



NOVEMBER 2016 VOL. 6 ISSUE 1

OBSERVER

HAVE WE GOT NEWS FOR YOU...



PHOTO
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MRS. BACKER

MEET THE STAFF!

GET TO KNOW THIS YEAR'S JOURNALISTS



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Observer Staff

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Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the very first edition of the 2016-2017 Alfred-Almond *Observer*! The mission of this year's *Observer* is to provide an entertaining and educational product for the benefit of the students and staff. It is hard to get to know everyone in the school, so in this issue we are helping our readers get to know our staff better. As you read through this edition you will discover the interests, as well as future plans of these journalists. On behalf of the *Observer* staff, we hope you enjoy getting to know the incredible people who make the *Observer* possible.

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Jessica F.

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Jessica F.

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Mission & Vision

Have We Got News For You

It is our mission as the Alfred-Almond *Observer* to provide a well-balanced resource for the purpose of entertaining and informing the Alfred-Almond community. We intend to create an easily accessible and reliable source of both local and national news. It is our goal to leave behind a more informed and knowledgeable student body for the years to come.

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Dylan G.
Greg B.
(Bill B.)



Erin: Animal lover. Adventurer. Musician.

As I sat on the playground on a sunny afternoon, I found out more about Erin than I originally expected to. I've always gone to school with Erin but I've only ever known a little bit about her. I knew that she played the saxophone and played tennis, but that's about it. During our time, I learned that she loves music more than anything. She loves to play all kinds of music, especially jazz and classical music. Erin mainly plays the piano, baritone saxophone, and flute but has attempted to learn the french horn, cello, bassoon and tuba. She enjoys listening to pretty much all kinds of music.

Erin plans on attending Western Iowa Tech Community College to major in music and possibly minor in computer science. "I would love to learn about computers because it seems like a very interesting and useful skill," she stated. She chose Western Iowa Tech because of its highly ranked music department and the fact that there are hiking trails close to the dorms. She loves hiking, kayaking, and sitting in the open air. After her time at Western Iowa Tech, she plans on going to SUNY Potsdam to further her skills with computers to eventually move on with life and look for work. Erin's dream job is to travel and make music for people to enjoy.

In her free time she enjoys watching anime, hanging out with her friends, pets and family, as well as drawing and working with fabrics and fibers. Erin is a very skilled artist and especially talented when it comes to weaving, sewing, and repairing clothing. Erin also enjoys her fair share of sports. She plays Varsity Tennis and previously raced the downhill slalom for the Varsity Ski team. Erin had to give up competitive skiing in the winter of her eighth grade year due to a knee injury. But this does not stop her from skiing for fun during the winter! She expressed, "I really enjoy skiing, but this season I would really like to try snowboarding."

The time I spent with Erin really opened my eyes. It gave me the opportunity to take someone I've always seen around school and put her in a special spotlight. This experience gave me an interesting background story I was unfamiliar with.

By
Harry R.
Staff Writer



Erin The Senior

Erin has gone to AA for her entire school career.

Photo courtesy of Amanda Charles



One Big Boot

Erin and her mom in front of the giant boot at the L.L.Bean store in Freeport, Maine.

Photo courtesy of Erin's Aunt Daun



A fine day at AA

Erin enjoys nature in her free time.

Photo courtesy of Harry R.



The Man on the Bike

By
Kalista C
Staff Writer

On Friday during 8th mod, Justin and I chose to do our interviews of each other, our first journalism assignment, outside in Senior Area where it was quiet, secluded and the sun was shining bright. Justin and I do not talk on a regular basis, therefore I didn't know what to expect from him. Justin always seemed like a shy guy to me, but I soon learned from interviewing him that he is quite the opposite. Of course we couldn't get away without any awkwardness between the two of us at first. Fortunately, the uncomfortableness had been broken when a few noisy buses came along and interrupted our shy silence.

As our small talk continued, I slowly learned more and more about Justin, including some things I never expected. I learned that, for the most part, Justin has his life planned out for

himself. He intends on residing close to home and going to college locally, either at Alfred University or Alfred State. This way, he could easily ride his bike to college and back, just like he does from home to high school almost everyday. Justin plans to study psychology to become a therapist or a high school counselor. Justin chose this career path because he wants to be able to help others in the best way possible. As you all know, high school can be a very stressful and awkward environment, as teenagers can be hormonal and problematic. This is the age group Justin wants to work with because he wants them to feel better about themselves and to never feel down. Justin wants to make a difference in the lives of young students and as well as helping them to set on the right path. This, in my opinion, is the perfect career path for Justin as he is a caring and kind person to everyone.

When asked who his role model is, Justin answered with, "Rocky, of course." He chose him because he feels Rocky is always trying to improve himself and strives to do better. Justin admires Rocky and aspires to be like him. Along with trying to improve himself, Justin also strives academically by always trying to achieve his goals, such as continuing to work hard in school and becoming a therapist. He loves to learn new things. When asked what his favorite subject in school was, he answered quite quickly, "Really anything Mr. Donlon teaches, but especially A.P. U.S." Justin expressed how much he loved his classes; he said Mr. Donlon always inspired him to do better and be better. Justin enjoys the social aspect of school as



Scholarly Student Justin poses for a picture with one of his favorite teachers, Mr. Donlon.
Photo courtesy of Charles E.

well as the academic side.

With fall coming, I had to of course ask Justin what his favorite fall activities were, which included walking with his family while the leaves are falling all around them and that fresh, crisp fall air. Justin enjoys spending time with his family and friends, he enjoys just being able to talk to them. Justin recalled a memory with a friend when they walked two miles to Alfred and just talked. Justin also enjoys reading in his free time if it's a good book, like *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. Overall, I enjoyed getting to know how awesome Justin is and sharing what I've learned about him.



Track Star Justin patiently awaits the track season in his favorite lane.
Photo courtesy of Kalista C.



The Man on the Bike Justin takes in the beautiful weather, enjoying the time he has left of fall to ride his bike.
Photo courtesy of Kalista C.



By
Jessica F.
Editor-in-Chief
Lite

Walking With an Immortal

On a beautiful sunny day, I had the task of interviewing Alfred-Almond Senior Greg B. Personally I really don't talk to Greg much on a daily basis, so I was interested in what kind of answers I was going to get. If you don't already know, Greg is a very unique individual. For starters, he is immortal and the rest of us are just mortals. Knowing this from past experiences with Greg, I immediately felt at a disadvantage to him going into the interview.

