



THE SPRESS

SOUTH PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Return of the Keystones

NOAH FISCUS

With the COVID-19 year still upon us, there have been numerous discussions on the Keystones and how they will be held because of the pandemic. In all the discussion, what do the students think about this matter? Do students think we should complete the Keystones during this year, or should we wait another year?

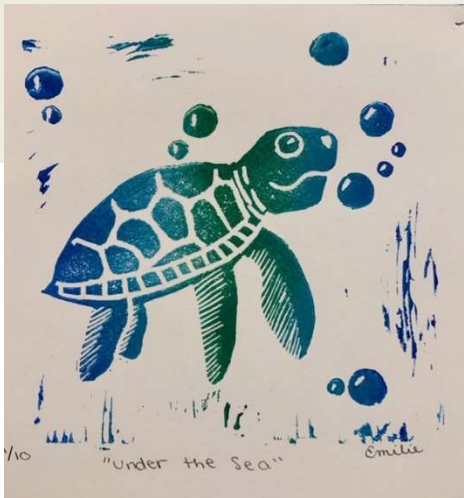
After a popular survey on the controversial topic, here are the results. Few students have said if they had the choice, they would take the Keystones this year. Approximately 9 out of 55 students agreed (16%). Many students said this because they think that it would be too hard to do it next year and would rather take it now. Kaden Kostelnik, a current freshman, said, “It shows what you learned throughout the year.”

On the other side, many students picked that they would want to take it next year. Approximately 46 out of 55 students agreed (84%). As you can see, this was a much more popular opinion. The main reason for them is they don’t feel comfortable with the current state of school and would just want to do it next year. Bryan Chapman, another current freshman, stated, “It would be too stressful on students’ mental health, a lot of people would fail it because some don’t do their normal school work and it would just make a worse mental situation for the students who are already in a bad headspace.”

Even with the controversy of the Keystones, it is important to take them because they are the stepping stones for students’ future careers. Even though it is not the ideal year, the Keystones still have the same impact they’ve always had.



Kaitlyn Karrenbauer



Emilie Mattas

Recognizing Autism Acceptance Month

CHLOE BYRON

All over the world there are individuals who have to live their lives with autism. It is estimated that about 1 in 54 children are diagnosed with this disorder. Boys are four times more likely to have autism than girls. This is the fastest growing developmental disorder on the spectrum in the United States.

People who are diagnosed with autism often have issues with socialization, communication, and their emotional skills. It is sometimes hard for them to have conversations with others and control their emotions. “I like having autism,” said Kylee Byron, a graduated senior who will continue to attend SPHS for four more years. She followed this by saying, “It is hard to have autism.” Some people who have autism are higher functioning than others which means they have similar mannerisms to a typically developing individual. While some are lower functioning which means they struggle more in their day to day life. It could be caused by many things including but not limited to genetics and environmental factors. There is no single known cause for this disorder, but given how

complex it is and how symptoms vary, there are most likely many. It is more common than childhood diabetes, cancer, and AIDS combined. Also, autism support is one of the least funded issues.

Kylee attends school the same time as every other high school student. She goes through her day completing tasks that will help her in life after high school. She helps in the cafeteria by packing lunches for students. Many teachers/aides assist her through the day so she can have a successful and independent future. “Ms. Sahady helps me at school with sewing, Mrs. Coologhan helps me with the vocational bin in room 103. I like the calendar activity,” says Kylee. One of the classes she enjoys most is music with Mrs. Barbone. “My favorite class is Music Therapy. I am a good singer in music class!”

To support Autism Acceptance Month, there are a couple different things you can do. You could support an autism-friendly business or simply be a friend to someone who may need one.

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SUN continues to shine

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As we continue to grow toward normalcy, our extracurricular activities have been in full bloom this spring season. One club in particular that students can look forward to in these upcoming months is Student United Nations- SUN, for short.

SUN is modeled after the true intergovernmental United Nations organization wherein representatives from across the globe come together to diplomatically reach decisions. Students are encouraged to research a specific country to represent in a simulated discussion and collaborate with fellow “countries.”

