

# Shark Bites

6th Edition

April 5th, 2017

Gulf Coast High School  
7878 Shark Way, Naples, FL 34119



## FSA: Florida Stressful Assessments? Not Anymore

By: Sophia Vellozzi

It is that time of year where school picks up, with an attempt to race toward the finish line. Well, the year is not quite over yet. The most important assessments of this year are yet to come, one of them being the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA).

The English FSA is yet another test that is an intrinsic part of the year and the years to come. The teachers are diligently preparing the students for these upcoming tests, but individual work from the student must also be applied in preparation for the exam. One of the simplest and effective ways of preparing is to read. Reading will open one's mind to numerous types of literature, and subjects someone to varied sentence structure and eloquent vocabulary. While reading, pay special attention to the grammar, language, and conventions the author uses. The more someone exercises this ability, the more apt that person is to apply and utilize this knowledge on the English FSA, especially for the writing component.

Focusing in class will consequently deem a student ready for the English FSA. Teachers expose their students to a variety of writing styles that can be practiced through writing essays. Freshman Student Kayla Mathai explains, "My English teacher is intent on us improving our writing skills. Through reading excellent literature, we are learning the various components that go into a finished writing piece." The teachers

will improve critical reading and writing skills by providing students with various strategies and advice when taking these immense state tests. Someone must demonstrate a proficiency in reading and writing in the classroom so that they build a positive habit that will turn out to be second-nature to a student when it is time to take the FSA. Stay involved in the classroom, and ask a multitude of questions that will eventually aid in these cumulative tests.

In addition, students should use the most abundant resource at their fingertips: the internet! Go online and practice reading passages or articles and answering the corresponding questions. This will expand a student's reading skills especially for the reading portion of the FSA. Freshman Student Faessa Dorival comments, "My English teacher prepares us by giving us multiple packets of practice questions to answer based on various articles. She had done this for our midterm, and I felt thoroughly prepared." Teachers will most definitely facilitate their student's reading abilities by taking such actions, but some require extra practice outside of the classroom.

As the Florida Standards Assessment approaches, don't be nervous. Ease nerves by preparing through reading and writing. If a student does as follows, they will feel less stressed on the day by merely taking responsibility for their own success and actively learning!

## We're Loud Sharks, We're Proud Sharks!

Madelyn Morey



The Shark Fins club at Gulf Coast High School was created to promote school spirit to all students at major Shark sporting events and school functions. The Shark Fins are responsible for the themes such as pink-out and neon night during the football season to assist fellow students in displaying their Shark pride. Additionally, Shark Fin members have raised awareness for school events to increase attendance at these events.

At the start of the school year, the Shark Fins brainstormed different ideas in a group setting during their meetings every week. Members then planned out how they would approach spreading their message of school pride. After deciding on focusing on raising attendance to sporting events they organized how they could successfully attract even more students to participate in their special themes for sporting events.

With this, the Shark Fins continued their work asking other students to wear certain clothes to sporting events, such as all black. This effective strategy helped them spread their message fast and even helped in selling t-shirts that promoted their club and other organizations at Gulf Coast. All around, the Shark Fins increased the amount of

students buying tickets to the football games during season and created a sense of school unity through school pride.

During sporting events, the members of Shark Fins would try to "pump up" the crowd with streamers and confetti. The student section of the Gulf Coast stadium was filled with students participating in the theme for that specific game and also cheering for their fellow

students alongside their friends. The Shark Fins set up a one of a kind school environment where the masses can all support Gulf Coast High School with Shark pride.

Within the club meetings, Shark Fin members use team-based skills to cooperate with one another in order to accomplish their goals. Everyone is able to put in their opinions or ideas so that all members are participating and have a say in their next project. This helps all of the members develop a respect or understanding for one another even though they have different mindsets as they work together on projects that will benefit their school and the student body as a whole. Finally, utilizing social media for good, the Shark Fins spread the word on student news surrounding school events and functions that are important.



Photo Courtesy of Google Images



# Features

## In GC's Library: Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher

By: Isabella Napoles

Jay Asher is an American writer who specializes in contemporary novels for teens. He attended Cuesta Community College in his hometown of Arcadia, California, where he wrote his first two children's books for a Children's Literature Appreciation class. He then attended California Polytechnic State University to become an elementary school teacher, but he left during his senior year in order to pursue a serious writing career. From working as a salesman in a shoe store to a librarian in a bookstore, many of Asher's work experiences influenced his writing. He has published two books: *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2007) and *The Future of Us* (2011).

*Thirteen Reasons Why* has received five stars from Teen Book Review as well as praise from other notable authors such as Ellen Hopkins, Gordon Korman, and Chris Crutcher. Netflix has created a miniseries based on the book with executive producer Selena Gomez that will premiere this year. It is the story of a teenage girl named Hannah Baker who committed suicide, and it is told through the eyes and ears of a boy named Clay Jensen.

Clay is a shy high school student who comes home one day to discover a box of cassette tapes at his front door. He finds that they were recorded by Hannah, a girl he had a crush on, who committed suicide two weeks prior. On the tapes, Hannah explains the thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life, and Clay is one of them.

The first person to receive the tapes was Justin, who was one of the first people Hannah met when she moved to town. They kissed once, but when Hannah developed feelings for him, Justin spread untrue rumors that they did more than kiss. This resulted in the ruining of Hannah's reputation before she even began school.

The next person to get the tapes was Alex, who used to be friends with Hannah. Alex ruined his friendship with her when he published a "hot or not" list that objectified her and furthered her tainted reputation.

Jessica was the third person to receive the tapes. She was a girl that Alex compared Hannah to, and she slapped Hannah in the face after Alex's list was published. She left a permanent scar on her face that ironically represented her emotional pain.

