St Pius X School Community,

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the PIRATES POINT. I am excited to be the Editor alongside Asst. Editor Karina O., Fiction Editor Nick L., Layout Editor Brooke F., and Classroom Coordinator Audrey B. Check out the feature on our principal, Mr. Zafra and his goals for this year as well as an article on our new Office Manager, Mrs. Kelly. We also welcome new teachers Ms. Duffy, Mrs. Tasber, and Mrs. McCommons. Immerse yourself in Frenchy’s Friendly Tips and Aljoan’s Kitchen. Journey with Nick to Upstate New York, and back in time to the Roman Empire with Rahim and so much more. Enjoy!
-Sophia K. Editor

Nick L.  Karina O.  Sophia K.  Audrey B.  Brooke F.
Mr. Zafra
Past-Present-Future
By Sophia K.

This is Mr. Zafra’s third year at St. Pius X Catholic School. Mr. Zafra was inspired to be the principal here because he wanted to give back to the school that helped form him. He hasn’t made all the changes that he wants to yet, but he is definitely on his way! He really likes the new school uniform and is proud of the new logo. He prefers the bigger logo so that everyone can tell that we’re “Pius Proud”! He considers this an opportunity to rebrand ourselves.

Mr. Zafra pointed out other changes at the school since he was enrolled at St. Pius X, noting there are more sports opportunities for all students including more basketball teams for girls and boys. We also have track, cross country, field hockey, and Soccer Shots. Academically, the upgrades include Chromebooks, Kindles, and Smart TVs. The education continues to evolve, while the religion curriculum remains unmatched.

Mr. Zafra enjoys the welcoming community atmosphere the school exudes. He wants the students to be more active and have a voice; that’s why he decided to reintroduce the Student Council. He also would like for more parents to be involved to get new energy and ideas. This is already happening with the leadership and parents of our Home & School Association.

Mr. Zafra’s own new energy and ideas extend to an innovative training program for the teachers called Catapult Learning. An expert will be guiding the teachers as they look at the data from the Performance Series tests to analyze strengths and weaknesses and adapt the curriculum accordingly.

Other curriculum improvements Mr. Zafra has implemented, include having Mrs. McCommons offer resource support, so our students have a better learning experience.

Mr. Zafra hopes to maintain a solid number of students every year and would like to see a new playground installed with fundraising money.
Welcome Mrs. Kelly - Master Manager

By Paris L. and Eva G.

When long-time Business Manager, Jennifer Castelow retired last year, Mrs. Lisa Jo Kelly applied for the position because she was looking for a new challenge. “I think I learned more in the last 2 months than the last 2 years!” commented Mrs. Kelly. Prior to coming here, she worked as an Office Manager for her husband’s business, CMIT Solutions. She also volunteered at St. Gregory The Great Catholic School, where her youngest child attends.

Mrs. Kelly’s job can best be described as Manager of all things, big and small. She is in charge of purchasing and keeping track of everything from light bulbs and lawn care to classroom and office supplies. She does all of the background checks for employees. In addition, Mrs. Kelly sets up email accounts for all the students. She also distributes keys to the faculty and staff. Something goes wrong? She manages that too!

Though she wished she had more interaction with the students, Mrs. Kelly loves her job and the family community at St. Pius X Catholic School. “Everyone was very warm and welcoming”; she explained, while commenting on how much she enjoys being here.
Welcome Back Pirates!!

By Channing L.
Let’s Have An Awesome Year!!
The Dazzling Ms. Duffy
By Audrey B. and Sophia K.

Ms. Duffy is the new Middle School Social Studies teacher who graduated from William and Mary. She also teaches PreK in the afternoon. She was inspired to become a teacher by her Lacrosse Coach, who was also her Social Studies teacher, and one of her biggest role models. Social Studies was always her favorite subject because they were the “coolest” teachers. Her parents always felt she should go into business and marketing, but she definitely prefers teaching.

