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Passaic Schools has a New Leader at the Helm

By Paola Liriano Navarro

Passaic School District does not often get a new superintendent, so when a new one is hired, it is a big deal. The story of how Montanez-Diodonet came back to Passaic is worth telling. She will be the first to tell you that taking this position is like "coming back home". A student of Passaic, and a graduate of the class of 1989 she said, "Wow, I was a student here and now I am the superintendent."

Back in the eighties, when Mrs. Montanez-Diodonet was a student, she ran track for PHS, competing in the 400- and 800-meter events. After graduation she worked as a law assistant in Newark, eventually graduating from William Paterson University, where many PHS grads go.

Life is full of relationships, and the current Passaic County prosecutor, Camelia Valdes, met Mrs. Montanez-Diodonet while attending college. They were sorority sisters in Alpha Kappa Alpha. Mrs. Montanez-Diodonet attributes much of her success to the inspiration she received from Valdes.

She has taught in the Peterson School District, but even though she has moved up through the ranks there, she considers it a blessing to be back home here in Passaic. Starting as a substitute social studies teacher, Montanez-Diodonet moved into administration, being a reading coach, a supervisor at the high school, the principal, associate chief academic officer and assistant superintendent.

When Pablo Munoz left Passaic last year, she found her chance to return home to Passaic. Now we have a superintendent that is from here, knows the people and the town, and wants to help to make Passaic Schools one of the best districts in New Jersey. That is not just words we hear every morning, but a goal that our new superintendent wants us to achieve.

While some have made a note to point out that Mrs. Montanez-Diodonet is the first Latina superintendent, she wants



PHOTO BY MATT FAGEN

Superintendent Montanez-Diodonet speaking to the Board of Ed.

everyone to know that she does not think of herself that way. She wants to be rated for the job being well done and for nothing

Diodonet believes that a key way to work together is to build relationships. This means with all members of Passaic, including the administration, families,



Students meeting with Superintendent Montanez-Diodonet and Principal Torres-Gomez.

teachers and students of Passaic Schools. That is the basis of her initiative for us, "We are Passaic and we are better together." This means that we are all on the same team and that she wants us to all monitor each other social and emotional wellness.

Our new superintendent wants us to know that as long as you

thing. The goal is to make Passaic more competitive with other respected schools, and that we can do it the Passaic way. A strong and fair leader, this goal is achievable and in the end we can all benefit from the pride that comes from doing a job

have a goal you can do any-

Microchip Shortage Will Make Life More Difficult

By Junior Bravo

It is hard to imagine an item or gadget on the market today that does not benefit from the use of microchips. Everything from the cars out on street, to the phone in our pockets, the machines we use to cook and clean to toys for children, all have microchips. That being said, there is a shortage of these chips. In many cases items will be more expensive and in others unavailable.

The current situation seems to have been caused by the pandemic when many factories were closed. The supply of microchips fell and everyone stayed home and used gadgets that used more chips. This was a recipe for disaster.

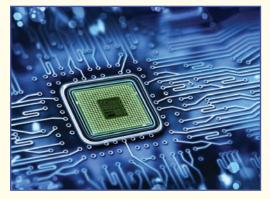
Earlier this year, the chip shortage seemed like it might ease sometime in 2022. That forecast seems to be optimistic.

"The shortages are going to continue indefinitely," said Brandon Kulik, head of Deloitte's semiconductor industry practice.

Moving into the Christmas season, many are looking for that hot new electronic gadget. However, everything will be more expensive if you could get it at all. Even though White House officials held meeting with key players in the U.S. semiconductor industry, there is nothing that can be done in the short term.

According the The Wall Street Journal, laptops this Christmas are estimated to cost at least \$50 more expensive. Phones and other electronics are also going up as well.

According to Business Insider, the United States made over 37 percent of the world's microchips as recently as 1990. By 2020, that number fell to about 12 percent. The reason we do not make them here is because it was cheaper to get them from overseas. While In-



tel makes their own, Apple gets their chips from faiwan. The supply chain shortages have only made the production of electronics harder and much more expensive.

With 75 percent of the world supply of microchips coming out of Asia, and China set to be the world's largest manufacturer by 2030, the United States, needs to take a closer look at what this means for our manufacturing and national security. Planes and tanks all have microchips too, and if they can't move, that is a serious national security risk.

According to an interview on Fox News, a representative insider of the semiconductor industry in the U.S. said, "Whoever wins the race for the next generation of semiconductor products eventually will have a major military, and maybe a dominant political and economic force, on the global stage."

The only answer for us locally is to take care of our favorite electronic items right now, because it may be a while before we can get our hands on an updated model.

Take that time to save up because it will almost certainly be more expensive when you find it in stock.

The Social Media Black Hole

By Anastasia Tangerife

Social media is like a black hole we all cannot seem to escape. No one can deny It is so addicting. We have all seen the students walking from class to class, looking down at their phones. Some actually walk into walls or into each other. How many times have we heard teachers say to put the phones away and focus. So many times have we heard this that it is considered a normal behavior. However, it is not okay. There is a growing body of research stating that this is a problem that we will all need to deal with.

A quick experiment for those that say they are not addicted to their phones but the screentime app on your Iphone does not lie. We are all being affected everyday mentally and physically without even realizing it, due to the constant use of our phones. We walk around with people looking down at their phones and it is normalized by society. But are we losing the ability to have effective human interaction? Where is the little smile we use to give people when walking past and catching eye contact by mistake. Eye contact is very important when talking to someone and a lot of people have unnormalized that. When we lose eye contact so does our connection of real life bonding. We can change the way were going with social media if we started implementing little things into our day that would take away the amount of hours

we spend on our phones.

Social media affects our mental health the most, then comes physical. The reason it affects our mental health the most is because people made it a habit to fake their lives on social media. We scroll through instagram seeing all these people with expensive bags, shoes, nice clothes and that gives people the idea of how life is supposed to be lived and that it would make them happy. In reality, some of these people making it seem like they have it all together are breaking down behind the screen trying to figure out life themself. People do not see that side though; all they see is the likes and fake smiles they have for a photo or short video. In short, it is not real. This can become physically harmful, because all the stress of trying to live up to unrealistic standards.

