

# The Hillside Prophet

Volume 1 Issue 1

May 2021, Edition



## Pets, Pets, Pets!

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## School Safety, Covid, Masks & More

INSIDE....



# Backpacks: A Locker on Our Backs

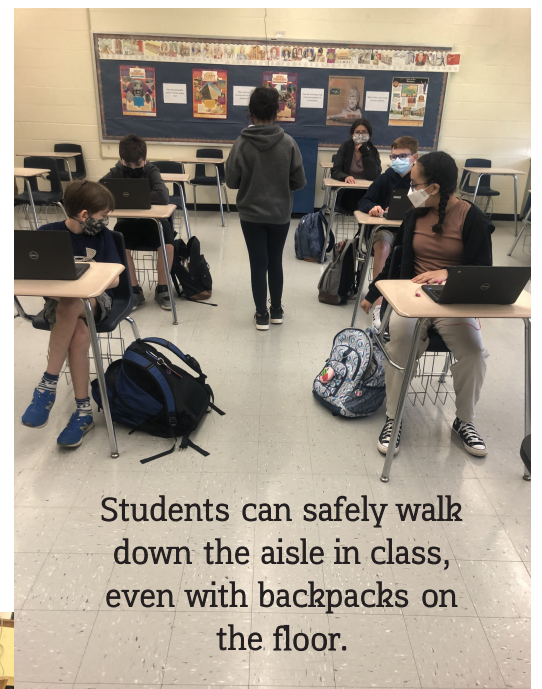
*By Roberto Huerta*

Is carrying a backpack around from class to class necessary? Sure it can be difficult every now and then, but it helps students not worry about having to run to a locker in between classes, and it frees up hands for safety.

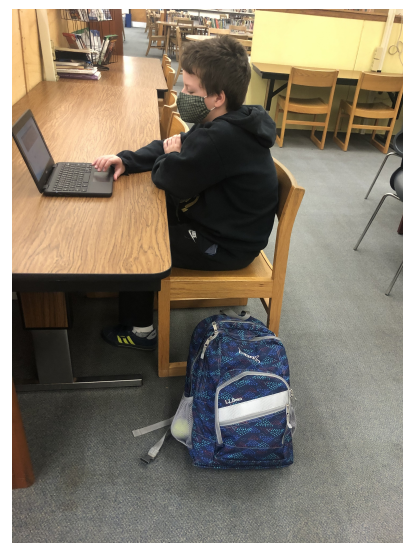
The main reason for not allowing students to carry backpacks in the past was because of safety concerns mostly. Whatever is concealed in a backpack is secret. They would take up a lot of space in classrooms, and could cause distractions for students. Backpacks, however, could be a great solution to tardiness to class, students carrying too many books at once, and students having a less likely chance of tripping and falling in the halls.

Both Vice Principal, Ms. Santa, and Principal, Mr. Deacon agreed that “carrying backpacks around all day can keep students more organized and better prepared.” They also claimed that on the opposite side to that, “it can get heavy for students to carry all that weight in their backs all day, and take up more space in the classroom.”

Sixth grader, Sarah Hartmann, also acknowledged that, “if things hopefully go back to normal next year, it would still be safer (virus wise) not to have lockers.”



Students can safely walk down the aisle in class, even with backpacks on the floor.



Backpacks are neatly next to students in all classes, and provides easy access to books, school supplies, and computers.

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## Weather

Fri 07: 59°/45° Few Showers 34% NNE 12 mph

Sat 08: 62°/45° Partly Cloudy 24% NW 13 mph

Sun 09: 66°/46° Partly Cloudy 7% WNW 12 mph

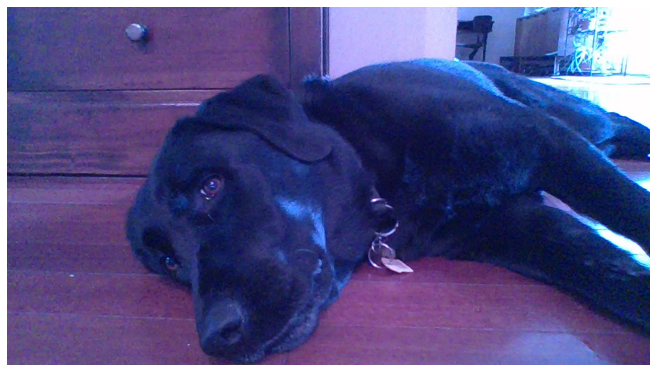
Mon 10: 71°/52° Few Showers 34% WNW 11 mph