Ms. Duffy always admired the faith, community, and discipline that is involved in Catholic schools. Her favorite thing about being here is the “positive and kind community of teachers and students”. She likes teaching Social Studies because she gets to prove that the past is important for the future. If Ms. Duffy wasn’t teaching Social Studies, she would probably be teaching English.

Some of her favorite hobbies include coaching Lacrosse and Basketball. If she could travel into any time frame in history, it would be World War II, because she experienced the Jamestown period at William and Mary. If she had to bring three things to a desert island, she would bring “a book, coffee, and a lacrosse stick”.

[Image of Ms. Duffy with students]
Inside the Mind of Mrs. McCommons

By Cassian A. and Thomas M.

Mrs. McCommons, our new Art teacher, started as a substitute last spring and now runs the Art program full time. She obtained a degree in Illustration and a Master’s Degree from Temple University in Philadelphia.

Her style of art is soft realism/Multimedia and she has been influenced by artists, Vermeer, Derer, and Mary Cass.

Mrs. McCommons came to St. Pius X Catholic School because she feels, “Jesus guided me here.”

Her favorite aspect of the school is “the kids” and she is very excited to be our Art teacher. She hopes to teach us “the basics of art” so we can branch out and do better. For the Middle School students, she assigned Art Journals that include 3 nature and textural elements. In the Elementary grades, she is doing the same thing, but without the art journals.

In addition to Art, Mrs. McCommons has a specialty in 2D Mixed Media and is helping the faculty with their Special Education needs students, a concern close to her heart. Her inspiration comes from our Blessed Mother.
Mrs. Tasber’s Terrific Transfer!

By Karina O.

Mrs. Tasber is the first-grade teacher. She loves the St. Pius X Catholic School community and enjoys teaching her class. As a former third grade teacher at Star of the Sea, she said first grade has kept her much more alert. Mrs. Tasber attended Tidewater Community College and received her Associates Degree in Social Sciences. She finished her Bachelor’s Degree in Education at Virginia Wesleyan College. She wants to continue teaching first grade for now but might try another grade in the future.

Mrs. Tasber stated that the transition process has gone very well. The faculty and staff have been a big help in figuring everything out. She also loved decorating her room which is based on Minions! Mrs. Tasber made sure that her room is an environment where kids can learn and have lots of fun. She practices words and numbers with her class, making sure that what they’re learning is sticking with them. She loves teaching kids while keeping it exciting and interesting.
Eighth Grade Elves

With the Christmas season just around a couple of corners, the 8th-grade classroom is already preparing for this joyous time. There are Christmas chains being created, trees being decorated, and smiles becoming commonplace in this elf workshop.
CONSTANTINE

By Rahim R.
Emperor of The Western Roman Empire
from CCCVI A.D.-CCCXXIV A.D.
Emperor of The Roman Empire from
CCCXXIV A.D.- CCCXXXVII A.D.

Constantine was born in the year A.D. 280, which was during the Crisis of the Third Century, in the city of Naissus. However, he was educated in the Eastern Roman Empire, where he learned Latin and Greek and probably saw Christians persecuted. His father was the emperor of the Western Roman Empire, and Constantine fought alongside him in Britannia. After the death of his father, Constantine became the emperor of Western Rome. In A.D. 313, he issued an edict, saying that Christianity was now legal within the Roman Empire. Others ruled the Eastern and Southwestern Roman Empire, but with time, he decided to unite all under one banner at last. Constantine faced a legion double the size of his, and things looked bleak indeed. However, the night preceding the battle, he had a dream that he would attain victory over them if he fought under the sign of the Christian Cross. Therefore, he painted crosses on the shields of his soldiers, and won an incredible victory against all the odds, securing his hold on the Western half of the divided Roman Empire. Shortly after this, Constantine met with Licinius, who was the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, to develop the edict of Milan, which legalized Christianity.