Recent studies have proven that constant social media on our phones comes with depression, anxiety, and feelings of isolation. Social media is also associated with low quality sleep and low self-esteem. Consumer Affairs speaks about the amount of people who lose sleep because they are on their phones, or because they were on their phones too much, causing stress which leads to loss of sleep.

The stress comes from when someone who cannot afford all the designer items sees all the posts of those that can afford it, they are going to wish that it was them and fall into a bad

Continued on Page 7

Taking Stock of Covid 2 Years On

By Kaylyn Amigon

COVID-19 has been with us for almost two years now. It was this time in 2019 that some infections were beginning in China and we thought we were safe over here in the United States. How wrong we all were. COVID-19 has struck terror into the hearts of those who want nothing more but to keep themselves and their family safe. But do people really know? Now part of the history books, we have a better idea as a society what this disease is and more importantly what we can do to mitigate the danger.

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a disease caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2 and was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It is part of the coronavirus family which include common viruses that can cause a variety of diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) although rare. Another name that was given to COVID-19 was simply calling it the coronavirus, in which the word corona refers to the appearance that coronaviruses get from the spike protein that are attached to them. The spike protein is what attaches to the human cell infecting it and then replicating itself in the cell and spreading to others.

Now that the vaccines have been developed to protect people from the virus, people are being less careful. Who can blame people for wanting to get out more. However, this does not mean that people should stop paying attention to others and those that develop symptoms that match COVID-19. It is still a very contagious disease and should be treated as such symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symp-

toms, these of which are most common, fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, or sore throat. Those are the symptoms to be on the lookout for. The surge of cases in the southern states seems to have ended and that means the spread will be moving north again. Now that winter is coming people might be getting the flu more commonly and due to covid-19 and the influenza(flu) sharing similar symptoms, people might be confusing the two or worrying about having COVID when in reality it is simply a cold.

According to the CDC the "Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2), and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses". Some ways to tell the difference between the two are seeing how COVID-19 spreads more easily and causes more serious symptoms in certain people. It can also take people longer to show symptoms with COVID and you may be contagious for longer. However, the only way to be completely sure you only have the flu would be by testing whether or not you have COVID-19.

When the virus was first making its rounds around the world people were panicking everywhere because we still did not know how the disease was being spread and what exactly were the symptoms. People were afraid because it did not seem like we could tackle this virus, that there was nothing anyone could do to protect themselves, and that our hospitals would be overrun. As the disease spread around the world people started dropping like flies and those that

were infected considered themselves dead. As people were dving, the number of confirmed cases continued to rise. Due to the lack of information at the start of the pandemic, the CDC recommended that states close most restaurants, bars and any place that would aid covid-19 in its spread, which in turn affected the economy. People we're losing their jobs, businesses, which is what caused the economy to plummet. As of 2021, while we do have more weapons against COVID-19, such as the vaccines, according to the CDC "the number of confirmed cases is around 254 million and around 5.1 million deaths.

One of the places that were heavily impacted by COVID-19 were our schools. Around the month of march 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic started spreading like wildfire and many schools decided to close, finishing up the school year virtually, my school included.COVID-19 brought a lot of changes to the lives of PHS students including how we are taught, how we learn, our overall school day, and our mental health. Many students thought found it difficult motivating themselves to do class on the computer. Distance learning took a different kind of discipline where the student was responsible for all of the work, much of the learning, and the teachers were literally more distant. We all did what we needed to do, but now it is time to get back to business and make up for lost time. The 2020-2021 school year was another virtual year, all the while we were thinking school was going to begin, but the fear of the spread of this disease was just too much for the schools to open.

Anothony Alvarez, senior, said, "While some students enjoy the ability to go to school without getting dressed or even

without getting dressed or even

Continued on Page 7

COVID-19 Makes Big Changes in PHS

Bv Jan Ramo

COVID-19 has brought so many changes to PHS. It has impacted many people including students and teachers and everyone in the Passaic community. Learning was difficult during the time of virtual learning, but now we are back in person to learn. We all need to do our part to keep this pandemic under control, to keep the schools opened, so that we can continue in-person learning. The new protocols are new and different, and frankly they are just a pain. But they were developed so that we can continue to learn as we should, to protect us.

So now that school has opened, the obvious new changes are that everyone entering the building must have a face mask. At least they provide an individually wrapped mask if we forget. It is a little different being is school, but still not seeing everyone's faces. It is just something that must be done to stay as safe as possible. There are also hand sanitizer stations in every classroom and throughout the school. Thank you to the custodial staff who hav been working hard to keep them full and operational. There is also security at every entrance to the school, taking temperature readings and also to check for the daily check-up of students and teachers. Additionally on the Passaic Public Schools page, they have posted resources and updates on how they are dealing with COVID-19 for schools and their plans for now and for the near future.

Some students disagree on going back to school with these protocols and they believe that having remote learning was better than going to school now because you didn't have to wear

uniform or go out in the cold every morning or being home felt safer than going to school. And some students agree on going back to school because they miss seeing their friends or they feel like going in person to learn is better than learning from a computer. My friend Jahir who is a PHS student and he is in 12th grade said that he would rather do remote learning again because he feels more safe at home and some students aren't even wearing a mask or not wearing their mask correctly.

Another topic that surrounds COVID-19 are vaccines. Vaccines have been out for a year and it is an option of getting it for having a less risk of getting COVID-19 but in some ways people don't agree on it. At the moment vaccines are available in Passaic and in New Jersey in total there are 67.3% vaccinated. Hector Lora the Mayor of Passaic is also helping with schools and everyone that has been impacted by COVID-19 and he also has a website that has information on vaccines and locations on where to get vaccinated. Jesus, a friend of mine who has taken the vaccine, stated that he thinks that the vaccine is good and safe but he believes that maybe they shouldn't be forced onto people.

COVID-19 has changed a lot of things in PHS and in my experience as a PHS student wearing a mask while going around the school every day, it doesn't change anything, but it makes me feel cautious about my surroundings. As of now it is our part as PHS students to make sure we follow these changes in our school every day and to follow the new protocols of PHS and to make sure we have a good education while being safe.