Tue 11: 68°/49° Mostly Cloudy 24% NNW 10 mph

Wed 12: 68°/51° Partly Cloudy 24% NW 10 mph



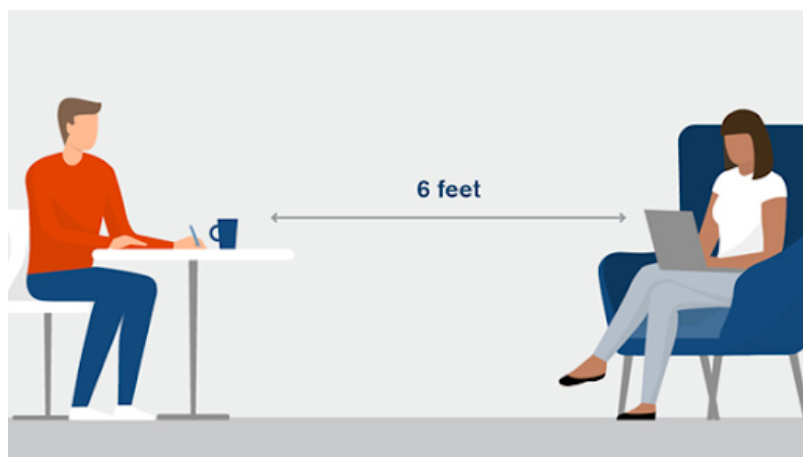




***Pet Pictures***  
*By Riley Greco*  
*Sometimes you just need to smile. Take a second out of your day to smile. You may have a pet at home, do they make you smile? Take a look at students' and staffs' pets, don't forget to smile :).*







## Three Feet Closer

*By Dylan Aveno*

Ever Since the Pandemic started, it has felt like a lifetime had passed by without change. Like when was the last time you went to a sold out sports game, or a regular old birthday party, or simply just been in a semi-crowded area without a mask on. It's been so long that we have grown accustomed to things that we would never have thought to ever do. But on March 19 of 2021, we made one step closer to the end of this pandemic.

Thanks to the vaccine, people are becoming more immune to the virus and the cases are decreasing. The CDC now recommends that every student that's under the ninth grade, can be allowed to be three feet apart with a mask on. Now they still recommend high schoolers and above to socially distance six feet due to some areas being high in transmission. Since adults have access to different Covid-19 transmissions, the risk of catching coronavirus is higher. But the fact of the matter is that kids and teens get to live at a relatively normal distance.

Students are starting to feel the normality come again, given that most schools are running full days (while still cohorting). This change is the spark that everyone needed to show that we are on our way to the finish line. The communities and people around the world represent a turtle. Slowly, but surely we will make it to tomorrow. One step at a time, or in this case one vaccinated person at a time, and before you know it, we will all come back to living our normal lives properly distant and maskless.

## Cranford Masks, Making Good

*By Samuel Huerta*

Last March through April, the HAS Student Council held a mask sale/fundraiser. Sold for twelve dollars each, the masks featured Cranford, HAS and OAS designs in the Cranford colors, blue and gold. To help support a local business, the masks were sold through Cranford's own Cougar Headquarters. All proceeds from the sale went to Newark Working Kitchens. This organization, run statewide, buys food from small businesses and donates it to those in need. To reduce exposure to Covid, the masks were sold online at cougarhq.com. These masks were designed by the HAS and OAS art clubs. Voted on by students, the most popular designs were chosen to be printed on masks and sold. With this fundraiser, over \$120 were raised. Flyers for this event had been put around the school to accumulate more sales. The sale ended April 2nd, and the masks are no longer available. Whether it's with a mask or not, show school spirit and wear your blue and gold!



## Trivia Challenge

*By Megan Wukovits*

This March was the one year anniversary of schools closing due to Covid-19. To mark the anniversary, on March 19th our Student Council had a school-wide trivia challenge. Topics like arts and sports were shown throughout the challenge. Some examples of the questions are, "What was the highest grossing movie of all time?" "What musical has been on Broadway the longest?" "What is a 4 under par in golf?" The challenge and questions were created by the HAS Student Council as a way to bring the school together after a school year of being separated into cohorts.

