



Mustang Musings

MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.” –William Arthur Ward

November/December 2022

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT’S DESK

What an excellent kick off to the 2022-2023 school year! I am impressed every day with our students, staff, and families. From early morning drop-offs to evening outings, it is clear that the entire community values hard work and cares deeply about our children. With the beginning of this year has come a return of many well-loved and attended events. It was great to see many of you at open house, homecoming, and countless competitions. By the time this publication goes to print, we will have completed our evacuation drill and will likely be gearing up for Halloween festivities and parent-teacher conferences.

In the building, learning is well underway. If you follow MCS on Facebook, you might have seen that our students have decorated their classroom doors blue and white, contributed food from our greenhouses to the cafeteria, gone horseback riding, learned about science with the installation of a trout tank, and participated in countless other hands-on learning activities. We know that the children we are educating today need to be prepared for a world we have not yet envisioned. With advances in technology and an ever-evolving job market, flexibility and the ability to interact with others is essential. In this vein, we will continually strive to prepare them with the critical and creative thinking skills required to excel on whatever path they choose to walk.

In thinking of generations to come, it is important that we pursue a Capital Project at MCS. As shown in our building condition survey and as documented by our staff and our

architects, there are areas on our campus that need immediate attention to keep our facilities functioning well and moving forward. These improvements include the replacement of aged roofs, new unit ventilators to improve airflow quality and efficiency, repaving the main parking lot, energy-efficient LED lighting, fire door replacements, and updates to our security systems. Additionally, our current bus garage is significantly past its usable life as a transportation hub and is creating daily challenges to maintaining and servicing our fleet. The Capital Project will include the construction of a new garage where our current softball field is and relocating the softball field to the south by the end of the soccer field.

This \$14.5 million Capital Project has been developed through a process of careful analysis by the District’s stakeholders. It addresses areas of immediate need and is designed to create a safe, cost-effective, and sustainable learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. If approved by voters, this project will move forward with no projected tax impact. This is due to sound fiscal planning by the District, debt from previous projects that is scheduled to expire, a contribution from our Capital Project reserve, and our high state aid ratio. We will receive roughly 86 cents in state building aid for every dollar spent on the project. Please reach out to Mrs. Maistros or the Board of Education with any questions. We urge you to vote on Tuesday, December 13, 2022.

*—Mrs. Jamie Maistros
Superintendent*





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THREE CHEERS TO . . .

- ★ All MCS’ new administrators, faculty, and staff. Welcome!
- ★ The cafeteria staff for finding yummy recipes for all the greenhouse goodies.
- ★ New administrators for making everyone feel heard, valued, and appreciated
- ★ *Jessica Walling* and *Ethan Franklin* for making it into the Area All-State Music Festival on clarinet and trumpet in November!
- ★ The Booster Club and Student Council for making Spirit Week and Homecoming weekend awesome.
- ★ Congrats to all the senior fall athletes, it has been a pleasure watching you grow and learn on and off the field.
- ★ Congrats to all the Mustang athletes for their winning seasons!
- ★ The Student Council and the Morris Rotary for another great Halloween celebration.
- ★ Our new inductees of National Honor Society.
- ★ The seniors for an awesome senior play!
- ★ All the good sports that were dunked during the Homecoming weekend.
- ★ Our CROP staff for a great start and your continued support.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

Going green by making the newsletter digital certainly helped save money for the district, and it was good for the environment. The District will continue this practice this year as well. You may access the newsletter under the “Newsletter” tab on the District web page. You may also access the calendar on-line under “Calendar of Events” and in the Athletics tab.

If you do not have computer access and/or would like a hard copy of the newsletter sent directly to you, please call the School’s District Office at (607) 263-6102 to request a copy be mailed to you.

Thank you for your understanding and support in this matter.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY & STAFF



Cat Burch

Hi! My name is Cat Burch and this is my ninth year teaching. I went to the College of Saint Rose for my undergraduate program in Childhood and Special Education. I then went on for my Master's in Curriculum and Instruction. Previously, I worked at other districts in the area as a Special Education teacher. I have taught kindergarten special education for the last three years. I'm so excited to be the newest member of the Special Education Department.

I grew up in Troy, NY, with my parents and moved to Syracuse in 2015 for a job. I met my husband shortly after moving there and I relocated to the Southern Tier area in 2017 to be with him after we were engaged. We got married in 2019.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my daughter who was born in February, my husband and our dog, listening to books on Audible, and all things Disney!



Deanna Perkosky

Hello! My name is Deanna Perkosky and I am the new Director of Bands at Morris. I also teach Pre-K through Second Grade and Fourth Grade General Music. This is my ninth year teaching. I am extremely

excited about this opportunity to work with students of all ages! I love the enthusiasm and fun we have with the little ones in general music. I also enjoy really digging into practicing and performing music with the older students on their instruments!

I studied Music Education for my Bachelor's Degree, at Mansfield University, Pennsylvania, and Instrumental Conducting for my Master's Degree at Messiah University, Pennsylvania. I have dreamed of a position like this one for many years and am thrilled to be here finally! I live in Gilbertsville, NY. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my husband Joel and my wonderful children Owen and Olivia, and our friends. I also enjoy eating delicious food, boating and water skiing, snowmobiling, and yoga.