In 314 A.D. a civil war erupted, leaving the two sides unsettled, with a decade of peace in between two wars. Eventually, Constantine decided to unite Rome as one and defeated Licinius. Later on during his rule, Constantine called the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 resulting in the Nicene Creed, which Christians recite today.

Constantine’s reign changed the Roman Empire forever, making it a Christian Empire, and one of the most powerful in the world. Right before he died in 337 A.D. he was finally baptized. He is buried in Constantinople in the Church of the Apostle.
In Montgomery County, New York, there lives a small town called Canajoharie. The name translates to, “The pot that washes itself” in Native American. The village is small and cozy. It has stores and great restaurants, just like any other town in the sticks, but there’s something unusual here. The village is famous for its falls, which are among the most beautiful in the country. The falls hide something rather strange, though.

The creek and falls lead to a pool of water, which some say is a bottomless pit. The pool is called “The Devil’s Hole.” It is named this way because of its shape. The hole is about twenty feet long, and twelve wide, depending on the water level. It is said to be bottomless because no one has ever gotten to the bottom. What adds to the eeriness of the place is that between 2001 and 2004, three people died while jumping into the Falls. The Falls are listed as one of the most dangerous places in the country because of stone ledges under the surface of the water, which are not visible from above.

According to the stories, people have gone down with scuba gear, dropped a telephone pole tied to a 100-foot rope, but their searches were fruitless. As far as we know, there are no pictures of this mysterious pit. There are pictures of the falls (above), but for some reason, this bottomless pit receives little attention. So, if you find yourself in a little town called Canajoharie in New York, feel free to visit this water hole. However, don’t let yourself become enveloped in the thick layer of mystery that shrouds this bottomless pit.
Sweet Victory At Last
By Mailey W.

The volleyball team has shown a huge improvement this season. They have won eight games out of twelve. The victory against long-time rival, St. Patrick’s was a hard-fought to the end. Head captain, Audrey B. stated, “It was extremely stressful and a close game the whole time.” We lost our first set, 16 to 25, but battled back and won the last two sets. Audrey proclaimed, “We were so excited to win, as they defeated us the first time we met. What really helped us win was teamwork. We jumped up and down when we won! All the stress was gone.”

Co-Captain Channing L. has played volleyball since she was in third grade, while Audrey has been playing since sixth. When they both were chosen captains, they were surprised. Being a captain has lots of ups and downs. The hardest part, Channing said, “Is being a leader and having a confident voice,” while Audrey pointed out, “Having a positive attitude is essential.” The teamwork in volleyball is an important part. She concluded, “Volleyball isn’t about who is the best of the best; it’s about friendship, leadership, but most of all teamwork.”

GO PIRATES!!!!
Dear Brooke,
Every night my dog leaves my mom’s room and comes into mine while I’m asleep. She always jumps on my bed and wakes me up while I’m trying to sleep. I can’t lock my door because it doesn’t have a lock. What should I do?
From,
Sleepless Nights
Dear Sleepless Nights,
Since you are having trouble getting enough sleep because of your dog, I would ask your mom if there is any way she could put her in another room. If not, maybe just put something against your door that is heavy so that she won’t be able to just come in. Good luck with that night owl of yours!
- Frenchy

Too Talkative Teacher:
Dear Brooke,
In one of my classes, all the teacher does is talk. We never have time to do any work, and never get anything done. I love the class. What should I do?
Sincerely,
T.T.T.
Dear T.T.T.,
Email that teacher and let them know you’re having trouble focusing because of all of the distractions that take place in that class.
-Frenchy

Dear Brooke,
Soccer and Basketball is a pain when you have tons of homework to do. Sometimes I struggle to get my work done after and before sports. How should I help myself to enjoy sports and to get my work done?
From,
A tired boy
Dear A tired boy,
I would try to manage your time wisely, by getting as much done as possible before soccer and basketball. Maybe you could bring some of your homework with you in the car as well. I wouldn’t stress too much because I used to stress about getting everything done as well, but if you put your mind to it and don’t worry it will all be okay.
- Frenchy
Sinigang

Sinigang, a meal my family often cooks, is a popular dish in the Filipino culture. It contains a variety of veggies like okra, eggplant, pechay, and much more. To spice it up you could add chili peppers and substitute pork for fish. It takes about 30 minutes to an hour to make, depending on the amount. It is usually cooked for special occasions. Enjoy!