"I liked the challenge because it had us all work together," a sixth grade student stated. "I liked it because we learned while we had fun and tested our knowledge," said another sixth grade student. "I loved it, it was super fun and it was a nice break out of the school day," replied seventh grade student, Emerson Murphy. "I liked it and thought it was fun, also a good way of getting the competitiveness out of everyone," responded an eighth grade student. As shown by these students the challenge was liked by many kids across all grades.

Student Council members created about 50 questions! Afterward, they were sent to Mr. Deacon and Mr. Willey to review and choose which would be put in the trivia game. The final standings of this challenge are unknown, but Mr. Willey stated, "the final standings were extremely close among the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. By the end of the challenge, only a couple hundred points actually separated the three grades."



# STUDENT COUNCIL DRESS CODE SURVEY COMING SOON!







## Middle School Basketball: The Reason Behind the Cancelled Season

By Dylan Aveno

Due to the spread of Covid-19, one of the most impacted groups of people were sports players. People were devastated and many were brought to tears because of cancelled seasons. Obviously, Covid was at its peak in Spring of 2020, but fast forward one year later, there aren't many changes in small towns such as Cranford, New Jersey. Now, many towns and cities had seasons, but with varied rules and changes to how the game was played.

At Hillside Ave School, the 2021 middle school basketball season was cancelled. This was the eighth graders last year to play along with their fellow teammates and rep the Hillside jerseys. But this is the case for many schools and towns around the country, not just Cranford. Now that it is safer to play baseball and football, why not basketball? You see, there is a much bigger difference than what you think.

Physical contact is a major component in the spread of Covid-19. It is why we have to social distance to an extent to where we can't touch each other. Now, the comparison between basketball and more physical sports like football and lacrosse is outlandish. Football is played outside.

The outdoors is where Covid is less dangerous because there is plenty of ventilation and air pockets in the atmosphere. There are plenty of air pockets in the air which makes the virus slightly less contagious. Basketball on the other hand is a little less physical, but it is played indoors.

The summer after quarantine saw many teams venture out into the world of outdoor sports and ultimately were able to hold games here and there. What I am suggesting is that Hillside holds a spring or summer season. We can play games at local parks and courts and have many spectators. It doesn't have to be in a league or even have a full season. This is just so that eighth graders get to step onto the court one last time and experience middle school basketball even if it's not exactly the same. The vaccine is out and about and people are starting to feel more comfortable in sports.

In the end, it all comes down to the players. It is whether they are comfortable with the vaccine and if not, are they comfortable with playing basketball. Either way it's all about the players learning and having fun and during times like these, where we have to make adjustments.

## Pickleball Tournament

By

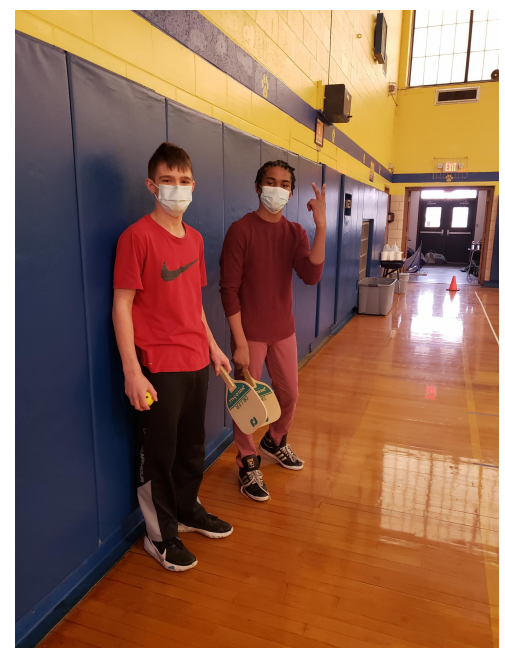
Roberto Huerta

Did you hear about the Pickleball Tournament? Eighth graders vs staff. How would you feel playing some of your favorite teachers in an all out Pickleball game? On the staff side some of the best players were Mr.Fichter, Mr.Willey, Mr.Costigan, Ms.Pascual, Ms.Vaccaro, and Mr.Moreno. But, on the eighth graders side you basically have many athletes. Almost every eighth grader was really good competition.

Both Mr.Fichter and Mr.Willey say that Mr.Moreno and Mr.Willey were two of the best on the staff side.

"UH-OH."

