

SEPTEMBER, 2017

The

CHIEF

PONTIAC TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

A FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

PTHS Senior Kamryn Moore is back from her year spent in Thailand! Read all about her experiences as a foreign exchange student!

WELCOME, FRESHMEN!

PTHS Freshman Joe Gilmore recounts his first few days here to start his high school career.



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FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROGRAM PTHS STUDENT SPENDS YEAR IN THAILAND

By Kaelee Germain

The mission of our school is simple “enter to learn, depart to serve.” For some, this means coming to school, doing the homework, and participating in making the school name stand out whether it be with sports or extracurricular activities. For some, the statement means to go to school, plan for the future, work part-time jobs, come home late to do homework, and start again the next day. Many of us do a combination of the two and we never get recognized for the long nights and early mornings we push through to reach our goals. In a time when we get so caught up with working to the future, one student decided to bring her future to her for a year: Kamryn Moore. Kamryn has been an adamant accomplisher since her freshman year at PTHS. During her first two years at school you'd most likely see her helping students in Mrs. Baumgardner's room, writing for the school paper or precisely cutting up produce for your meal at Bernardi's. Most importantly, you'd see her taking advantage of the Interact Club. Ever since she was young, Kamryn has aspired to be a journalist and to visit all seven continents. She knew a school like PTHS would help her get there if she set her feet running. At the end of her sophomore year she signed up to be an exchange student to Thailand. Over the course of a year, she was able to go to school, stay with an amazing host family, indulge in their culture, and put little old PTHS on the international map. Straight from her story, here's what Kamryn has to say in an interview:

What made you want to go the most to Thailand?

Kamryn: Well, I actually really didn't want to go to Thailand. I was originally supposed to go to Turkey, but three weeks before I left I had to switch countries and Thailand was the only one available. Once I got there though, I fell in love.

What were you most nervous about before you got there?

Kamryn: I was extremely nervous about being underprepared. I only had a very short amount of time to learn about a whole country and how to live there. I really wanted to make sure I didn't accidentally offend anyone.

What is one food you miss eating in Thailand?

Kamryn: khoeneow and moo ping!! Khoeneow is sticky rice (which was actually my Thai name) and moo ping is a grilled pork. It was my favorite after school snack!

How did you see yourself grow as a person on your journey?

Kamryn: I think I've grown so much throughout this past year. It is one thing to try and learn about other cultures through a book, but it's another thing to go live there. I became so much more confident in myself and the decisions that I make. I also feel like I'm not as naive about the world outside of Pontiac anymore.

What is your favorite memory of the trip?

Kamryn: my greatest memory would have to be the moment I landed in Thailand. That moment could never compare to anything else. The feeling of two years preparation was finally beginning and it was indescribable.

What advice do you have for students wanting to study abroad?

Kamryn: Go for it!! Don't be afraid of what could go wrong, and think of everything that could go amazingly! I would give anything to go back and do my exchange all over again, because that's how amazing it was. Take the leap and just do it!

From the buoyancy of her persona while talking about Thailand to her the sincere look in her eyes, one would be heavily mistaken to say that Kamryn's travels didn't change her for the better. If travel can change our small town views for the better, then surely we should try it. Mark Twain once wrote in *Innocents Abroad*, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.” On that note get out there; work hard, plan your trips, save money, and enjoy the journey; you won't know where you'll end up until you leave home and make a few mistakes towards your future.





A NEW EXPERIENCE

WELCOME TO FRESHMAN YEAR

By Joe Gilmor

As an eighth grader, I had not a clue what freshman year would be like. The idea of starting anew in a school full of strangers, students and teachers alike, seemed interesting, yet also somewhat intimidating. What clubs would I join? Who would I speak to? How would I ever become accustomed to the school? Luckily, I had numerous mentors to help me along the way.