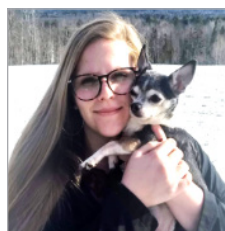
In addition to being a band director, I am currently studying to be an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for the Gilbertsville Emergency Squad. I am very excited about the opportunity to help my community!



Julia Bjorvand

Hello! My name is Julia Bjorvand and I am excited to be the new Fifth Grade ELA and Social Studies teacher. While I am new to the district, I am certainly not new to Morris. I have lived in the area on and off since

1986. I graduated from Gilbertsville Central School and then went on to attend Elmira College. It was in college that I met my husband while studying to become a teacher. In 1993, we moved to Connecticut as that is where Tom was stationed while in the Navy. It was at this time our first son, Jeffrey, was born. After he served in the military for four years, we moved to Philadelphia for a year, where I worked as a Lead Teacher at United Cerebral Palsy. While there were lots of things to see and do, we missed our family, so we moved back to the area in 1994. After working for a short time at Sidney Headstart, I was hired at Franklin Central School. By this time, our second son Connor had been born. Fast forward twenty four years, and our children have grown and moved out and I decided it was time to work closer to home. While I will certainly miss the families and students in Franklin, I am excited to make new connections here in Morris. I hope to meet many of you at sporting events, concerts, or just out in the community. I am looking forward to being part of Morris Central School.



Toree Donnelly

Hi everyone. My name is Toree Donnelly. I will be teaching Fifth Grade this year at MCS.

After graduating from Mount Markham Central School in 2010, I received my Bachelor's and Master's degrees from SUNY Potsdam. I completed my student teaching in 2017 and was teaching up in the North Country. I taught for four years at a rural district called Hermon-DeKalb Central School. Eventually, I decided to move back to be closer to my family.

In my free time, I like to read, cook, watch scary movies, and hang out with my dog Willy.

I'd like to thank everyone who has been so welcoming already, and I'm looking forward to joining the close community you have here at Morris Central School!



Amy Zeh

Hello, my name is Amy Zeh. I am so excited to be part of the Morris family again. I was lucky enough to start my teaching career in Morris twenty years ago. I left Morris to take a full-time teaching position at Worcester Central School. I have

taught kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade. I'm very happy to be working with the first graders this year. Their excitement and energy is inspiring! In my free time, I enjoy running, shopping, and watching my children play sports. I look forward to getting to know my colleagues, students and community members at Morris.

continued

WELCOME NEW FACULTY & STAFF



Christine Callea

Hello, my name is Christine Callea and I am one of two new first grade teachers here at Morris. I am excited to have the opportunity to teach your children and be a part of such a welcoming school district and community.

This will be my sixteenth year teaching. I have previously taught UPK, kindergarten, pre-first and first grade.

I was born and raised in Norwich and still reside there with my two rescue dogs, Gus and Lucy. In my free time, I enjoy working on house projects, running, being outdoors, and traveling.

I am looking forward to working with the faculty and staff here at Morris Central School and getting to know more members of the community. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your child's learning!



JoAnn Fredette

Hello, Morris community members. I would like to introduce myself and thank you for giving me the opportunity to teach in your district. My name is JoAnn Fredette, and I am the newest member of the high school

science department. I currently teach Regents Chemistry, College Biology (in partnership with SUNY Cobleskill), and Regents Physics.

A little about me: I grew up in Worcester NY, and attended Worcester Central School. I received my undergraduate degree from the College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY, and my Master's Degree from SUNY Oneonta. I am a NYS STEM Master Teacher Emeritus. I am excited to join the Mustang team after twenty years of teaching high school sciences at Schenevus Central School.

My husband, Bill, and I live in Gilbertsville, having moved from Worcester, NY, in 2018. We have three sons, William, Michael, and Sebastian. In my spare time, I enjoy baking (cookies are my specialty), sewing art quilts, flower gardening, and reading nerdy science-related books. I look forward to getting involved with the school's drama department. I enjoy creating costumes, props, painting scenery, and getting to know the students outside of the classroom.

I am looking forward to teaching at Morris. The faculty, staff, and students have already made me feel so welcome, and I look forward to meeting more of you at school and community events. Until then, I wish all of you the best in the year ahead.



Diane Sneddon

Hello Everyone! I wanted to take a moment and introduce myself. My name is Diane Sneddon, and I am one of many new teachers here at Morris and will be teaching Sixth Grade ELA and Social Studies. I graduated from

Georgian Court College in New Jersey with a dual certification in Sociology and Elementary Education along with a cluster in Criminal Justice. I obtained my Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Midway University, Kentucky. Previous to teaching in Morris, I spent time teaching in Cooperstown and before that the South Jersey Shore area. I am going into my 20th year of teaching MCS's amazing 5th and 6th grade students, and I am enjoying every minute of it.

I grew up in upstate Pennsylvania before moving to Massachusetts to become a nanny, then onto Jersey to begin my college career. I currently live in New Berlin, with my husband and many farm animals. I also have a crazy, stubborn chocolate lab named Buckshot who is a wonderful companion on my walks. Although my children are grown and live in New Jersey, I Facetime often with them and my four beautiful grandchildren.

In my spare time, you can usually find me in the kitchen baking something or out and about exploring new places. I am looking forward to getting to know my students, parents, colleagues, and the community members of Morris. Here's to a wonderful year ahead!



