

THE OBSERVER

The News We're All a Part Of



MEET THE STAFF



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Letter from the Staff

Dear Readers,

Welcome to another year of the Alfred-Almond *Observer*! As always, our first issue works to introduce the new staff writers to you, our audience. The fledgling journalists interviewed each other in an effort to get to know their teammates better, hone their skills as reporters, and deliver their findings to you.

Since this is a student publication, each year will have a slightly different feel depending on the goals and personalities of those who are working to produce each issue. This year's group strives to deliver a modern, engaging, and informative paper that provides the readership with articles that are both educational and entertaining. We will work to cover a variety of topics, with stories coming from those we see every day in the hallway to broader issues that impact the world.

We hope you enjoy the first issue of volume seven, and we look forward to serving you with another year of *Observer* publications. Happy reading!

"Atticus, he was real nice."
 "Most people are, Scout, when you finally see them."
 —Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

—Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Mission & Vision

The News We're All a Part Of

It is our mission as the Alfred-Almond *Observer* to provide truthful, unbiased, and accurate information to the student body. Our goal is to deliver relevant stories focused on both informing and entertaining the Alfred-Almond community. We strive to promote a positive school climate and will use the *Observer* as a way to give all voices at Alfred-Almond a platform.

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The Irish Stone Wall



How does one describe Emily N.? Well, to start off, maybe you've seen her strolling through the hallway surrounded by her friends. Or, perhaps you remember her older brother, the infamous Brody N. Maybe you only know her as the fiery red head holding down the defensive line on the soccer team. Well, no matter how you think you know her, there's always more than meets the eye.



Pet party
Emily
holding her
favorite cat
Nug
Photo
courtesy of
Emily Noone

After my interview with Emily N., I was able to get some insight into just how complex she is. According to Emily, her family is quite the "mind boggler." Emily's parents are divorced, her Dad lives a couple hours away, and she currently lives with her mother. At her Dad's house, she has two little half sisters and a step-mom. Then on her Mom's side, her Mom has a boyfriend; she has her only full brother, Brody; then two more half brothers, Cole and Luke. Emily describes her two little sisters, Rylee and Adleigh, as being "pretty chill," claims she can get along with Luke quite well, calls Brody and Cole "annoying," and says she gets along with her parents alright most of the time. Emily does have a hard time dealing with her

By: Duncan B-C

complicated family sometimes though, because unlike many, she can't visit her dad when she wants to because he lives so far away. In conclusion, Emily's family is quite complicated.

Aside from Emily's human family, Emily has five furry companions, her favorite being her cat, Nug. Emily describes Nug as a "fat and fluffy" grey cat. She says he's fun to cuddle with and c'mon, who doesn't love cuddling with their pets? After questioning Emily about what pet she would get if she could get any pet, she said a giraffe. Not the most common answer to that question, but certainly a unique one. She says she would get a giraffe because "they are tall and they eat trees." Who would have known Emily likes giraffes???

There's more to Emily than just family; she is also enrolled in two different sports teams here at our school: soccer and softball. On the soccer team, Emily plays right fullback, also referred to as defense, and occasionally center fullback when she is called upon to fill in for her other teammates. On the softball team, Emily used to be a pitcher, but this past year, her coach moved her to right field, where not soon after, she hurt her ankle. Emily prefers soccer over softball, as she says "softball is boring." Emily prefers the constant thrill of soccer games. When I consulted her friends Roni and Vianna, Roni said, "I'm lucky to have her as a friend," and Vianna shared how Emily "is really artistic." Emily enjoys playing with her friends on the soccer field and if you've ever caught one of her games,

you would see she's like a stone wall back there, not letting anything or anyone get past her.

Emily appears to be a practical, here for a good time kind of person. By practical I mean she doesn't over-think things and likes to keep it simple. I asked Emily how she would rob a bank (if she was going to rob a bank). She went with the classic route of a ski mask and a gun asking for money - quite a simple plan. Then, by here for a good time, I mean that Emily just wants to have fun and be happy. I asked her what she would do with a million dollars, and she said she would buy an amusement park. Her reasoning was that she would be able to ride all the rides all the time; this infers that she just wants to relax and have a good time. Lastly, when I asked Emily if she liked her name and what she would change it to if she could change it, she said she did like her name, but if she were going to have a different one, it would be "Irish." Her soccer coach calls her Irish and maybe, the next time you see Emily N., you too could call her Irish.



The soccer star
Emily stands in front of the goal, a position she's quite used to as she does play defense
Photo courtesy of Duncan B-C



Feisty Heisty Abigail

By Josh C.

Let me preface this article with an introduction. I've known Abby for years, ever since we met due to a common interest in the internationally-celebrated video game known as Minecraft in sixth grade. It was through a common love for video games and computers that kept us in contact; by means of online services such as Skype and Discord we could talk without leaving our dens. So it was by no coincidence that we happened to wander into the computer lab where we could bathe in the glow of LED screens and cold air - and avoid direct contact with the sunlight - to exchange interviews.

J: If you had five million tax-free dollars sitting in front of you that the IRS wouldn't bother you about, what would you first spend it on?

The answer, rather obvious looking back on it, was whips and cribs.

A: I'd probably buy a hot pink Ferrari, and then I would buy a house in Malibu, California.

She has all her bases covered. For the next hypothetical, the conversation pivoted to language.

J: If you could instantly learn any three languages, spoken or otherwise, which three would you choose?

A: My first choice would be Japanese, because it's a pretty interesting language and Japan is on the opposite side of the world from us, it's just different... As for my second language, I would probably pick German, because German is similar to English but kind of different. It seems like a fun language to speak. And my last one would be to actually fluently speak Spanish, because I've taken five years of the class and I don't even know if I'm really that good at it.

Next, the most important hypothetical of all.

J: If you could broadcast one message to everyone on Earth, which message would you choose?

A: 'Peace, Love, Unity, Respect.' I would broadcast P.L.U.R. out to the world because I think sometimes we



PROLIFIC ACTOR

Abby has been involved in numerous video works with her friends. She sometimes appears in productions from MWO F Media, an online collective that grew from the halls of Alfred-Almond. This picture is from 'USHistoryExtraCredit.mp4' which can be found on YouTube.

Photo courtesy of MWO F Media.

all gotta take a break and be optimistic and understand what other people are feeling and where they're coming from.

Not a secret, encoded message, not a message meant to confuse or annoy, but a basic reminder that we are all in this together and need to love one another. Truly inspiring words. And on the opposite end of the spectrum, a question about wrongdoings:

J: What's your perfect heist? If you had to obtain something you weren't supposed to have, how would you do it?

A: I would probably sneak into a concert, front row seats or backstage, for All Time Low, so I could meet them.

J: How would you accomplish that?

A: I could probably fit into somebody's bag and be carried into the concert, and blend in.

J: Sounds uncomfortable.

With the hypotheticals out of the way, we discussed influences.

J: Where do you get your inspiration to wake up and get out of bed? What causes you to wear the clothes that you wear and do the things that you do?



Feisty Heisty Abigail

Continued

A: I'm very inspired by a leadership director that I had last year for a counselor training program at a camp. His name is Duncan J. He's a great leader and has good judgement and inspires me everyday to keep going because everyday is a new day.

J: What camp is he from?

A: YMCA Camp Cory on Keuka Lake.

J: What do you do there?

A: I am a counselor, I lifeguard for kids and I'm in cabin with ten girls, age ranges from seven to fifteen, and it's a pretty fun time ...

And on the subject of influences...

J: ...I know another one of your influences is music. Any favorite genres or artists in particular?

A: I listen to a vast range of music... I listen to a mix of the genres 90s alternative, punk rock, select rap, and sometimes classical. As for artists that I like, my favorites are the Fray, Jack Johnson, All Time Low, and Ed Sheeran.