Cyber Security is Focus of Recent Biden Executive Order

By Abigail Huitzil

President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order on May 12, 2021 to strengthen federal government networks following recent cyber attacks that question the security of both public and private sectors. Following the recent problems faced by SolarWinds, Microsoft Exchange, and the Colonial Pipeline it was obvious that something needed to be done. These three major cybersecurity incidents portray that the United States' public and private sectors are at risk for hostile cyber activity from executive imposters and cyber criminals.

Solar Winds

SolarWinds, a crucial U.S.information technology firm was the victim of a cyberattack that involved the SolarWinds Orion system. The hackers placed a malicious code into software updates issued by SolarWinds and sent them out on March 26, 2020. More than 18,000 SolarWinds clients established these groundless updates, resulting in it going undetected. To continue, the cyberattack impacted government agencies, such as the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security, not to mention, private companies, like Microsoft and Cisco, and other organizations, like the California Department of State Hospitals. The purpose of the cyberattack remains a mystery, but for all we know, the main target was government agencies that utilize the SolarWinds

IT management systems. This is a scary prospect for the government and for everyday consumers. Federal investigators and cybersecurity professionals have assumed that Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service is most likely liable for the cyberattack. Though, Russia has denied participation in the act, of course.

"Malicious activities in the information space contradicts the principles of the Russian foreign policy, national interests and understanding of interstate relations", stated the Russian government. Russia also stated, "Russia does not conduct offensive operations in the cyber domain."

Naydelin Huelitl, a Passaic High School senior, has also expressed, "Getting hacked is very scary, knowing it is easy for hackers to do. Knowing your private information was leaked or stolen is frightening since it has happened to people, not only companies. These hackers have stolen money, credit cards, identification and many other things. I would want my information to be protected and difficult for these hackers to obtain."

Microsoft Exchange

Comparatively, on March 2, 2021, Microsoft revealed that Hafnium, a Chinese state-sponsored hacking group, was accountable for exploiting holes in Exchange, a mail server designed by Microsoft. They were able to get access without directly interacting with those affected. Exchange is used by a variety of customers, including small business-

es and state governments. Hackers were able to get their hands on emails and insert malicious hardware for the purpose of spying on their targets, impacting around 30,000 customers. The purpose of the cyberattack remains unknown, but it is speculated that it might have been a practice run for a much larger attack. Proving the importance of strong passwords and multi-factor authentication.

Peter Firstbrook, a Gartner analyst, conveyed, "The hackers' endgame is not the on-premises servers they put web shells in, but setting themselves up for future attacks of higher value targets those servers may be connected to."

Ashley Rivera, a Passaic High School senior, has also stated, "Thinking about getting hacked is petrifying. When I think about hackers getting information from random people, it makes me feel unsafe thinking about them stealing my identity. When situations like this happen, it makes me doubt whether my passwords are strong enough and question if they are hacking into my phone. As a woman, this situation makes me feel paranoid since hackers could be spying on you, which can potentially lead to the issue of trafficking people."

Colonial Pipeline

By the same token, the Colonial Pipeline, an American oil pipeline company, was attacked on May 7, 2021. The Colonial Pipeline hackers, also known as DarkSide, were able to access the sys-

tem by stealing a single password for a VPN account, which ultimately affected the airline industry and caused a fear of gas shortage. VPN's are capable of providing encrypted access into a corporate network.

Colonial Pipeline Chief Executive Joseph Blount stated, "In the case of this particular legacy VPN, it only had single-factor authentication. It was a complicated password, I want to be clear on that. It was not a Colonial123-type password."

To continue, DarkSide acquired 100 gigabytes of data within two hours. Afterwards, DarkSide placed ransomware into the Colonial Pipeline IT network, which influenced the functionality of its computer systems. The hackers eventually demanded a ransom of 75 bitcoin, which was valued \$4.4 million at the time. Colonial Pipeline paid the amount being asked for to get a hold of the decryption key and its systems. Fortunately, the FBI were able to track the bitcoin payment trail to regain the ransom. 64 of the 75 bitcoin were recovered.

Oliver Huitzil, a Passaic High School sophomore, has expressed, "Colonial Pipeline was asking to get hacked. Although they had a password, there was no two-factor authentication involved, which would have made it more difficult for hackers to hack. Their password was very weak, as you can see. Not to mention, the bitcoin can easily be traced

Continued on Page 7

Is the popular Squid Game just a series or is it a representation of society?

By Axel Lagunas

SPOILER ALERT

With eye-catching effects, an interesting plot and a twist on traditional South Korean childhood games, the Netflix series Squid Game has gained massive popularity. But what is the deeper meaning behind a series based on adults playing games for children, in a competition for a grand amount of money or just dying in the process?

Squid Game, a series on Netflix has recently been skyrocketing in streams after being released in September. It is likely to be the most popular Netflix show ever. The series is based on a collection of 456 individuals who are incredibly in debt and feel forced to participate in a series of six games in order to earn a massive amount of money. The catch is that each game kills a significant number of the constestants until only one remains, the winner. The games played in this series consist of Red Light, Green Light, Dalgano Game, Tug of War, Marbles, The Glass Tile Game, and Squid Game. If a player does not pass or win the game then they will be eliminated and therefore killed. In the end there is only one winner who wins 45.600,000,000 South Korean Won (\$38,460,271.20 USD).

Overall these games were chosen because they are considered fair for everyone, being commonly played by children in South Korea as it was mentioned by the characters at the beginning of the series. These games however contain a twist, which is a death penalty if you lose. The suspense in the series is due to win or die. These contestants are fighting for their

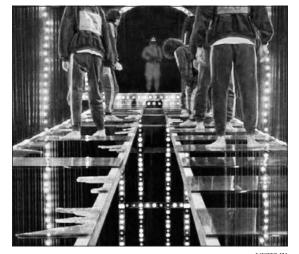
The first game played in Squid Game is called Red Light, Green Light. The game consists of one

person, in this case an iconic South Korean doll. One person went across a field and yelled "Green Light". Now players at the other side of the field try to cross the field. It is the same game we all remember playing as children. When the player yells out "Red Light" they turn around and if they see a person move then the person is eliminated. They continuously do this until there are no players left in the field. In Squid Game any players who are moving are eliminated

and are killed. If you are caught moving you are not just out of the game, your are out of your life. Only 187 players remain after this round.

