



Ben's Pen

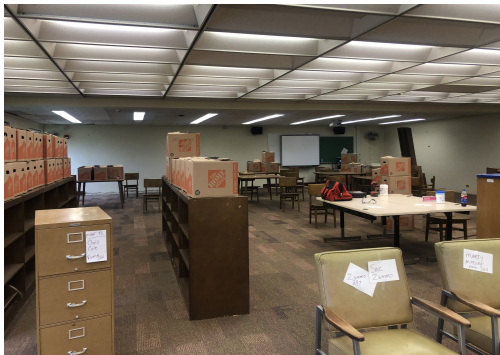
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BIG LIBRARY RENOVATIONS

by Mackenzie Vetter-Higgins

Have you seen the new library? Well, it looks really nice. I interviewed Mrs. Grabenstatter and Mrs. Massey. They told me that they have 15,773 books this year and 5,671 books have circulated since September. That is a lot! I asked them how long it took to box up the library. They told me it took about six weeks. I asked them how long it took to unbox everything. Mrs. Grabenstatter told me, "Unboxing went pretty quickly. But we did it in stages because all of our shelves weren't ready. In the first two weeks or three weeks, we did everything that we could, and then it took about four and a half weeks to get everything right, because the shelves weren't done. So it happened in stages." The pictures below show some of the packing up that took place.



Did you know the library was not always where it is today? The library we have now was built decades ago when a new wing was added to our school. I was wondering where the old library was located. They told me the old library was where the copy center is now, in room 269.

A lot has changed since the school was built. I asked if they could change one thing in the library, what would it be, and Mrs. Grabenstatter replied, "Currently I think this is my dream library. I don't know if there's anything. But new front doors would be nice, maybe with windows in them. I am very happy with the way everything turned out." I asked them what they thought of the renovations, and Mrs. Grabenstatter said, "I can't believe it went as quickly as it did. The buildings and grounds workers really worked hard from the time we got out of school. I came over a few times throughout the summer. When we came back to school we were able to get some shelving started.

I was wondering how long the renovations took and if they were still working. Their responses were, "The renovations were about four and a half months. There are still a few odds and ends to finish, but it is mostly done!"



Please continue to the next page to see a completely new look for our library! Even the ceiling is new.

I asked the library staff how long they both had worked in the library or other libraries. Mrs. Grabenstatter has worked at Franklin Middle for 21 years, and Mrs. Massey has worked in the Kenmore School District for 16 years.

I also asked what their favorite books were. Mrs. Grabenstatter's is *Stuck in Neutral* by Terry Trueman, *A Long Way Down, Wonder*, *Little House on the Prairie*, and *Crispin*. Judy Blume is one of Mrs. Grabenstatter's favorite authors along with Paula Danzinger. Recently she read *Ichabod* and she said that it was really good. Mrs. Massey's favorite books are *A Cricket in Times Square*, and *Wink*. I asked them if they had any books they wanted to add to the library. They said *The One and Only Bob* and the new *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book. So what do you think? Are you going to visit the library soon? I hope you are. I hope you liked reading this. Remember to visit the library during academic support, and thanks for reading this article.



Come and See Aladdin Jr.

by Olivia Premo and Rianne Rimmes

This year Benjamin Franklin Middle School is putting on the show *Aladdin Jr.*, directed by Miss Hill, along with Miss Reagan, the assistant director. The crew this year is being instructed by Mr. Krueger. There are 40 Students in the crew of this musical, all with very important jobs.

The cast list consists of many amazing people including Sydney McHugh as Aladdin, Addison Rejewski as Genie, and Madelyn Atherton as Jasmine. More lead roles are Annabella Cruz as Jafar, Makayla Doll as Sultan, Vanessa Martorana as Kassim, Cara Eschberger as Omar, Ev'eah Tyson as Babkak, Reagan Rider as Iago, and finally for the leads Morgan Tobin as Razoul, Michelle Fernando as Isir, Mikayla Wilkins as Manal, and Alexia White as Rajah. Lastly, there are 78 amazing members of the ensemble.

This musical consists of lots of music, including "Arabian Nights," "One Jump Ahead," "One Jump Ahead (Reprise)," and "These Palace Walls." Some more include "Babkak," "Omar," "Aladdin," "Kassim," "Friend Like Me," "Prince Ali," and "A Whole New World." Lastly, "High Adventure," "Prince Ali (Reprise)," and last but not least "The Finale."