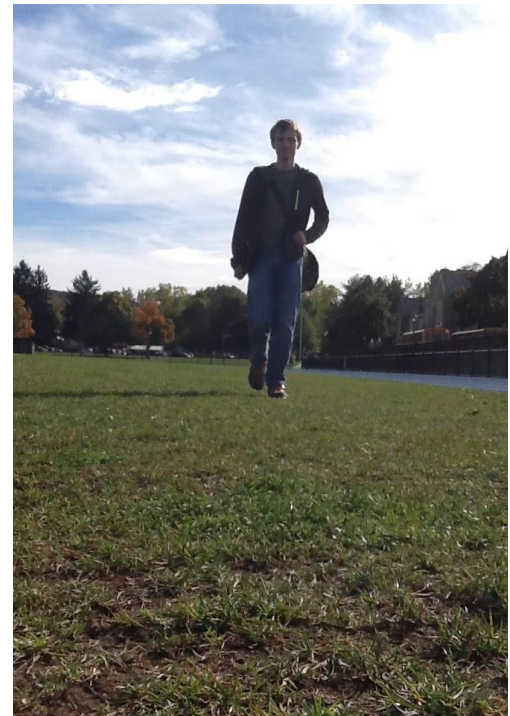
To break the ice, I started out with an easy question. I asked him how his senior year has differed so far from his other years of high school. I quickly learned that I was not going to get a typical answer to any of my questions, "Well for one...I now bring burritos to lunch! That is a wondrous improvement." I was not expecting this answer, but I found it easily relatable, because I too, find burritos very satisfying.

I was then led into a long and elaborate story of how Greg conquered the South Pole. This has been a goal of Greg's for a long time, and with the help of his minions, he tunneled his way down there and fearlessly conquered the many birds that were dressed in their formal clothing. Even though Greg doesn't know for sure why they were all so dressed up, he suspects they were going to an important party. Intrigued about why Greg chose to conquer the South Pole, I asked, and yet again I was surprised by his answer. The reason Greg conquered the South Pole

with the help of his minions is because, well, Africa posed too big of a threat of course and everyone has to start somewhere, so he chose to start small.

From previous discussions with Greg, I knew he wanted to attend college but he hadn't chosen where yet, which is reasonable considering the importance of the decision. So I decided to revisit the topic while sitting on the playground, all while trying not to be trampled by small children. Given more time, Greg had decided that he liked Stony Brook University and Clarkson University. Knowing Stony Brook University is quite the drive, I asked him if he was nervous about moving so far away and he simply answered that it is "in the prime location for a certain project he'd had in mind. Close to Manhattan." Flooded with many different emotions when he said "project," I dared to ask what exactly the project was. By this point, Greg had become known to me for his original answers, he simply said, "The Manhattan project." Like many others, this answer left me sitting in awe on the playground. So what else would I do other than move onto the next question.

The trend of this interview had mostly just been Greg continually surprising me with answers, and he didn't stop when the questions got a little more serious. When I asked him what he thought the most important lesson he learned in high school was, yet again he caught me off guard...but in a different way. "Well it's quite



One Step At a Time *Greg is always looking forward, ready to conquer whatever life throws at him next.*

Photo Courtesy of Jessica F.

simple...well it's actually not that simple." When asked to elaborate to this very vague (but still relatable) answer, Greg compared life to water against a stone. Still somewhat confused, I asked him to give me a little insight. He compared running water against a stone to life because in life you have many obstacles that you must fight through to keep achieving your goals. Running water erodes away each layer of stone, like obstacles in life, over time, which is how people should fight each obstacle in life. Even though Greg can have very bizarre answers to somewhat simple questions, he has a reason and theory behind each and every one of them.



By
Justin B.
Design Manager

Kalista: Kind Compatriot

To learn more about our staff we were tasked to interview someone we didn't know and write about them. In my case, it was Kalista and I. It took a little bit of time for the interview between Kalista and I to truly begin because we were trying to get a feel for each other's personalities. We managed to overcome those uneasy feelings quickly through the magic of both light small talk and the calm location we had chosen. We decided to go to the Senior Area - it had been secluded and well lit. The perfect place for an interview, we set up shop there and got to work. Our quiet environment was eventually disrupted by about three noisy school busses passing through, and while these school busses successfully distracted us, we managed to just laugh it off and continue the interviews.

I went first and asked Kalista a variety of questions, trying to get to know who she is on the inside. We would both break up any lulls in the conversation with jokes, and it definitely helped to make both of us much more comfortable with each other. I managed to learn a great deal about Kalista and some of her awesome qualities; it was an incredibly gratifying experience. She shared a lot of her coolest experiences she has had, alongside some of her dreams and aspirations.



Soccer Maniac *Kalista looks back at her time on the soccer team as though it was yesterday.*

Photo courtesy of Justin B.



Kind Caretaker Kalista *This sweet girl always tries to be helpful, especially with the children. She volunteers to assist them whenever she can.*

Photo courtesy of Miss Lang

Kalista describes herself as a very motivated person who knows what she wants and strives to improve herself - something everyone should try to do. She always tries to help others, which is reflected by her desired career: her goal is to be a kindergarten teacher and a good role model for our younger generation. She does not place emphasis on money or personal gain. The person who lead her down this path was Mrs. Donlon; her words of encouragement and general advice has greatly affected Kalista's career path. On a more fun note, Kalista told me that her coolest trip was when she went parasailing in the Dominican Republic - something she was pretty scared of before actually trying it and having a lot of fun. Along with parasailing, she told me about how she saw some adorable turtles, and how those two experiences were her favorite memories on the trip.

Kalista also told me that she loves animals - especially her cat Noel. However, her love doesn't just go out to animals. She also enjoys swimming and reading romance novels like *Safe Haven* by Nicholas Sparks. She went on to tell me that her friend Jessica was the one who first got her into swimming when they were little, and she's been doing it ever since. Overall, Kalista is a social, hardworking, and funny person. She is a fun, kind girl and it was a pleasure both interviewing and getting to know her.



Jack. Love him? You don't know him

By
Brendan W.
Editor-in-Chief



Travel the World Jack C. poses with a globe. Jack plans to travel the world in his later years.

Photo courtesy of Brendan W.

He loves travelling and exploring, and discovering things he did not know before about places he has never been.

Another thing that he finds interesting is politics, which seems odd for a 16 year-old. Some may say it is dumb or pointless, but to him, it is of the utmost importance, and he has spent a great deal of time and energy to research and learn what he believes.



Nothin' But Net Jack C. poses under a goal on the varsity soccer field. Jack is one of five captains of the Varsity Soccer team.

Photo courtesy of Brendan W.

Some people go through life not knowing what they believe, but for him this is no problem.