Dalgano game, a.k.a. the honeycomb game is the second challenge. This game has players cut around a sugar cookie type of circle with a shape molded into it. They only have a needle to use as a tool. The players randomly choose between one of four shapes. The triangle is the easiest and the umbrella the hardest. The catch is that it is more difficult than it looks, there is a ten minute time limit, and if the cookie breaks, the player is eliminated. Again, that means death. After the second game only eigthy contestants were left.

The third game in this series is a classic tug of war. Of course there is a twist in this game as well. Teams were chosen and unknowingly some of the weaker players are found on one team. Just as in a regular game teams of players pull a rope to get the other team to move over a central line, but there is no mud puddle in the middle of this tug of war. There is a huge



The Glass Tile game was terrifying and deadly.

void and the losing team falls into a pit and die. Thirty nine participants are left after the end of this match.

The fourth game that takes place is the marble game. In Squid Game the players are made to choose a partner to compete for the next game. In this game the twist is that the person that the people chose are the people they are playing against. During this game, participants were given ten marbles and had the option to play whatever games they liked with the marbles as long as they did so peacefully. And of course if you lose your game you lose your life, so only sixteen participants remain after the end of this fourth game.

In the next round, the fifth game was the glass tile game. This game drastically removes a great number of players. It is deadly. Contestants were assigned numbers that corresponded to tiles that would break on the way to your numbered tile. So, like walking across a mine field the players guessed their way to their destination, most dying along the way, with only three surviving to the other side.



The iconic doll in Squid Game during the game "Green Light, Red Light."

With only three left the tension is dramatic. The tension for one of the players is too much and they try to win the game before they get to the next game. There is only one player left at the end, winning the prize and getting himself out of debt. Now what is the deeper meaning in a series based on games for children? Many may believe that Squid Game is just a battle royal killing game, however they are wrong as this is just the surface of the true meaning within Squid Game. At the kickoff of the season we learn about the protagonist Gi-hun and his tragic story of debt and sorrow. Through the season we learn about some of the other protagonist's backstory and the unfortunate events that got them to play the game. We see how people place themselves in debt due to bad habits or tragic life stories that make playing Squid Game the only way to get them a second chance to start over in life. It seems like in this society the only way many can get a second chance in life is by risking theirs. The commentary of the society that places such a high priority on money over the lives of people is not subtle.

Furthermore, the commentary about people willing to risk their own lives and do horrible things to others to get ahead is a sad look at human nature. Many of the contestants are willing to kill other players in order to win. The creation of gangs and corrupt authorities in this society means that some players withhold information about the game levels to give themselves a better chance of winning and staying alive. Song-woo represents people who will succeed over the lives of others. We see how he progressively becomes more aggressive and betrays his partner in the Marble game and ultimately makes the biggest betrayal by killing one of his former teammates the night before the sixth game. All this shows human nature and the ability of humans to create a corrupt society in order to gain unfair advantages and get ahead of each other. In this way the show is deeper than just an action show.

The show gets progressively darker with each episode. Towards the end of the season we see what may be the darkest part of the series. We see the game is run by Player 001, Oh

Continued on Page 7

Valorant Patch 3.10 releases Chamber

How will the meta shift with the addition of the new sentinel?

Valorant is a five versus five tactical shooter game, which is popular and getting more popular all the time. The attraction of games like this and this game in particular is that players experience competition on a global stage, with 13 rounds of attack and defense strategies. Teams must work together, use strategy and collaborate to beat their enemies. There are also special modes like Deathmatch and Spike Rush, Games must be constantly improved or they will begin to look stale and get boring for players.

With the addition of Patch 3.10, a new character named Chamber makes his official VALO-RANT debut. On October 29, French weapons designer was revealed with an array of game changing abilities and, according to professional superstar Tenz, he Tweeted, "this shit is crazy." Chamber has some abilities that are similar to agents like Killjoy and Cypher, mainly his trademark which places a trap that scans for enemies and destabilizes the terrain around them when someone is in its range. However, he is more about mechanical outplays with an addition of

His Headhunter equips a pistol, and his ultimate, tour de force, summons a powerful sniper rifle that has the ability to one shot an enemy with a single direct hit. He is a hybrid of Jett, Yoru, and Kay/O- an incredible mix of the agents. This is going to be a popular choice for fans of the game.

Patch 3.10 reintroduces the ability for players of all ranks to five stack in competitive, eliminating the need for players to use a smurf ac-



VALORANT patch notes 3.10 is soon to come, and with it come two big additions to the game: the new sentinel, Chamber, and the re-introduction for five stacks across all ranks.

count to queue up with friends. However, that comes with rr (ranked rating) adjustments. These changes are based on the highest-ranked player in a five stack, and they increase or decrease based on the parties' ranked discrepancy. Four stacks have been removed from the competitive queue for good, as they led to relatively poor experiences for a solo player. Riot has confirmed it will oversee these changes over the next few weeks in order to make adjustments where it's seen as necessary. This will make a big difference in game play and will improve the

Lastly, the most recent patch addresses a number of problems and challenges, enhancing the overall gameplay experience. The action sequences will be smoother, with less lag and better reaction times. The patch is live, so open your client and get ready to queue!

Taking Up Jiu Jitsu

By Leland Rodriguez

In Grappling University Martial Arts, or G.U.M.A., participants practice jiu jitsu, judo and wrestling. However, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is the best. Being a competitive and combative experience a special way of thinking needs to be developed. It is more than just raw power, but rather a way of responding with strategic counter-moves to beat an opponent. It is way to broaden your mind as well.

I am currently a blue-belt at 16 years old and I got my blue belt in under a year. It is not easy to advance so quickly. It takes a great deal of time, effort and concentration. However there is still a long way to go. Further advancement requires getting purple, brown, black and maybe one day red belt. No black is not the top rating in Jiu Jitsu, red is. That will all takes a very long time.