Michael Wais

Hello! I'm Michael Wais. I am a new teacher in the high school Math Department. I teach Algebra 1A, Algebra 1B and Pre-Calc. I graduated from SUNY Oneonta this past spring with my Bachelor's in Science

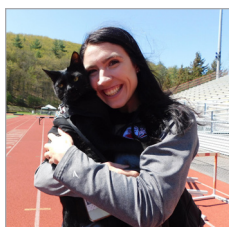
for Mathematics Education. I taught here last Spring under Mrs. Denning and had an incredible time getting to know everyone here.

I had two amazing math teachers when I was in high school that became great friends and who changed my life. In my high school there was an extra help period after school and before sports where you could get help from any teacher. I struggled with paying attention in school and struggled in my math classes, so I got extra help from my teachers nearly every day throughout high school which helped me thrive in those classes. You do not need to be gifted at math to learn and enjoy it. I believe a good attitude towards your work and a good mentor is all you need to succeed in math. Eventually, in college I realized that my passion was teaching and continuing to learn math.

continued

WELCOME NEW FACULTY & STAFF

I grew up in Athens, NY, on a dairy farm. I like playing tennis, walking, journaling, am unhealthily obsessed with the reality show Survivor, and you'll find me playing basketball at the YMCA after school most days. I feel incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to teach here and am excited to be more a part of this community.



McKenzie Rhone

Hi, everyone! My name is McKenzie Rhone, and I am super thankful that I am the new Health and Physical Education teacher at Morris.

I graduated from Lock Haven University in the spring of 2022.

I received my Bachelor's Degree in Health and Physical Education. While at college, I also competed on the women's track and field team. I am also the cross-country coach at Morris! I have a great passion for running and exercise. Living a healthy lifestyle has always been extremely important to me. I am super excited to help students learn how to live happy and healthy lifestyles and how to advocate for their own personal health.

I am originally from a super small town in Pennsylvania. I decided this summer to take a leap of faith and move to New York. I am so lucky I got to bring my cat with me. His name is Hank and he loves his new home just as much as I do!

I am super excited to have the opportunity to work with some amazing mentors. I am incredibly blessed to have been welcomed right into the staff as a first-year teacher. I am looking forward to getting to know all my colleagues, students, and community members at Morris!

HAPPY RETIREMENT

Thank you for your dedication

All of MCS would like to congratulate two dedicated staff members on a fantastic retirement! Both Kathy Forgit and Virginia Robinson have spent their whole careers at Morris Central School! Best of luck in your future endeavors!



Kathy Forgit

Kathy Forgit has been a proud MCS staff member for 26 years! After Mrs. Forgit retires, she wants to spend time with her grandchildren, working in her garden, reading and relaxing. She also wants to go south in the Winter. Mrs.

Forgit's favorite memory of MCS happened when she first started her career at Morris, and it occurred when she helped one of her very first students to write his name! Since that day, she loved helping kids learn how to read, write, and becomes experts at other skills to develop successfully in school! Mrs. Forgit said, "I'm going to miss seeing the students every day!"



Virginia Robinson

Mrs. Robinson has also been a proud MCS staff member for 30 years! After retirement, you may catch Mrs. Robinson traveling or doing some of her favorite crafting activities. Her top three travel destinations are Maine,

Vermont, and Hawaii. Mrs. Robinson is a very crafty woman, and after she leaves MCS, she will have more free time to can, add to her scrapbook, and read. Mrs. Robinson could not think of her favorite memory right off the bat; however, she finally decided that her favorite memory is when the kids say, "Hello!" every single morning. All those hellos started everyday fantastically. With that being said, she is going to miss each and every one of the students when she leaves!

—Aislinn Ray, Junior



SENIOR CITIZEN LUNCHEON

December 22, 2022 • 10:30-11:30am

The Student Council is proud to announce that we will once again host the Senior Citizen Luncheon at MCS! Seniors please join us for a delicious hot meal, visit with friends, staff and students and enjoy the festive entertainment.

Menu

Roast Pork	Sweet Potatoes	Apple Sauce
Dressing	Coleslaw	Roll
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy	Cranberry Sauce	Pie

Please join the MCS school community and let us show you our appreciation!

RSVP to Diane Walling by December 9 at 607-263-6100.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTIONS



The Mustangs chapter of the National Honor Society held their annual induction ceremony following Open House on October 6, 2022, in the MCS auditorium. The ceremony was open to the public for the first time since the COVID pandemic began. There were many smiles and much applause as the ceremony was led by the current members of our local chapter. This year's inductees were as follows: *Samantha Coyle* (sophomore), *Ethan Nisius* (sophomore), *Grace Schiller* (sophomore), *Madeline Schiller* (senior), and *Hannah Wist* (sophomore). As the candles burned representing the four pillars of the National Honor Society, the new inductees took their oaths vowing to continue their scholarship, leadership, character, and service in our community and throughout the world. We are very proud of all that our members have accomplished, and look forward to seeing their future contributions.