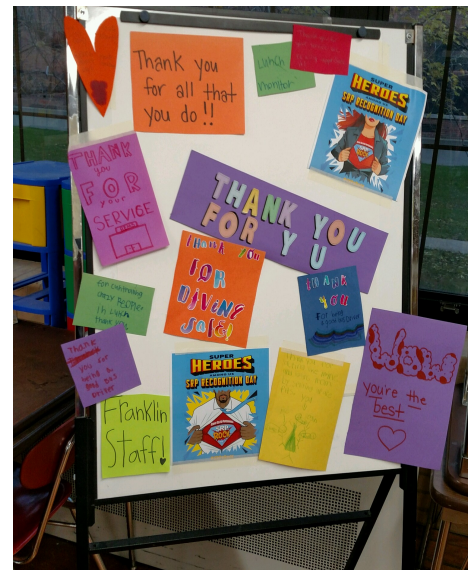
Aladdin Jr. is an extremely entertaining show that keeps audiences interested in the whole musical. There are many action packed scenes and evil plots with twists and turns around every corner. This is not just a regular musical, this is *Aladdin Jr.* by Benjamin Franklin Middle School. Come see us perform on **January 27 or 28, at 7PM or January 29, at 2 PM.**

Preparing for School Related Professionals Day

by Evelyn Cianchetti

On November 16 we celebrated School Related Professionals Day. That means we had a chance to thank the people who might not teach at the school but still help out a lot. This includes: custodians, bus drivers, bus aides, classroom aides, teacher aides, teacher assistants, the security guard, the nurse, the health office aide, the librarian, the library aide, secretaries, monitors, the engineer, the copy room aide, the lifeguard, kitchen staff, technology experts, personal 1:1 aides, volunteers, etc.

Mrs. Ricotta and Ms. Deer organized the event. Mrs. Ricotta printed posters from NYSUT with a Super Hero theme. NYSUT is a NY state union for people in the education profession. The Kenmore Teachers Association provided donuts. Franklin Middle teachers provided coffee, juice and breakfast treats. The Newspaper Club made drawings. I am in Mrs. Daly's Craft Club and we made paper flowers. The Craft Club also painted clay hearts. Mrs. Cardinale, Ms. McDonald, Mrs. Murray, and Mrs. Daly's enrichment classes created posters and thank you notes. The WEB leaders decorated the room. A lot of people came together to make it a special day.



Honoring Our Veterans

Students in Mrs. Gabel's Gr. 7 Social Studies class made cards for troops who are overseas in Germany, and for nursing home residents. D'Andre Gatson is pictured on the left, and Arianna Higbie is on the right.



My Erie Canal Tour Experience

by Avery Price

I went on the Erie Canal tour with my brother, my grandma and my grandpa. When we got there I saw a medium-sized boat. The people let us get on first because they said that seniors must get on the boat first. I was really happy because we got to go on the top of the boat and sit. When we started moving there was a loud horn and I hated it because it was so loud. Then we were coming up to one of the locks. We stopped and I saw the water going up and lifting the boat! I felt like I was going to fall off because I am a scaredy cat. When we reached the top, and the water stopped rising, we went through the lock and that was so cool. The tour guide was telling us about the Erie Canal and what it was used for. Then we came up to another lock and the water went up again and this was even cooler because I saw a duck. When we were out of the locks we rode down the water. Then the tour guide started playing Erie Canal songs. Also the tour guide sounded like a tour guide from a hunting video game when he was on the mic. Then we turned around and went back. Then I saw something horrifying. A dead fish! Ewww! When we went back through the locks, the water went down and it was even cooler. Then when we got back and got off the boat last because we got on first. Then my grandma let us get a souvenir. I got some putty and my brother got a toy ship. When we got to my grandma's house we played with the stuff we got. If you have never been on the Erie Canal Tour before, you should go to Lockport and try it out!



Snakes

by Jena Roehner

You might think snakes are scary, slimy creatures, but they really are not as scary as you think. For example, most snakes are not even poisonous. And they will not bite. And you might think they are slimy, but they are not slimy at all.

