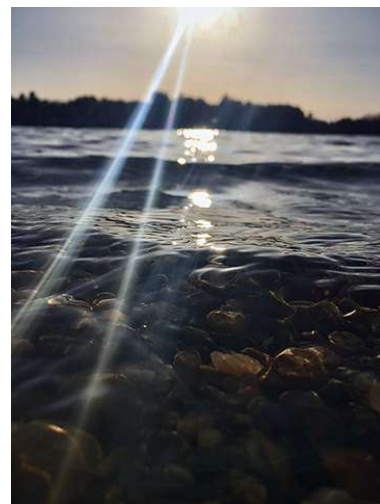
Minecraft 2020. 1.16 Nether overhaul and netherite were added to the game.

Minecraft 1.17.000 update is supposed to come out mid-2021. The 1.17.000 update is called the caves and cliffs update. Many things will be added to Minecraft including: larger caves, larger cliffs, goats, amethyst, copper, telescopes, lush caves, dripstone caves and much more. Right now the newest version of Minecraft is the 1.16.221 so we have a while before 1.17.000. In my opinion this might be the biggest thing for gaming in 2021. So far people have been hyping

up this event for a very long time now. The developers, also known as Mojang, own Minecraft. Even they have been hyping this update up. This update has already come out in different mods and some previews for V.I.P people.



**Kayla Contreras**



**Kathryn DeCicco**

## **How the Closure of In-School Learning Hurt Students**

**by Fallon Minnich**

Ever since Covid 19 hit, and schools closed, kids mental health has worsened significantly. The loss of play time with friends and school took an emotional toll. A study published April 29th in JAMA Network sheds on how serious that harm has been. The work was led by psychologist Tali Raviv at Northwestern University. It involved a survey of more than 32,000 caregivers looking after children from kindergarten to grade 12 in the Chicago Public School System.

Tali Raviv wanted to find out how the children exhibited 12 different traits before the end of school and in the time after. The results were unbelievable. Tali Raviv found out that the negative traits scores increased, and on the positive traits there was a decrease.

About 7% of all the children that participated in this study actually benefited from the shift to in-person learning. Some of the negative traits involve loneliness, agitation, anger, stress, anxiety, depression, etc. Some of the positive traits involved relaxation, hopefulness, interacting positively with family and peers, etc. I believe this is something very serious that is happening to kids in the U.S. I wanted to learn more about the tolls that were caused because of the closure of in-school learning.

In my opinion I believe this study is very true. Constantly being on computers inside the house has definitely caused a lot more stress on my brain and body than ever before. I personally have felt less motivated to do things because I haven't been able to see my friends and participate in activities such as sports, and after-school activities. If you would like to learn more about Tali Raviv's study on how the closure of in-school learning has impacted U.S. children's mental health then use this website. <https://time.com/5964671/school-closing-children-mental-health-pandemic/>

## **What Taekwondo Means to Me**

**by C.J. Vieira**

When I was five years old my family enrolled me in Taekwondo to try and help me focus. I still have a small amount of trouble focusing but Taekwondo helped a lot with my listening. I am now 11 years old and preparing to earn my black belt. I have all my belts in a case displayed in my room.

When I got higher and higher belts I felt each belt put more responsibility on me to do the right thing and take initiative in the class. I could not feel the responsibility the belts gave me if I had slacked off and did the bare minimum. Doing my best kept me fit and mentally strong by giving me new goals to complete and achieve.

Finishing those goals make me feel good while also giving me more confidence in myself. It also gives me the will power to stay determined and to keep going till I earn my black belt.

I have become more calm and in control of my emotions and actions and do not act on impulse as I did before. Taekwondo has taught me how to defend myself and push me to try my hardest and put all my power into my kicks and punches. Taekwondo has helped me mentally and physically.



**Jake Lomas**