She also is a fan of short films as an artistic format.

A: I watch a lot of short films on YouTube, because I find that they usually have a good message at the end, and they're just a good expression of art. Two of my favorites are 'Cold' by Emily Diana Ruth and 'Removed' by Nathanael Matanick.

For the final question, I learn where her values lie.

J: What are some items you find so essential to your everyday life that you always have them on your person, easily-accessible?

A: For number one, I'd say my cell phone, which I generally have on me all the time, [...] there are some times that I don't, like when I'm working at camp, I'm



LOYAL COMPADRE

Abby always does everything with her crew nearby.

In this crew in particular, we see (from left to right) Jeanne D., Liam C., Abby H., Wyatt A., Jessie M., and Alex D.'s head.

Photo courtesy of Jeanne D.

MUSICAL MASTER

Abby is very active musically, considering she took AP Music Theory and has been active in band for many years. She also plays the piano in her free time.

Photo courtesy of Josh C.



not allowed to use my phone until night time, which is understandable... I feel like it's my connection to the world, because sometimes it's hard for me to put myself out there. My second object that I always have with me, I would probably say my watch. I have a waterproof watch which I got for my birthday, and it's a pretty nice watch. It looks good and it's usable at camp when I'm lifeguarding, because it's waterproof. Another item that I always keep on me is a set of bracelets - reminders - because you use your hands a lot during the day and you're going to be looking down and you'll see them. I have a distance bracelet, which one of my close friends also owns, so I'm reminded of him from that bracelet.

Let it be known from this interview that Abby is an individual with her morales in the right place. Lover of music, bracelet collector, camp goer. Considering she would broadcast a message of peace, love, unity, and respect over one of chaos, confusion, hate, and lunacy, you know she is someone you can count on at any point.



Sam the Wild Man

By: Kaitlyn C.

The elevator cubby was cool. The sounds of people going through the hallway interrupted our interview often, and broke any silent moments that we had. Doors opening and closing were a jarring reminder that we were in school, an institution much more rigid than the interview we had. As Sam and I sat, I had no idea what to expect. We had never really talked much throughout our years of school, except for passing conversation. I knew that he enjoyed hunting, soccer, and music, but most everything else was a mystery to me. There is so much more to him than meets the eye, such as the fact that he competes in turkey calling, and I am very glad I got the chance to learn.

Sam enjoys hunting, hiking and fishing. He has been hunting since before he could even walk. Hunting is very big with his family; he explains "It's how we get all of our food and everything." Sam also enjoys using wild mushrooms in food. He started foraging them because he always saw them out in the woods and "figured if there was a chance that I could eat them, why not?" When he was 12 he found his first mushroom - a morel. "They taste really good pan-fried," Sam recommends. Now he owns five books about identifying mushrooms so he can make sure they are safe to eat.

Sam is also a talented competitive turkey caller. His first competition was at the Steuben County fair, and he won second place, only bested by an 18 year old. Sam was 8 years old at the time. "My grandpa was the head of the Steuben County Sportsmen's



Sam the Goofy Man "Sam's a cool guy, he's funny, and he's good at cheering people up," said Attilo, one of Sam's teammates.
Photo courtesy of Kaitlyn C.

Federation and he hosted a turkey calling contest, and I've been using turkey calls since I could walk. So I figured I would try it out," Sam recalled. Over the years Sam has won four state championship contests, and has been to Grand Nationals twice.

Not only does Sam know his way around the woods, he also knows his way around the soccer field. He started out kicking the ball around his yard. When he entered kindergarten he joined the youth soccer league. As he got older and soccer became more serious, Sam



Sam the Soccer Man The midfielder with amazing dribbling skills has scored one goal this season with seven assists, and scored six goals last season.
Photo courtesy of Kaitlyn C.

played the position of attacking midfielder. Sam eventually went on to become the forward for Alfred-Almond's boy's varsity soccer team. "It was pretty crazy, very weird experience." He said, remembering winning States, "It was pretty awesome." I went to see my first soccer game this year and watched Sam play. He is very passionate about the sport, and leaves it all on the field.

Passing Sam in the hallways doesn't give you the chance to get to know who he is. This interview goes a little deeper, but there is always more to learn. Sam is a remarkable man and his love for the outdoors is inspiring. In the words of Chloe, "He's a cool dude."



Sam the Hunting Man Hunter extraordinaire, Sam looks forward to the spring turkey season. *Photo courtesy of Kaitlyn C.*



Sweet Home Alabama

By: Attilo C.



A Long Road Ahead It won't be long before Chris, a senior, begins his journey into the adult world and faces challenges on his own. Photo Courtesy of Annie Lloyd.

Chris's interview began in a rather small, carpeted space with live jazz music in the background. There were a couple chairs which made it so both of us had the option to sit, however Chris chose to sit on the floor so his back could be against the refreshing coolness of the cement wall. Unknowingly, this location I chose for my interview with Chris couldn't have been farther from Chris's comfort zone. He prefers the sounds of the wind gently moving the branches of the trees, little animals running across the forest floor, the trickling of the water in the creek, and crows calling to each other.

18 year-old Chris Galusha feels at home in the outdoors. He loves to hunt, fish, hike, and even work outside so he can feel the open air. From a young age, he

and his dad would go hunting, fishing, and adventuring in nature, creating a foundation for what would become a large influence in Chris's life. "My dad taught me everything I know about the outdoors... We spend a lot of time hunting and fishing together," Chris said to me. His interest in hunting and fishing had taken him on a trip to Alabama with his father, where he now plans on going to college at Northeast Alabama Community College. When asked, "Why Northeast Alabama?" he replied, "I love the South, and Alabama has good hunting." Chris also mentioned that the college has a fishing team that he is interested in.

Growing up, Chris would love to pretend to be a policeman. Part of this love came from his grandfather's influence as a state trooper. This interest persisted, and as of a couple of years ago, Chris has started to take bigger strides towards becoming a Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officer. He has gone to camps for the past two years, talked to multiple DEC officers, and according to him, has even emailed Lieutenant Matthew T. Lochner of the DEC Department in Albany. I asked him what he did to get the opportunity to speak with these

Northeast
Alabama
Community
College

"Chris is a big man, full of big ideas, with some big guns."
~Duncan B-C.

"Chris is an avid hunter that loves the outdoors."
~Matt I.

"The one kid who was talking about hunting?"
~Zoey K.

"I think Chris has a very positive outlook on life."
~Sophie N.

"He is really good at raising money with fundraisers."
~Abby H.

Continued on next page.

Department of Environmental Conservation officers. In response, he said, "..., my neighbor who had just moved in is a DEC officer." Chris claims that his desire to pursue this profession has given him more direction in school. "I've really started to focus on [School] a lot more over the last few years. I used to be an underachiever; now I like to aim higher." I continued to ask more about the duties of an officer in this specific department of law enforcement, how they compare to other law enforcement officers, and what kind of training is required. He replied that DEC officers actually have more authority than State Troopers,



At One with Nature

What you can't see in this image is the fact that is that he sat on a log with dirt, and likely many worms, beetles, etc; without a second thought.

Photo courtesy of Attilo C.



Future Mustang!

Chris looks forward to going to college and starting a new life on his own.

Picture from www.nacc.edu

stating, "Believe it or not Attilo, from what I've learned at DEC camp, the academy is pretty tough. If you had to ask me, it sounds a little more intense than the State Trooper academy." Since this is merely an opinion, it is hard to qualify this statement; however, after researching both six month training programs, I think many would agree that the training program for becoming an officer in the Department of Environmental Conservation is much more intense than what might have been expected. For example, you must be tazed and pepper sprayed.