—Mrs. April Vunk, NHS Advisor, Teacher

NEW LEADERSHIP

Congratulations to all the students elected to offices this year so far:

Yearbook:

Carissa Richards, President and
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Tatiana McAdams, Vice President and
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Ethan Franklin, Business Manager
and Treasurer

Lincoln Waffle, Secretary

Hannah Wist, Photo Editor

Madeline Schiller, Copy Editor

Aislinn Ray, Design Editor

Class of 2023:

Jon Child, President

Lincoln Waffle, Vice President

Ethan Franklin, Treasurer

Carrisa Richards, Secretary

Class of 2024:

Yana King, President

Jessica Walling, Vice President

Maddie Coleman, Secretary

Maiya King, Treasurer

Representatives

Golf Club:

JJ Benjamin, President

Ethan Franklin, Vice President

Lincoln Waffle, Treasurer

Levi Waffle: Secretary

Senior Band:

Lincoln Waffle, President

Everett Pondolfino, Vice President

Aaron Pondolfino, Treasurer

Levi Waffle, Secretary

Senior Chorus:

Lincoln Waffle, President

Everett Pondolfino, Vice President

Aaron Pondolfino, Treasurer

Jon Child, Secretary

Student Council:

Jessica Walling, President

Maddie Coleman, Vice President

Yana King, Secretary

Everett Pondolfino, Treasurer

National Honor Society:

Jon Child, President

Yana King, Vice President

Jessica Walling, Secretary

Ethan Franklin, Treasurer

Athletic Club:

Garrett Aikins, President,

Scott Murphy, Vice President

Ethan Franklin, Treasurer

Carissa Richards, Secretary

Envirothon:

Maddie Coleman, Team A Captain

Jessica Walling, Team B Captain

GEMMA HALL HAS A HEART FOR MCS

Anyone who has been to a graduation ceremony at MCS, knows that Gemma Hall, a local benefactor to MCS students, donates money toward several scholarships that promote the arts and humanities in our community. Gemma Hall also helps sponsor special activities that support the arts during the year. Last Winter Gemma Hall offered to send a small group of students to see *The Sound of Music* at GlimmerGlass Opera in Cooperstown over the summer.

Attendees for this special event were *Carissa Richards, Kiernan Burke, Everett Pondolfino, Aaron Pondolfino, Lincoln Waffle, Scott Murphy, Aislinn Ray, Jason Strain, Tatiana McAdams, Madeline Schiller, Jessica Walling, and Maddie Coleman*. Students were chosen by teacher recommendation and interest in acting, music, English, and/or History.

While there students were treated like VIP guests. In addition to being served delicious lunches and refreshments at intermission, students had the chance to speak directly with the maistros who told us all about the music, actors, and facilities. To boot, students were treated to front row seats for the performance.

The show was amazing. The actors and actresses were talented, and the sets were some of the most beautiful and complicated sets many of our students had ever had the chance to see. Students' reactions were positive and grateful:

Jessie Walling said, "I loved the way that the production used the *Doe Re Mi* song. They used the song when the children were first introduced to music. Then it reappeared when they started doubting their love and ability to feel the music, and the song and Maria's appearance brought that connection back."

Maddie Coleman thought the show was "spectacular!" She "enjoyed connecting themes that were presented in the show to real world problems!"

Tatiana McAdams said, "I really liked the uniqueness of all of the singers' voices. Nobody sounded exactly alike and I thought that was very cool and unexpected."

Aislinn Ray, thought, "the show was absolutely breathtaking, that was my first opera show ever, and I absolutely loved it! The scenery switching was so smooth, and the music was phenomenal, thank you so much for this opportunity!"

"Despite having seen *The Sound of Music* prior, the opera managed to easily suck me into the story through its incredible acting and impressive scenery all over again. When the symphony began and the vocals erupted, I was hit with just how remarkable the show was following each and every song. It is unreal how big of a difference simply hearing the music is compared to being able to listen to and watch the music happen from right in front of you. As someone who would hardly consider themselves a big music listener, the Glimmerglass Opera's *The Sound of Music* and its performers managed to captivate me with every song. It was an experience that I'll never forget, and I can rest assured that it left me with a new-



The group loved the GlimmerGlass Opera grounds. The buildings were interesting and the gardens were lovely. Did you know that it used to be a working farm before it was an opera house?



Jessie Walling and Maddie Coleman (Juniors) really appreciated front row seating.

found appreciation for all things in music and the arts. Thank you, to Ms. Hall," said *Madeline Schiller*. *Thomas Aaron Pondolfino* is an experienced theatre-goer and performer. He said, "This trip was amazing, but amazing doesn't really fit. It was a reminder not to dismiss the theatre, because entertainment through trips like this give us chances to learn from pleasant experiences!"

Everett Pondolfino, an experienced actor himself as well, said, "One thing that stood out to me specifically in the show, was how the Captain stood by his beliefs, even in the face of an unbeatable foe. This reminded me of all of the Ukrainians who have stood up for their country, and the beliefs of freedom in front of grave odds."

Lincoln Waffle thought the show was "thought-provoking." He said, "I have seen the musical on TV before, but it was much more powerful to see it on the stage."

Carissa also thought the show was wonderful. She said, "The show was incredible and full of serious talent. I think that the cast truly brought the story to life. The music was beautiful and the acting portrayed the story line very well. It was the first opera I've ever been to and it was a great first experience."

A special thanks also goes out to the MCS Board of Education and our administrators who allowed this trip and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard who were the perfect go-betweens for Mrs. Waffle and Ms. Hall.

From first timers to the opera to students who have attended many shows in many places, the show left a lasting impression. It was a truly wonderful experience. Students are very thank-ful for Gemma Hall and her generosity. Thank you, Ms. Hall!

