



Articles by Sean Kastantin

Cluster 7-5

Annie - Winter Play

Everybody loves the little orphan with bright red hair and an even brighter personality. This winter, the Pollard and High Rock Drama Association is pulling together a classic family favorite with the production of Annie.

The play had its first showing on Friday, February 2nd and showed until Sunday, February 4th. It sold out on Friday and Saturday, and sold out on Sunday after all the dust settled with the at-the-door tickets bought.

Lily Ramras brought the character of Annie to the stage, keeping the audience entertained with her eccentric display of optimism. But staying positive was futile, with the crushing presence of Ms. Hannigan, portrayed by Robin Kane, forever a dark weight keeping her from her ultimate goal, finding her real parents who left her at the orphanage years ago. That is, until someone shows up at the doorstep of the orphanage. A millionaire named Mr. Warbucks, played by Frankie Mendez, has requested an

orphan to spend the holidays with him. Annie is chosen and goes to the millionaires mansion.

Soon enough, Mr. Warbucks, the grumpy millionaire, realizes what he's missing in his life. After spending time with Annie he realizes that he can have all the money in the world and still not be as happy as he could be if he had somebody to share his life with, so he decides he wants to adopt Annie. Annie, however, has her heart set on finding her real parents.

Behind their backs, Mrs. Hannigan and her brother Rooster, played by Liam Salerno, find out about the \$50,000 prize going to the birth parents of Annie and go to the house of Warbucks with all the knowledge of Annie they need, supplied by none other than Ms. Hannigan. They fool Warbucks into believing they are her real parents, with knowledge about her locket.

In a final effort to keep Annie, Mr. Warbucks tells them to come back tomorrow, giving himself time to conduct one last desperate

attempt to keep her. Him, the FBI and President Roosevelt, played by Ronan Keane, are up all night, and they manage to trace the note back to Annie's real parents. But, having been long deceased, they rule out the possibility of the money hungry Rooster and Ms. Hannigan being her parents. With nobody else to parent her, she is adopted by Mr. Warbucks, for one of the happiest endings you can imagine.

The Pollard-High Rock drama association takes 6th graders from High Rock and 7th and 8th graders from Pollard and cycle through productions of fantasy, classic books and modern performances. Directed by Ms. Jones, Ms. Grina, Mr. Ciccolella and Mr. Cournoyer they do a winter and spring play.





Part of Mrs. Hannigan's Orphans ensemble dance and sing "Your never fully dressed" in Act II, scene 2



The whole Annie cast takes a final bow at the end of the production

BLOOD DONATION

Written By Sean
Kastantin



**MAKE
LIFESAVING
A HABIT**

Did you know?

That January is
national blood
donation month!

What does it mean to be a blood donor? When you hear the words “blood donor,” what do you think about? Maybe you think of the needles, of your blood in somebody else’s body. Maybe those thoughts frighten you, worry you and perplex you. This January is national blood donor month. Growing up, my old schools always had Red Cross blood drives, to help out those who need it. 2017 was a big year, but your help can have a bigger impact.

Why does your help matter most this year? Well, think back to Sunday, October 1st, 2017. Just an average concert, until it wasn’t. A gunman opened fire, leaving 546 injured and 58 dead. Dr. Kevin Menes was on duty the night of the shooting, and he was more than shocked to see more than 200 critically wounded patients show up at the door. To all those injured people still hoping to make a comeback, your donations help

Now think back to September 6, 2017. Hurricane Irma barrels through Puerto Rico, causing approximately \$45-\$90 billion

dollars in damage, but it wasn’t over. Irma made its way to the Florida keys, wiping out about a quarter of the homes there. 25 people were found dead or injured as of September 11.

Finally, the wildfires. The wildfires in California were recorded as the most destructive in recent history. 9,054 different fires raged across 1,381,405 acres (5,590.35 km²). 1 firefighter was killed along with 45 civilians, while 12 firefighters and 199 civilians were non fatally injured.