They were paired up. They were knocking out every team they faced. So they just walked into the finals and WON! Who were you rooting for?





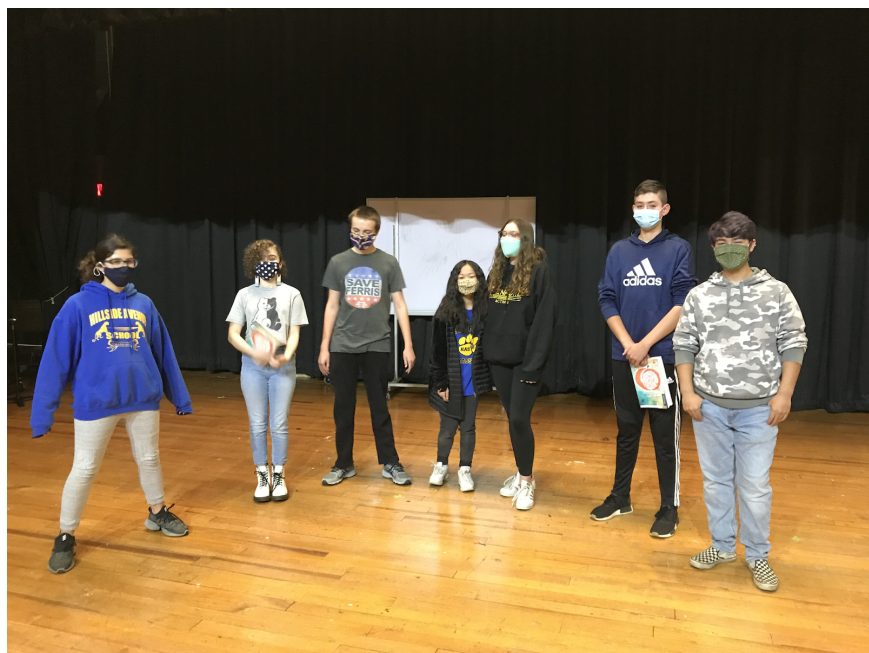
# James & the Giant Peach Jr.

*The Musical*

*By Samuel Huerta &  
Daniel Kass*

On Saturday, the Hillside Avenue School theater program will be performing *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*, the Musical, with director Kathleen Gordon. Due to COVID restrictions, it will be performed outdoors, with a rain date of May 23. James will be played by Adrianna Pizzuta. Other cast members include Jack Struble in the role of Grasshopper, Charise Melvin Da Silva as Ladybug, Alexandria Chen as Spider, Samuel Huerta as Earthworm, Milena Lavin as Ladahlord, Clara Carpenter as Spiker and Zara Hammond as Sponge. Megan Nord will also be the set director and Julia Duykinck will be the head of costume design.

*James and the Giant Peach* is about a young boy, James, who was orphaned at a young age. He winds up with two abusive aunts, Spiker and Sponge, who see him as means of service and not as a child who needs care. In his first days at his aunts' house, he stumbles upon an old man named Ladahlord. Ladahlord was magical, and gave James a spell. While trying to use his new found spell, James makes a mistake and turns five insects and a peach huge. Later, when the peach is fully grown, James meets the large insects, who can talk. Eventually, the large peach breaks off of its tree and rolls off where James and the insects will go on wild adventures. Tickets will be available at a date that is still being determined. Support the theater program and make sure to see *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*!





## Hybrid v In-Person v Virtual: Which do you Choose?

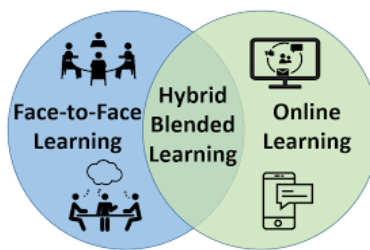
By Roberto Huerta

Are you happy being hybrid? Are you happy being virtual? Are you happy being in person? I'm sure you've asked yourself that question before. (I'm right aren't I) Sure, being hybrid can help because when you're in school you can do a semi- hands on project but being virtual you are much safer from the Coronavirus.

Sixth grader Colin Chen who is 100% virtual says that, "it is extremely easy to get distracted, bored, and even lonely." He also noted that "you can easily get less work done because of being distracted and bored". But he also states that "socializing with friends outside of school is very helpful if you ever get lonely."