Another thing about Chris that many might not know is his work ethic. He told me that "I've always had a good work ethic," then quickly added with a slightly guilty smile, "Just not with school work." He proceeded to talk about how over this summer and past summers, he has done plenty of

hard work on local farms for some money. Chris also added proudly that he likes to work for everything he can. "I hate depending on my mom and dad," he said. "I don't want them to give me everything I have."

All in all, Chris is an 18 year old with the ambition to achieve great things in the near future after he leaves high school. Hopefully at this point, you have learned a few new things about "that one kid who wears camo," the "avid hunter," and that kid who fundraises a lot. Maybe now, Chris is no longer just a face to you, but a person you can feel some what acquainted with; enough to even wave, or say "Hi" to in the hallway.



One down! More to come?

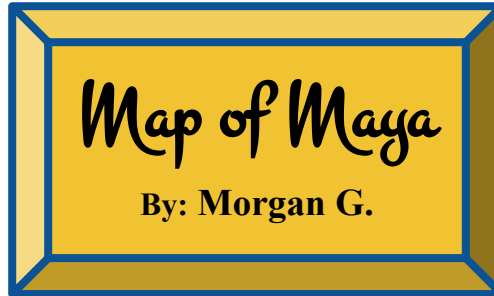
Chris shot this doe within the first week of bow season (which started on October 1), and is his first deer this year (2017). Photo Courtesy of Chris's Mother, Jennifer G.



Around the Globe- *Venturing into the school's learning center, Maya gravitated toward the rotating model of the globe she one day hopes to travel. Photo courtesy of Morgan G.*

One sunny afternoon, Maya R. and I wandered into the school auditorium to conduct interviews of one another for this "Meet the Staff" edition of the *Observer*. As we were about to begin, the tranquil mood of our conversation was interrupted as a teacher came in and quickly flicked the lights off without even noticing us sitting in the far back corner of the room. Now with only our laughter and computer screens filling the darkness, we began the interview with a question that would prove important to the overall understanding of who Maya really is: "Where have you traveled?" This question set the tone of the interview and helped me to realize how important adventuring is to Maya.

This central theme in Maya's life seemed to connect to every new detail that came to light in that dark room. Her love for traveling seemed to be almost genetic as she began to describe how her grandma had emigrated to America at the young age of 19, and how her dad traveled a lot for his marketing job. According to Maya, her grandma is one of her biggest role models, and her dad was a big influence in her decision to go into the marketing field, as well. When asked if she felt her dad had shaped her job choice, she responded with "definitely," and explained that her dad "used to work for Fisher Price and travel all over" and that she felt "it would be really cool" if she could travel for her job too. This led me to an understanding of how large of an impact these prominent figures had in shaping her love for adventure.



This effect on her life decision of going into the marketing field led to a discussion about her future plans. While Maya has already traveled to Australia, India, and Costa Rica, she hopes to someday travel to places such as South Korea, Hong Kong, and Italy. Her international travels, while they do hold a special place in her heart, are not at the top of her list. The place that takes the cake in Maya's book is the infamous New York City, located only six hours from home. When asked why she loved NYC so much, she depicted her favorite part. "So you know when you get off the subway station and then you're walking up the stairs to get out, to the city, and the minute you walk up the stairs and you're at the top and you're just hit with everything, that's my favorite part." She explained how the mixture of so many different cultures and lives was so interesting to her as she would wander the crowded streets, towered over by monstrous buildings.

When asked about college, Maya expressed that she was only looking at colleges in New York state, such as Syracuse, Binghamton, and Pace which is located directly in NYC. This decision to stay close to home seemed to contradict everything I had pieced together so far. How could someone who wanted to travel so bad want to stay so close to home? She then confused me even more when she told me her dream places to live included Italy and South Korea. This led me to investigate further by interviewing Maya's best friend Sophie in hopes of having an explanation come to light. During our conversation she said that "Maya is one of the kindest and most compassionate people I know, and she always puts

other people first." As we were having this conversation another friend of Maya's, Kaitlyn, jumped in, recalling a funny story regarding how Maya "helped [Kaitlyn] improve her fashion sense." Needing to figure out how all of these different sides of Maya connected, I ended up in the comforting office of Mrs. Decker, who described Maya as "quiet, kind, compassionate, and helpful to others." As I recollected my conversation with Sophie I remembered the similarities in her response. I then recalled what a fellow adventurer, Alyssa, had said during our conversation: "Being friends with Maya is an adventure." At that moment I had finally put all of the pieces of the puzzle together.

The people that instilled and nurtured that love for adventure in her, ranging from friends to family, would always be here. She wasn't staying close to home because she didn't want to adventure, it was because she wasn't ready to leave the people who mean so much to her. She appreciates the value of all adventures, and knows they can be found closer to home than you thought, whether it's a wrong turn, a weird saying from a stranger, or a change in fashion sense. New York state may always be home to her, but Maya knows that one day she will have to go on an adventure of her own, much like the one her grandmother went on so many years ago.



Maya's Map- *Maya shows off the map located in her family home marked with all of the places she and her family have traveled to. This real life "Map of Maya" serves as both a fun family tradition and a personal way of remembering her travels. Photo courtesy of Casey R.*



The Humble Athlete

By: Christopher G.

Who is that kid that many people ask about in the hallways of Alfred-Almond? Attilo Val Sujin Hoshaku C., if you don't already know, is part Japanese and part Italian. Many people know Attilo as "A good hard worker, and a great athlete" - Matthew I. Attilo is part of the varsity soccer team, who, back in the fall season of 2016, was able to bring home the trophy and the title as the 2016 Class D New York State Boys Soccer Champions. Attilo also has played Varsity Baseball the past two years, and is currently getting ready for his third and final season coming up in the spring of 2018.

Attilo also shared a story with me. When Attilo was younger, he and his family went back to Japan to visit family. Attilo and his brothers were riding their bikes down a hill in Japan on a beautiful sunny day. Attilo started gaining speed going down the hill. His view of the bottom of the hill was blocked by the bamboo like plants, when all of a sudden a car pulled out in front of Attilo. Attilo tried to avoid the car but it was too late. Attilo slammed into the side of the car, then was launched off his bike seat and landed onto the windshield. Pumped up with adrenalin, Attilo rolled off the windshield onto the hood, and onto the ground. The driver jumped out of his car in shock, ran to Attilo and checked on him making sure he was ok.



*Baseball is his other half and his life
Photo Courtesy of Christopher G*



In this photo Attilo gets into the zone and prepares for the upcoming baseball season. Coach Turner quotes, "Attilo is a fantastic teammate. He is hard-working, humble, athletic, and can be delightfully funny. He is a balanced young man."

Photo Courtesy of Christopher G

This happened in 2008, and could have been the end of his baseball career before it had even started. However Attilo was uninjured and was able to start his baseball career in 2009 when he started playing with the little league Yankees.

Attilo is a great baseball player, and has modeled his baseball technique after Major League baseball player Ichiro Suzuki. Ichiro was born and raised in Japan and even played most of his professional baseball career in the Japan league. He then was brought to America by the Seattle Mariners in 2001. He is currently 43 years old playing for the Miami Marlins, and is the oldest Major League outfielder in Major League history. Attilo one day hopes to one day be drafted into the Major League to be a star outfielder, like many kids who love the game. Attilo is a genuinely passionate baseball player. We have played in the outfield together and I have seen first hand how Attilo always has his teammates' backs. Varsity Baseball coach Keith Holmok shared, "Attilo is a complete team player who has a strong arm and enjoys chasing down fly balls, he also is eager to take the mound and challenge any batter."

After he finishes up his time in high school, Attilo's next level will be collegiate baseball. If all goes well he will hopefully be drafted to go and play on a minor league team and show his abilities to his coaches and then make his way to the top.



Who is Joshua David C.???

By: Abigail H.