Moving on from his interests, I asked Jack, "How have you enjoyed your experience at Alfred-Almond?" He said that one downside was that it is a small school, and it has sometimes faltered the experience of high school. On the positive note, he believes that the teachers have a tendency to be more reliable in small schools; he believes that the students are generally happier for each other, and there is less drama.

My final question concerned his plans for after graduation from Alfred-Almond. Jack is looking at a few different colleges right now for possible application. He is considering Alfred University, St. Bonaventure, Mansfield, Ithaca, and is planning on visiting a few more. He plans on majoring in education, specifically high school science. After he graduates from college, he plans on moving to another state, possibly to Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, but only time will tell of his true desires and decisions.

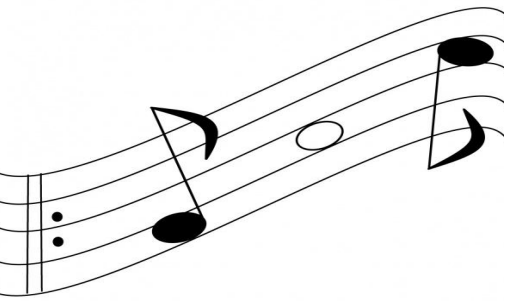
This snippet of an interview with Jack sheds a little light on the Alfred-Almond senior, but still is pale in comparison to his possibilities. From games, sports, politics, and adventures... to high school, college, and far after... we have expanded our knowledge of this young man. In all honesty however, a single article covers very little of the life of a man, and likewise, there is still much we could learn of the life and personality of Jack C.

To most people, Jack C. seems like just another senior at Alfred Almond; he seems like a quiet guy that does his own thing, or just another guy on the Varsity Soccer team. But there is more to him than what is seen on a day to day basis by those who merely pass him in the halls.

During a one-on-one interview, I had the privilege of learning much more about him than most. The first question I asked him was, "What are your interests?" His response showed an interest in playing video games, specifically *League of Legends*. He spends time playing video games when he has nothing else to do. To make the video game experience more enjoyable, he joins his friends through online connections, which allow them to play together. But video games are just a scratch of what he finds interesting.

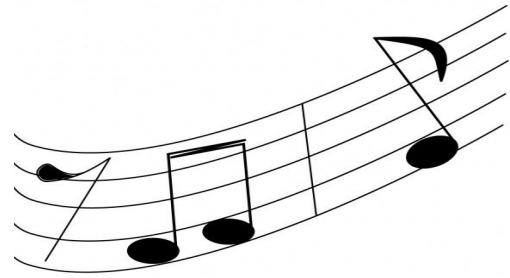
For a gamer, one would not think of him as being overly athletic, but anyone who thinks this could not be farther from the truth. He plans on running on the Boys Varsity Track team in the spring, and is the starting sweeper and captain of the Boys Varsity Soccer team. His athletic talent and ability to lead others has granted him a coveted spot among the best.

He enjoys anything outdoorsy such as bonfires, camping, hiking, and much more. He also would love to travel the world. He has been to Costa Rica once before on a spanish trip in 10th grade where he went waterfall rappelling, surfing, ziplining, and much more. He also plans to visit Ecuador in the future.



Mystery Of Madge

By
Dylan G.
Staff Writer



Even though most students might overlook her...literally... Madge C. has some of the loudest thoughts and beliefs that can be found in Alfred-Almond. Madge is probably the only incoming senior who already has been accepted into her college of choice and probably the only senior who knows what her working life will entail. With religion a centerfold of her life, Madge shows that not everyone has the teenage freedoms that most of us are able to enjoy, this allowed Madge to shape into quite a special individual.

Madge says her father was her biggest influence in developing a drive and desire for education. She shared the story of her father obtaining his doctorate in ministry. He began the long process shortly after her birth. Her father's work for his degree has shown her how important it is to get a good education.

Being a pastor's daughter means following a different set of rules and restrictions. For example, Madge isn't allowed to go out on Friday nights like most of us are. Her family stays home and prepares for church or has a family night where they relax and unwind before the busy next day. Madge says that her parents have become a little more relaxed about this rule. "I typically have to leave for school events or other extracurricular activities before 6 or 7 p.m.," says Madge. Madge also has to ask a few days before an event in order to attend.



Preparation for the future *Madge sits happily on the stage where she has many experiences as a stage director. She hopes to build many more in future stages similar to the one sits on. Photo courtesy of Dylan G.*

Most people know that Madge is very involved in the arts; she has been the assistant director of the last three plays that have been produced here at Alfred-Almond. She is a major figure in the school choir, and frequently comes to soccer games to sing our national anthem. Even with all of her activities outside of school, her schooling is far from simple. Madge took AP art her junior year. She is often found with a camera at many of the events she attends. Madge has also provided numerous pictures for ALCEN by attending sports events or some of the musical concerts that the students play in. Madge can be most likely found in Mrs. Karr's room, the band room or the art room. These are the focus of much of her studies in her future. Madge plans on studying performing arts the upcoming fall. She says that she has always had a love for the industry and the ability to go to a school in a Christian environment and study her subject of choice.

Madge leaves school with an attitude of being allowed to blossom into the person that she has kept away from all of the peering eyes in high school. She advises not to let high school be the defining part of your life. With her enrollment in Lancaster Bible College of Lancaster, Pennsylvania for the fall of 2017, Madge sees herself being able to develop into her own person. This might seem strange to most of us as we have our own freedoms to be our own people. Madge has always had the title pastor's daughter looming over her head. Madge has been under the influence of her parents as they have passed most of their beliefs onto her, she was never really encouraged to develop her own at first. Although she claims that her parents only encouraged her to develop her own feelings and beliefs on major topics in past years, Madge has been a strong minded individual for as long as I can remember.



Musical Melody *Madge is found where she is at home - the Senior High Band room. She is the head percussionist. Photo courtesy of Dylan G.*



Owen: The next Quentin Tarantino?

By
Abbey S.
Copy Editor

The Alfred - Almond playground was warm and sunny on a typical September afternoon. What I thought was going to be a normal day in Journalism became a learning experience between me and a friend. While he seems to be simply a humorous “happy-go-lucky” senior, there is actually much more to him than meets the eye. Senior Owen C. has many goals beyond his Alfred-Almond career, and this feature will shed some light on his past, as well as taking a glimpse at his future.

