

Ben's Pen

Fall/Winter Edition 2018 Volume 3 Issue 1

A Publication by Franklin Middle Students

Food Drive is a Success

Miss Brown's Homeroom Sets New Record

by Anthony Pastore

The students in Miss Brown's class set a new homeroom record with a total of 272 food items being collected for the food drive. A few of the students in the homeroom were interviewed about the food drive. Chloe Miro stated, "I am giving food to people who need it. Being able to give is awesome." Savannah Koons responded, "I am not bringing in food to just win a contest. I'm also bringing in to the people who have no food, including older people and younger people." Additionally, Arnesa Uruqi replied, "I like helping people that need things to live and support themselves."



Miss Brown's Gr. 5 homeroom came in 1st Place, 272 food items is the highest total in our school's homeroom records.

Mr. Gauld's homeroom came in second place with 127 non-perishable food items. Students in Mrs. Fay's homeroom were in third place with 102 food items.

Students - please remember that even if your homeroom didn't win the food drive contest, your donation will be appreciated by someone in need. You've made the holiday season even more enjoyable for people in our community.



Mr. Gauld's Gr. 6 homeroom - 2nd Place



Some students made posters to promote the food drive

Delivery by Kenilworth Fire Company

Every year the Kenilworth Fire Company volunteers to pick up all of the food donations and transport them to St. Faustina's Food Pantry at Blessed Sacrament Church. That way, people in our local community are able to get some food when they need it.



Mrs. Fay's Gr. 7 homeroom - 3rd Place

Getting Ready for the School Musical: The Lion King Jr.

by Layla McCleary

Some of my 7th grade classmates are busy preparing for our school musical, so I decided to interview them about their experience. My first interview was with Sara Davidson.

Ben's Pen: Which character are you playing?

Sara: I'm playing adult Nala.



Sara Davidson

Ben's Pen: How do you manage your time to be able to memorize your lines?

Sara: Pretty much any second of spare time I have I spend reading over lines. It's not as easy as it seems.

Ben's Pen: What is your favorite part of getting ready for the musical?

Sara: Dress rehearsals, blocking, and choreography. It's so exciting to watch the show come together right before your eyes.

(Note from Ben's Pen: Just in case you are not familiar with certain theater terms, here is some more information: A dress rehearsal is when a play is practiced before the first official performance in front of a large audience. Blocking refers to working out the details of an actor's movements. Choreography relates to what type of dance moves are planned for a performance.)

My second interview was with Reece Stanko.



Reece Stanko

Ben's Pen: Which character are you playing?

Reece: I am playing Scar.

Ben's Pen: What is it like to play the role of a villain?

Reece: I think that playing a villain is fun because they have more personality and character. Playing a villain is also fun because of the lines that they have and the drama of the last scenes.

Ben's Pen: You have been in school musicals for a while. What made you decide to join the school musicals?

Reece: I joined the musical in fourth grade because I wanted to do something, I had always liked watching the musical and I heard it was fun so I joined it.

The last interview was with Anna Weinert



Anna Weinert

Ben's Pen: Which character are you playing?

Anna: I am playing Mufasa.

Ben's Pen: Which songs in the musical are your favorite, and why?

Anna: My two favorite songs are: "They Live in You" because it has a great melody, and it is my solo, and "The Stampede" because it is very catchy.

The middle school students will be able to watch the musical during the school day. Our entire school will see the play on February 1st.

Franklin Middle School Presents:



January 31, 2019 7PM

February 1, 2019 7PM

February 2, 2019 2PM

Writing my Own Play

by Dimitrius Walters

One day last year I decided to write my own play while I was at my old school in Virginia. A copy of the play is in our school library if you would like to read it. The title of the play is *The Very Rich Kings and the Very Rich Queen*. The play is about a past and future dimension and it includes the comical behaviors of an evil witch, three kings, and one queen. It is a crazy story with lots of action. I hope you enjoy reading it.