Sixth grade science teacher, Mr. Fichter, who goes in school everyday says, "getting to know the students is a lot more challenging this year, but being in person you can know them as much as you can." There is a downfall, as he also added that, "if you're teaching virtually you can give more meaningful feedback."

So, virtual, hybrid, or in person? What's your choice?



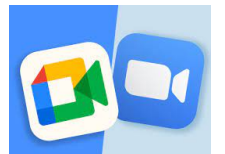
## Covid-19 Vaccine

By Ariana Gutierrez

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. After you've been fully vaccinated, you can start to do some things that you had to stop doing because of the pandemic. Everyone 16 years of age and older is now eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can.

Widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic. Over 245 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given in the United States from December 14, 2020, through May 3, 2021. COVID-19 vaccines were evaluated in tens of thousands of participants in clinical trials. The vaccines met the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency use. Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, since they were authorized for emergency use by FDA.

These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.



## Google Meet vs. Zoom: Why did we switch?

By Dylan Aveno

On March 16 of 2020, the world went through the beginning of an era that many believed to be a nightmare or a dream come true. Quarantine prevented us from playing sports, seeing friends, or in this case, going to school. But unlike many other problems that emerged from quarantine, there was a solution for going to school. School districts around the world found it best to have classes online and virtually. Using the power of technology, schools were able to hold online video chats to help students stay on point and caught up with school.

In Cranford, New Jersey, the applications used during quarantine were Zoom and Google meet. The apps functioned well enough to get through the rest of the school year, but when the next year came around, there was a drastic change. At the time, the Covid-19 vaccine was unavailable, so some students were still uncomfortable with going to school and all students were hybrid to start the year. But, besides going into school, the only change in this school year was the fact that when students were virtual, they used Google meet for all classes and no more Zoom meetings. Many were left without answers and were confused nonetheless.

According to the school principal, Mr. Deacon, "Given that all of the students and staff had Google accounts, it only made sense that Google meet was the way to go. Google meet was easy to access and was convenient."

Now during quarantine, there weren't many issues or security breaches that I have heard of. But Google meet was easily accessible and safer. Only people with Cranford accounts were able to access the virtual class. Since students and teachers are familiar with Google applications, there were very few conflicts from the students point of view. Since we have less than fifty days left of school it is more likely for all students to come back to school than to change to Zoom.

Now people still use both apps outside of school for birthdays, work meetings, and just communicating with friends. Hopefully next year, all that will change, students will get vaccinated and we will no longer need to have virtual meetings.

## Is school safe or is it Just a Breeding Ground for Germs

By Samuel Ridley

The United States, more specifically the Cranford community, was hit pretty hard by the Coronavirus in Spring 2020. After months of quarantine, and safety preparation, schools were ready to open to in-person learning in September 2020. The big question was, are schools prepared and ready to have people walk the halls, and for classes to resume once again, and will it be done safely?

Students and teachers are required to follow all school protocols and State requirements. Most importantly, individuals need to wear face coverings (with limited State-mandated exceptions), socially distance, and frequently wash/sanitize one's hands. Additionally, children must stay home if they are sick or exposed to COVID-19. There is a daily attestation form that must be filled out to ensure that your child is free of COVID-19 symptoms, as well as a temperature check upon entering the school building. Failure to adhere to these and all other requirements will result in any child not being able to participate in in-person instruction.