Owen moved into the Alfred-Almond School District in 2011, during his sixth grade year, from Rockville, Maryland, which is a suburb of Washington D.C. His family moved here when his father scored a job working at Alfred University as a Professor of Counseling. Owen describes the difference in settings as a “change of pace.” He explained, “I used to live in a suburb, but now I’m the only house on my road.” He misses the city aspect of his previous location. He mentions how the movie theater was very close to his home and that he never had to check the movie times because they were always playing. In this area, the movie theater is about twenty-five minutes from his home, and he always has to check the movie times.

After living in Alfred Station, otherwise known by Owen as “the hood,” for a long period of time, he has adjusted well.



Looking Forward to Colder Weather On a warm afternoon, Owen poses with his equipment awaiting the next ski season to come.
Photo courtesy of Abbey S.

His favorite memories at Alfred-Almond include causing trouble in school (such as recently flipping a water bottle onto one of the lights in the lunchroom), and being a part of the ski team. His favorite aspect of the team is the bonds that are formed between himself and his team members. Skiing is not only a sport for Owen, but one of his favorite things to do during his free time. He also enjoys watching movies, spending time with family, playing the saxophone and hiking/backpacking when he has time to spare. Because of his love for backpacking, he also works at a backpacking camp every summer in Canada.

On top of watching movies for a hobby, Owen wants to make it into a career. His dream is to become a mainstream film director. He would enjoy creating anything from big budget action movies to small indie horror films, although he is not interested in directing romantic comedies. In preparation for his future with the film business, he is currently taking numerous film and English courses here at Alfred-Almond as well as at Alfred University. He feels that his ideal article for the Observer is a film review, and definitely not a science or math article, or as Owen would call them “smart articles.”

To pursue his film career, Owen plans to apply to Champlain College, Syracuse University, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Ithaca College. His number one choice is Champlain College. He is interested in its beautiful location and great program. On top of attending Champlain College, Owen is highly interested in studying in Ireland and Montreal. His goal is to major in film production, which is a four year degree, and then to hopefully attend New York University for graduate school. When asked if he planned to join any clubs in college, he expressed interest in a frisbee club, backpacking club and a fraternity. After college, he wishes to move to the West Coast to continue his career in the film business. Though he enjoys skiing, he will have to settle in the West Coast to have a successful career.

It seems very apparent that Owen is excited for what the future brings. He is an ambitious young man who is overflowing with the immense drive to overcome whatever obstacles get in his way. His future will be filled with limitless possibilities. This interview has brought a greater understanding of the one they call “Owen.”



Alex: Billionaire in the Making?

By
Cory O.
Staff Writer

As I sat down on a hot sunny day on the Alfred-Almond playground I did not realize that the next billionaire could be sitting right next to me... Who is this person? Alex DeGraff, a 17 year-old senior who has more to him than meets the eye, sat down to give the interview of his life. Alex grew up in Alfred, NY, his father being an Astronomy Professor. Expectations being high, he found himself being just another high school senior, feeling the pressure of work and graduation getting to him.

When asked if he had any regrets, few were thought of but those mentioned included his overall performance in 8th grade, not getting a 100 in game design, and not meeting his full capabilities in AP English and

African American history. Although Alex displayed some regret, it is overshadowed with academic satisfaction. School has become a lifestyle, and reaching goals set is a challenge that Alex looks forward to. Becoming great was never something Alex just thought about, it's been his plan all along. One of the smartest students to soon graduate from high school, it has never been an easy road to success.

Alex DeGraff has a variety of talents; He is strong in math, a reliable app developer, and a master at multiple choice questions. The senior is nothing short of becoming something great. App development being an increasingly greater part of not only Alex's talent but also his future, could this be his chance to make it big? Probably, but when asked about a future career path, the answer

was to become a software engineer. This would begin with a college education.

Where in fact would this boy genius take his talents? Maybe USC, Georgia Tech or his number one pick: Cornell. Why Cornell you may ask? Alex has a desire to become one of the best in his field, so why not take it to a great institution? Going to Cornell would be a great plan for Alex, and the college itself will help him succeed in life. Why wouldn't a great student go to a fantastic school?



A Studious Student Alex D. sets his goals high and has one of the highest GPA's in the school.

Photo courtesy of Cory O.

In five years, Alex DeGraff hopes to enter an entry-level software engineering job. His post-college dream job is being the head of a tech company. Shooting high, Alex is dreaming big. With an extremely high work ethic and being very intelligent, Alex knows he can do whatever he sets his mind to. Perhaps living in a big city, or becoming rich? Time will only tell what Alex DeGraff can accomplish.



Looking Into The Future Alex watches on as he prepares for the next step in life.

Photo Courtesy of Cory O.



Charles: More than meets the eye

By
Janu P.
Senior Copy Editor

Many people at Alfred - Almond know Charles E. as a timid and quiet guy in the senior class, which is partially true. On the surface, Charles seems like an average guy, but he really has many attributes that set him apart from others. Charles' quiet personality helps him gain respect. He never says more than he needs to, which adds weight to anything he says. His tendency to be quiet is what makes his voice important to others.

Before I was given the opportunity to interview Charles, I didn't know much about him. I had read an article about him and his piloting hobby in a previous edition of The Observer, which I thought was incredibly interesting, so I was instantly excited to talk to Charles and get to know more about him. I already thought Charles was fascinating before the interview, but little did I know that Charles would fascinate me beyond his piloting hobby. Most teenagers hobbies would include watching Netflix, playing sports, and gaming, but not Charles. One of Charles' many interesting hobbies is piloting. He's been taking piloting lessons for a few years now with his father and it is one of his favorite things to do among other things. (To find out more about Charles and his piloting hobby, read Joe Kenyon's article "Charles the Aviator" in the January 2016 edition of The Observer, found here.)

Aside from piloting, Charles also enjoys drawing. He likes to draw animals, scenery and occasionally portraits of people. His love for



Up Up and Away Charles moments before he hops into a Cessna 172 and takes off at Hornell Municipal Airport
Photo courtesy of Charles E.

drawing began at a young age with his grandfather. Another interesting hobby of Charles' is learning to speak and write languages. He has learned to speak a little French, and taught himself to speak and write a little bit of Russian. He even began learning and writing Arabic but stopped because there were many different dialects. He is currently learning to speak and write Japanese. Charles likes learning different languages because someday he hopes to travel to different countries such as Japan, and would like to be able to communicate with the people. Charles also enjoys working with technology such as soundboards for mics and cameras. He has acquired many skills in that area by helping out at his Church and is also a part of the AACS Robotics club. Ten years from now, Charles hopes to be working for a computer company after receiving his computer

engineer technology degree. He also hopes to be able to travel to Japan and a few countries in Europe. Maybe by then he'll be able to fly himself there! Where Charles goes in the future and how he gets there is all a mystery, but one thing is for sure: Wherever he goes, and however he gets there, he will bring his bright, original, and humbling personality.