One example of a natural consequence of these disasters is in hospitals. As we all know this is flu season, and the flu can lead to much worse. But all those plastic IV bags are made in Puerto Rico, and with the storms and hurricanes, production is slowing down. Imagine getting medicine, blood or fluids out of something like a bottle.

Donating blood ensures blood will be on the shelf when needed— many people don’t think they’ll ever need blood, but

many find out they do, according to redcrossblood.org,

Still not sure why you should donate? Well, what about all the people affected by the Mexico earthquakes? Or the monsoon flooding in Bangladesh? All these people can be greatly affected, possibly for a lifetime because of something that you do that takes less than an hour.

Remember, you can also donate when it’s not January, and it doesn’t have to be blood. Donations of things like money, clothing or even just volunteer work can make a difference. You can sign up to donate blood at redcross.com (You must be 17 years or older and in good health to donate blood).

**Blood is always
needed and your
donations can
always help. Sign
up today!**

2018 PYEONGCHANG WINTER

To see some of the world's most talented athletes compete for glory, riches, and not to mention some nice gold, silver and bronze hardware is a beautiful thing, and



THE WINTER OLYMPICS

lucky for us, we get to see it every 2 years, 4 years in between each type, winter and summer, with a two year overlap so as to satisfy the thirst for the world's biggest sporting event. The Olympics started in Greece in 1896, and have forever been adored by sports fans across the globe.

This year the Winter Olympics were held in Pyeongchang, South Korea, with a record breaking 92 countries expected to compete. With 15 events, such as skiing, skating, and biathlons, there will be a first place, second place, and third place winner per event.

Team USA's athletes have pretty consistently been among the nations at the top of the podium at medal ceremonies, but so far this year, not so much. As the Olympics are coming to a close, the USA has won 8 gold medals, 7 silver medals, and 6 bronze medals. On February 13th, Shaun White earned the USA's 100th winter gold medal.

Obviously, there are a lot of hockey players and fans in Needham, MA, and since this is the winter games, you better believe the support is coming in strong for Team USA. But this year, an interesting decision has been made to not allow professional hockey players (NHL players) to be on the team. This is because the IOC has been providing funds for insurance, travel, accommodations, and things like that to the NHL. But this year, the IOC informed the NHL that they would no longer provide them with the money for the players. That matter along with the fact that several NHL teams are opposed to interrupting the season for the Olympics was enough to cross out NHL participation. Consequently, Team USA is forced to consist of former players, promising college players, AHL (American hockey league) players, and European leagues.

One of the biggest stories coming into this year's olympics is 17 year old snowboarding phenom Chloe Kim, earning a gold medal in the halfpipe. Labeled as one of the most entertaining olympians the games have seen in a while, the Long Beach, California native has been to the X Games four times. She also became the first woman to land back to back 1080s in USA superpipe competition. The superstitious athlete knocks on her board

before all her runs, saying, "You know how when you jinx yourself, they're like, 'Knock on wood'. My snowboard's wood, so in case I jinxed myself sometime in the past, I just knock on my board. It just makes me feel a lot more comfortable." She was also named one of TIME magazine's thirty most influential teens of 2016. She was named the snowboarding athlete of the year of the 2016 ski and snowboard association and was flag bearer for the US for the 2016 Youth Olympic Winter Games in Norway.

On the slope, the aging Lindsey Vonn, downhill skiing extraordinaire suits up for what might be her final race. The potential of competing in your last race can be a daunting thought, but Vonn embraces it. She wins for her late grandfather who passed away a few months before she won bronze in what was likely her last race. In the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, she took gold in the downhill race.

The competitive spirit that turns nations against each other in a friendly way along their quest for glory is the same spirit one may see in their everyday life. The Olympics, although a competition among most of the time quarreling territories, manages to unify the world, because no matter how many differences two countries may have, they all have a hunger for one thing, a gnawing, endless hunger that is never satisfied; the hunger for glory.