There are many interesting facts about snakes. Did you know only 7% of snakes are poisonous? Did you realize snakes have forked tongues to smell their nearby surroundings? Have you heard that snakes shed their skin once a month? Did you know snakes do not just have one heart? They have three! Keep reading for some more facts about snakes. I found this information from nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/facts/snakes-1.

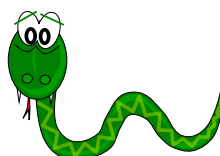
There are 3,000 species of snakes. About 70 species of snakes live in the water. Here are a few types of snakes you might not know: python, cobra, viper, anaconda, titanoboa, garter snake, king snake, coral reef snake, mamba and boa. Some snakes are very dangerous and deadly, such as the inland taipan, the coastal taipan, the king cobra, the Eastern tiger snake, and the Black mamba.

All snakes are carnivores but they all eat different things. For example, they will eat eggs, fish, rodents, rabbits, birds, frogs, toads, earthworms and slugs. All snakes swallow their prey whole.

A lot of people think that snakes can only make hissing and rattling sounds. Snakes can make other noises, like growling, clicking, and chirping.

Did you know that snakes have a reason to be afraid of some other animals? Some animals will eat snakes and a few of them are large birds, foxes, wild boars, coyotes, raccoons and even other snakes!

Snakes are very interesting creatures. Some people even have snakes as pets, which proves that not all snakes are scary. I hope you enjoyed reading my article about snakes.



Coloring Books for the Ronald McDonald House

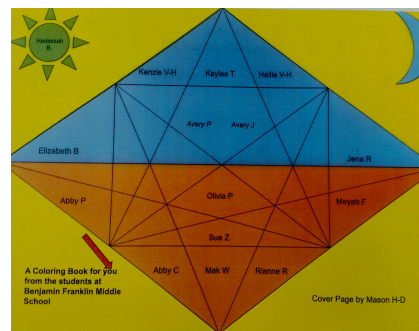
by Hadassah Bush

Have you heard of the Ronald McDonald house? It is a place where families can stay when their child needs medical help. It is a non-profit organization. The Ronald McDonald House saves families a lot of money so they do not have to go to a hotel. They can stay overnight at the Ronald McDonald House instead. Families that stay at the Ronald McDonald house are from out of town, and they need a chance to take care of their loved one.

The newspaper club decided to make a coloring book for the Ronald McDonald House to help the children that are staying there feel better. It is 32 pages long. The coloring book was emailed to the Ronald McDonald House, and crayons were donated by Mrs. Zummo. It was fun to make the coloring books.



The Ronald McDonald House is located on West Ferry Street in the City of Buffalo.



The cover page of the coloring book for children staying at the Ronald McDonald house was designed by seventh grader Mason Ham-Deveans.



Pictured above: one of the main common area rooms on the first floor of the Ronald McDonald House.

My Life as a Buffalo Sports Fan

by Avery Johnson

As a little kid my family loved the Bills and the Sabres. They watched every single game for decades. Sometimes we hoped for a Super Bowl or Stanley Cup, but yet neither of the teams has earned a trophy. But that does not stop us from believing in them! Every game is an opportunity to be in the playoffs. Without my family I would have never seen a single game! Football and hockey changed my life forever. And I will never stop watching these games.



The Benefits of Winter Sports

by Makayla Wilkins

Guess what? Winter sports are right around the corner! There are four available sport options in our school: boys basketball, girls basketball, co-ed swim, and wrestling. The season runs from November 15 to late February. I am here to tell you why it is a great idea to take winter sports! You should take up a winter sport because it is great for your physical and mental health. Winter sports keep you moving and healthy. You become stronger, and faster. Winter is cold, and it is hard to be outside playing and to be active in cold weather. But with our school's winter sports programs, you are not outside in the cold, you are training inside. It is great for your mental health because you can make a lot of friends. When you join a sport, your teammates are like your family. Taking sports can also show you how to manage your emotions by not being a sore loser. Taking sports can help you in so many ways, participating in winter sports is a great opportunity and a valuable learning experience.