**Ingredients:**
- 1 bunch of pechay
- 12 string beans
- 3 pieces of chilli
- 1 onion
- Pork, beef or cut fish
- 1 eggplant cut into pieces
- 1 tablespoon of cooking oil
- 8-10 pieces of okra
- 2 quarts of water
- 1 pkg of Sinigang mix

**Instructions:**

1. Bring water to a boil
2. Add onions and tomatoes then let boil for 5-8 minutes.
4. Add two tablespoons of fish sauce (if cooking with fish) and 2-4 tomato pieces
5. Two tablespoons of sinigang mix
6. Boil for another 10 minutes
7. Add the veggies and cook for 10 minutes
8. 2 small potatoes in pieces
9. 1 pack of sinigang mix
TEACHERS TALK:

HEALTH & P.E. By Jhun D.

In the Middle School Health class, Mrs. Lomogda is focusing on having students engage and work out their bodies and minds through health and wellness goals. She hopes to motivate students to stick to them. She’s covering hygiene, personal health, and diseases. Mrs. Lomogda is also discussing drug and alcohol abuse, stress, depression, and coping skills. In the Elementary School, the focus is on safety and helping the students understand the five senses. They also will learn about germs, nutrition, and emergency procedures.

Amazing Art By Audrey B.

It’s a new year in art with lots of fun new changes! For starters, the Middle School is starting 2-3 creative art journals EACH WEEK! These are a place where students are Free to express themselves, GROW, and learn. Mrs. McCommons said she hopes to raise students’ awareness of the intrinsic bond between Language Arts and the Visual Arts. Middle School students you can look forward to working with glass blowing, ceramics, weaving, clay, and acrylics.

Social Studies By Megan and Mailey

Miss. Duffy is excited to lay the foundation of the student’s experience with American history. She also hopes to “Encourage students to think critically instead of simply accepting the common narrative of U.S history.” Miss Duffy is teaching a Time in History - 6th grade: 19th century and the Civil War, 7th grade: 20th century and how history affected our modern world, 8th grade: studying government and civics. She hopes that each student will have a deeper understanding of our history.

Kindergarten By Paris L.

Mrs. Mcartney has many goals for her students. She wants them to know how to read and write by the end of the year. She wants them to shine in upcoming classes. She loves seeing the excitement on her students’ faces when they walk into school and are ready to learn. Students have a project coming up, where they will create a nocturnal animal and write three facts about the animal, and then share it with the class.
Algebra 1 & Geometry  By Amare M. & Jhun D.
Mr. Hill has been teaching here for 3 years and is mainly focusing on student’s success. He is hoping that all 8th-grade students obtain high school credit. His strengths as a teacher are relating to students and he brings the latest technology and techniques to his classrooms including Geometry Powerpoint.

ILA  By Audrey B
The big change in ILA is an increase in the number of class novels - from 4 to 6. Mrs. Pruitt also hopes to launch small book clubs within each grade, where students will choose what they read (from a list of course) and discuss in groups. Her goal is to help the Class of 2020 expand the Pirates Point to cover the entire school instead of just Middle School and to have a Fiction section filled with Short Stories.

Science  by Cassian A.
Science is everywhere and that is what Mrs. Pitton is trying to convey to her students. She is focusing on teaching current events and how students can make informed opinions on them. STEM is for now just fun projects, but she plans to get into robotics competitions.

Playful Pre-K 3!  By Audrey B.
Mrs. Burfield teaches Pre-K 3 and says she loves teaching the youngest grade because everything is new to them and they are EXCITED about everything. This month they have their costume parade for HALLOWEEN and their field trip to Hunt Club Farm. She says her favorite thing about teaching them is seeing their little eyes light up with amazement! Their favorite thing to do is show and tell and RECESS.