Soundboard Expert Charles loves working with soundboards and is very familiar with them through experience at his church.
Photo courtesy of Janu P.



The F. Files

By
Bill B.
Staff Writer



Cave Conference
Jessica's menacing pose.
Photo courtesy of Bill B.

Now, before I start, I am required to say that everything in this article is just my opinion, and that none of it is true. Despite this, I invite you to form your own opinions. Only you can decide what the truth is.

The best way to tell lie a is to hide it the truth, and that is exactly what Jessica F. did. The mortal told the truth like a manipulative, vile villain. The location of our interview was... interesting. It took place in an artificial cave made of plastic.; quite a fitting setting considering the multitude of manufactured deceit and lies that followed in our battle of words. (Or conversation, if you prefer. Weirdo.)

At first, our interview progressed predictably. I let Jessica interview me first as a courtesy. In spite of my politeness, she soon made her first evil ploy. She had the audacity to plant a bug, poorly disguised as her cell phone, in the tunnel! Of course I quickly dismantled this despicable ruse, and planted a bug of my own.

My interrogation began with an

intensely heated question - which was fitting, because the tunnel was really hot. Now before I tell you about that question I need to say that every American loves their hot sauce. Some mild, and some hot as the internal molten core of a hot pocket. Now to connect that little tangent with the first question I asked Jessica "What is your favorite hot sauce?" Her response? "I don't like hot sauce." She had admitted her hatred of the sacred sauce! Body How can she be human!? You can't even call yourself human if you don't like love hot sauce, because hot sauce is the culmination of the human ideals and all that is good in the world. The next thing I learned that admittedly wasn't as evil was the sports she played, which were soccer and swimming. One sport to practice kicking and running someone down, and the other to become an expert in drowning people, or as she would probably say, saving drowning people. Jessica training for such outcomes are not her only future plans. I got a glimpse of Jessica's forthcoming plans. She wants to go to Stony Brook University to become a Forensic Psycho, or "Forensic Psychologist," as she called it. She couldn't fool me though -- **psycho** is in **psychologist**! Coincidence? I think not! It's an interesting choice for a job either way. After that she plans to get a high paying job in New York City. The job is most likely to raise money for secret twisted experiments on random unsuspecting subjects. Only I'm allowed to do that! I even got a license from a guy in a dark alley next to the "Forgery for a Fee" shop... I digress. After further research, I found that a Forensic Psychologist's job is usually to testify in court to assess the mental state of criminals and victims. So Jessica is looking into a career involving crime and criminals...

That's not even the juicy part; the highlight of all this is when I asked her what she would do if given three wishes. What she wished for was for her family to be healthy, and to be successful in her education and job. You may have missed a very important detail there; she wished! Jessica Flaitz was willing to use magic to get what she wanted, you know, because wishes are inherently magic. Do you know who uses magic? A WITCH! Thats right Jessica is a witch, no doubt about it. When asked earlier if she was a witch she said, "No." Then I asked if she were sure, and she said, "Yes". Earlier she vehemently denied any and all connections to witchcraft too, even though she is willing to use magic.

Now that we know that Jessica isn't exactly a truther, we can dig deeper into conspiracy as one of my questions was "Who are you?", She responded "Uh, Jessica Flaitz." She said "uh" in that response, a hesitation after being caught off guard by me. That means that she can't possibly be who she said she is. She has to be something else altogether. What is she? I don't know. Only further investigations will be able to tell the truth of this person's identity. Also her shoe size is a ten.



Jessica's Flight
Jessica refusing further pictures.
Photo courtesy of Bill B.



MASTER OF DEFLECTION

By
Madge C.
Public Relations Manager

Rarely found anywhere else but on the soccer field or playing soccer, soccer is the favorite past time for high school Senior and Boys Varsity goalie, Dylan Griffin. Dylan shares that one of his proudest moments in all of high school was making it to sectionals and then states for soccer. He also recalls his favorite high school memory, which was the penalty shoot out in Spencerport. Although Dylan's main focus has been soccer there is more to him than just this. Dylan's favorite place to be when at school is in Mrs. Valentine's room. He says when in her room, if he has homework that needs to get done or any other school related projects, he can have some peace and quiet to meet the expected due dates.

Every student, at least by their senior year, had that one teacher that they can count on to be there for them. Dylan proudly calls his influence "Mother Valentine." When spending most of his time in Mrs. Valentine's room she has "kept him in check" and made him do as many of his assignments as she can get him to do on time. Dylan shares that the most important lesson that Mrs. Valentine has ever taught him is to "enjoy what you do in life whatever it ends up being, because if you don't you won't enjoy every day of your life."



The Master of Deflection *Dylan G. defends the goal from any suspecting scorers during the Senior Night home game.*
Photo Courtesy of Madge C.

Mrs. Valentine has definitely been that influential teacher that Dylan can call on. As most seniors have been through many years at Alfred-Almond they know the struggles of being an underclassman and how hard high school can really be. When asked to share some advice for the underclassman, Dylan says, "Don't go through school like me." Make sure you develop a good study pattern throughout your high school career to guarantee you pass all your tests. Put in a lot of effort and make sure all your work is done on time; this will pay off in helping you when other deadlines come around so you won't be scrambling to get all of your work done. When asked what his future holds and how he wants to be remembered at Alfred-Almond, Dylan has a carefree attitude.

Dylan doesn't want to stay in the area after high school ends so he hasn't really put much thought into what he is leaving behind at Alfred Almond. He says "what I leave behind is what it is." As for his future Dylan hopes to have a blank slate and make a new life of his own that is nothing like his life is now, although he states that the rest of his future is "a lot of unknowns". Although Dylan doesn't seem to care too much about what he is leaving behind and how he will be remembered at Alfred Almond, he knows he will get to soon be able to feel the joys of creating a new life for himself once college rolls around. Regardless of where Dylan ends up, we all know that whatever his future brings will definitely be something related to soccer.



Star Soccer Goalie *Dylan G. in the starting line up before the Senior Night Game*
Photo Courtesy of Madge C.