Not only a mental sport, or raw physical effort, there needs to be an endurance that can only come with the best workout you ever fealt. If any of this sounds interesting, join up. Find a place to learn and

practice. It will become your happy place. Though it sounds strange to learn grappling martial arts for peace, that is exactly what happens. It is worth the sweat, blood and tears. It's worth all of it. If anyone is interested in going to a place where your whole outlook on life is changed and made better, where you can feel needed and you can be a better version of yourself, come on over an join me over by the CVS on Van Houten Avenue.

Not only is this a great feeling, but it is a practical skill set as well. Becoming stronger and learning how to defend yourself, is a skill that can come in quite handy. If you are going to be attacked then the time to learn to defend yourself is before that moment. At that moment it is too late. Even people that are bigger and stronger than you can be defeated with the aid of Jiu Jitsu.

Lastly, the confidence that comes with working and improving a skill set and a point of view makes success in other parts of your life more accessible. Outside of Jiu Jitsu helps me focus on school with its mental challenges.

NALS ON FOR MILE ACADES VIC HIGH

Birds of a feather Thankful Together!

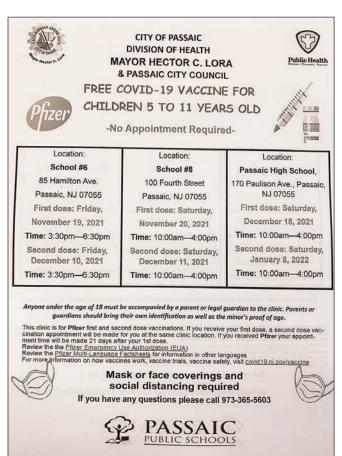




AROUND PHS



























Fall is for Football

By Eric Rios

As the leaves change color and people start thinking about all the pumpkin spice items available to eat, real sports fans know that the real sports fans are excited about one thing, football. It is fun to become a fan of one team and root for that team throughout

the fall season to the upcoming Superbowl LVI, this February 13, 2022.

M o s t football fans want

to see their favorite team make it to the superbowl but the teams have to go through 18 weeks of hard-fought games to see which are the last two teams standing at the championship playoff game.

Football is one of the most popular games in American sports because teams from a certain area or city have fans that thrive to go to their games and support their favorite team and players. We can all agree football is a great American game and a fall American tradition.

Many people like making

predictions on which teams will make it to the Superbowl and most of the safe picks have been on the Ravens and the Titans. Both teams have had a phenomenal record of games so far through the preseason and game seasons.

With only eight more weeks to go, most of the other teams need to make a comeback if

> they want to secure a playoff spot, hopefully winning the Superbowl championship. At this point in the

season teams are hoping to do as good as they can without getting injured players that could wreck the season.

The best way to get involved is to watch a game with someone who is a fan, maybe go to some PHS games. Then, you can learn the basics of the game, feel the excitement that comes with rooting for your team, especially with friends.

With all the problems today with people becoming less social, an activity that people do together can be just the thing to keep us from going crazy this winter. Go team!

Champions League Kicks Off New Season

By Sebastian Hernandez

The Champions League, also known as the European League, is a football competition (soccer for us Ameicans) and is the most prestigious club competition in European football.

This season it has come back again for another year and all new young talents have arrived to the biggest clubs in the world and as the years pass on we see the best in these players. They show what they are worth and they do everything to win one that one biggest trophy. All the best clubs gather up together to compete to show what they are capable of.

As supporters and fans watch the beautiful game called football/soccer, the excitement from the tension around the stadium is what the game is all about. The draw for fans to come together as family and friends to watch their clubs compete brings tension, despair and joy and excitement. It is best when you can share it with others.

This competition is a way for people to come together and we could all use that right now. Every season is a roller coaster ride and this season is not going to be any different.

Every year around the world



people come together in each country to see their own team perform and show what they are capable of. Rooting for the home team is a patriotic display around the world.

Right now there are thirty-two teams that will face each other until the end and whichever team makes it to the knockoff rounds they proceed to the finals. There are about three million people who watch the Champions League and they have to see what improvements their own clubs have done.

We all go through an emotional phase where we all have to suffer when our teams don't make it to the finals. We all see our teams go through their best and through their best this is what we call such loyal people. No matter what defeats or how bad they lost they know

that next year they have to come back better than ever.

One of the best players in the world Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. We are soon to see both of them perform in their new teams and hopefully they adjust well to the teams. But as we know they have done football their entire lives so they know what kind of tension and how much pressure is focused on them. They know how important this trophy is to everyone, both have won eight champions league trophies and they know how much it means to them and their fans...

Every year we witness new young talents and we see how good they perform its sometimes great to see this young players play for the biggest trophy in the world and seeing their hunger for that trophy is one of the best things to see. We all get to witness the best challenges face each other and they make their debut to show why they are their and why deserve to be where they are right now. Greenwood is a young former football player and his desire for that trophy means a lot especially since he is only 22 years old.

Once you get into the game and find a team to follow, the experience is addicting. Then soon, we will all be cheering for our team in competition.

MLB Playoffs Were One for the Record Books

By Arnold Flores

The 2021 MLB season was definitely a historic one with many no-hit games, with players doing the impossible but everyone knows post-season baseball can get even more exciting.

The post-season for baseball started on October 5. The Yankees and Red Sox went head to head in a Wild Card game. The Red Sox came out victorious 6-2, but both teams were evenly matched throughout the season.

Immediately after the next day, the Dodgers and Cardinals played the second Wild Card game, the Dodgers ended up winning 3-1. While it ended up being a close game, the Dodgers won 16 more games than the Cardinals in the regular season.

The Wild Card games came to an end and it then it was time for the Division Series.

The Division Series is a series that is best out of five and it started with the American League Division Series (ALDS) where the White Sox went against the Astros, and the Red Sox went against the Rays on October 7. The Astros eventually ended up beating the White Sox three games to one on October 12 with their final game score being 10-1.

The Red Sox and Rays also played four games with the Red Sox winning three games to one as well; their last game was played on October 11 and the final score was a close one being 6-5.