Music  By Karina O.
Ms. Kooiman, the music teacher, wants to give students a chance to play and sing in groups this year. She encourages kids to listen to each other and be kind. She would also like to include more gospel music in her classes. This month, the 2nd graders are practicing for their 'All Saints Day Program.' They are very excited and show lots of enthusiasm. Miss Kooiman’s goal is to keep her classes fun and interesting while having everyone be kind as well.
3rd Grade Class  By Amare M. & Jhun D.
Mrs. Auger has been teaching here 8 years and wants her students to gain knowledge and have a positive attitude. She is focusing on her core subjects. Her strengths as a teacher are having a good classroom and making sure her expectations are understood. The parents like the way she communicates with them.

Middle School Religion by Aljoan A.
This is Mrs. Glass’s third year at SPX. She feels blessed and called to this position. Her favorite part of teaching is seeing her students on a daily basis. She loves them all! Her number one objective is to live by the greatest commandment and to remind her students of the responsibility to love God, love one another and love ourselves. She often reminds her students that love is a verb, and the best way to show it is through kind and loving actions. She is committed to helping her students (and herself) become better people. She hopes to make religion class relevant by allowing students to complete group projects and providing them with time to reflect on their work.

Second Grade
Mrs. Robinson is working with her students to help them grow in their faith and love for God. This year they will be celebrating First Reconciliation and Eucharist. By the end of the year she hopes her students will have grown in their faith, their cursive writing skills, and expanded their knowledge in all of their core subjects. Mrs. Robinson’s strengths as a teacher is that she creates a very loving environment and each and every student knows that they matter.

4th and 5th Math and Science
Science is in full swing in 4th and 5th grade as they focus on plants this quarter. The mini greenhouse is up and running. Hopefully, the plants will thrive so they can increase the gardens outside of Hall B. Fifth grade had a wonderful experience at the Norfolk Naval Base for a STEM Day. This year in math Mrs. Novisk hopes to increase her student’s love for math by exposing them to a variety of skills and activities. Mrs. Novisk hopes that her love for math and science will spread to her students.
Perky Pre-K4 on a Roll

By Mailey W.

The Pre-K 4 are already on a roll learning as Miss McDaniels has brought a whole new ballgame this year - including songs, dance moves and active lessons. Miss McDaniels' routine includes reviewing the day, month and year. Their curriculum also includes singing a song about colors, in three different languages: English, Spanish and Sign Language. “Their brains are like sponges, always eager to learn new things!” she said.

Miss McDaniels graduated from Radford University and has been at St. Pius X Catholic School for three years. She was inspired to become a teacher by her Mom and Dad. She shared, “My Mom was so great with me and used to be a teacher and my Dad always said I would make a great teacher.” For Miss McDaniels, it is all about the little ones, “Kids just say the funniest things; they make me laugh everyday.” She also noted the challenge that comes with teaching such a young age, “They can’t sit still! Miss McDaniels has found her calling and is doing an amazing job. The kids just love her.
Señora O’Sullivan’s goal is to prepare her students for the next year’s level. She wants it to be fun and exciting for her students to learn and retain the information. She also said that she wants her students to become lifelong learners.

Señora intends to use more technology in different ways and use the most authentic resources she can find to motivate her students’ desire to learn. She plans to find more articles from Spanish speaking countries. Another thing Señora is doing to promote authenticity is having the students listen to Spanish music. It warms her heart to see her classes full of excitement.

Señora O’Sullivan enjoys teaching and sharing her heritage and culture with her students. She acknowledged that sometimes it is challenging teaching the whole school, Pre-K through 8th grades. The key is to stay organized. She loves teaching at St. Pius X Catholic School because of the wonderful students and families.
Student Council is BACK!

By Brian T. and Audrey B.