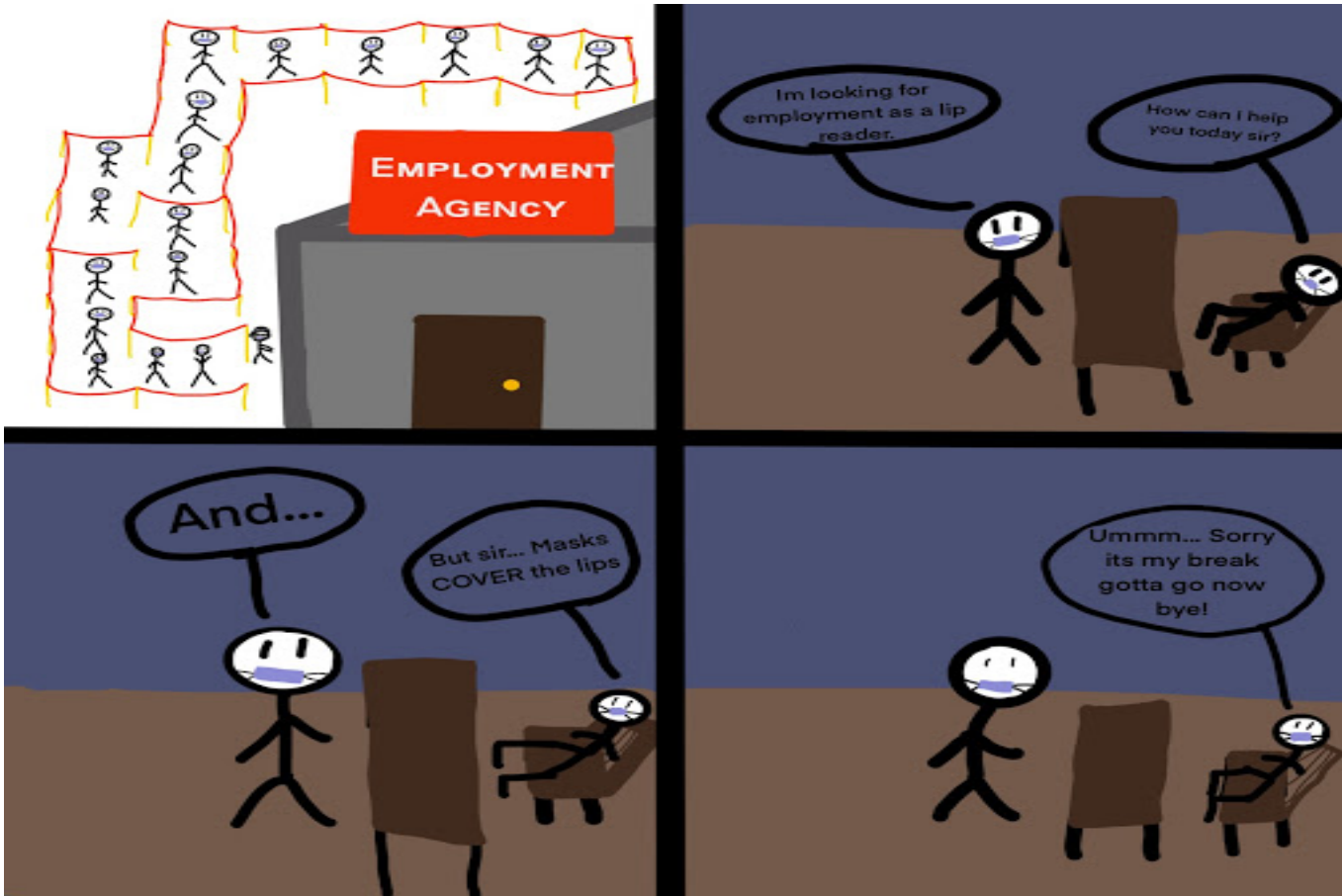
The district's plan for reopening, according to the Superintendent's email to parents, was a gradual start to the school year, to assist in focusing on the social-emotional needs of students and teachers. It would allow students to meet and interact virtually with their teachers and other students while still being able to see each others' faces before the first in-person day when everyone would be wearing a mask. Teachers also took part in professional development activities during this first week so that they could be prepared to welcome students.

According to our assistant principal, Ms. Santa, "I think that all of the protocols and procedures are being followed to ensure that the school is safe. I commend the students for being so cooperative and respectful of our school community during this time."