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, ELA

CROSS COUNTRY

This year the Morris Cross-Country team merged with Edmeston Central School to create a larger and more rounded team. Cross-Country is a sport focused on long-distance running and personal goals. The team runs in meets anywhere from 2.1 miles to 3.1 miles. *Lorissa Johnston* (24') said, "I chose to do cross-country because running has helped me. People might think it's hard, but it's all about your mentality, pushing yourself every race until you beat the time you had when you started."

On September 17, 2022, the Ladies on the Cross-Country team won first place in the Fort Plain Invitational. *Carly Bond* ('24), Edmeston, said, "I'm happy it was something that as a team we could win. I think it gives us hope and positivity going into future races and shows how important every team member is. We now know that winning is possible and there is no need to accept defeat before every race." The team has had a positive outlook on the season so far and has high hopes for the rest of the season as they continue to show their strengths individually and together. Coach McKenzie Rhone of Morris, said, "Overall, our boys and girls cross-country teams are both doing great. The team is adjusting well to merging and have become a strong team. This season so far has been a season of Personal Records or PRs. *Carly Bond* ('24) and *Lorissa Johnston* ('24) have been leading the girls team with notable times. The girls varsity team won their first invitational at Fort Plain at just their third meet. The boys varsity team has also been achieving great things this season. *William King* ('24) has been leading the boys team with remarkable times and great leadership skills. Seniors, *Colby Smith* and *Thomas Pondolfino* are also playing crucial roles on the team. *Hunter McAdams* ('27) is making his name known in his first year on the modified team. *Hunter* has been improving every meet, performing amongst the top runners every time he runs."

There are four seniors on the team this year who have achieved many personal goals over the years. *Thomas Pondolfino* ('23) said, "It's a strange sport from an outside perspective, but the community the team creates is actually quite nice." Thomas has achieved many of his personal goals over this season as well as maintaining a positive attitude toward himself and his team. Team captain *Colby Smith* ('23) stated, "Heading into this fall, I was pumped our team was only going to grow with the merger. Adding more energy and fresh legs has only pushed everyone harder. As we head into the second half of our season, there's surely going to be personal and team accolades ahead—this



Varsity Cross-Country Team.



Coach Rhone and the Edmeston Coach cheer *Hunter McAdams* (Eighth Grader) on during a meet.

group's got a special feel." The team has shown a lot of positivity with the merger. Meeting new people and trying to create a team with a positive atmosphere can be difficult, but the cross-country team has exceeded everyone's expectations. *William King* ('24) said, "Cross-Country is one of those sports where you compete more against yourself than others; it builds character." The team has had a successful season so far with many ups and downs as all teams experience, but they are doing an excellent job at staying positive and pushing themselves and each other.

—*Rachel Hill*, Junior

VARSITY GIRLS SOCCER

In the past, Morris and Edmeston have rivaled in every sport, from soccer to track to softball. Although, this school year, like last, athletic teams have been low on players to take the field—last spring Morris’s baseball and softball programs merged with Edmeston’s. However, the thought of combining this fall was not a question at first until both ladies’ teams concluded that they needed to merge soccer teams from our schools to compete.

Morris first brought 13 players to tryouts while Edmeston brought 14. Finally, the team became a mix of 22 girls from Morris and Edmeston. Edmeston senior, *Arissa Bolton* said, “At first, I was super nervous about being merged. Even though it was a little weird at first, I wouldn’t change a thing. I’ve met so many more amazing friends, and out of all the years I’ve played, this is the best team I’ve ever had.” From preseason up until now, the girls have gained so much more trust in each other on and off the field. They all work and play for each other, not themselves. Morris senior, *Carissa Richards* said, “The merge has presented both teams with a lot of new options and opportunities that we didn’t have before. We have been super successful so far.” Many girls were skeptical about the merge and the competition between both schools, but it also challenged every individual to play as hard as they could all the time.

Every single player has been able to touch the field so far this season, new and returning players have brought assists and goals, and to boot, there were pizza parties to celebrate the small wins that meant so much to the team.

—*Hannah Wist*, Sophomore



Maiya King



Thomas Aaron Pondolfino

Published

Last year Mrs. Waffle had the unique experience of meeting Taylor Mali, a famous spoken word poet. He offered to meet with her juniors to give a talk on Zoom and a challenge. After we listened, we explored his Metaphor Dice challenge where you roll three dice (with a subject, adjective, and object) and make our own poems. Several students chose to submit their poems to Mali’s Golden Die Contest. *Thomas Aaron Pondolfino* was selected as a finalist in the teen category as was Mrs. Waffle in the adult category. They will both be published in the *Poetry By Chance: An Anthology of Poems Powered By Metaphor Dice*, this Winter. *Aaron* said, “The concept of metaphor dice relies fully on the ability to interpret almost random nonsense and creatively generate an excuse for the order.” *Aaron* thought it was a unique experience.



RELEASING BUTTERFLIES

In September, Miss Callea’s First Grade class explored the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. Students observed and documented the process of metamorphosis. In total, they released 13 butterflies. Miss Callea has worked with *monarchwatch.org* for many years through their nonprofit education, conservation, and research program. The organization focuses on the monarch butterfly, its habitat, and fall migration. The program also provides resources to tag and track the butterflies during their migration. To learn more about the monarch butterfly and/or the tagging process, go to <http://www.monarchwatch.org> for more information.