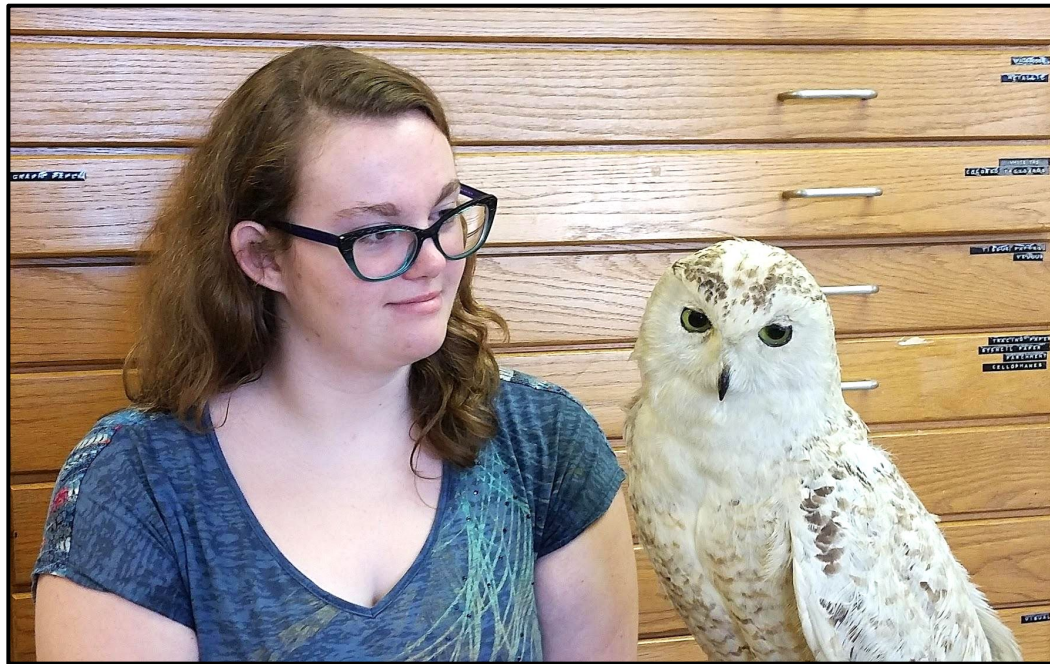


WHO IS MADISON?

By
Mrs. Backer
Adviser

Fourth mod Monday. As I welcomed Madison M. into my classroom, I realized that I was about to get a glimpse into the life of a student who, until this point, had only existed as a name on my roster. I would soon discover that of course, she is much, much more than just a name. Our conversation revealed a young woman who is incredibly self-aware; Madison knows exactly where she came from and has a clear vision of where she wants to go. She even found a way to inspire me in the 30 minutes in which we spoke, revealing a new approach to the sometimes insurmountable task of waking up in the early morning (5:27 a.m., to be exact).

An Alfred-Almond student since kindergarten, Madison has looked forward to journalism class since the seventh grade. She always liked reading the *Observer*, and took great interest in the articles and news stories that could be found in the student publication. Madison has always been drawn to stories of origins - stories that seek to discover where and how people, places, ideas, and events all began. With a collection of quirky history books covering topics such as "the stories you didn't learn about in high school" and the "origins of superstitions," Madison hopes to add her own written edition of an origin story to this year's *Observer* - a story featuring Mrs. Booman's stuffed owl, who, unlike Clem the skeleton, has yet to be given an official name (future AA naming contest, perhaps?).



Imagining the Origins *The art owl has been a fixture at Alfred-Almond since Madison's father was in school in the seventies. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Backer*

As our conversation moved on, I learned how Madison puts her love of history and information to good use as a member of the Academic All Stars - a favorite past time that she "always looks forward to." Madison's love for trivia stemmed from time spent watching Jeopardy with her grandmother. She and Grandma Flanagan used to compete with each other during the show, keeping a tally of who could get the most answers correct. While Grandma Flanagan was typically the victor, Madison noted that her best chances for winning came when the subject matter was more "current." Moments like this might be Madison's inspiration to pursue a history major, hopefully at Wells college. She doesn't plan on stopping there, though. If all goes according to plan, Madison will follow her four year degree with three years of study at Cornell Law School, where her ultimate goal is to achieve a law degree that will enable her to start a career in patent or family law.

Before all of this can happen, however, Madison must first wake up in the morning, and how she accomplishes this is nothing short of creative genius. At 5:27 am each weekday, Madison wakes up to a particular song that she has preselected for her morning soundtrack. Each day has its own song, and in listening to the music and lyrics, Madison feels inspired and ready to start her day.

As we neared the end of our chat, I felt lucky that the uneven number of students in our class resulted in an opportunity for me to get to know one of Alfred-Almond's finest on a more personal level. I look forward to hearing stories from Madison's unique perspective, learning more tricks for setting oneself up for a positive day, and perhaps, being even a small part in what has the potential to be the year in which Mrs. Booman's owl gets the name and fame that he (or she?) so greatly deserves.



By
Alex D.
Copy Editor

CORY'S IN THE HOUSE!

There we were, violently throwing ourselves back and forth. As Cory and I flew from one end to another, the clear sky and warm September sun brought back memories of relaxing afternoons spent playing in recess. We were there to conduct an interview, but that could wait. The playground was our priority, and the swing set was our first target. The feeling of nostalgia progressed with every swing. The chains connecting us to our seats could hardly contain our joy and excitement. Eventually though, our swings slowed down as we were brought back to reality in order to face the task at hand. But there was one thing I learned from this experience; the chains of Alfred-Almond can barely contain the awe-inspiring man named Cory Olix: the man who will pave the future of the Observer's articles on sports and politics.

This guy loves a lot of things, soccer and lemonade in particular. His favorite show is *Spongebob*, and is currently watching shows like *Hell on Wheels*, *Vikings*, *The Voice*, and news programs--specifically *Fox News*. His favorite movies are *Star Wars* and *Remember the Titans*. These movies reflect his nature; a large, and epic spectacle.

Cory is a huge scholar. His experience in college-level courses such as AP US History, ACE French, Sociology, and AP US Government and politics has given him the necessary skills to write some heavenly articles. Rest assured, he's going to write some sick pieces. He'll also be able to write on issues that are



Play Hard Soccer is an integral part of Cory's life; he plays it year round.

Photo Courtesy of Alex D.

important to him, further increasing the quality of his writing.

After this dude works hard in school, he works hard on the field, where his passion and talent for soccer cannot be matched. This team captain loves the sport so much that he plays it year-round. He sees it as a way to have fun, improve his skills, and socialize. His years of bonding with his soccer teams have given him the empathy required for an interviewer and article writer. Who better to write in our newspaper than somebody that is this dedicated to what he loves? Nothing but quality will be produced by Cory.

Cory is excited to enter the next stage of his life, and leave the chains of high school. Some colleges in which Cory has expressed an interest in attending are SUNY Cortland,



Work Hard Cory is constantly striving to achieve new heights
Photo courtesy of Alex D.