All of the teachers have been very helpful, and so have the upperclassmen that, until quite recently, seemed likely to throw me in a locker and slam the door shut as soon as the opportunity presented itself. While, truthfully, no upperclassman ever seemed that intimidating, the point is still clear. This all goes to show what a wonderful community has developed throughout PTHS. Freshmen, keep up the hard work, your actions affect those of everyone around you. Upperclassmen, continue to serve as great role models for those who look up to you. Everyone, let's make this a great year for the students and staff of Pontiac Township High School. I am so proud to be a part of this great Indian nation.

What summer activity do you miss the most?



Isaac Nollen



"Camping"



Katie Stock



"Kayaking"



Joey Giordano



"Hiking"

Welcome Back

from the Editor of *The Chief*

By Kamryn Moore



With a new school year comes new teachers, new classmates, new schedules, and new stresses. With all this "newness" going on, it can be hard to lose focus and get behind on your school work. While meeting new friends and joining new clubs is fun, we have to remember we are here to learn. In this crazy chaos called high school, we can often get overwhelmed. So, here are some useful tips to ensure you have a safe and fun school year!

Freshman- I want to be the first to wish you a warm welcome to PTHS! Your freshman year can be insane, but if you stay focused it'll be a breeze! Don't be afraid to join clubs, sports, or anything else! Getting involved was the best decision I ever made as a Freshman. Go out and try new things, I promise you won't regret it! Always remember, upperclassmen aren't as big and scary as they look.

Sophomores- Congrats on completing your first year of high school. This year you'll feel more confident in yourself as you walk the halls. My biggest advice for you: just because you're no longer freshman doesn't mean it's too late to join a club/sport! Still try to get involved and have a great year!

Juniors- You're finally upperclassman! While you may be focused on that, this will be a stressful year. Now I don't mean to scare you, I just want you to be prepared. Your classes are going to be much harder and more stressful. You're also going to be taking the ACT and trying to figure out what college is right for you. Yes this is a stressful time, but it's also fun! You now have those "upperclassman perks" like going to prom! So enjoy it, but remember the underclassmen now look up to you.

Seniors- We finally did it. We're the top of the food chain, the head honchos, the first rows of the bleachers at the football games. While some of us may be dreading this year, others can't wait to spread their wings and fly. This is the year we have to make decisions that will affect the rest of our lives. Whether we go to college, the military, or even straight into working, be confident in your decision and do whatever will make you happy. Take advantage of everything and savor these moments, because this is our last year together. Cherish every single moment this year brings and I wish you all nothing but success this year.

I look forward to seeing you all grow throughout this year and I'm so grateful to be editing the school paper this year!

Good luck! Kamryn Moore, Editor of The Chief



New Teacher

Mr. Demattia

If there's one thing that's obviously about Mr. Eric DeMattia, it's that he loves his job and he loves PTHS. Only graduating high school in 2013, his youngness allows for him to relate more to the students and bring fresh, new ideas to the Math department. When asked why he wanted to come back to PTHS and be a math teacher, the answer was very simple: Mr. Shepherd. "When I was in high school, Mr. Shepherd was a pretty good mentor. I had always loved math, but it was him who showed me why I loved math. Once I decided to be a math teacher I knew I wanted to come back here to give back to a place that helped make me the person I am today". Though he majored in math and could be making a lot more money than he is now, that's not what's important to him. "I care about helping kids and giving back to a place that gave me so much." Coming back to your former high school as a teacher would feel strange for most people, but Mr. DeMattia sees it as a learning experience. "It's very weird being back here but on the other side of things. My former teachers are now my coworkers and I have to call them by their first names! But it's very cool now being the one designing lesson plans instead of learning them". What does he do when not teaching or coaching football? "I like to do puzzles. I'm a Rubix cube kind of guy." With his goal this year being to have a 90% pass rate in all his classes, he adds "I want to help each and every kid that I can and help them succeed. I hate when people say 'I can't' because that only means they don't want to try and are giving up." Well, Mr. DeMattia, it's clear that you are doing what you love in a place that you love, and PTHS is lucky to have you!