The man, the myth, the legend... Joshua David C.! You may know him as Big J, Thoughtful J, Wacky J, etc. Not only is Josh a warm-hearted, comical guy, but he is a wizard at computers.

Josh's hobbies on the computer involve making content such as music, videos, graphic designs, playing video games, and browsing the internet. The music that Josh single-handedly produces, "borders between instrumental hip-hop and trap." (Trap is a genre of music that is related to hip-hop, dance, electronic music). Many of Josh's classmates think highly of him, such as Chloe M. who shared, "He's got a good personality and he's really funny!" while fellow classmate Emily N. stated, "He's pretty rad!" Josh often plays video games online with his friends. Josh's family is also a big part of his personal life. He spends time with his brothers at home, and his family often has movie nights. He has two younger brothers, Liam (sixth grade) and Ben (eighth grade). Josh described his brothers, telling me, "Ben is very blond and skinny... he's sort of out there. He never knows what's going on - in a good way," and about Liam "...he's got a good brain on his shoulders... we have similar likes [and interests]."

For future plans, Josh has decided on applying to RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology), which is conveniently located about hour drive away from Alfred, NY.

Josh says, "RIT has a unique degree that I'm interested in: motion picture science." This major is specifically the engineering of video and audio production, including working with lenses, camera sensors, video codecs, and more. This degree would open up many careers in the media and engineering fields to Josh.

You have to wonder what type of people give inspiration to Josh. He

for the food, he picked sausage and pepperoni pizza. For my second hypothetical, I proposed the question that if Josh had the opportunity to go to any country, where would he go, and why? Josh responded with South Korea, Japan, the UK, or Sweden, because they're all first world countries. He shared that he would like to go to a country that "...has access to all the commodities of the first world." As a

senior residing in the United States, one may wonder what Josh would have to share with the younger students at Alfred-Almond. His words to the underclassmen were "Don't worry about school too much, it'll be okay. Sure, it's okay to

respects and appreciates mostly everyone, especially those that can keep it chill. An example of someone Josh has the same philosophy of is Lil B, an American rapper from Berkeley, California. Josh stated that Lil B is "all about those positive vibes, he's a chill connoisseur, a panther, an opossum."

For some creative or hypothetical "What if?" questions, I asked Josh "If you could eat any meal with any person, alive or dead, who would it be with and what would you eat?" He went with a strategical answer, saying, "...someone who has the answer to something that we need. I want to obtain useful information out of the dinner." For an example, Josh thought of the first person on Earth, since "it would be beneficial to science," but as

prepare for something short-term and to try to give yourself a boost in the future, but don't stress yourself out about what you don't need to." Another great quote from Josh concerning grades is "...be as good as you can be, make first honors if you can, but if you can't, it's okay, we're all human". Josh also states that "time flies." using AP Biology as an example, when creating the four year high school plan Josh says, "it seemed so far away; now it's over".

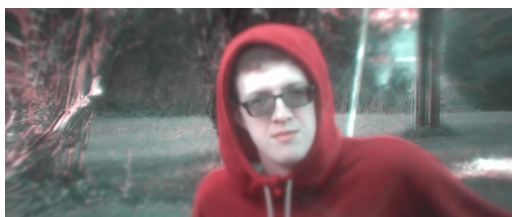
You can't pass up a chance to speak to Josh because he's one of the coolest cats you'll ever meet. Overall, Josh C. is an intelligent, humorous guy and if you see him in the hallway, don't hesitate to wave and smile.



A Poppin' Single Josh applies his graphic design skills to create album art covers for his music. He uses programs like Photoshop and FL Studio to create his content. Josh publishes his music- onto Soundcloud.com under the username oBdurate. His music includes solo work, collaborations with friends and cousins, and remixes.

Image courtesy of Josh C.

A Content Creator Josh makes an appearance in a self-made video. This short film was created last year in 2016 for the purpose of an extra credit project for US History. The video is called 'USHistoryExtraCredit.mp4' and can be found on youtube.com. Josh is constantly producing content, whether it's music, graphic designs, or videos. *Photo courtesy of MWoF Media*





Defender, Sprinter, Friend



By: Jessica M.

On Friday, September 15, I sat across Veronica M., more commonly known as “Roni”, prepared to ask her about interests, hobbies, and family. At first, the only noise was the whirring of freezers in the back, permeating the air with the scent of Italian dunkers and chocolate milk. After some small talk about said lunch, we decided to begin the interviews.

To start, I asked Roni about her current soccer season. I remembered her almost always being right midfielder, so I was very surprised to learn that she was now playing as a defender. “His [Coach Lucey’s] logic is that I’m really fast so I can get back [to help],” she remarked as to why she now plays defense, and although she said it is a bit frightening, she is warming up to the position. Roni said that she likes playing soccer because of the “teamwork” it requires for you to win. Fellow teammate Sophie N. remarked, “Roni improves every season... she is very determined and hardworking.”

Senior Season Roni has happily played soccer for Alfred-Almond for the past six years and is excited for her final season.

Enjoying the Fall As the trees change colors, Roni is reminded of autumn’s beauty and opportunities.

Photos courtesy of Jessie M.

Following our discussion about soccer, I inquired about her track career. Roni started running track in ninth grade; she had previously played softball, making this upcoming year her fourth with the Varsity Girl’s Track team. Her typical events are sprints, with her favorite being the 200m (half of the track). Another member of the track team, Maya R., said, “Roni works really hard in track and is very positive.” Roni stated that she likes track more than soccer because, unlike soccer, it’s more individualized, so you can “push yourself,” use your competitors as motivation to “run faster, jump farther,” and “it’s hard to see your improvement in soccer, but with track you can always get better.”

Following this conversation, we talked about friends and family. Most of the school year, when Roni is not busy with school and sports, she’s spending time with her family. In particular, she loves to spend time with her dad and sister. Roni describes her dad as “a really goofy guy overall,” and her “main supporter” for any problem that she has, which is something she really admires. For fun, the two ride ATVs together through the forest. Her sister, Alex, is her closest sibling, as she has spent the most time with her. Alex was able to be an awesome big sister to Roni throughout the years,



spending time with her while shopping, going to movies with her, as well as attending her soccer games.

Roni usually sees her friends in school, since she is so involved with her family at home, but still has some favorite activities to do with them outside of school. One of her favorite seasons is autumn because of all of the awesome social opportunities it has. Varsity soccer and football games happen all the time and are extremely intense, leading Roni and many other comrades to watch them. Halloween also occurs during this time, so many fun events happen. One of her favorite memories is going to the annual Halloween Dance at AACS as Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head with her friend Abbey and unexpectedly winning a prize. When it’s not fall, Roni still enjoys going to parties and concerts with former senior friends.

From this interview I learned how passionate Roni is about important things. She is an extremely good athlete, family member, and friend. I hope her senior year is full of happiness and bliss for both her sports career and home life.



By: Matt I.

Larger Than Life

On a very hot, sunny day in our amazing, smelly senior area, I had the opportunity to get to know Chloe, the two sport athlete, who was originally from Seattle, Washington until her family had to move here for work. I've gone to school with her as long as I can remember and we've always been friends, but I've never just sat down and talked to her like this. It wasn't exactly what you would call a great interview environment, with cars, people and buses passing through making a whole lot of noise, but even with all this we were able to get to know each other a lot more so than before. Most people that see Chloe towering over everyone in the halls would just imagine her as being another one of Alfred Almond's fine scholars that's constantly worried about her homework, grades, and nothing else. However, there is a lot more to Chloe than that.