Hugging His Mom Cory sighted being a solid teammate and family member.
Photo courtesy of Madge C.

University at Buffalo, Slippery Rock, and Alfred University.

In short, The Observer is blessed to have a student as stunning and remarkable as Cory. His experiences as a writer and team player will certainly produce some of the best articles this school can create. He's huge in every sense of the word; look out for some stellar articles from the best of the best at Alfred Almond.



By
Charles E.
Staff Writer

Canada and Coffee

Janu P., a three sports athlete, a scholar, and a team player here at Alfred-Almond. Originally from Brampton, Ontario, Janu joined the Alfred-Almond family in 2010. Janu comes from a family of business owners. Her parents are the proud owners of the Pujari Mart, formerly known as Unimart, in Alfred, and two other convenient stores located in Cuba and Mount Morris.

Janu is the third of four children. In her free time Janu enjoys spending time with her family. Especially with her sisters, Pooja and Amy, and her little brother Rishi. Watching movies is something that they enjoy doing together. She also enjoys playing with her dogs Chrissy, a Shih-Tzu Maltese mix, and Aimee, a Maltese. Janu says that her mother is her greatest role model. She is motivational, strong, and who she aspires to be like.



Spring Home Janu at the track where she runs the 4 by 8 *Photo courtesy of Charles E.*

Janu involves herself in multiple sports: soccer, track, and basketball. She has played soccer since she was in elementary school at Fallingdale Public School. In



Outside With Her Pup Janu with her dog Chrissy *Photo courtesy of Amy P.*

track, she runs the four by eight, which includes four people running eight hundred meters, or two times around a track, the open eight-hundred meters and the mile. She does not think that she will continue playing these sports into college, but she might just for fun, perhaps intramural sports. Janu is also the President of Student Government. Janu was able to give some advice about what she thinks underclassmen need to know:

“Work hard, focus on the good, and don’t be alarmed if things don’t go the way you want. Remember you get out what you put in, and a good attitude can change any bad situation into a positive one.”

Janu’s dreams are to become an entrepreneur and open a coffee shop. She hasn’t worked out all the plans for how the shop will look or what the design will be, but what she does know, is that she will be in charge of the idea when that time

comes. She wants to go to college and get her degree in Business Management. The colleges she is interested in are The University of Toronto, as well as two schools in Ontario, Canada, University of Waterloo, as well as Wilfrid Laurier University. She would also love to travel to Europe and visit Greece, Paris, and Italy because it’s pretty.

Janu is a motivated woman with a clear plan for her future. She has a positive attitude and a joy for life that will allow her to go far.



Home court
Janu at the gym
Photo courtesy of Charles E.



The Somewhat True Tale Of Prince Harry

By
Erin A.
Public Relations Manager

I interviewed Harry on a sunny fall day outside by the playground as we listened to children playing and running around. The sun felt nice on our skin as we interviewed each other. The conversations we had gave me more insight on Harry, whom I never knew much about even though we've been going to school together since kindergarten. I only knew that he liked dirt biking and soccer, but talking to him really helped me get to know him better; he is a very interesting man, and this is what I found out.

As a member of the Boys Varsity Soccer team one thing Harry enjoys is the structure and family feel of the team. They have had a very good season so far, and hope to win



Recalling past good seasons
Harry has enjoyed the past seasons being on the soccer teams.
Photo courtesy of Erin A.

this year's states. Harry also plans on joining the Varsity Track Team to try something different; he wants to try the 800 meter dash or the mile for the team, hoping to make his last sports season a good one.

In addition to Harry's involvement in sports, he enjoys listening to older music, blues, and playing his guitar. His favorite artists are Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath. I can see why Harry enjoys listening to them because they are an amazing group. He has been playing his guitar for about a year and says that it is fun to play. Guitar can be a hard instrument to learn, but with the right instruction, it can be easy. Harry really likes a guitar teaching app called Yousician Guitar. He says that it helps more than an instruction book because it can check your progress, and is fun to play along too.

Harry also really likes riding his four-stroke YZ 250 dirtbike, but hasn't professionally raced. His favorite place to ride is in fields and he enjoys riding for long periods of time. He began riding road bikes to learn how to do certain tricks. He even went to a camp in New Hampshire over the summer to strengthen his skills. Another activity which Harry enjoys is camping, especially in the Adirondacks with his family friends, the McMahons. They go frogging, which is catching frogs with nets and the cooking them and kayaking. The Adirondacks are a beautiful



On the Home Field
Harry looking out on the soccer field where the varsity soccer team has found repeated success.
Photo courtesy of Erin A.

place to go at anytime of the year, especially the summer when life there is in abundance. Turns out, Harry is a very interesting person and I now know him better than I did before. I am glad that I had the chance to get to know him better.



Remembering adolescence
Harry getting in touch with his younger years as children run around on the playground.
Photo courtesy of Erin A.

Abbey: A Day in The Life

By
Owen C.
Design Manager

What is there to say about Abbey other than a stressed out girl spending a lot of time focusing on the future, but who can also kick back and live in the moment? I got the opportunity to sit down with Abbey and talk to her about how her senior year has been so far, and her plan for the future as well as her hobbies, aspirations, and deepest darkest secrets.

Regarding her senior year, Abbey said that "It's a little stressful, but it's helping my future." She also stated that "It could be better, could be worse." She's taking Journalism, Physics, and AP Government at Alfred-Almond, as well as World Religion and Calculus at Alfred University. Although she's not the biggest fan of her World Religion course, and Calculus can prove to be rather difficult, Abbey still enjoys the small aspect of college life she gets to experience a little early.



Devotion to the Team: Abbey has been a member of AA's soccer program for six years *Photo courtesy of Owen C.*



Born Leader Abbey is a captain of the Girls Varsity Track Team *Photo courtesy of Owen C.*

As far as college goes, she wants to major in pharmacy, and she's looking at University at Buffalo and University of Pittsburgh. When I asked about what she thinks about living in the big city, she commented, "I'd like to leave the small town" and that "Buffalo and Pittsburgh are not that far away." Abbey also stated that she doesn't spend a lot of time in the city, but that doesn't seem to worry her.

When she gets some time away from her hectic school life, she's very active in school sports. Abbey is involved in Alfred-Almond's Girls Varsity Soccer team as well as the Girls Varsity track team. When I asked her if she would ever apply these hobbies in college, she said that if anything, she would run intramurals (or a club league), but not competitive. Abbey said on competitive track, "I don't think I'm good enough, and it's a lot of work."