Student Teacher



Mr. McCallister

If anyone has walked down to the Freshman Learning Community hallway this semester, they would have noticed a new sign on Mr. Blair's door. Alongside his name and room number is a sign with a new name: Mr. McCallister. He, as his English students already know, is Mr. Blair's student teacher this semester from Illinois State University. I currently have him as my English I teacher, and I recently took the opportunity to ask him a few questions to get to know him a little better:

- What made you want to become a teacher?
"Working with students and inspiring the shape of their lives."
- What made you want to go into the English department of teaching?
"I had a very good English teacher when I was in school."
- What made you want to become a high school teacher?
"I worked with little kids for one summer and did not like it."
- Do you have any family that are teachers and inspired you to become one yourself?
"Most of my aunts and uncles on my mom's side are teachers."
- Where did you grow up?
"I grew up in Naperville, IL."
- Do you plan to stay at PTHS?
"I would if I could but if I can't then I don't know where i will teach."
- If given the chance, what would you change about PTHS?
"Nothing, the school is great."

Hopefully, Mr. McCallister enjoys his semester spent with us at PTHS. If you see him in the hallways, welcome him to our Indian Nation!



Fall Sports Update

By Clay Miller

Recently, the sports program at Pontiac Township High School is going under a drastic overhaul. Our Corn Belt Conference and the Okaw Valley Conference are merging to form the new, larger Illinois Prairie Conference. At a glance, this change could seem minor, but for the athletes here at PTHS and all their families it will be a massive change. New schools are being implemented such as St. Thomas Moore and Monticello High School, the latter of which is a three hour round trip. This means longer drives and later nights for athletes and their families. Because of this, the staff of PTHS have made some helpful adjustments.

These longer travels will mean athletes will be removed from their 7th or 8th hour courses much more often than before. Due to the fact that students will be missing valuable class time, the Science Department now offers a time slot for students to come in before school opening at 6:30 and complete any labs that they missed during those 7th and 8th hour classes. Students must pre-set these times with their instructor. More changes like this could be to come to make life easier for these athletes. Athletes including myself are looking forward to taking on this new challenging conference in hopes to bring home trophies for PTHS.

FFA Over the Summer

By Leslie Babbs

The first event that happened over the summer was the State Convention, which was located in Springfield, IL. The theme of this year's convention was "Maximize," which means maximizing opportunities that are rare or maximizing yourself to become the best person you can be! Also, graduates of 2016, Jenna Leonard, Kyle Tucker, Anna Landstrom were given the FFA American Degree. In addition, the graduates of 2017, Jacob Larkin, Colin Stark, Carlie Weaver, and Mark Raube earned their State Degrees.

Another event during this amazing summer was the 2017 FFA Leadership Camp. "BE BOLD" was the motto for the summer and it did indeed create boldness for most fellow campers. The camp had challenge courses, in which the groups had to communicate in the best way to complete the challenge given in a certain amount of time. The most important element was being a leader or building up to become a leader.

The Washington trip was also a fun summer events. Everyone who went had a great experience. Also, the Farm Progress Show was a very good opportunity to look at colleges or interests

Upperclass Acts



Kamryn Moore

NAME: Kamryn Moore

NICKNAMES: Kamille, Kam, Kammy

ROLE MODEL(S): My grandmas

ACTIVITIES @ PTHS: Class officers, Speech Team, Science Club, P2D2, Interact, Yearbook, The Chief, Student Council, Unified Soccer, Peers in Action

FONDEST MEMORY OF HIGH SCHOOL SO FAR: Being a Rotary Youth Exchange Student in Thailand

3 MAJOR AREAS OF INTEREST: Travel, writing, and helping people

PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: Attend a 4 year university to major in International Studies