—*Christine Callea*, First Grade Teacher

SPIRIT WEEK

For this year's Spirit Week in mid-September, we had a different variety of ideas. Monday, we had Soccer Moms vs Barbecue Dads. All the outfits people wore were great and were personalized to how they thought soccer moms and the barbecue dads looked. Some people wore their Mom Squad outfits and others wore Hawaiian shirts and aprons. Tuesday was the very popular, traditional Twin Day. This day was where you could dress like one person or multiple people. Wednesday was a new day, Adam Sandler Day where we had people dressing like him from his movies or who just wore baggy clothes. Thursday was Country versus Country Club Day. More kids and adults had fun wearing country clothes such as flannels and jeans than country club, but there were still quite a few people wearing great golf outfits. Friday, of course, was Blue and White Day. The goal was to wear blue and white from head to toe. School spirit and color was the right way to start off Friday to push us into a good weekend.

In addition, this year we had a door decorating contest between all the grades. Mrs. Kane's door looked like the final scene of the movie Up. Mrs. Waffle's door emulated the dunk tank. Mr. Harmer's door was a crazy collection of blue and white that went right up to the ceiling. Mrs. Collins's door was covered in Mustangs. Mrs. Dening's Seventh Graders were the winning door decorators. Mr. Manchester's Sixth Graders won the elementary door contest as well. The decorations on all the doors were amazing, but the Sixth and Seventh Grade doors were great choices for being the winners too.

—Garrett Aikins, Senior



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PEP RALLY



Students enjoyed the chants and cheering for schoolmates in all the competitions.



Jon Child (Senior) was the MC for the pep rally.

to complete the task included JJ Benjamin, Garrett Aikins, Brandon Mitcham, Kiarra Walker, Josiah Dugan, Scott Murphy, and 8th grader Lucas Waffle, who proudly sported the shirt that led his team to victory.

The third and final event of the pep rally, and certainly a student-favorite, was the Morris mummy-wrapping contest. In Morris's own method of welcoming the new faculty, staff, and administrators, six new members of MCS were selected for the honor of being completely wrapped in toilet paper. Their teammates, MCS students, raced to beat the clock and wrap their teachers to get the most amount of coverage.



At the buzzer, signaling the contestants to stop their wrapping, the Morris mummies trudged in line to face the audience. One teacher couldn't move she was so tightly wrapped, so Mrs. Waffle and Ms. Turner carried her to the judging line. The winner was decided on the basis of the loudest cheers, giving way to a substantial victory by new math teacher Michael Wais and his team of students.

Thomas Pondolfino, senior, also decided to do his part in raising the mustang spirit though dashing across the gym, triumphantly waving a Morris flag. The stands erupted in cheers in response. "It was a bit intimidating at first," Thomas admitted, "but once the rally got started, it was really great to see everyone so motivated." Thomas was not alone in harboring great feelings of pride for his school following MCS's pep rally of 2022. He was joined by all those in attendance, deeming the rally a great success.



Thomas Aaron Pondolfino (Senior) running the Mustang Flag up and down the sidelines during the pep rally.

—Madeline Schiller, Senior

HOMECOMING CARNIVAL

Homecoming is always a fun time of year. It adds a little spice to the early part of the school year. This year, Student Council and The Booster Club continued the tradition of the outdoor carnival activities we added during COVID. As usual, we had a bonfire, cow pie bingo, dunk tank fun, corn hole games, face painting, food, and much more. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed themselves.

Activities

There were many fun activities for people to enjoy. We started the night off strong before we even left school with the end of Spirit Week and Fun activities at a Pep Rally. Then at the carnival, we started with fun and games and the announce-



ments of everyone on the soccer and cross-country teams. There were two bounce houses for the younger kids to enjoy. There was also a dunk tank where everyone's favorite teachers had the opportunity to get dunked. As usual, Mrs. Waffle and Mr. Roser were favorites that night, but Mr. Harmer and Mr. Packard teased everyone the most. There was cow pie bingo, where everyone placed bets on where the cow's "pie" would land on the grid laid out. *Ricky Pegg's* ('28) beautiful cows were the spotlight of this show. Corn hole and other yard games were out for anyone to play, free of charge, as well. Face painting was also available for all ages. Down at the soccer field, kids of various ages hosted a small scrimmages



and there was food to enjoy, and the bon fire to cozy up to thanks to some senior boys and Mr. Iannelli.

The People's Opinions

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. But let's hear some from the people themselves.

"The homecoming carnival was great! Being able to hang out with my friends and take pictures at the bonfire was really fun." —*Ali Farmer* ('26)

"My favorite part of the activities was the food. Booster Club food is #1" —*Aislinn Ray* ('24)

"Homecoming 2022 was perfect. It was great watching the younger kids (and a few older students) play soccer in the field that night. The weather didn't dampen the mood in the slightest, but I guess I can't speak for the people in the dunk tank." —*Madeline Schiller* ('23)

"Homecoming was fun. I got to talk to my friends that I normally don't get to after school." —*Kylee Canfield* ('28)

"I really enjoyed the games. It was hilarious watching teachers get dunked, and I loved face painting." —*Ella Moore* ('27)

"It was a great event and it really showed Mustang spirit." —*Jessica Walling* ('24)

—*Tatiana McAdams*, Junior





DUNK TANK

This year's homecoming was a blast. For the second year in a row, The Booster Club hosted a dunk tank. We had Mr. Breck, Mrs. Norton, Ms. Turner, Mrs. Vunk, Mr. Tilley, Mrs. Waffle, Mrs. Maistros, Mrs. Dening, Mr. Harmer, Mr. Iannelli, Mr. Packard, and Mr. Roser were all good sports and volunteered to be dunked. Mr. Roser and Mrs. Waffle tied for the most dunks with 15 each. Ms. Turner was dunked the least amount with three which seems lucky or maybe she is the most feared or loved in the school; I guess she will have to guess which.