Although this year’s SUN may look a little different than it might have in years prior, Mr. Fennell guarantees that the experience will be an enriching one.

Senior UN officers will “design a crisis meeting based upon [a] selected historical topic”, explains Mr. Fennell. He plans to watch a film of this event during the school day and have students “craft a resolution” appropriate for each respective country represented.

Despite the inability to attend Duquesne’s annual SUN convention, Mr. Fennell is optimistic that students will still strengthen their debate and organizational abilities, all while maintaining a safe distance- and having a great time.

Prom 2021

SOPHIA DEMATTEO

It’s official... Prom this year will take place on May 7 at the Hilton Garden Inn at South Pointe in Canonsburg, state mandate and health regulations permitting, of course. Juniors and seniors, as well as guests from other schools or graduate students, are invited to spend a “Night in Paris,” provided the COVID-19 protocol is properly followed.

Senior reservations can be made on April 12 or 13, and juniors are eligible to make reservations on the 14 and 15; all reservations can be taken during each lunch period, as well as during homeroom through the first period in Mrs. Hecht’s room, 214. In addition to making a reservation, a completed Table Form must be turned in, as well as a check made payable to South Park High School. A table will seat six students, and admission is \$130 for couples and \$65 for single attendees. Cash will not be accepted. Parental contact information also must be provided.

Students should arrive and check into the Hilton Garden Inn by 7:00, and dinner will be served from 7:30 to 8:30. Prom officially ends at 10:30, and no one will be permitted to leave prior. There is an early dismissal on Friday, May 7, at 11:30 for students attending the Prom, and dismissal notes are due to the office by Wednesday, May 5.

All students must complete a COVID-19 Release Form in order to attend prom, and CDC guidelines will be enforced. Masks must be worn at all times, except during dinner. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in expulsion from the dance and refunds under this circumstance will not be issued. Students will also be searched thoroughly before being granted entry, and attendees may be selected at random to use the AlcoBlow device. Refunds can be given until April 30th.

For more information, contact Mrs. Hecht.

Also, be sure to follow the official SP Prom Instagram page @spprom2021, and attendees are encouraged to share pictures of their dresses @sppromdresses2021. We hope to see you there!

STUDENT PROFILE – MANDY SMITH

School life for the blind

CORA SMITH

School life can be troublesome for any individual, though with additive obstacles it can be far more challenging to conquer. Mandy Smith, a sophomore in the South Park high school, has been faced with such complications, having been visually impaired for many years now. You may have seen her walking around in the halls, her cane leading her path as a specialized guide utilized to help her navigate the building; and though she is a sensation among those who know her, many have only offered glances in her direction, unaware of what challenges she has had to overcome as a blind individual.

Mandy was not born blind; nevertheless, she was not spared perfect vision. She had been genetically passed down a condition called Aniridia, an eye disorder that can discolor or misshape the iris. In Mandy’s case, her Aniridia left her with extremely light pupils, a detail that can be visually identified by anyone who has travelled close enough to see. Along with Aniridia, Mandy was born with Glaucoma, a pernicious eye condition where high pressures are pushed onto the nerve connecting the optic to the brain, otherwise known as the retina. If a retina is to detach, the brain will not be able to receive images transmitted from the optical organs, and thus, sight is lost. Such a condition had quickly become serious, requiring Mandy to take eighteen drops in each eye every day in order to try and control the amounts of pressure being pushed onto the back of her orbit. This ailment was detrimental to her eyesight, pressures reaching the high fifties, whereas at the pressure point of sixty the brain is signaled to shut down the eyes.

To attempt to alleviate this Mandy was taken to the doctor’s office more than she was visiting home, often going under anesthesia two to three times a week in an attempt to save her corneas and ultimately her vision. Eventually, the family would travel to Ohio where valves were surgically placed into her eyes to help release the pressures; however, her corneas had clouded at this point and it was denounced to Mandy’s parents that losing her vision would be inevitable. Refusing to give up, the Smith family located a new eye doctor located in New York where plastic corneas were then implanted into her eyes, a last hope at preserving her vision. Such was successful for a while, until Mandy contracted an infection in the back of her dominant eye, the inflammation detaching her left retina and ultimately causing her to lose her eyesight on that side. At this point, Mandy had just turned three years old.