FAVORITE MOVIE: *A Walk to Remember*

MOST INSPIRATIONAL SONG: "Don't Stop Believing" by Journey

FAVORITE TEACHER/CLASS: Ms. Babb/English 3

FAVORITE AUTHOR/BOOK: *What We Left Behind* by Robin Talley

MOST POSITIVE MOMENT: When I got accepted to be an exchange student

PET PEEVES: When people spell my name wrong and when people walk slow/on the wrong side of the hallway

WHAT MY FRIENDS WILL REMEMBER ABOUT ME: my ambitiousness, my competitiveness, picky eating, and sense of humor

HOW WOULD YOU SPEND \$1,000,000? First, I would pay for all of my schooling. After that I would travel to all 7 continents and see the 7 wonders of the world. The rest I would save for a rainy day.

IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT 3 ITEMS WOULD YOU WANT WITH YOU? A water purifier, apple seeds, and a book

LAST WORDS OF ADVICE: "Be whatever you want to be, and do whatever makes you happy."

Upperclass Acts



John Liam Pickett

NAME: John Liam Pickett

NICKNAMES: Liam, John Liam

ROLE MODEL(S): Father Adam Cesarek, Ryan Woith

ACTIVITIES @ PTHS: Football, Baseball, National Honor Society

FONDEST MEMORY OF HIGH SCHOOL SO FAR: Beating Prairie Central 4 years in a row

3 MAJOR AREAS OF INTEREST: Engineering and sports

PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: Attend a 4 year university and major in some form of engineering

FAVORITE MOVIE: *Shawshank Redemption*

MOST INSPIRATIONAL SONG: "It's My Life" - Bon Jovi

FAVORITE TEACHER/CLASS: Engineering/Architectural Design 2 with Mr. Woith

FAVORITE AUTHOR: John Grisham

MOST POSITIVE MOMENT: Hitting a home run

WHAT MY FRIENDS WILL REMEMBER ABOUT ME: Helping out

HOW WOULD YOU SPEND \$1,000,000? Invest

IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT 3 ITEMS WOULD YOU WANT WITH YOU? A boat, a tank of gas, and a motor

LAST WORDS OF ADVICE: "Pay attention."

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

FOR ALL DRIVERS:



“A driver must come to a complete stop (and yield):

- When a pedestrian is in a marked crosswalk.
- On school days, when children are in close proximity to a school zone crosswalk.”

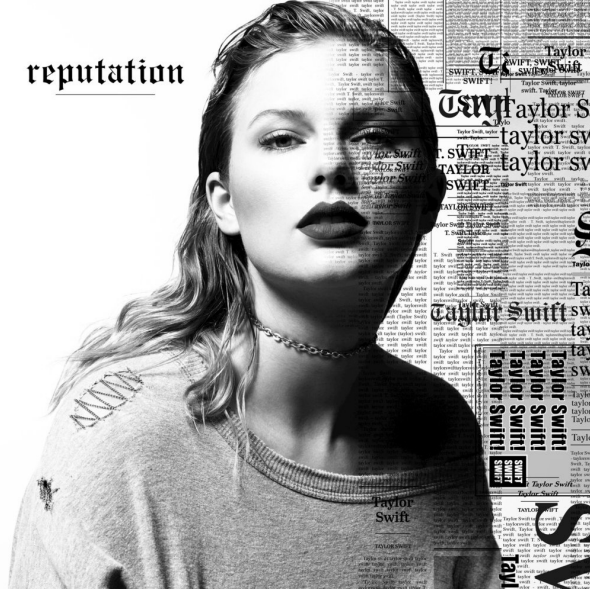
(from cyberdriveillinois.com)

IT'S THE LAW! YOU MUST STOP

FOR ANYONE IN THE CROSSWALK!