Chloe has a variety of talents. Many people know that Chloe is part of the softball team; I hadn't asked Chloe about sports so I went and found Roni and Emily in the hall and asked them about her athletic ability. They told me that, She has been captain for a year as a junior, she's the first baseman, and she helped lead them to the sectional finals last year. They may have lost in the finals but it was still a big accomplishment for her (and the team) since they had not been to the finals in quite some time. She's also a big part of the basketball team. As everyone knows, Chloe isn't exactly what you would call short, so that helps her out on the basketball court. I've had the experience of watching Chloe play

basketball, and I have noticed how talented she is, especially when it comes to using her height to send some shots back to where they came from.

When I asked Chloe what her future plans were for college, she said that she is very excited to start the next stage of her life. Her dream is to attend St. Bonaventure to study psychology for four years. When I asked why she Chloe why she chose this major, she responded with, "It's just so interesting. There is so much to learn" She seems to be undecided about her plans for a job after she studies at Bonaventure.

I asked Sam W., Chloe's boyfriend, what her favorite past time is; he says that her favorite pastime is "messing with her dog Rosco," and he says that she absolutely loves "The Walking Dead." After I asked Sam, I went to Chloe and asked her. She gave me the same answers as Sam and then she also told me that she loves to



Those Crocs Though

Chloe M., left, showing off her friends' awesome crocs after a must-win sectional softball game under the lights last season at Houghton College.

Photo courtesy of Emily N.



Another Win

Chloe left, celebrates a sectional win last year with her good friends and fellow softball players Emily and Hannah.

Photo Courtesy of Emily N.

write. When I asked about what she likes to write about, she responded with, "I really enjoy writing about things that I've experienced in my life so far."

The time I took to sit down and get to know Chloe really showed me that you may think you know someone, and you might, but there may also be a lot more to that person's story than you already know. So the next time you see someone you think you know, sit down, and just talk. You may be surprised by how much you learn.



Pretty in Pink

Chloe shows off her school spirit for neon day on the first day of spirit week.

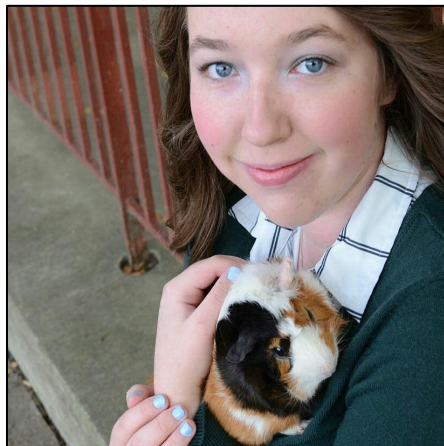
Photo Courtesy of Wendy M.



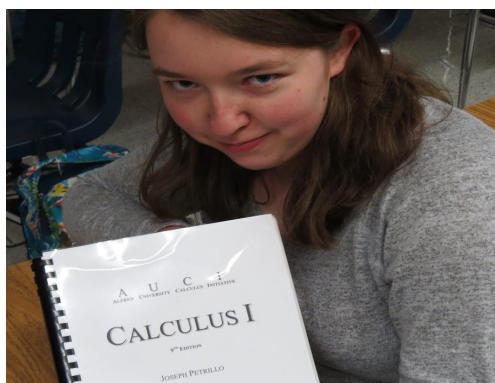
Can I Bring My Guinea Pigs to College?

By: Veronica M.

Recently I had the opportunity to interview a fellow classmate and friend of mine, Jessica M. The cafeteria seemed like a quiet place to hold the interview; it was dark with some light shining through the windows, vacant besides the two of us, and quiet except for the buzzing of the freezer. Jessica, or “Jessie,” is more than meets the eye. The interview allowed me to get to know more about Jessie that I would have never known, such as her favorite pastimes, love for guinea pigs, and future ambitions. I was interested in Jessie’s aspirations and goals for the future ahead of her.



Guinea Pig Lover *Jessie happily poses with Lola, one of her three guinea pigs. Jessie’s pets mean the world to her.*
Photo courtesy of Mrs. McClain



Math is Her Strong Suit *Holding her Calculus I book, Jessie shows off one of her many academic talents that she wishes to pursue in the future.*

Photo courtesy of Veronica M.

Outside of school you can probably find Jessie playing video games with her friends, spending time with her three guinea pigs, baking lots of goodies, or of course, studying and doing academics. Some of Jessie’s favorite video games are XCOM2, Overwatch, and Playerunknown’s Battleground. When she’s not playing video games, you’ll probably find Jessie spending time with her guinea pigs: Charlotte, Lola, and Will. They are probably the most loved guinea pigs around; they even have their own Instagram account!

Jessie has always loved guinea pigs and got her first one when she was nine. She hopes to add to the guinea pig family by getting a fourth one soon.

Jessie’s dream college is Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. “I’m basically looking for research and a really good college to get a foundation and a lot of opportunities, and I think Cornell could do that,” said Jessie. If she doesn’t go to Cornell, her next choice would be the University of Rochester. She wants to do as much research as she can and study biochemistry in college. “She is a very motivated person and always kind and helpful,” said her good friend Sophie N. Jessie’s college career is a very important step in her life and she values her education. Jessie’s grandfather had Alzheimer’s disease, and it inspired Jessie to learn more about the disease through research. She is interested in neuroscience and is curious to learn more about Alzheimer’s disease and the brain in general. “I want to do research on different components of the brain and how they work together,” she says. Jessie is a caring person who wishes to use her own skills in math and science to help others.

Believe it or not, she wasn’t very fond of science in elementary school.

In the far future, Jessie would also consider teaching either math or science. “Jessie and I have been friends since third grade, and she has always been very helpful in every subject, especially math,” says good friend Kaitlyn C. Jessie aspires to use her own knowledge in hopes of helping and teaching others. Jessie explained that she wants to teach because, “The future generation needs to know how to do these things too; the same people aren’t going to be around forever.”



Future Science Major *Jessie is looking forward to studying biochemistry next fall, hopefully at Cornell University. Miss Carretto’s science lab makes the perfect setting for Jessie.*

Photo courtesy of Veronica M.

It surprised me that such a brief interview would hold so many unknown details about Jessie that I would have never otherwise known. The interview felt more like a conversation between two fellow classmates. This process was an eye-opener for sure; I realized that I nonchalantly pass hundreds of people everyday and each person, even in this small school, has their own unique story to tell. I have learned that Jessie is a passionate student, video game expert, and guinea pig lover. This article is only a snippet of Jessie’s life, and I am fortunate I got the opportunity to get to know her kind and caring personality a little bit better.



Stopper and Left Defender

By: Chloe M.

On a bright and sunny day in the middle of September, I sat quietly and listened to Matt I. talk about his plans for the future, his regrets about the past, and his thoughts about the present. We were put to the task of interviewing each other for our first Journalism assignment. We sat out at the picnic table in senior area next to a garbage can full of water and trash. Our choice in setting was probably not the best, as there were many distractions throughout our interviews, yet we got right down to business. After he repeated the phrase, "Send iiiit," a few times, the ice was officially broken and I dove right into questioning him.

The first thing we talked about was simple. I asked about his favorite pastime. He answered, "Not sitting at school, playing soccer." His answer, although simply phrased, explains a lot about Matt. From what I already knew about him, I knew that he was incredibly athletic and he didn't like being cooped up in school all day.



Playground Fun Matt revisits his childhood on the playground at Alfred-Almond, is the perfect setting for his fun personality. *Photo courtesy of Chloe M.*

Matt is an exceptional soccer player so I asked him more about sports. Naturally when talking about his favorite sport, he said, "Soccer, because I'm good at it," and later when we discussed it, he added that it's one of his favorite sports because his team won states.