Trying Kenpo/Karate

by Arabella Merkel

Bam! I had just broke my first real wood board. It wasn't that easy. I think that kenpo is not just about getting higher belts. It is about persevering.

Kenpo is like normal karate but it is mixed with jiu-jitsu, which is a Brazilian martial art. I started kenpo when I was eight years old. My mother and my step-dad had already started with kenpo. They asked if I wanted to try it. So, I said yes. I was tired of just doing dance, I wanted to try something more. I got dressed and went to my first class.

I didn't feel like I should be there, but I looked up to my step-dad. Everyone started with their own outfit. After my first class, our instructor gave me my first belt. It was a white belt. I felt proud of myself even if it was only a white belt. After all, I did try really hard. I was one of the youngest kids there. I looked up to the higher belts and older kids.

I went home in my new belt. I took off my outfit and went to bed. I thought about getting the other belts. It made me really excited to go back. I dreamt about being a black belt and breaking boards.

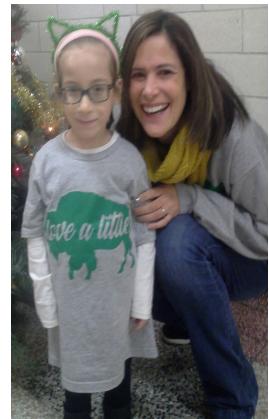
Imagine you are ready to break your first board. You get ready, and you wait for them to count. Then you slam your fist down to break it. You finally break it, everyone is rooting for you. It is an experience you will never forget.



Cool, Crafty Creations

by Amelia Morris

If you like making crafts or watching DIY videos on YouTube, then the craft club might be just the thing for you! It is on Tuesdays after school in room 256, until 4:15. Mrs. Daly and Mrs. Murray run the club. They are really nice and have really great craft ideas. We have made crafts with paper, glitter, pine cones, and they even let us make slime. They say they have a lot of awesome new ideas for the new year! Not only can you make crafts in Craft Club, but you can meet a lot of new kids and maybe even make some new friends.



Piper and Mrs. Gabel

Question: There seems to be a new fashion trend at Franklin Middle in which people wear grey shirts with green buffalos. The shirts are labeled with the words "love a little." What is the reason for this?

Answer: There is a local company called 26 Shirts that helps raise money for various charities. Mrs. Gabel (7th grade teacher) has a daughter named Piper who has frequently taken rides on the Wings Flights of Hope helicopter when she needed surgeries in different parts of the country. The Gabel family felt very grateful for Wings Flights of Hope so they decided to raise money for the charity by getting in touch with 26 Shirts. Since shirts were purchased by people throughout the district, \$1,800 was raised for Wings Flights of Hope.



Mrs. Arroyo (left) and Mrs. Hyzy (right) wearing "love a little" apparel on a recent staff dress down day

Making the Commitment to be in Chorus, Band or Orchestra

by Jonathan Brown and Mariella Holden

Hey! If you are interested joining chorus, band, or orchestra we would like to tell you what it's all about!