My Florida Trip

by Hadassah Bush

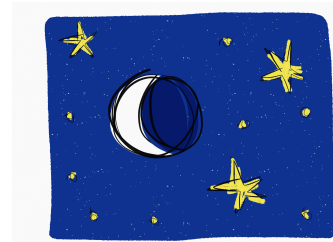
I would like to tell you about my adventure to Florida. First, we drove to Florida, and one thing we saw was a huge moon. My family took some pictures of the moon, and they took some more pictures of other things we saw on the way. When we were driving, I felt sick from the long ride, and when we got to the vacation house I was hungry. Then I went to sleep. I slept in a room that was decorated with characters from the movie Frozen. The next day we went to the Florida Zoo. I loved seeing all the animals. On the following day, we went to the place where you can see "Winter the Dolphin." This dolphin was the star in the movie Dolphin Tale. After that, I went in the pool. On the last day of vacation, I went to Disney and had fun. The rides were my favorite part of Disney. Then after the vacation was over we drove home on the next day. This vacation was something that I will always remember.



Fun Facts

The Newspaper Club researched some fun facts. We hope you enjoy them.

The moon has moonquakes.
(bestlifeonline.com/random-fun-facts/)



Potato chips cause more weight gain than any other food.
(vernonmorningstar.com)

It is impossible to hum while you are holding your nose.
(bestlifeonline.com/blow-your-mind-crazy-facts/)

Cats have 32 muscles in their ears, but human beings have only six.
Also, cats have over 100 vocal sounds, while dogs have around ten vocal sounds.
(us.virbac.com/)



There are nearly 200 species of monkeys, and they are found primarily in tropical rainforests.
(treehugger.com/things-you-didnt-know-about-monkeys-4869728)

Facts about Buffalo:

Buffalo is in the top ten of cities in the USA in international trade.

Buffalo is largest flour milling city in the world.

Due to a significant number of parks, Buffalo is known as the City of Trees.

Millard Fillmore and Grover Cleveland, both US presidents, were from Buffalo.



Buffalo was the first city to host the 1993 Summer World University Games, which are an international athletic competition.

The original manuscript of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain is stored in a Rare Books Room at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. Some original manuscripts of other books date as far back as the 15th century!

Buffalo is home to five professional sports teams, including the Bills, Sabres, Bisons, Bandits, and Queen City FC (soccer).

Note: All of the facts about Buffalo were found at the following website:
daemen.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Ahh%27Mazing%20Facts%20About%20Buffalo.pdf.

Facts About Pandas:

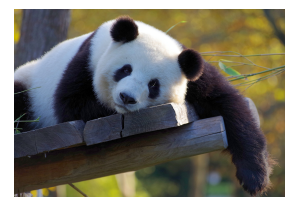
Bamboo is 99% of the panda's diet.

Pandas spend about 12 hours a day eating

They weigh 4-8 ounces at birth

There are Albino Pandas in the wild, they are very rare.

All panda information is from these sources: wwf.org.uk, [kids national geographic](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com) and pandasinternational.org.



Advice from the Falcon Friend



Dear Falcon Friend,

I have a hard time controlling myself when I feel stressed or angry. Sometimes when I feel upset I will say things that are not very nice, and then I regret it later. What are some coping strategies I could use, so that I don't turn friends away?

Yours truly,
Trying to Relax

Dear Trying to Relax,

The Pandemic has been an adjustment for everyone and it is okay to feel a little frustrated sometimes. It is important that you try to maintain the friendships that you have. When you feel yourself starting to get upset, try to step back and calm down a little. Deep breathing in and out is very helpful. Maybe walk away and take a moment. There are other ways to calm yourself. Visualize a quiet place. Listen to music. Maybe, if it satisfies you, exercise.

If you feel you are ready, go back and talk to your friends if you overreacted, so they know that you mean well, and so they do not take it personally.

Sincerely,
The Falcon Friend

The Hat and Sock Drive

by Meyah Franklin

The National Junior Honor Society had a hat and sock drive for the homeless people, and other people in need. Over 200 hats and pairs of socks were collected. I was at the store getting some tomato sauce for dinner and I saw a pair of Hello Kitty socks and a Frosty the Snowman hat, so I bought it and I took it to school and put it in the box. I was thinking that younger children might like this.

Mrs. Lach organized the hat and sock drive, along with the National Junior Honor Society members. They also made some very cute and pretty posters. It was great to think of a way to help the facilities that assist people in need.