The National League Division Series(NLDS) started a day after the ALDS. The Braves played the Brewers and the series finished with the Braves winning three games to one on October 12. The final score was 5-4.

The Dodgers played the Giants where the Dodgers beat the Giants three games to two after through all five games. The last score was 2-1 and the Dodgers closed out on the rivalry that had been going



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The Braves finally get their last out in Game 6.

on all season. With the end of the Division Series it was time for the Championship Series.

The American League Championship Series(ALCS) started on October 15 and the National League Champion Series(N-LCS) started on October 16 only a day after.

These series are best out of seven so the team that wins four games first advances to the World Series.

The ALCS was played between the Astros and the Redsox, where the Astros came out on top fourgames to two, six days later after the first game was played. The Most Valuable Player(MVP) during the ALCS was Yordan Alvarez, Alvarez had a .522 batting average, with six RBI's, seven runs and an OPS of 1.408 throughout the

six ALCS games.

The NLCS was played between the Dodgers and Braves with the series ending up four games to two in favor of the Braves and the final score of the last game was 4-2.

The NLCS MVP was Eddie Rosario and he had a .560 batting average, with three homeruns, nine RBI's and an OPS of 1.647. He went 14 for 25; 14 hits ties the record for most hits in a single postseason series.

After these postseason games, come the final seven games in the World Series. The 2021 World Series was played between the Houston Astros and the Atlanta Braves. This series went up to six games with the Atlanta Braves winning four games to two. This series was mostly in the Braves

favor with the Astros never taking a lead over the Braves. The Braves won the first game, Astros won the second game, Braves then won the next two games to take a 3-1 advantage, Astros stayed in the series winning one more game but inevitably ended up losing the next game. The last time the Braves had won a World Series was back in 1995, with many postseason appearances the past few years the Braves said it was enough and at last won the World Series 26 years later. The World Series MVP was Jorge Soler, Soler had a batting average of .300 with 3 homeruns, 6 RBI's and a slugging percentage of .800. He led the Braves along with other players to their fourth World Series Championship title.



GOOGLE

The Braves hold up the World Series trophy.

December 2021, The Hilltop Star



ORTHJERSEYSPORTS

17/18 team celebrates after beating number one seeded Passaic Valley in the Passaic County Tournament Quarterfinal.

Passaic Boys Soccer Continues Making History

By Victor Carpio

Soccer is one of Passaic's best programs with the team improving tremendously every year and making history every single year. The team made history this year by making it to the state sectional tournament semifinal for the first time ever in the school's history. Passaic also won the conference/league title for the first time ever in the school's history.

You could see massive improvement when it started in the 17/18 season. That year, there was a massive change to the program because a brand new coach was introduced. Coach Marc Pollaro changed the program and implemented his new style of coaching. It proved to work because he hasn't had a negative record since his first year.

Coach P had already been assistant coach for passaic soccer. He was there when coach Vincent Fazio was head coach. Coach Fazio had retired after the 16/17 season. Coach Pollaro stepped up as head coach. He kept the same intensity as a coach. Fazio was known for all the excruciating running he'd make the team do in preseason. Coach Pollaro introduced new running drills that kept that same intensity to ensure the entire team would be in shape for the season.

Passaic Boys Soccer Team records for Past 10 Years

12/13 Record 13/14 Record 14/15 Record 15/16 Record 16/17 Record 2-14 3-18 8-8-1 7-11-2 4-14-2

17/18 Record 18/19 Record 19/20 Record 20/21 Record 21/22 Record 11-8-2 12-7 14-6 11-3 15-6-2

NFL Coach Accused of Racism

By Eddy Fortuna

Former Legendary Super Bowl winning Head coach Jon Gruden, formerly of the Raiders, and then head coach of the NFL, said racial slurs in emails he wrote, directed to NFL players Associate Chief DeMaurice Smith. Gruden at the time was working as a TV pundit and says he can not specifically recall writing the email but apologized for using that type of language.

"The email from Jon Gruden denigrating DeMaurice Smith is appalling, abhorrent and wholly contrary to the NFLs values," said the NFL head, Roger Goodell. He continued, "We condemn the statement and regret any harm that its publication may inflict on Mr.Smith or anyone else."

The email came to the NFLs attention during a review of workplace misconduct at the Washington Football (formerly the Redskins) that was going on during the summer.

The league was informed of these racially insensitve emails and raised issues for an investigation. Though at the time of printing the source and complaint is unknown. Gruden's comments in the emails were sent to American Football League President Bruce Allen during the 2011 lockout of the players by the NFL. Gruden told the newspapers that he was angry about the lockout during



Former Las
Vegas Raiders
Head Coach Jon
Gruden

labor negotiations and he did not trust the direction the union was taking.

"Over the past few months, senior NFL executives reviewed the content of more than

650,000 emails, including this email which was sent to a club employee," the NFL representative said in a statement.

DeMaurice Smith responded to the emails, saying "Racism like this comes from the fact that I'm at the same table as they are and they don't think someone who looks like me belongs. I'm sorry my family has to see something like this but I would rather they know. I will not let it define me."

Smith will remain as the NFLs Players Association executive director for one more term, which will be his last, after the union's Board of Player Representatives voted to retain him on Friday.

Jon Gruden is suing the NFL because these emails were sent privately and were released without his knowledge. Unfortunately, these issues have come to the attention of everyone, and a question of how far racism goes in the National Football League is in everyone's minds.

The Social Media Black Hole

Continued from Page 1

mindset which leads to anxiety. depression, and low self-esteem. One answer is to not wish for all the materialistic stuff, but that is unlikely. Seventy-two percent of the world uses social media, most of whom are children and young adults, who are more swayed by the materialism being put on display. Researchers have found out teens average nine hours a day on their phone. In a normal 24-hour day, with eight hours for sleep, that leaves teens with seven hours of their day to do all the things that teenagers do including school, work, friends, etc.