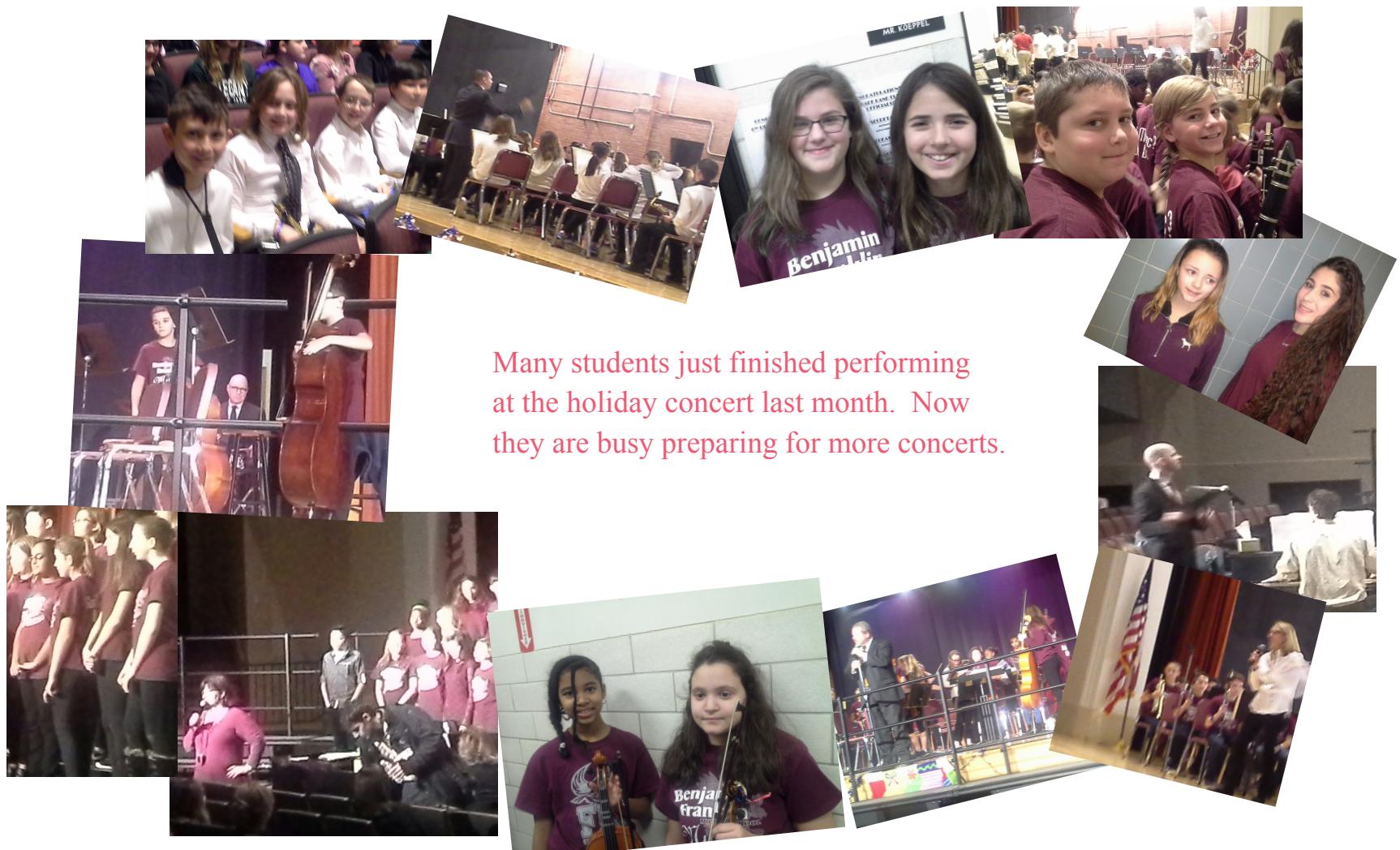
In chorus we love to sing! In 6th grade chorus we are singing: "Here Comes the Sun" by George Harrison, "Bonse Aba" (a traditional song from Zambia, arranged by Andrew Fischer), "Shoshone Love Song" by Roger Emerson and "I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing" (a traditional African American song, arranged by James Desjardins, which will be performed as a combined piece with the 5th and 6th grade chorus). We are also doing a big Star Wars piece ("Duel of Fates" by John Williams) with the 7th grade and 5th grade choruses along with the rest of the orchestra. Besides singing, chorus also comes with responsibilities such as remembering your music and participating in class.

Band is also a wonderful thing to commit to. You have three concerts each with three songs, besides the East Side Band Concert with only two songs. The East Side Band Concert gives you the opportunity to see what it is like to be an experienced band player. You go to Ken East High School to perform for the audience. Additionally, there are some things you have to know before joining band. Playing in band is a big time commitment, it is not an easy class. You must KNOW and be able to PLAY a BAND instrument. You must take your instrument home every day and practice. You have to keep track of your lesson schedule.