Matt was a junior last year when he was on the boy's varsity soccer team that won states. This accomplishment must have left a very big impact on Matt because when I asked him what he was proudest of he once again brought up winning states. Matt and I discussed which positions he played on the soccer field and he said, "Stopper and left defender." We talked about other sports that he plays and he told me that during basketball he plays wherever he is needed and during baseball he pitches and plays third base. I then attempted to bring up Matt's biggest regrets in life. After joking around about a couple of ex-girlfriends, Matt answered, "crashing my car into a tree... hard." I was surprised when he said this because I had no clue that just a week before our interview he had crashed his car. The interview took a more serious turn after that. I then asked, "If this was the last conversation you ever had, what is one thing you would say?" To which he responded, "Make highschool as easy as you can." Although his answer was once again simply phrased, it showed a lot about Matt. He is a very laidback and easygoing person which showed throughout most of the interview.

Matt has many friends, including myself, so I decided to ask them a little bit about him. Sam W., Matt's close friend and teammate, said "Matt is a great soccer player." I also asked Emily N., another close friend of his, how she felt about him and she said,



He Shoots, He Scores! Matt sends the ball towards the net from the 18 at Alfred-Almond Central School. The star athlete also plays basketball and baseball. *Photo courtesy of ALCEN.*

"He is an amazing person and friend." In my experience, these statements are all true of Matt.

My final question for Matt was about the most influential person in his life. He told me that that person is Mr. Turner. When I asked him why, he said, "Because of the things he says and the stuff he does." Although this answer is vague, if you know Mr. Turner, you know that this statement is very true. Mr. Turner is influential to many of the players on the winning boys varsity team. He is also a very influential person to many others, including myself, so Matt's answer was understandable. Although I have known Matt for years, I learned a lot about him through questioning him and listening to what he had to say. Matt is a great person and his positive energy affects everyone he meets.

Fun Fact: Matt was also the September Athlete of the Month.



Speedy Sam

By: Sophie N.

Who is Samantha Q.? This is the question I asked myself while heading outside to interview Sam in the humid September air. Fellow classmate, Duncan B-C says that he “doesn't know much about Samantha,” and “has always wanted to learn more about her.” Sam is the only junior in our Journalism class, and I think everyone wants to get to know her better. I was bubbling with excitement as I headed to our interview and couldn't wait to see what I would be able to learn about Sam. I have been on soccer and track teams with Sam but there is so much that I did not know about her. I didn't even need to ask any questions before I was instantly intrigued with Sam's personality. I think that when people see Sam they notice how confident and honest she is. Instantly I recognized that Sam is a very sweet and down to earth person. Classmate Hanna T. said, “Sam is always really nice and super funny.” When talking to her, Sam said her best trait was “telling it how it is.” People love Sam for her willingness to tell the truth and acknowledge what she thinks is right and wrong.

Her honest and tough personality can be easily translated into her athletics. Sam participates in both varsity soccer and varsity track. For Sam, these sports can be therapeutic and are a healthy way for her to release her frustrations in the form of exercise. She loves how soccer helps her get into shape even though it can



Medical Motivation

Sam is very interested in anatomy and wants to go to school to be a medical examiner.

She works very hard in school and is determined to accomplish her goals for the future. Photo courtesy of Sophie N.

be very frustrating at times. When faced with challenges in soccer, Sam is still able to persevere and put her best foot forward on the field. While soccer is important to release anger and pent up energy, Sam also finds dance to be a very important aspect to her life. While dance, like soccer, is physically demanding, it is different from other activities because “you are able to find



Speedy Samantha *Samantha Q. poses on the track, excited for her favorite sport to begin. During the spring, she is an avid sprinter and thrower for the varsity track team.*

Photo courtesy of Sophie N.

yourself in the music” and express yourself in a different way. Sam does many types of dance, including modern, lyrical, hip hop, tap, and jazz. When I asked if Sam preferred soccer and track over dance, Sam responded by saying that she could not choose because she sees the two as almost completely different activities. In one she is able to “truly express herself and her emotions,” and in the other she is able to “release aggressions” and physical exertions that cannot be represented as much in dance.

Not only are these sports important to Sam, but she also loves to hunt. When she was younger, her father hunted and she would tag along. Eventually she picked up this activity herself and has loved it ever since. Hunting is a family activity for Sam and is one way that she likes to spend time with her loved ones. Sam is definitely very focused on her family. She has a strong bond with her family and they can often be found spending time together. One of their favorite things to do is go to dance competitions together. Dance competitions turn into a fun “girls weekend” where her family is all able to spend quality time together and bond.

Even though I'm sure her family will miss having Sam at home with them, I know they must be excited for what lies ahead. Sam plans on going to college and eventually becoming a medical examiner. She has recently discovered a fascination of the human body and is curious to see what else she can learn in this field. As a junior she has already set great goals for her future and I'm confident that she will succeed in whatever she puts her mind to. Sam is a determined and hardworking person and once she has a plan, there's no stopping her.



DUNCAN RUNS ON MAC AND CHEESE

By: Emily N.

I don't know Duncan that well; the only time I talk to him is during school. I knew that Duncan plays soccer and baseball, that he skateboards, and that he likes mac and cheese, a lot. As some background information, last year in English class we were talking about our senior trip, and Duncan mentioned a place that he went to that had really good mac and cheese. Another day we were in Mrs. Kress's room trying to come up with a fundraiser for our class, and when Roni mentioned having a movie night with popcorn and drinks that people could buy, Duncan suggested we have mac and cheese as an option as well. When Duncan was asked where his favorite mac and cheese is from, Duncan said that his dad makes "a mean mac and cheese."



Senior Soccer Player

Duncan plays left midfield for the boys varsity soccer team as number 19. He has had one goal on the season so far.

Photo courtesy of Emily N.

He also mentioned that he enjoys Club 57's macaroni and cheese and some from a restaurant in Wellsville called L'Italia. Duncan loves mac and cheese almost as much as he loves skateboarding.

Many people know that Duncan skateboards. I don't know very much about skateboarding, but I do know that skateboarders can do some pretty sick tricks. Duncan's favorite trick to do is "the classic ollie," which is when you jump and the skateboard goes with you but stays at your feet. Roni has seen Duncan skateboard, and she said, "He's really good, he makes it look easy."

Duncan dresses differently than the average guy his age. This year he has started to wear a fanny pack. "His fanny pack always pulls his outfits together," says his friend Chloe. When asked who his style inspiration is, he replied, "I like to dress like professional skateboarders dress." Duncan also mentioned that he takes inspiration from kids in movies from the 80s; he said 80s kids dressed "really cool."

While coming up with questions to ask Duncan, Roni mentioned that he had a summer job. I asked him what he did at his job, and he replied, "Yeah, I just painted," which made both of us laugh. He talked about how boring his job was; he would go to Alfred University at 7:00 in the morning and be there until 3:30p... Duncan talked about how he would paint a



Duncan's New Wheels

Duncan poses with his two favorite sets of wheels. He recently got his car and is still trying to master how to drive it because it's standard. Photo courtesy of Emily N.

wall, and once he was finished he would paint another wall, and paint another, and another... He "just painted" for a month and a half.

Duncan plans on going to college but is still unsure about where he would like to go. Duncan said that he wants to go out of state, but not too far away from New York. He added that Pennsylvania or Massachusetts would be a good distance away from home.

After talking to Duncan I did learn where he gets his style inspiration, where he thinks the best macaroni and cheese is from, and that he doesn't like to paint walls. I also learned that Duncan is a pretty cool dude to sit down and talk to, and that he doesn't allow the conversation to get boring.



Sophie: A Determined Style

What do you notice when you see Sophie N.? Do you notice her unique sense of style, or do you notice how happy and bubbly she is? Stylin' Sophie set time aside to let me talk to her and be able to get to know her a little better. Outside of Mr. Levey's



Bound for the Stars *Sitting in lane eight of the track, Sophie shows off her science themed shirt as well as her love for sports and academics. Photo courtesy of Samantha Q.*

room on the sidewalk we began talking about her life.