What can be done? If more people realized that phones have a negative impact on our community as a whole, maybe we can change some things before they become worse and more permanent. Phones are also a huge benefit to everyone, for example how easy it is to text and call people and get a response almost instantly, use calculators, and just as a source of entertainment. For a lot of people I know it will not be easy but these are some things we can do to start a change, delete and unfollow people, stay off your phone when you are with company, follow those who help you. When there is a real person with you pay attention to them instead of the fake person on your phone. There are so many things we can implement into our lives to start a change. The change will not happen overnight but if we all started to implement little and different things into our lives that would positively change everyone, we would all be noticing each other more and laughing at the world and not looking down at our phones.

Social media is not always a bad thing, but it has become physically and mentally draining for a lot of people when abused. Statistics and studies have already been showing us how phones affect us every day. Having people angry at the world will just keep making our community fall apart. Once we start making the change even with a few people it would positively affect the people in our community who have not started, and they can piggyback off of everyone else. This world has so much potential for greatness, but everyone has to make the decision of taking their nose out of their phones.

COVID

Continued from Page 2

getting out of bed in the morning, most actually miss their school and their friends". Coupled with the fact that virtual learning wasn't the same as learning from home, students found themselves learning and understanding the material less and less. We all learned to appreciate the environment at school more during that virtual learning time.

Learning is the power to overcome fear, so as a result of hav-

ing vaccines and more ways to fight the virus, not only schools but shops, restaurants, bars and any public place that was closed before, was now opened up once again. However, even though schools and businesses are opened up, things did not go back to normal once these places opened up as there were new rules and guidelines to follow. The guideline that was most customary was the need to wear a mask. According to the CDC "A study of an outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, an environment notable for congregate living quarters and close

working environments, found that use of face coverings onboard was associated with a 70 percent reduced risk," showing the fact that wearing a masks does help lower the risk of getting COVID-19 and is a leading factor in stopping the spread of COVID-19. The safest thing to do is to wear a mask, keep a distance of six feet, always wash your hands or use a disinfectant, in order to be able to keep you and your family safe. We are at the beginning of the end of this ordeal, so let's stay strong and take care of ourselves and each other.

SquidGame

Continued from Page 3

Il-nam, along with several other wealthy people who admit the game was created purely with the intent of entertainment. The owners find entertainment by watching people place their lives on the line by trying to gain a second chance at life. We can see this in today's society with major corporations taking advantage of lower-income people by giving them things that will end up hurting them and placing them in debt. This may also show the class system that is emerging in South Korea as well as other countries. Although class systems have been eradicated people are still economically sectioned based on income and the occupation they have. This raises the question, what would people do in order to gain a financial advantage in our own society?

There is a great deal of corruption represented in Squid Game. The officials wear Square, Triangle, and Circle masks to split contestants into groups with people getting each other killed as well as starting illegal business such as the selling and harvesting of human organs.

Present day society sees this with the existence of the black market as well as the trafficking of drugs and humans. These are some of the issues that are hidden behind masks or in this case walls of the government that are

not spoken of.

However, human nature is not all dark, there is goodness as well. This show is not depressing. The creation of friendship and empathy between players also grows with each episode (at least for those who stay alive). We see friendships that are created even in the worst of situations. We saw players communicate and become close to one another between the betrayal and corruption of the game. Towards the very end of the last episode we see that within random people kindness and compassion can form. Friendships and bonds stayed until the very end of the series. Kindness can be born out of even the darkest places.

Cyber Security

Continued from Page 2

down back to its receiver and with that information, you can find the location or the area where the hack was enabled. In this case, the hackers got outsmarted."

Executive Order

The Executive Order will guarantee that technology service providers share information with the government, especially breach information. It will encourage the federal government to implement cloud services and zero-trust architecture, meaning that no application that affiliates with their architecture will be claimed as safe. Also, the use of security tools, such as multi-factor authentication and encryption. In like manner, the Executive Order will set security standards for software sold to the government itself. It will create a Cybersecurity Safety Review Board to inspect major cyber attacks and brainstorm suggestions for strengthening security. Not to mention, the Executive Order promises to organize a playbook for cyber attack response. It will implement a government-wide endpoint detection and response system and cybersecurity event log rules. This is the first step to improving national security in order to reduce the amount of cyber attacks in the near future.

Combating Cyber Problems Way Before

In 1993, President Bill Clinton was urged by a panel of security experts to begin taking action about cyberthreats. As a result, several initiatives and policies were settled. The United States government has employed well-prepared people in cybersecurity roles, across many departments, such as the military sector. The United States

government has also developed strong relationships with federal agencies, such as the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), who serve as cyber risk advisors. Not to mention, the presence of the United States Cyber Command (USCYBER-COM), which helps mold the Department of Defense's cyber capabilities. Furthermore, there are laws and standards, such as the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), which orders federal agencies to outline a security and protection program. Last but not least, Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) are responsible for sharing threat information with different sectors.

The appearance of these attacks having success in the United States from foreign actors is a scary proposition. We as a nation need to have secure systems and this executive order is a step in the right direction.



PHOTO BY PHOTO BY STAFF SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER (left to right) Alejandro Cuacil (#7), Jimmy Gonzalez (10), Daniel Cuacil (facing camera) and Andre Ruiz (4), celebrate PHS Indian Soccer getting their heads and hearts ready for the game.



Passaic Boys Varsity Soccer Team Competes with the Best

By Bryan Perez

Passaic Indians Soccer potentially looked like the best team in the conference, competing with teams like Clifton, Passaic County Technical Institute, Paterson Kennedy and Paterson Eastside. The boys will led their attack with one of their best, Jimmy Gonzalez coming off one of his best seasons yet, with 25 goals and 10 assists.

The boys hosted Clifton in their first game, and narrowly lost 1-0. However, they bounced back and went on a four game winning streak, beating Passaic Tech (3-1), Paterson Kennedy (2-1), West Milford (7-0) and Paterson Eastside (11-0). Bryan Perez won Nj.com's player of the week for having five goals and seven assists in just two games.

Jimmy Gonzalez broke the school record against Paterson Eastside having made four goals that game. He broke the record of most goals in Passaic High School Soccer program. Now the record to beat, 55 goals for Passaic High School.