You may be interested in joining orchestra. According to sixth grader Alexis Casselman, "Orchestra, for me personally, is a very fun activity. It is a great way to express yourself, but it does come with a lot of responsibilities." Arabella Merkel, a fifth grader, explained what those main responsibilities are; she stated, "In orchestra you have to remember to go to your lessons, and don't leave your instrument at home. Practice at least 20 minutes a day. You have to make sure to tune your instrument and rosin your bow. You can't loosen or tighten your bow too much, or it might break. If you are interested in joining, make sure you are prepared to take on the additional responsibilities." Alexis Casselman agreed, and also commented, "Another responsibility is to always remember your music, as Mr. Koeppel says it is very hard to play without music."

After you join a music program you will find that the more you practice, the more you succeed.

(note from Ben's Pen: The students who wrote this article participate in different programs. Mariella is in chorus, and Jonathan is in band. A special thank you to Arabella Merkel and Alexis Casselman for their input about orchestra so all three programs could be included in the article.)



Many students just finished performing at the holiday concert last month. Now they are busy preparing for more concerts.

Fascinating Facts

Man's Body Preserved in Ice for 5,300 Years

by Jason Despaw Jr.

Scientists discovered the body of Otzi, also known as the Ice Man, in 1991 in the late spring. It turns out his body was 5,300 years old. X-rays on the body were done by scientists. The scientists found an arrowhead he got shot with. Otzi the ice man faced a horrible death. He got shot by an arrow on the left side of his back, right into his lung. He died on top of a mountain. A CT scan was taken at a hospital to see his injury more clearly. Today the body of Otzi is kept safe in a museum. The body tells us about the New Stone Age and is a very important discovery. For more information, visit <https://www.dogonews.com/2009/3/9/otzi-the-iceman-now-online>.

Amazing Facts about Dwarf Planets

by Isaac Needham and Anthony Benedetto

We were reading the *2015 Almanac of National Geographic Kids*, and we found some interesting facts about dwarf planets. A dwarf planet is a very small planet. Five dwarf planets have been discovered. They are Ceres, Pluto, Haumea, Makemake, and Eris. We would like to tell you some specific facts about Eris.

Eris has a position from the sun in the thirteenth orbit, which means it is the last planet in our solar system. There is only one moon on Eris. The length of the day is 25.9 earth hours, which is not much different from our 24 hour day. The length of the year is 561 earth years, which is much different from our year. Smaller planets rotate around their sun more slowly, so that is why the year is so long on Eris.

Dwarf planets are so many millions of miles away that you can't even see them with a telescope (except for Pluto). Pluto is the only dwarf planet in our solar system.

Some kids might like to watch the following entertaining video about dwarf planets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsFSUuou14Y>. If you decide to watch the video we hope you like it.



dwarf planet Pluto

Amazing Animals

African Clawed Frogs

by Jackie Bihary

The African clawed frog (also known as African claw-toed frog, African clawed toad, xenopus laevis, xenopus, or the platanna) is a species of aquatic frog of the family of Pipidae. The word laevis means smooth while xenopus means strange foot. The name comes from the three claws on each hind foot, the frog uses these claws to tear apart food. The species is found throughout much of Sub-Saharan Africa (Sudan and Nigeria to South Africa) and in limited populations in South America, North America, and Europe. (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_clawed_frog)

I would like to tell you about my African clawed frogs. I have two Albino African clawed frogs. I have named my frogs Leonard and Lizzie. I got Leonard and Lizzie when they were babies. These frogs grow quickly. I got Leonard three years ago and I got Lizzie during the summer. I absolutely love these frogs. They are great aquatic pets. If you ever wanted a frog as a pet, I would get one of these. They are super easy to take care of. One time there was a bad accident with Leonard before I got Lizzie. It was sad and scary. But thankfully Leonard is doing great and is alive and well. (If you want to know what happened you can ask me.)



Lizzie

If you are interested in buying one of these frogs be sure to go to one of your local fish stores. You can find supplies and food and gravel. Be sure to buy huge gravel for your frogs, if you don't they can ingest tiny rocks and choke on them and die.