From then on, the remaining plastic cornea seemed to be doing its job, allowing for Mandy to be able to see with the usage of glasses and magnifying glasses. Though, as one of the doctors had predicted, the inevitability of her vision loss was inescapable. Two years ago, at the age of fourteen Mandy’s right retina detached, as result of too much trauma inflicted by the doctor’s desperate attempts to save it. Ever since then, the young student has been battling the loss of her vision entirely, refusing to back down from grueling experiences and many frustrating realities she knew would eventually come to meet her head on. She has taken it like a true soldier though, and continues to push forward, taking her experiences day by day and making the most out of her situation. When asked how she handles her daily life, she said, “I try to take every day as it comes, it’s been extremely difficult to keep my head up, but I’ve given enough to the situation already. Influences such as good grades, writing, family, and friendships have helped me to keep my mood positive and I hope it will continue to stay that way.”

Though she is independent and able to advance through school on her own, a little help can go a long way. When asked how other students or faculty can attempt to aid her she stated, “Avoid completely stopping in the school halls. I do my best to avoid running into others but at times it can be hard-- and students stopped in the middle of the walkway is only another barrier to that. If you can, try blindfolding yourself at home and navigating your way around. You’ll find it’s a lot more difficult than you think, especially if you lose your bearings or if random objects you wouldn’t expect to be in your way appear.” Mandy’s situation is one she will be trudging along with for the rest of her life, carrying an added burden most others will usually never come to terms with in their own life. Nevertheless, she is hopeful one day research will become advanced enough to treat her condition and restore what she has lost; and as her sister, I intend to be there for her every step of the way.

Reflections of a senior

LUKE FURMAN

Four years ago I was nervous. Going into high school is scary enough, but on top of that I decided to join the marching band as well. I woke up early on the first day of band camp and wondered if I had it in me to push through four years of early rising, research papers, and standardized tests. I left camp that day a high-schooler.

Fast forward today, and I’m still thinking back to that first day, the friends I made that helped assuage my fears, and boost my self-efficacy. I went into school on the first day already used to waking up early, already accustomed to the layout of the school, and already belonging to a strong group of wonderful friends. I wonder sometimes about those who didn’t get as lucky as my friends and I did when we got involved. As I’m wrapping up my time here, I asked my friends in band and they all agreed with me, having those older people to watch our backs made the transition go much smoother.

I think the most important piece of advice I can give is to not obsess over grades. I’ve watched far too many friends stress over a B, and lose focus on the actual subject matter of a certain class. At the end of the day, if we need to Google how to find the determinant of a matrix, that just isn’t the end of the world. Your life will be just as complete when you leave if you get a B or two, I promise.

All in all, I’m very pleased with my time at South Park High School, and, when push comes to shove, that’s really all that matters. I get to leave knowing that I learned what I wanted to learn, participated in what I wanted to participate in, made the friends I wanted to make, and created the memories I’d hoped to create. I can’t ask for much more than that.

Do you have Moxie?

TESSA LETTIE

New to Netflix is a new movie called “Moxie” that came out on March 3. If you have ever read the book “Moxie” from Jennifer Mathieu, the movie and the book are very alike but a little different. If you were interested from having read the book, I will give you a little intel on how it contrasts. It has the same main idea and subject points. There are more topics talked about and expressed in the movie than the book.

The movie is based on a teenage girl that is tired of how women are treated and how people stereotype women. She makes a feminist group called Moxie and sends a zine anonymously throughout out the school for other people to read and jump in. The girls of the school were fed up with an administration at her high school with the mindset that boys will be boys and their words and actions don’t do any harm. They are tired of being pictured as sensitive for wanting to be treated respectfully, having sexist dress codes, and guys giving sexist and objectifying comments. Not only that, they were tired of following the rules and not being heard by anyone.

Have you ever felt this way? If so, I would highly recommend watching the movie “Moxie.”