JJ Benjamin and *Garrett Aikins*, Seniors, both wanted to dunk Mr. Roser because of all the sprints he made the soccer team do. *Hannah Wist*, Sophomore, wanted to dunk Mr. Iannelli because he kept talking about how nobody would be able to dunk him. *Jonah Baldo*, Freshman, also wanted to dunk Mr. Roser because he also said no one could dunk him. *Robert Hill*, Sophomore, and *Lincoln Waffle* wanted to dunk Mr. Harmer because they thought it would be funny. Third Grader, *Bella Marino*, one of the many elementary students, enjoyed the dunk tank too. She said, "My favorite people to dunk in the dunk tank were Mrs. Maistros and Mrs. Waffle. It was fun to dunk Mrs. Maistros because it's her first year at MCS and I was the first one to dunk her in the water! I liked dropping Mrs. Waffle because she's my aunt and I dunked her three times in a row! It was also kind of hard to do because they are both so nice."

Mr. Packard wanted to do the dunk tank because of the experience, because it was fun, and a perfect opportunity to trash talk. He went so far to make a limerick he chanted while on the "wet seat." Mrs. Waffle wanted to do the dunk tank because she's a good sport and wanted to make people happy. Mrs. Maistros' dunk tank experience, as were all the participants' experiences, was a freezing experience. She thought it was fun to watch everyone try and dunk her as well. Mr. Iannelli couldn't get over the cold. Mrs. Dening wanted to take part in the dunk tank because she wanted to take part in the homecoming activities and to be able to pick on her school kids.

—*Ethan Franklin*, Junior



Homecoming Court: *Lincoln Waffle, Garrett Aikins, Scott Murphy, Carissa Richards, Hannah Swayer, and Bethanee Barringer*



The whole gym roared with excitement when *Jessie Walling* (Student Council President) named *Scott Murphy* and *Carissa Richards* Homecoming King and Queen.

ROYALTY ANNOUNCED

2022's Homecoming Dance was the first dance we've had in at least three years. Student Council members, many of whom had to run home after their games and freshen up, helped decorate the gym and entryway in blue and white.

At first, the dance floor was pretty stagnant; it seemed like no one really knew what to do. Other than *Aaron and Everett Pondolfino* that is. They started dancing and managed to drag everyone else in. *Everett* managed to circle up the crowd and then grabbed *Jonah Baldo*. After a few seconds they grabbed two more people and then they grabbed two more until the whole gym was on the dance floor.

The concession stand was packed full of snacks, drinks, and baked goods put together by Student Council members. It was a popular place to chat and cool off once the dancing started.



Students enjoyed trying a few line dances at the Homecoming Dance

About half way through the dance, Student Council President *Jessie Walling*, Junior, announced the Homecoming court. This year's court was made of *Scott Murphy, Garrett Aikins, and Lincoln Waffle* for the boys. And for the girls, the nominees were *Carissa Richards, Hannah Swayer, and Bethany Barringer*. The final tally of votes proclaimed the homecoming king and queen were *Scott Murphy* and *Carissa Richards*. *Carissa* said that, "Everybody had a lot of fun during Homecoming weekend this year. I especially liked Saturday: winning our games, and then being voted homecoming queen at the dance was a super exciting way to end the weekend."

—*Lincoln Waffle, Senior*

HOMECOMING GAMES

Homecoming this year was a huge success, especially for our Varsity athletes. The modified team put up a huge fight in their game against Richfield Springs. It remained a close game throughout, but they ended up losing 3-2. The next game of the day was the boys varsity against Brookfield. The boys played a great game, coming off with a strong 7-0 win. *Kiernan Burke* ('23) contributed a very exciting header toward the end of the game which lifted spirits before the game came to an end. Then the Morrsi Alumni played a short game. It was a rousing tie of 1 to 1. They were all winners! The last game of the day was played by the girls varsity team. The girls earned a huge 13-0 shutout against Brookfield. Since the girls were merged with Edmeston for their season, they played in the Edmeston Homecoming the weekend following the MCS Homecoming. Great team efforts were shown in all of the games. The best part was that there was very distributed scoring between players on each team. It's always exciting to win at Homecoming and contribute to the excitement of the weekend.

—*Carissa Richards*, Senior



VARSITY SPORTS SENIOR NIGHT

During Homecoming, After the Booster Club recognized senior athletes from Brookfield, The Booster Club honored MCS Senior athletes with goodie bags and flowers as a way to thank them for their dedication to their respective fall sports. In addition, they thanked and honored the athletes' families for their dedication to the school and MCS athletes as well.