The boys lost their winning streak to a strong-sided Waldwick, losing 3-1, making their season record fall to (4-2). The boys fueled up after that upset and went on an 11-game-winning-streak, not only beating but shutting down teams like Clifton (1-0), Paterson Kennedy (3-0), Passaic Tech (4-0), and Fairlawn (1-0). The boys earned themselves second seed in the county tournament and fourth seed in the state tournament. Their chances of winning are really high with attackers like Andre Ruiz (20 goals, 16 assists), Jimmy Gonzalez (13 goals 6 assists) and Bryan Perez (8 goals and 13

In the county tournament Passaic started off strong with a 4-1

win over Wayne Hills. Alejandro Cuacuil, Daniel Cuacuil, Bryan Perez and Andre Ruiz all scored once against a strong sided Wayne Hills, beating them 4-1 in the quarter finals in the county tournament. However, they were upset by Paterson Kennedy in a 2-1 loss in the semi-finals. The Indians played hard, and even with three players down, still managed to take the game to overtime. Eventually in the second half of overtime, Kennedy managed to score the golden goal, which took them to the

PHS went to the state tournament looking for revenge, beating a strong-sided North Bergen in penalties and Ronny Lima saved the Indians with two saves in the shootout. Andre, Alejandro, Edgar, and Bryan all scored on their penalties. Up next was a really strong Livingston face-off against the Passaic. Passaic won

the match 3-1, with goal scorers Daniel, Jimmy, and Andre. Ronny made some big time saves to keep Passaic in the game, he finished the game with seven saves.

Passaic faced number one seeded Kearny High School, in their first ever school appearance in a state sectional semi-final. They gave it their all but lost the match 6-1, and that's where their season ended.

Even though they lost this game, this was Passaic Soccer's best season ever, winning their league. That was Passaic boys soccer's first ever trophy. The team was one to remember with many talented players, aided by good coaching. Coach Pollaro, and Coach Turdo, coached an amazing team, leading them to many victories. The 2021-2022 soccer team ended their season with 16-6-1.

Bryan Perez, (senior - midfielder - #8) said, "I think the

season didn't go how we wanted to, we lost in counties and lost in states, but it was a good season in terms of development, all of our players became really good. All the hours spent training with coach Pollaro and coach Turdo paid off. I think even though we have many seniors graduating, our young team has developed enough to continue to make success for the soccer program."

Jason Perez (freshman - midfielder - #12) says, "I'm proud of the boys this season, I learned a lot from them and from coach Pollaro and Turdo. The attitude the team had was one of the best. Whenever we lost a game, our team would come back stronger in the next practice and game, we were never happy to lose."

That spirit will remain with the team, building on their success this year and in recent years to bring more championships for themselves and for PHS!

The Student Athletes of Girls and Boys Soccer

By Cynthia Rodriguez

PHS student athletes have to show their love and devotion to their sport, as well as keep up with their academic responsibilities. Sometimes that is hard to do, but when Passaic Pride is shown, it makes the job of the student athletes a little easier.

Great examples of gratitude from the school community is when there are afterschool games with bleachers full of supporters. There has been a lot of support for both the boys and girls soccer teams and in recent seasons it has been growing.

Both teams have come a long way over the years and show great sportsmanship on and off the field. Together they assure student athletes can focus on their studies and sports while building memories all together.

The students who participate on the soccer teams have to find the time to balance their school work with their home life and responsibilities as well as keep up on their training schedule to stay competitive. That is not an easy task, but they demonstrate this by succeeding on and off the field, in their sport and in their books.

The best example of the dedication to studies as well as athletics is found in two current members of the girls soccer team that are currently in the top

10 for grade point average for their school! Joana Martinez and Seoane Oaxaca from Passaic STEM Academy are great players on the field and also very smart in their studies.

Student-athletes are not only shining in academics but it is seen in their sports as well. The Boys Soccer program has succeeded in making it to the semi-finals for the past four years. Along with making it far into the league, players have outshined their fellow athletes on the field from many different

Bryan Perez, a senior at PHS represented our school is a big way. He had a huge week, scoring five goals and recording seven assists in just two games. He scored two goals and assisted two others in a 7-0 win over West Milford" BIG NORTH CONFERENCE.

Bryan Perez is not the only athlete with such accomplishments. Jimmy Gonzalez another senior is currently the top goal scorer in the history of PHS boys soccer the boys soccer 55 goals.

The Soccer program has managed to create a family celebrating their accomplishments with multiple dinners and breakfasts provided by coaches. A family that looses, wins and plays hard all together in the end.

With eight hours of school work during the morning, and

after school practices in the afternoon, plus homework nights. managing these tasks can be seen to be difficult from an outside view.

Joana Martinez states, "I'd just say it's about time management. I think how you occupy your days and use your time is key to keeping up with both studies and sports at the same time. Not only that, but asking for help from your fellow peers and teachers can also help balance both tasks.'

Students and teachers play a huge role in this. Seeking out assistance is not negative and can greatly impact students positively when choosing to reach out to their resources. Although sports take up a lot of extra time from your day, students shouldn't shy away from joining sports based on time management.

According to Martinez, "They should join because apart from clubs, extracurricular activities are a really fun way to be involved in your school, while also being able to contribute to your future successes in college. Not only that, but it's extremely fun to meet new people and experience the joy of sports."

Representing PHS can be seen as an accomplishment towards these students; it helps build newly found friendships and allows students to focus their energy onto something they en-



PHOTO BY STAFF SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER

The 21-22 Girls Soccer team shows spirit on and off the field.

joy doing. It could go as far as feeling like a second home to some players and a place where nothing else matters for a short

Student athletes in Passaic are seen showing their school pride by joining sports they love to play and also focusing on their studies. It is required to have passing grades in order to play so students stay on task during school for afterschool sports events.

Passaic Athletics Program is getting better every year with new athletes working hard and achieving new accomplishments. New coming students are currently influenced hoping to play in sports they admire because of their fellow alumni. These young students are told they must focus in school in order to be able to be a bigger part of the Passaic athletics community. These teams have made a huge impact on one another and have demonstrated students can shine in school and on the field.

You have what it takes to shine on and off the field? Join a team!