Leonard

Living with Parakeets and a Cat

by Hajar Obaid

Parakeets (also known as budgies) are pretty cool animals! My parakeet, for example, knows how to throw blueberries at our wall, that's pretty cool, even though pretty messy. Parakeets are funny animals! You can teach them how to play dead with just your finger and some treats. I got a cat in November and things got intense. One day I was bored and just sitting on my balcony. My phone was dead. My tablet was dead. I decided to go take out my parakeet, Mango, to get him to get comfortable with me. After a while, he got pretty comfortable with me, so I was ready to put him back in his cage. I thought he wasn't afraid when I walked anywhere with him but of course he was. He flew out of my hand, into the kitchen, and don't forget, I HAVE A CAT! The cat was running so fast and I was panicking so much! Luckily though, we caught the bird while my brother was holding the cat away. Geez Louis, was I relieved! I hope my cat doesn't chase after any animal again.



These parakeets look like my parakeets.



I have a cat named Oscar who resembles this cat, but Oscar's hair is shorter. Like most cats, Oscar has natural hunting instincts. Luckily the bird cage keeps the birds safe.



Some parakeets have vibrant colors like the ones in this tree.

My Family Reunion at Allegany State Park

by Isaac Needham

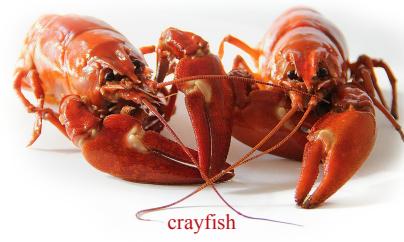
Have you ever been to a family reunion? Or do you know someone who has gone to a family reunion? My family went to three family reunions in the past three years, all in the same place. We went to Allegany State Park on the Red House Side. The Red House Side is a section of the park that is located around the Red House Lake.

One day we were walking deep into the forest near a creek and we saw at least 30 trees that were down! There was a tornado there a few months before we got there. First I saw just one tree down, and then I saw five trees down, and then when I walked some more I found about 25 trees down. This tornado went right through the Red House Side. My cousins and I were surprised by how much damage there was. My cousin said, "Oh my gosh! I never knew a tornado could do so much damage!"

You can see many interesting things while you are at Allegany State Park. My cousins and I were at a drain off, and we saw a crayfish two years ago. He was just minding his own business while we were trying to catch him. We actually caught the crayfish. Since he was a red crayfish we used a net to catch him so he would not use his pincers to grab us.

Allegany State Park is an adventure. You can go hiking, fishing and much more. I would recommend going in summer when it is nice. Legend has it that you might see Yeti or Bigfoot.

You will need to bring food, water, and firewood. DO NOT COOK OUTSIDE OR YOU WILL ATTRACT BEARS!! Inside the cabin there is a toaster oven and microwave. You do not need to bring pots or pans or dishes unless you are going to the Green House Side. If you decide to go there sometime, I hope you can stay for a few days and enjoy the experience as much as I did.



You Can Change the World

by Brooke Davis

Here is what girls in our world have to deal with everyday. If we wear too much makeup, we are trying too hard. If we wear a little makeup, we are not trying. If we wear a sweatshirt and sweatpants, we are called lazy. If we have braces, we get called "brace face." If we wear glasses, we get called "four eyes." Some girls get called ugly every day. Some girls get made fun of every day and have no one there for them because they are not popular. Some people are fake towards people and are just using them.

Why is the world like this? Why is it this way? I got made fun of one time simply because I was having a bad day and I felt upset about it. I felt like I couldn't tell anyone about an issue I was dealing with because I thought they'd tell other people. Why did I feel this way? Why do I feel like I can't trust anyone? Maybe it's because this has happened before.

That person you called a name - most likely they will feel that you are being disrespectful and unfair - they might avoid people because they don't want to get called a name. That girl you called fat - she might be starving herself. That person you saw on the street and called ugly - they might hurt themselves every day.