MR GREENWOOD

For 14 years, Mr. Jeremy Greenwood was a school counselor, spending 9 years in Weymouth and 5 at pollard. This year, he decided to make the jump to the Pollard Middle School Assistant principal. This trimester, Mr. Greenwood was called up from interim AP to the official AP, and is now serving under the title Assistant Principal.

To get a better look at Mr. Greenwoods perspective, we asked him a few questions. Below is the full interview of Mr. Greenwood.

What school experience have you had prior to being hired?

Prior to taking on the role of Interim AP here at Pollard I was a school counselor for 14 years. (9 in Weymouth and 5 here at Pollard)

Have you ever been a teacher?

I have never been a classroom teacher, but have always consider myself an educator.

How does being a counselor compare to being an AP?

I was initially very concerned about how making the transition from counselor to AP would impact my relationships with students. Over the past year, I have found that job change hasn't had any negative impact on my ability to build relationships

with students. In fact being an Assistant Principal has allowed me to interact with and develop relationships with even more students.

What made you make the jump from counseling to being an AP?

I have always been interested in playing a larger role in the school and having more of an impact with students. This new position keeps me closely connected with students but allows me to be more involved in larger conversations.

How does being a counselor help you in being an AP?

My job as a counselor was to help students navigate the challenges of the middle school environment. Meeting with students allowed me to see the challenges and all the struggles and successes through their perspective. As an AP I am able to use this experience and this perspective to help have conversations and make decisions about what is in the best interest of our students.

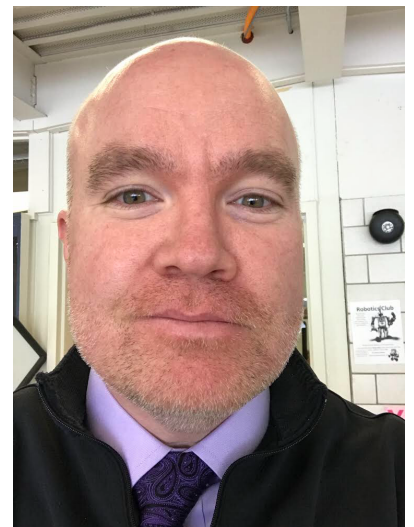
What are some of the responsibilities that come with being an AP?

Being an AP comes with a couple of new responsibilities for me. In my new role I get to plan professional development and run meetings for grade level teachers. I also get to help plan whole grade and whole school activities for students. And perhaps most exciting of all, I get to do lunch duty every day!

What makes you have a more positive demeanor?

It's easy to keep a positive demeanor because I really enjoy my job. Every day presents a new opportunity to make a positive impact on someone else's life. I want to help ensure that every student can look back on their middle school experience and remember not only the struggles and hardships, but also remember their progress, their successes and the fun they had.

Mr. Greenwood is a great fit for this school, as you can see. His background in counseling creates an approachable figure that you can be comfortable around. His optimistic outlook on situations he may find himself in every day keeps the rest of Pollard upbeat, and every time you talk to Mr. Greenwood, you'll leave with a smile on your face.



PEAT

The Pollard Environmental action team is a non profit, pollard based organization focused on creating a greener environment for the near future and years to come at Pollard Middle School. Stated on their website, "Conservation and finding a clean and renewable energy source is critical to our future."

PEAT is run by Mr. Dowe in room 268 and meets regularly on wednesdays at 2:50. Some of their projects have included things like setting up water bottle collection bins in the cafeteria so recyclables don't get mixed in with the trash. In a dump, a water bottle can take 450 years to decompose, whereas if disposed of properly can be made into something totally new.

Many eighth graders use PEAT to finish some of their CSL, but it can evolve into something more than that. It can turn into a hobby, not to mention one good for the planet. In association with GreenNeedham, Project Green Schools, 350.org, the green team and Needham RTS, PEAT and it's members feel strongly about making the world a better place.



If you're interested in joining the Pollard Environmental Action Team you can email Mr. Dowe or check out one of their Wednesday after school meetings. And remember, "We must become the change we want to see in the world" - Gandhi.