This year is the last year our seniors will be able to play a highschool sport ever again. Varsity Soccer player and Senior, *Lincoln Waffle* said, "It's a little sad knowing it is our last year here." Varsity Cross Country runner, *Thomas Pondolino* felt intimidated knowing that it's his last year. He said, "It's a bit intimidating as the expectation is that the senior year is your best from a sports perspective." Boys Varsity Soccer Captain, *Garrett Aikins* said, "it's very sad that it will be my last year playing alongside my friends that I've played with my whole life." Boys Varsity Soccer player, *Ethan Franklin* feels the same as most would with it being their last year. He said, "This year is sad because it is my last year to play with all my friends." *JJ Benjamin*, Boys Varsity Soccer player, added, "It's sad knowing it's my last year to play with my friends for my school, so I made sure I had the most fun possible." Girls Varsity Soccer Captain, *Carissa Richards* said, "It's nice to be



recognized as a senior athlete after playing here for so many years. I will definitely miss high school sports more than anything when I graduate."

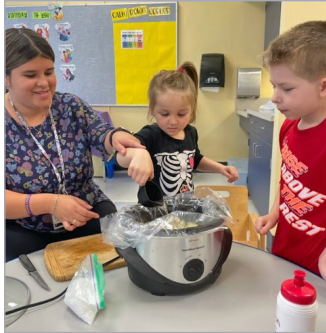
—*JJ Benjamin*, Senior



Applesauce

On Thursday October 6, Mrs. Burch's classroom made applesauce in the crockpot. We used a recipe and practiced following directions in a recipe. We used a knife to cut up our apples. We used a measuring cup to measure our sugar and water, and we measured the cinnamon with our hearts. We ate it in the afternoon after it cooked for about three to five hours. It was delicious!

—Ms. Cat Burch,
Teacher



Sixth Grade Happenings

Wow! What an amazing beginning our sixth graders have had so far! While recognizing that this is a big year for them . . . you know . . . not quite an elementary student and just beginning to be a middle schooler . . . the up and down emotions of it all! :). Just so you know, they are beginning to pull everything together beautifully.

Fortunes, murder, and eccentric characters are what we have been reading about this month and the students are very excited about solving the mystery in the novel *The Westing Game* which is their TUCCR book. Students have been studying theme, setting, and plot along with character development. Just to keep them on their toes, we've also thrown in critical thinking skills.

In writing, we are working on persuasive essays and will soon be moving onto argumentative writing pieces. Students are expected to write a solid five paragraph essay with three main arguments and to back up their statements with three supporting details.

In Social Studies, we are just finishing up *Ancient Humans*. Students have learned about the skills that were needed for humans to survive during the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. How did humans go from being hunter-gatherers to domesticating animals and plants? If you're not sure, ask a sixth grade student, they will surely give you the rundown! Mesopotamia is our next stop and we will be studying the ancient areas between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Hammurabi's Code, and Cuneiform.

—Ms. Sneddon, Sixth Grade



TUCCR Mystery

For seven years, Morris Central School has been participating in the The Uncommon Community Reading Program, or TUCCR. The TUCCR Program is a school/community reading program that encourages people to read commonly themed texts from year to year. The TUCCR program allows people throughout the school and community to be able to come together and connect over a common book. Students K-12 have the privilege to keep the books that they read every year. This ensures that each student will start to build a personal library.

This year, the common theme is Be Critical Thinkers. All books and past themes can be viewed on the school's webpage under the "Departments" tab. This year Seventh through Twelfth Graders are reading a book called *Jackaby* by William Ritter. The title *Jackaby* is named after a detective who is in search of an assistant. Abigail Rook has a keen eye and she will not take no for an answer. Soon, Abigail

finds herself in a thrilling case with her crazy boss *Jackaby*: A serial killer is on the loose and an extraordinary one at that, he is a mythical creature hiding in human form. Students could not put this book down. "I think *Jackaby* is a very interesting mix between mystery and fantasy. The author blends the elements really well and creates an interesting story," said 11th Grader *Tatiana McAdams*. *Ciran Gorman* finished the book within a few days and even said it was comparable to his favorite fantasy series, *The Alchemist*. Throughout the last couple weeks it has been obvious that this story really caught these high schoolers' attentions. *Madeline Schiller* (12th Grade) said, "*Jackaby* has this really unique twist to your typical mystery plot. I never want the story to be over!"

The Community is invited to read any and all of the books. They are on display in our MCS library and are available to take out. In addition, you can borrow them from the Village Library in Morris. In the spring, at the Academic Fair, we hope you'll enjoy some of the critical thinking creative projects students have planned.

—Justine Norton, Senior

SCIENCE FUN

Hands-On Science

Students in Environmental Science, as well as the 2023 Envirothon teams, joined Ms. Grant and Ms. Johnson for a hands-on learning experience at Gilbert Lake. Students learned about identifying soils, collecting and identifying macroinvertebrates to assess water quality, practiced identifying trees, and learned to use environmental science instruments, such as secchi disks, clinometers, and Biltmore sticks.

—Mrs. Heather Grant, Science



Collecting macroinvertebrate samples: Jess Walling and Aislinn Ray use a D-net and the kick method to collect and sample aquatic macroinvertebrates.



Identifying macroinvertebrates: Students sort and identify aquatic macroinvertebrates to determine the overall water quality of the stream flowing into Gilbert Lake.



Biltmore Sticks: Students practice using a Biltmore Stick to measure tree height.



Identifying Soils: Ms. Grant taught students to use soil keys and identify soil horizons.



Macroinvertebrate mayhem: Students played a game called “macroinvertebrate mayhem” to understand how environmental stressors can affect the macroinvertebrates that live in a stream.

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