Sophie is the senior class president as well as a varsity athlete. She participates in sports including soccer, skiing, and track. According to Sophie, she “never pictured herself playing soccer as a senior.” As a young child, Sophie viewed herself as a “terrible [soccer] player,” but she had a huge “Sophie moment” of determination and set a goal to work hard and get better within the sport. This same idea is present when Sophie joined track. She was very apprehensive at first and was scared to test up, or prove that she was capable, to play varsity.

Originally she played softball her seventh grade year but finally found the courage to test up for track in eighth grade. Sophie is a sprinter and jumper, but soon was introduced to the pole vault as well. She found the pole vault interesting and decided to give it a try, with the help of mentors like Kyra Kress, Mr. Decker, and Mr. Dwyer. To her surprise, Sophie would go on and win Sectionals for track her junior year. Without her willpower and dedication she would not be standing where she is now.

Sophie's strength of character would be tested again when she joined ski club in fifth grade. She was inspected on the Magic Carpet at Swain Ski Resort in order to ski on the slopes. (The Magic Carpet is a

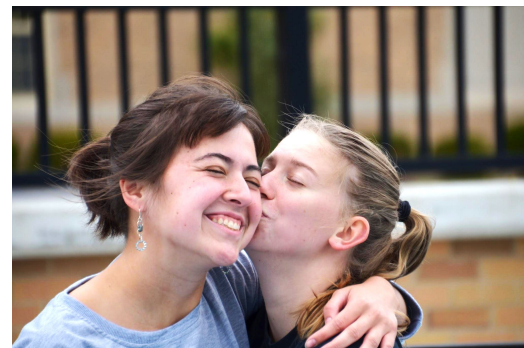


Soccer Champ *Sophie battles it out with a Jasper-Troupsburg player October 14 to maintain possession. As number eight on the team, she is a proud player of the A-A Varsity Soccer Team and has been for many years.*

Photo courtesy of Quick Snap in Time Photography

slight incline used to practice turns and her formation before going onto the true slope. She was told by the staff that she was not good enough to ride with her family and friends on the hill. Sophie's grit kicked into gear and she was determined to get better in order to ski with her family and friends. In ninth grade, Sophie joined the Ski team coached by Mr. Bialecki. She “never pictured [her]self as a part of the ski team” when she joined ski club.

By: Samantha Q.



A Supportive Friendship *Sophie, left, accepts a meaningful kiss on the cheek from her loving friend Hanna T. They have been friends for eight years.*

Photo courtesy of Samantha Q.

Before skiing, she played basketball until she changed her mind and became the skier she is today.

Sophie's determination is seen by many others, including coaches, teachers, friends, teammates, and family. According to Andrea M., a fellow defender, Sophie has taught her “to play [her] hardest and to be open-minded,” both on and off the field. When Andrea sees Sophie walk into a room, she notices how “she is always dressed with a smile.” Last year, Sophie could be found in Mrs. Valentine's room hanging out with her friend Dylan Griffin; when I asked Mrs. Valentine if she had ever noticed Sophie's dedication, she said that “[Sophie] is very hard working and is always happy.” Stylin' Sophie has a great amount of perseverance and has an enormous, positive impact on others.



From Lanes to Planes

By: Ms. Backer

Driving down the road, sun shining, and music turned up loud - moments like this are when life for senior Zoey K. is pure bliss. She also finds happiness when she's swimming, spending time with friends and loved ones, and when she looks ahead with anticipation to her future. New to Alfred-Almond in September of this year, I sat down with the former Hornell Red Raider to get to know her backstory. What she shared offered insight into where she's coming from, as well as where she hopes to go.

Six years ago, in fifth grade, Zoey discovered a love for competitive swimming. Focusing primarily on freestyle and backstroke, she found a sport that she not only enjoyed, but was also good at. Making Hornell's Varsity Swim Team in seventh grade, Zoey was "the only seventh grader to get a varsity letter that year," something she recognized as a "big accomplishment" and one of her proudest moments in her life thus far. It was also during this year that Zoey won fourth place in counties, and then went on to compete in sectionals with her teammates. With these memorable experiences occurring in the pool lanes, Zoey hopes to continue her journey as a swimmer by trying out for Alfred-Almond's swim team this



Big Dreams *A competitive swimmer, senior Zoey K. hopes to continue her adventures in the Army as an airborne medic.*

Photo courtesy of Ms. Backer

winter, thinking that she will have to push herself even harder, since she sees A-A as having a strong team.

Some of Zoey's favorite companions share her love for the water. Chloe, a black lab; Orville, a mixed-breed; and Buddy, a lab/shepherd cross are some of her closest family members. Zoey loves dogs for their personalities, saying, "They're just so awesome - I feel like they know when you need a friend." In addition to her dogs, Zoey lives with her grandparents and two brothers. Her younger brother, Jonas, is 14 years old, and apart from being athletic and funny, Zoey describes him as the "coolest little nugget" who is incredibly "down to earth." Her older brother Tyler, on the other hand, is 18 years old, and according to Zoey, they "always butt heads." This doesn't stop her from loving him unconditionally, though. When asked

what she would do if she could have any wish come true for any person, Zoey replied that she would wish "for my brother Tyler - I want the best for him."

Zoey's empathy extends beyond her family members, too. Her dream is to become an airborne medic for the United States Army, which, according to Zoey, basically entails "jumping out of planes, finding people who are injured, and stabilizing them until a doctor or nurse comes to help." She stumbled across this daring job prospect when visiting her uncle, a retired Army medic living in Alaska, who told her the Army was looking for women in that field, and since she wants "to help people out" and "love [s] America," she figured, "...why not?" Upon graduation, Zoey plans to enlist and enter boot camp, and then pursue medic training as she works to reach her courageous goal.

Between her efforts as a swimmer, her love for her family, and her ambitious patriotism, Zoey stays driven and focused on her sky-high visions for the next chapter of her life. In the meantime, while she finishes her senior year here at Alfred-Almond, her fresh perspective will provide a unique edge to the Observer - something we can all look forward to.



Success at Sectionals *Zoey, left, and a Hornell teammate show off their ribbons after competing in the 100 backstroke.*

Photo courtesy of Sue Kays



The Next Generation *Zoey reads with her cousin Lucy in Alaska, where she learned of the Army's need for more women.*

Photo courtesy of Sue Kays



Morgan: Not So Bad After All

By: Maya R.

President of the Math Club, avid writer, electric guitar player and professional scooterer, Morgan G never fails to impress. A true Renaissance woman, when Morgan isn't crafting her bestselling novel, or tackling difficult math problems with Mrs. Bensley, she is working diligently in school in hopes of becoming a lawyer one day. As ambitious and interesting as she is, this is only the beginning for mathematician, writer and musician Morgan G.



Skrrt Skrrt

Morgan started riding her scooter when she was eight, but didn't start going to the skatepark in Hornell until she was twelve. Over the summer, Morgan went to the skatepark almost everyday and practiced her tricks.

Photo courtesy of Maya R.

Prior to interviewing Morgan, I knew little about her, but was excited to get to know more. To learn a better understanding I asked fellow classmate Kaitlyn C. what she liked about Morgan, "Morgan is a fun person to have a class with and she's a great pal!" As she and I were searching for a place to interview, we stumbled across a propped door of the auditorium. We looked at each other, shrugged slightly, and entered into the pitch black space. Morgan quickly found the lights, and we traveled to the top of the steps to begin he interview. Moving from Hornell, Morgan was glad to have found good friends and an education more fit to her learning style. When I asked her if there



Hanging Loose

When Morgan isn't doing tricks on her scooter, she can still be found showing off her skills, like hanging upside down.