reputation



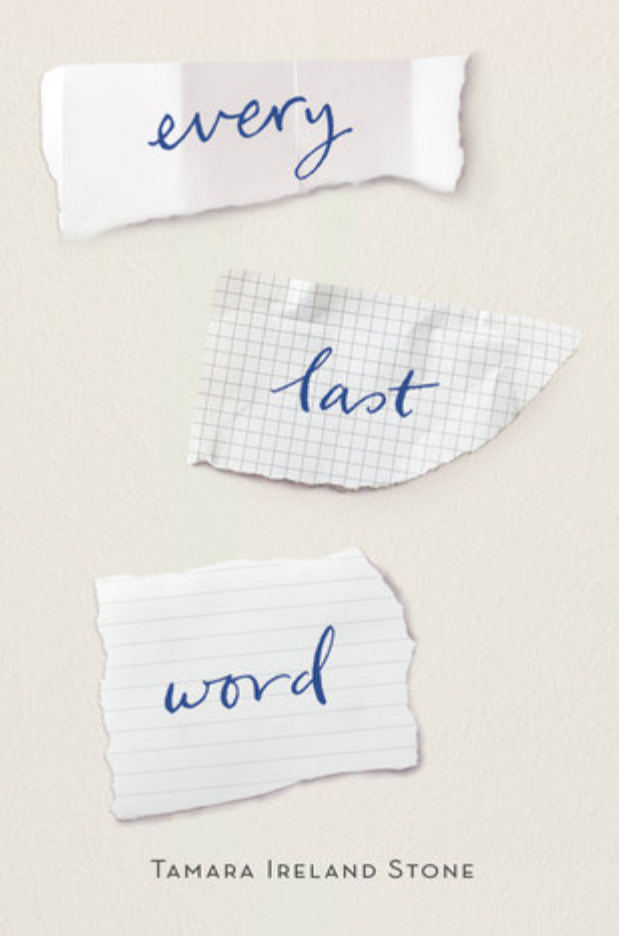
The Critic's Corner Music

Review of Taylor Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do"

By Becca True

Taylor Swift is arguably one of the most controversial singers of the past decade. With her rich romantic history, radical transition of music style, and frequent celebrity cat fights, it is no wonder why she catches the attention of millions. Despite the constant stream of hate she receives, the twenty-seven year old does not allow it to affect her and her successful career. In fact, her enemies appear to motivate her further and act as inspirations for her music. Recently, she released her new single, "Look What You Made Me Do." The music video immediately went viral, breaking records on Youtube. Many attempted to decipher each scene of the video, pointing out the symbolism and forming their own theories. The song has a darker tone in comparison to her previous songs, and it touches on her reputation, dramatic life, and rumors surrounding her. Whether or not you enjoy Taylor Swift, it is certain that she has moved far past her days of having teardrops on her guitar.





Review of Tamara Ireland Stone's *Every Last Word*

By Kenzie Cool

Every Last Word follows a girl named Sam, who is part of the popular crowd. She spends her days hounded by worries and dark thoughts because of her OCD. It doesn't help that her friends are judgmental and more concerned about their image. Until one day Sam meets Caroline. Caroline then introduces her to the Poet's Corner, opening up a bunch of new possibilities. The Poet's Corner is a group of misfits that feel they have been ignored at the school as a whole. As a result, Sam finally feels like she belongs. Until one day an event unfolds that brings Sam's sanity into question. To find out more, definitely pick up this book!

Student Poetry

"Home"

By Sunny Holt

Her freckles were scattered like rose petals of a heartbroken love
It was as if they were designed individually
each of them scarring her skin beautifully
She dreamt of summers in Paris with a wrinkled map in her hand
and sunglasses on the tip of her nose
She would take pictures of everything she saw,
making sure that she was nowhere in focus
Her world was filled with nights on her roof
gazing quietly at the stars
She was the flower that broke through the cracks of a concrete
jungle
She dreamt as if she was oceans away
She was my home
I missed home
But home never missed me.

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Enjoy creative writing? If you ever would ever like to see your creative pieces in *The Chief*, contact Mr. Soares or Mr. Blair!