STUDENT SUBMISSION

LIVIA MAZZARELLA

The Twelfth Tuesday: We Talk About Forgiveness

Mountains

Pain.

Something we all must go through.

A mountain so high we must climb to overcome

As very few do.

Anger.

A fire that rapidly lights,

Ready to burn.

Gradually the flames turn purple,

To yellow,

To orange,

To red,

To ashes.

Reflection.

Mind deep in thought on a train into the unknown.

This short moment faced,

Do you allow it to create a long impact?

Will you allow it to change who you are?

Is this battle worth fighting?

Or maybe it is only a battle with yourself.

Acceptance.

A redeemed outlook on life,

An intense feeling of peace rushes through your bloodstream

As you plant that flag on the summit of Everest.

All along that dagger that stabbed you in the heart,

In the end was just a scrape to the knee.

Peace.

EDITORIAL

What’s the deal, Apple?

DAN PEPKE

Older Apple phones tend to die more often. Due to this you upgrade with the newest models, and the newer phones are worth more and more, so what's the deal Apple?

Apple is a multi-billion dollar company known for making touch screen phones and other technology. Phones by the company have been going up in the price range up to \$1500. The only reason they go up in price is to keep up with popularity and having the newest iPhone, and due to this they keep making money every time they release a new phone. Apple realizes this and barely updates the newest phones or makes improvements. A great example of this is between the iPhone 11 and iPhone 12.The only difference is updated storage and graphic updates with the phones.

One thing that goes under the radar is the phone batteries. As an iPhone 7 owner my battery dies constantly and dies within two hours. The batteries on older phones die like crazy, and they tend not to update most of the time. If you have an older phone you will end up having to upgrade the model of the phone within the next year.

Apple has made many products along with their iPhones. Examples of these would be headphones called the AirPods Max worth \$549.00 and the AirPods Pros \$160. The reason they are able to price these things so highly is because they know that there is a demand, because people want to be shown as wealthy or look cooler with the nice expensive Apple products. Apple makes more and more money off of being a trend more than a phone company.

ARTS & CULTURE

Pittsburgh’s hidden gem

TESSA LETTIE

There are so many beautiful things in our city - so many, you probably don't even know about. A particular place that I personally love is the Mattress Factory Museum. If you're into abstract, contemporary art, you would love this museum. You will also discover artists that you might not know about. Some of these featured artists are James Turrell, Yayoi Kusama, and Greer Lankton. There are so many pieces in this building that need to be seen and appreciated.

It looks like a simple house downtown, but really it’s an amazing building with beautiful, miraculous, and fantastic pieces in each room. All of the reviews say it's an amazing, out of the ordinary place that you must experience. According to Google reviews, “Definitely check it out. There are no words that adequately describe it. Take the time to really take in the installments. Enjoy yourself.”

Beyoncé, Taylor Swift make history with record breaking Grammy wins

LUKE FURMAN

The 63rd Grammy Awards were held on March 14, 2021, at an outdoor venue in Los Angeles, and was hosted by comedian Trevor Noah. Live artists were able to perform for one another, socially distanced, of course.

Beyoncé made history that night, winning her 28th award, becoming the most awarded woman, and the second most awarded person in history. Her daughter, Blue Ivy, won an award with her mother at age 9 for “Brown Skin Girl.” Taylor Swift also made history, becoming the first female artist to win Album of the Year three times, tying the likes of Frank Sinatra, Paul Simon, and Stevie Wonder for the all-time record.

H.E.R won Song of the Year for “I Can’t Breathe.” Billie Eilish gave a surprised speech after winning Record of the Year, claiming Megan Thee Stallion and Beyoncé’s “Savage (Remix)” deserved it. Megan Thee Stallion won Best New Artist and Best Rap Song, however, so she was able to be recognized for her accomplishments.

The event was hosted by Trevor Noah, and several employees from various small music venues across the nation presented the most prestigious awards of the night as part of the telecast.

SPORTS

South Park baseball

DAN PEPKE

The spring season is coming to South Park, and that means Baseball. The South Park High School has high hopes for the season.