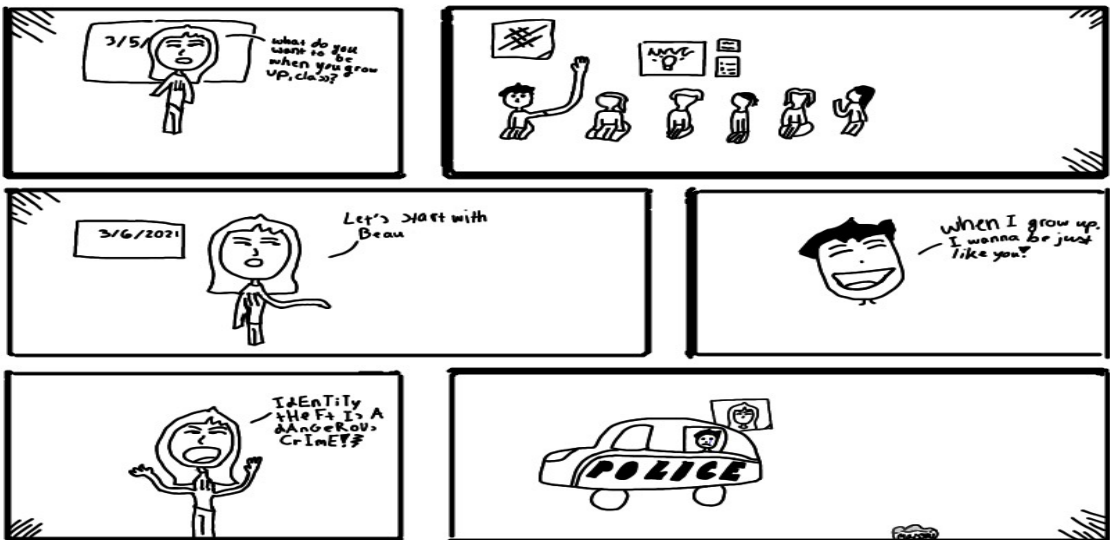


# Entertainment

COMIC  
BY  
MEGAN  
WUKOVITS



COMIC  
BY  
DANIEL KASS



HOROSCOPES  
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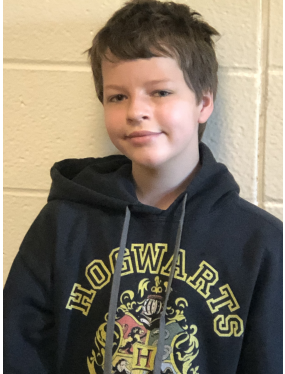


[HTTPS://WWW.ASTROLOGY.COM/HOROSCOPE/DAILY.HTML](https://www.astrology.com/horoscope/daily.html)



# Meet The Staff

**DANIEL KASS**



My name is Daniel and I am a sixth grade student at HAS. I enjoy the arts, digital designs and photography. I am currently part of the school play.

**RILEY GRECO**



My name is Riley Greco. I am in 6th grade. I like to walk my french bulldog, shoot archery, and play softball and volleyball. I love anything to do with the ocean or the beach. My favorite TV shows are The Vampire Diaries and Outer Banks. I love sports and like the outdoors.

**DYLAN AVENO**



Hello! My name is Dylan Aveno. I am a seventh grade student and I am a part of the Hillside Prophet. Some of my hobbies include sports, video games, and writing. I've always wanted to join a school newspaper whether it was in middle school or high school. If sports in the future doesn't pan out the way I envision it to, I want to be a writer or journalist. I enjoy writing articles and learning new things about our new and changed world.

**SAMUEL HUERTA**



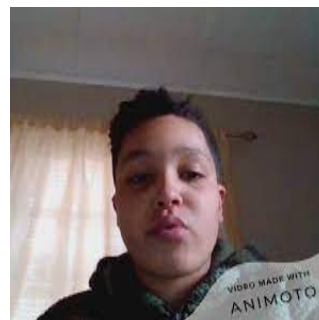
My name is Sam Huerta. I am a 7th grade student. I am very interested in the musical arts and literature. I participate actively in HAS' strings orchestra as a viola player and am a part of the school chorus. I am also in the 2021 school musical, James and the Giant Peach Jr. I can also play piano. In 2017, I enrolled in the P2E program. I am still a part of that today. I have enjoyed writing from a young age, and I am happy that HAS is finally starting a newspaper.

**ARIANA GUTIERREZ**



My name is Ariana Gutierrez. I am in 6th grade and love to play basketball. I love being a part of the school plays. I enjoy going to school.

**SAMUEL RIDLEY**



I am a sixth grade student at HAS. I have been virtual all year.

**ROBERTO HUERTA**



Hello there, I am Roberto Huerta. I am in sixth grade and I wrote some of the articles you will read in the Newspaper. I am a big Mets fan, I love soccer, and I'm very comedic. I have a pitbull terrier named Winston, who is one of the most hyper and playful dogs in the world. I am also the Sixth grade Public Relations Officer in the Student Council. I am in the play "James and the Giant Peach," (which you should go see May 22) I try my best to do everything I enjoy!

**MEGAN WUKOVITS**



I'm Megan Wukovits. I'm in 6th grade at HAS. I like Harry Potter, Minecraft, Roblox, and Hamilton. I play golf, volleyball, and take coding lessons. I enjoy drawing and going on bike rides with my friends.