This year Mr. Zafra decided to bring back Student Council. Mrs. Lomogda and Mrs. Novisk are supervising the Student Council along with President Sophia K. and Vice President Nick L. The elections were held over a period of two weeks and were full of intense marketing. The students hung posters, wrote speeches, and brought in candy. President and Vice President candidates read their campaign speeches to the whole school during Morning News. These speeches included promises of more dress-down days to renovating the preschool playground. Voting was held over a course of three days and grades 4-8 voted. The Student Council’s current project is making Halloween Candy-grams for $1 each. The candy grams are bags of marshmallows, and the ghostings are anonymous. They plan to use the money raised from this fundraiser for future projects.
Weird Facts

By: Jeremy M., Nick L., Vincent W., Bryan T.

Animal Edition

Shrimp's hearts are located in their heads.

Frozen lobsters can come back to life.

Snails can sleep for up to three years.

Elephants are the only animals that can't jump.

A cow gives nearly 200,000 glasses of milk in a lifetime.

The fingerprints of a koala are so indistinguishable from humans that they have on occasion, been confused with each other.

You can hypnotize a frog by placing it on its back and stroking its stomach.
Diary of a Kitten

By Nick L.

Saturday- Today I was in the animal shelter when something incredible happened. I got adopted! I saw someone come around the corner. He was about six feet tall, with messy black hair, a blue T-shirt, and jeans. He made eye contact with me, and I saw something flicker behind his eyes. “I’ll take that one.” he told the employee and continued something in humanspeak, but all I could understand were the words “Small Bob” and “reminds me” as he pointed to me. The employee squatted down to my cage and lifted meowt. Get it? “Meowt!”

Anyway, I saw Marmalade in his cage and waved goodbye. “Bye, Fork,” said Marmalade. “Bye, Marmalade,” I said. We were good friends, even littermates. He was the only family I had ever known. The new human looked like he was conflicted. He said something else, and the employee picked up Marmalade. We both got placed into a smaller cage. “Hi, Fork.” “Hi, Marmalade.” We got carried around the corner, and we wrestled for a spot to see out the front of the cage. When we left the shelter, the fresh air felt amazing. The human carried us to a blue Prius and placed us in the passenger seat.

Our new maid drove all the way home, even though I kept telling him that I could drive. In fact, I provided lots of useful input, all of which he ignored. Marmalade joined in too.

When we got to the house or dorm, there was so much furniture to mark as my own, so many things to knock off the counter... As I jumped up to the counter to disable a threatening glass of water, by yeeting it to the floor, I felt a squirt of water on my back. Scary! I jumped like a thousand paws in the air! I heard my new keeper say, “No blah blah glass blah blah blah.” I didn’t really care about what he said, I just wanted to keep exploring.

I jumped down. This place was smaller than the animal shelter. There was an open space of 20 X 20 human feet, that contained the kitchen and living room. The living room had two leather lazy boy chairs, a coffee table, and a TV. The kitchen had a tile floor, but the living room had blue shag carpeting. I looked around and saw a door that was open a crack. I pushed my way inside to see a litter box and a food dish, as well as a water dish. Marmalade was right behind me. “You guys blah blah share food dish blah blah until another blah blah pet store.” explained my human. Though I was slightly vexed about the situation, I continued my exploration mission. As I looked around the room, I saw a human litter box and a human paw washing device. They were both higher than me by about twelve paws. I assumed this was the bathroom. I also found two bedrooms in the dorm. One of them had completely blue bedding. I realized there was a lot of blue in this place. The day had been busy, and Marmalade and I were tired. We curled up together on one of the lazy boys. “Goodnight, Fork.” “Goodnight, Marmalade.” I quickly drifted off and dreamed of magical dreams of cream and catnip.

I was awakened to a loud noise, and you will never believe what it was! To be continued...
The Pius Pumpkin Patch

Thomas M. 8th Grade

Rahim R. - 8th Grade

Karina O. 8th Grade

Audrey B. 8th Grade