Why are we so mean? Why can't the world be nicer? We should all treat each other like we want to be treated. Bullying just makes the world worse. We should treat each other nicely so that the world doesn't have to be like this.

Raise your hand if you want to keep the world like this. Now raise your hand if you want to change it. If I were you, I'd raise my hand to change it because the world shouldn't be like this.

If you are thinking about saying something mean to someone, don't say anything at all. Why can't we say something nice to each other? A compliment like "I love your hair" or "I love your smile" or "you're pretty" or "you're smart" can make someone's day. Kind words have more power than people realize.

You can change the world.

Thanks for listening.

Advice from the Falcon Friend

Dear Falcon Friend,

My friends bailed on me. What am I going to do now? Please help.

Sincerely,

I'm lonely



Dear I'm lonely,

It can be hard when your friends bail on you, but it happens. It kind of depends on how they bail on you. People can bail on you in different ways. One way could be, if they all of a sudden stop talking to you and then start talking to you again the next day, or something along those lines. Another way would be if they completely stop talking to you all together. Making plans to hang out, and not including you in those plans, would be another way of people bailing on you.

If they hang out without you, then you can talk to them the next time you see them. Tell them how it felt when they bailed on you and ask them why they did that. But try not to take it personally or act defensive or angry, that way you can listen to their point of view. If they completely stopped talking to you, then it wouldn't really be possible to talk to them about it. A solution to this predicament may be trying to make some new friends. Maybe at lunch sit with someone new, or talk to someone who you aren't close friends with. Once you make some new friends or at least meet some new people, you can start to move on and you will begin to feel better.

I hope this helps!
- Falcon Friend

Fantastic Friends of WNY: A Place Where People with Disabilities can Relax and Have Fun by Mrs. Zummo

If you have a sibling or other family member or a friend with a disability, there is a new place where he or she can go to have some fun. Fantastic Friends of WNY is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization that provides opportunities for disabled people of all ages to have a safe place to hang out and enjoy various structured activities. Since my younger son has autism, I was excited to find a new place to take him where he could get to know other people who have special needs. In addition to hosting events at their brand new facility at 1284 French Road in Depew, Fantastic Friends has monthly events in various locations. My son recently attended a Fantastic Friends holiday party at the main lobby of the Ellicott Square Building in downtown Buffalo. There were lots of people at the party. In addition to the people with special needs, there were family members and many volunteers who came in to help out. I met quite a few student volunteers from various middle schools, high schools, and colleges, mostly in Western New York. There were adult volunteers as well.

Dino and Debbie Cordone, parents of a 13-year-old with special needs, founded Fantastic Friends, because they realized that our area needed more opportunities for young people with disabilities to be able to spend their time in a welcoming, comfortable environment. Fantastic Friends serves people who have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury, Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Sometimes there are activities that siblings of the special needs individual are able to attend, if they would like. People interested in attending the events need to pre-register. The Depew location can also be reserved for private parties. For more information, visit www.FantasticFriendsWNY.org.



above: The Ellicott Square Building in downtown Buffalo



right: enormous, real tree on display inside the main lobby of the Ellicott Square Building where the holiday party took place



There are lots of hands-on activites for people of all ages at the Depew location, including the large-sized Connect Four game, and the metallic sequins board to create your own message, artistic design, tic-tac-toe game, etc.



The sensory room at the Depew location is a relaxing environment for individuals with special needs.

Attention Students

Do you like to write, draw comics, or take pictures? Or do you participate in a club, sport or hobby that other people would like to know more about? If you answered yes to any of these questions, the school newspaper club may be a good fit for you!

Meeting Day: Thursdays
Time: 2:50 until 3:30

Location: Usually Room 297.
Occasionally we meet in the library.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: I am not able to attend some of the meetings. Is that okay?

A: That is fine. We understand that you may have other obligations and clubs to participate in. You can come whenever you are available.

Q: I am not able to stay after-school on Thursdays. Can I still make a contribution to the school newspaper?

A: Certainly - just get in touch with Mrs. Zummo and she will meet with you sometime during the school day to help you plan your article submission.