The South Park Eagles are power ranked 1 in double A. They had their first scrimmage March 22 at Wylie Field against Elizabeth Forward. They hope to begin the season strong. The team has high hopes for the year to win the sections and win WPIAL. The Eagles have had a switch in coaches this year due their old head coach leaving to go coach at Baldwin. Now, Coach Schmidco will be the head coach of the Eagles through the 2021 season. They also have acquired junior classmen Drew Lafferty to the team. The year is looking bright for the Eagles, and we will just have to wait and see how far they can go.

Elective Highlights

CHLOE BYRON & NOAH FISCUS

Family and Consumer Science:

Miss. Stull teaches three different classes at the high school including Culinary Arts, Understanding Children I, and Understanding Children II. These are electives that students can take during their high school years. If you want to get into one of these classes, it is most likely you will have to wait until your junior or senior year. They tend to be the first electives to go! Miss. Stull provided information about her classes below. These include more in depth descriptions of what you should expect while taking these courses.

Culinary Arts:

Students will learn how to safely use all types of kitchen equipment and utensils to follow a wide variety of recipes from basic smoothies to preparing homemade pastas and sauces to cleaning and cooking poultry in many different ways. Teamwork is a must! I feel that my students gain confidence, patience, appreciation and the ability to think outside of the box when it comes to creativity, experimenting and making mistakes and learning from them. While cooking the students realize what he/she is capable of doing and take pride in their work, all while having fun! No, there aren’t any prerequisites, but hopefully students have an interest in cooking or baking. Culinary Arts is more a mixed grade level course with mostly juniors and seniors. In Culinary Arts, students should enjoy or want to learn how to follow recipes and experiment with cooking, baking, flavors and plating arrangements.

Understanding Children I and II:

Students will learn the theory and reasoning behind the behavior and learning processes of children ages 3-6 years old. Students will learn how to create lesson plans and crafts based on preschool themes to use in our preschool program. Students will also be teaching these lessons. No, there aren’t any prerequisites, but hopefully students have an interest in crafting or working with preschool aged children. Understanding Children classes are usually filled with seniors. In Understanding Children classes, students should enjoy crafting and working with preschool aged children.

Foreign Language:

There are two different foreign languages taught at SPHS, German and Spanish. Teachers from the Foreign Language Department provided details below that will give students a better understanding as to what to expect when signing up for these courses.

We teach German and Spanish language, culture, customs and geography. Any foreign language is beneficial to the students overall learning. Knowledge of another language gives you the edge in any post-secondary education as well as in the job market. In order to enroll in level 1 a student must have at least a 70% overall in English and proficient on the 8th grade PSSA. In order to enroll in level II, students must have at least a 70% overall in level 1. To progress to levels III and IV, students must have at least a 75% overall. Students must be in grades 9-12 to take these classes. Student interests should include travel, history, English and a desire to learn about other cultures.

Fine Arts:

Getting involved with the arts will help students branch out and explore their creative interests. There are many different courses you can take ranging from Concert Band to Pottery. Two of the fine arts elective teachers provided information for students to refer to when doing their scheduling for next school year.

Music:

A few of the classes taught in the music category are Concert Band, Concert Choir, and Percussion Ensemble. They are performance-based classes and they are taught by Mrs. Barbone. In these classes, students will learn how to sing and play instruments efficiently, and they will also work towards their three concerts. In Music Theory, students will learn how to read music efficiently. These classes are for students who enjoy being creative. They should also know how to read music and enjoy listening to music. There are no prerequisites.

Art:

In art, students will learn about many different art mediums (graphite, charcoal, oil pastel, watercolor, acrylic, printmaking, sculpture, and pottery) with the help of Mrs. Rech. Students should take these classes if they are interested in being creative in calm settings. The students must also be willing to try new things. The prerequisite for art classes is you must take Foundations of Art before moving onto Drawing & Painting or Pottery. This gives you a good idea of what kind of art you would like to pursue. Also, students of any grade are allowed to join. Art is for students that are interested in being creative in any way.

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STUDENT CORNER

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