Something else I discovered about Abbey during our interview, was her admirable perseverance. I discovered this while we were talking about one of our mutual classes, Senior High Band. Abbey has been an active member of Alfred-Almond's Music Department ever since she was old enough have let her, but in recent years, it has started to become a little repetitive, as anything would if you've

been doing it that long. I asked her why she keeps doing it, why not quit. Abbey asked the rhetorical question, "Why would you do something so long just to quit it?" This response is very admirable, and will stick with many as a light at the end of the tunnel.

No matter how much Abbey loves Alfred, she likes to escape once in awhile. When I asked her how often she got out of Alfred, she jokingly stated "like Almond?" and we shared a laugh. When I elaborated and referred to vacation time, she stated that she'll go to Rochester and Buffalo a few times a year on day trips, but also takes the breaks during the spring and summer to go travel. This next spring break she plans on going to Puerto Rico. Her family has a tradition of going to Florida every spring break, but some of her extended family won't be able to go this year because of the different breaks between high school and college. Abbey on Puerto Rico stated, "I'm excited to have to speak Spanish for once. I've never been able to use it before." Abbey has taken Spanish every year in high school except for this one, because she finished the extent of the program last year. As Abbey would say, why would you do something so long just to quit it?



Hard at Work: Abbey has to study hard to get into University of Buffalo and University of Pittsburgh *Photo courtesy of Owen C.*



A Little Bit About...Brendan

Brendan W. and I sat on the public bench outside the school, immersed in a deep conversation about interests after high school. Despite distractions from the bright yellow and blue playground, familiar faces of teachers from our youth, and dozens of little kids running around us, we were able to stay on task. The fact we were outside was quite fitting, because when it comes to outdoorsmanship, Brendan does it all. During the fall, he stays physically active, but avoids competitive sports to make the transition into the new school year easier, instead of trying to balance out sports, high school and college classes. He loves to travel and has been to Yellowstone, Great Plains, Grand Canyon, Mexico, and the Caribbean. In addition to that, he is always

down for bonfires with friends and riding fourwheelers. Brendan loves politics and is extremely excited for the outcome of this election. He says that “this is a very unique election” and is trying to stay as unbiased as possible while doing so. After high school he plans to go to college to get a four year degree in an undecided field. Brendan is still deciding where he wants to go to college. He is looking at some local schools like A-State, and is also looking at some other private and public colleges further from home. He then plans on enrolling in law school after college. After law school, Brendan hopes to save up enough money to visit the seven wonders of the world. He wants to move down South, and most importantly leave New York like many other post graduates and to find a better living elsewhere.

Then, I asked him about his high school experience. He and I have been together since first grade, so, I was assuming that his experience was very similar to the one I had, which was very true. He transferred to Saint Ann's for grades fifth and sixth and was immediately welcomed back as he came back for seventh grade. He has rather enjoyed Alfred-Almond. “Everyone knowing everything about everyone is good and bad ...the community is friendly and [there is] little drama.” He feels that there aren't outsiders in a school this small and everyone is part of just one “family.”

By
Jack C.
Copy Editor



Brendan admiring the view. *Brendan on October 11th stood on a beautiful day taking a long glance at the hillside and is reminded about his love of the outdoors* **Photo courtesy of Jack C.**



Brendan holding his favorite role model. *With his love of politics and opinions on various controversial accounts, Brendan holds President Barack Obama's photograph falsely showing his gratitude.* **Photo courtesy of Jack C.**

Even though he notes these positives, he does admit that “people can get on your nerves,” and “it is hard to overcome conflicting opinions and close friendships can fall apart with widening interests.” He also said it is “sometimes hard to make new friends because there are no new people, and sometimes friend groups are difficult to fit into.”

There is a lot to say beyond what is stated here about Brendan but time interfered. He has both enjoyed the positives of AA, and taken note of the negatives. In the end he seems to be on the right track in life, and being his close friend, I can't wait to see what the future holds for him.



Abby - Unique

By
Madison M.
Copy Editor

On a Thursday morning in the library, I interviewed Abigail F. We talked for about twenty minutes and I was able to gain some insight into her personality. "Unique," that is the word that Abby uses to describe herself. No one person is like anyone else, even twins (and hypothetically clones) are unique; everyone has their own biggest accomplishment and their own dream vacation. There are multiple things to keep Abby busy during the school year: she plays basketball and softball, is a fire warden, and is co-editor of the A-A yearbook. Being editor is something that has been a wish of hers since she joined the yearbook in ninth grade. One could also say that being an editor of the ALCEN is a family tradition, as her mother was the editor when she was a senior. Multiple things have changed in the process since then, however, and Abby is grateful that they have a computer program to produce the yearbook in and don't have to do it by hand.

Multiple things have changed in the process since then, however, and Abby is grateful that they have a computer program to produce the yearbook in and don't have to do it by

hand. Even though the computers are helpful in preparing the yearbook, Abby believes that she could survive without technology. She is not addicted to her phone and likes to do things on pen and paper. However, being without technology would be a hindrance because homework is done on the computer and one would not be able to look things up with the click of a button.

The Abby's household would have to invest in a set of encyclopedias if the internet crashes as they own a dictionary but no encyclopedias.

A few of Abby's favorite things to do outside of school are to hang out with friends, watch reality television such as Keeping up with the Kardashians, and read Nicholas

Sparks books. Vacationing is also a favorite activity for her. Anywhere with a beach would be considered Abby's dream destination. Abby fell in love with the beaches in Florida and Mexico as she loves the sun and the clarity of water found there. It is no surprise then when Abby said that Fiji was her dream vacation.

Even though Abby can't go on vacation all the time, she is able to accomplish things that make her happy. School is one thing that Abby is proud of, she explained to me that her biggest accomplishment is getting a five on the AP US History exam. She considers this to be great because, to her, history is boring and the class was a gigantic source of stress for her, which is one thing Abby wishes she could do differently.

She hopes to learn how to better manage her stress and overcome the nerves and anxiety. Not stressing is one thing that Abby wishes she could do differently. As history was an obvious elimination for the favorite subject of the scholar, I had to ask what her favorite classes were; the answer was any math class and eleventh grade Spanish. All in all, I believe that "unique" is definitely the right word to describe Abby F..

Traveling the World!



Vacationing on different beaches is a favorite activity for AACs senior Abby.

Photo courtesy of Madison M.

Although Abby F. is not a member of the *Observer* Staff, she is definitely worth the time to learn about. She is a brilliant member of the senior class of 2017 and we are privileged to be able to learn more about her, and share what we have discovered with the student body.