Photo courtesy of Maya R.

was anything she missed, Morgan responded, "I miss the Writing Club, that's about it though..." Through the Writing Club at Hornell, Morgan was able to publish her own book, Not So Bad After All, though this is just one of her many works of writing. I proceeded to ask Morgan if moving schools had influenced her writing. "Actually, switching schools, I have a lot less time to write, because of the homework ... There's like, actual learning here." Despite the added school work, Morgan still finds time to write on Wattpad and is working on numerous different stories. From vampires and werewolves, to teenage realistic fiction, Morgan's writing holds a vast array of topics.

It wasn't until later on in the interview that I discovered Morgan's unique relationship with math and her dedication to Math Club. "Math is like, my least favorite subject, but the math for Math Club is completely different." Morgan proceeded to tell me that doing math in Math Club allowed her to solve the problem anyway possible. Unlike math class, she wasn't forced to solve the problem a single way. "In algebra, you have to figure it out a certain way,

but in Math Club you can figure it out however you want to." I asked Morgan if Math Club has helped her in Pre-Calc. "I think Mrs. Bensley has helped me...I joined it [Math Club] because I like Mrs. Bensley, mainly." Later on, I asked Mrs. Bensley what Morgan brought to the Math Team, "I'm really glad she came from Hornell," Mrs. Bensley replied "She brings a lot of energy and spunk to the Math Team." With this energy and spunk, Morgan strives to work her hardest as President of Math Club. As for the musical side of Morgan, she to play her electric guitar for at least half an hour each night, "I started playing the electric guitar this summer, and I mean, I've gotten pretty good right now . . . A few songs." Morgan informed me that dedication is key to becoming a good electric guitar player. When Morgan isn't playing the electric guitar, she's at the skatepark in Hornell practicing on her scooter. When I asked if she knew any tricks, Morgan responded with a simple "Yeah" and a slight nod, a confident expression across her face. From writing future novels, to playing the electric guitar and practicing tricks on her scooter, Morgan has many talents both inside and outside of school. Morgan proves to have great potential as a writer for the Observer. Mathematically and musically, Morgan has maximized her ability to become a marvelous student here at Alfred Almond.



Math Companions

Morgan enjoys Math Club and Pre-Calculus with Mrs. Bensley. Mrs. Bensley is glad Morgan moved from Hornell, and enjoys her contribution to Math Club.

Photo courtesy of Maya R.



The Self-Proclaimed Nerd

By: Sam W.

I was fortunate enough to have had a conversation with the self-proclaimed nerd: Kaitlyn. Kaitlyn describes herself as a nerd for multiple reasons, mostly based on her enjoyment of “nerdy” things. She enjoys learning; science; and multiple fandoms like *Supernatural*, *Doctor Who*, *Harry Potter*, and *Sherlock*. She is an avid lover of science fiction and fantasy. One of Kaitlyn’s favorite pieces of fantasy is *Fantastic Beasts*. She has watched this movie five times, thrice in theaters. Kaitlyn remembers the names and special features of almost every beast. If she were to be a character in the movie she would be Kowalski because she enjoys baked goods, or Tina, because she relates to her the most. Her favorite character is Newt, though.

Kaitlyn is also a Girl Scout. She has earned around 50 badges in her Girl Scout career; some of her favorites consist of learning how to crochet, a field day badge, and the science of happiness. One of her biggest accomplishments, however, is her gold award project. A gold award project is the highest award a Girl Scout can earn. She created a trail in Alfred; while walking this trail you see signs teaching you how to reduce your impact on the environment.



A Girl of a Thousand Merit Badges
Kaitlyn stands in front of a white pine tree showing off her decorated Girl Scout’s vest. On her vest are over 50 earned badges.
Photo courtesy of Sam W.



Book Worm
Kaitlyn is an avid reader, she’s currently reading *Harry Potter: the Goblet of Fire* for the eleventh time. She has two large, full bookshelves with around 60 of her own books. *Photo courtesy of Sam W.*

Though Kaitlyn is a nerd, she also somewhat considers herself an athlete. She has been a swimmer for ten years. She swam for Alfred-Almond for six years and KVAC, a swimming club, for all ten. She doesn’t consider herself the fastest swimmer, but she practices great technique. Her fastest 500 yard time is six minutes, 47 seconds - only seven seconds away from the sectional qualifying time (which she plans on making this year). Kaitlyn also runs track. She, in her own words, isn’t “the greatest” and only really runs to stay in shape. She runs the 3,000 meter, the 1,500 meter and the long jump. Her teammate, Roni says, “She’s a wonderful teammate and shows a lot of dedication.”

Kaitlyn has a lot of big plans for her future. She does not want to live in New York because she would like a change of scenery. At first in college, she would like to major in biochemistry, but she plans on getting her Ph.D. in genetics. With this degree in genetics she plans on being a genetic researcher, finding information on the endless possibilities in the field.

If you ever see a genetics based, scientific discovery in the future years, search for Kaitlyn’s name because there’s a good chance it will be hers.



Backing Up Intelligence

Walking into the classroom of 250, students are always welcomed with a smile. Ms. Backer is the advisor for *The Observer* and an English teacher with two children, Ellie and Ezi, whom she loves very much. When these girls laugh Ms. Backer claims it's one of her favorite moments. She truly wishes the absolute best for her two daughters, and hopes to always see them happy and smiling.

While raising her children, teaching full time, and taking care of her house and horses, Ms. Backer received her master's degree. The extremely hard working woman stated she accomplished this milestone through “. . . a lot of caffeine, staying up late, counting down how many assignments I had left, and great support from people around me.” She said she always knew she wanted to be a teacher ever since she was a young girl.



*Standing in front of the knowledge Ms. Backer spreads she kindly smiles, showing the love for her profession.
Photo courtesy of Zoey K.*

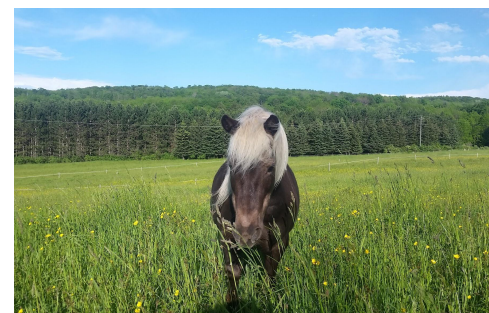
By: Zoey K.

Ms. Backer was raised in Alfred Station by a German/Italian family and went to Alfred-Almond kindergarten through twelfth grade. Her father moved to the United States right from Italy as an eight year old. She stated that between her and her parents while growing up there was a large lack in communication; now that she herself is a mother, she understands why. Parenting is much more difficult than she imagined.

In high school, Ms. Backer played a year of soccer but decided that playing on a field with many people watching was not her thing. However, horseback riding competitively was her favorite activity; she even began giving riding lessons at age 12. One of Ms. Backer's dreams was to have her very own stable. She made this dream a reality but unfortunately, like many dreams, the reality of them did not match up. Everything is not what it seems. Thinking back to high school, Ms. Backer said “I had a few good friends and we had some really good times.” In fact she is still really close friends with one of her pals from high school to this day. She also stated “I was always looking towards the end result of high school and waiting to be on my own.”

Following high school Ms. Backer studied at Alfred University for four years. During this time she took a variety of classes such as Oceanography, Philosophy, and Photobook. Ms. Backer graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor's degree in general studies. She then went back for a year to receive her teaching certification in seven through twelfth grade English teaching. After, she went to SUNY Empire State from 2014-2017 finally earning her Master's degree of education in teaching and learning with a focus in literacy.

Ms. Backer wishes for a level of contentment that will last for a very long time. She also wishes to learn to conquer her fears. She is a hard working woman who has learned to stand up for herself by experiencing failure. She is a very happy and bubbly person to be around, and a great teacher.



Horseback Ms. Backer's four legged, half blind friend, Sadie roams the open grassy field with ease. **Photo courtesy of Ms. Backer.**