Tyler was the fourth, and he used to take pictures of Hannah through her bedroom window in an attempt to "catch her in the act" of doing what everyone in the school knew her for.

The fifth person who heard the tapes was Courtney, who used to be Hannah's friend. Hannah realized that Courtney only used her to gain popularity. Courtney had been known as a sweet girl until she spread rumors that Hannah sent her sensual messages, which was untrue.

The sixth person to get the tapes was Marcus, who took advantage of Hannah when he asked her to go on a date with him then proceeded to physically violate her a number of times.

Zach was next. He pretended to comfort Hannah after her date with Marcus, but she later found out that the only reason he helped her was because he was dared to.

Ryan was the eighth person to hear the tapes. He was the editor of the "Lost N Found" column in the school newspaper. He gained Hannah's trust by befriending her, then he stole a poem of hers that detailed her personal problems. He published it in his column anonymously, but people easily figured out that she was the author and mocked her.

Clay was the ninth person to receive the tapes. As he listens to them, he walks around town and goes to all the places she mentions while reminiscing about what could have been.

What do the tapes say about Clay? Does he pass them on to the next person on Hannah's list? How does he deal with everything she has said? Discover the answers to these questions and others by reading the heartbreaking and moving novel *Thirteen Reasons Why*.

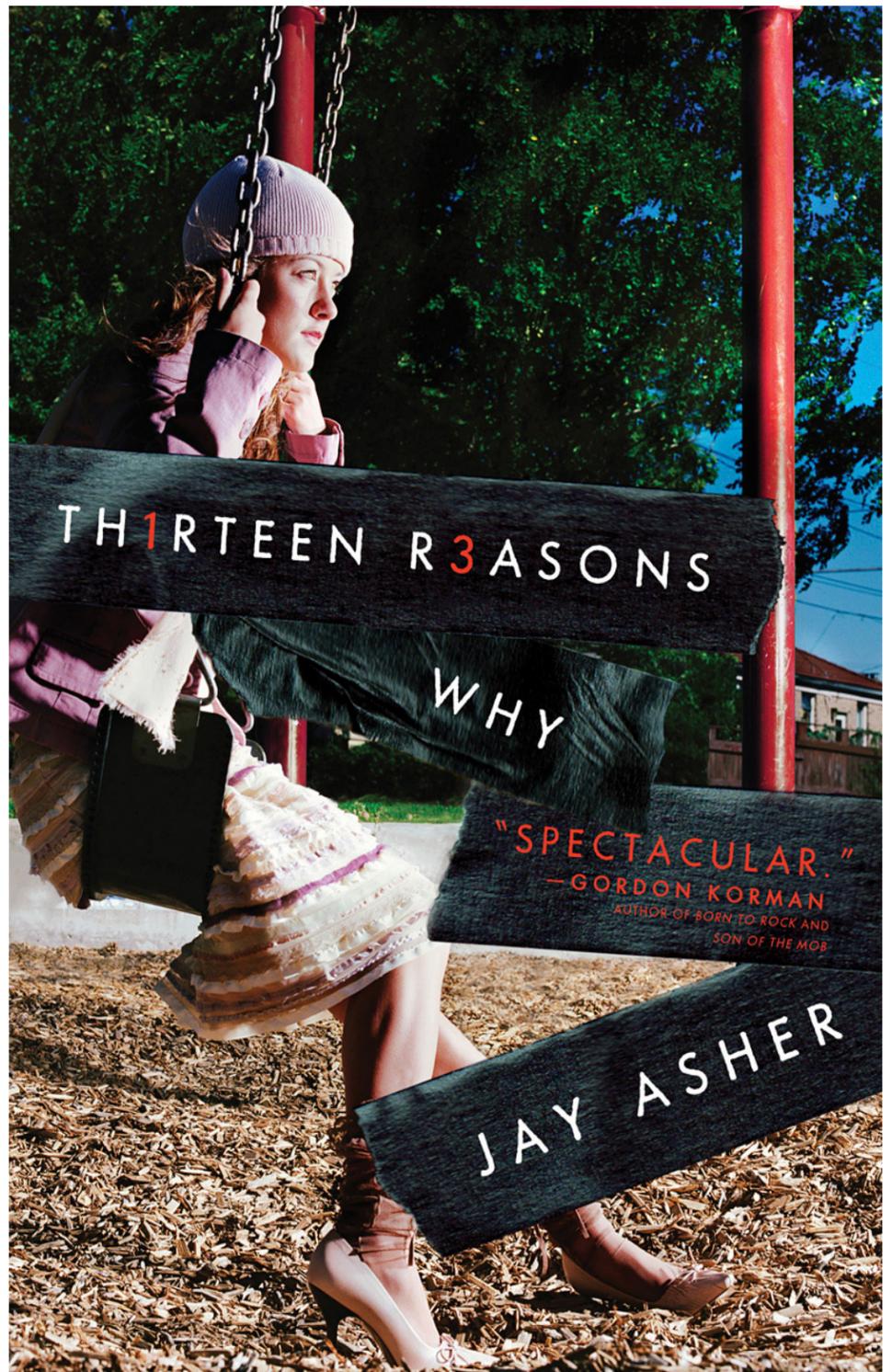


Photo Courtesy of GCHS



## Teacher Spotlight: Ms. Layne

By: Katie O'Brien

hensive as the laureate and global perspectives class. Critical thinking and speaking skills learned in these classes will be carried on with students throughout their whole lives. In Ms. Layne's global perspectives class, students research worldwide issues. Students choose topics they are interested in, rather than being assigned a topic.

Her other class is the laureate class. Laureate is a Collier County Public Schools program that allows students with the right qualifications to graduate with the laureate diploma. This is the highest honor awarded in Collier County and students who meet all requirements will also receive a \$1,000 cash scholarship. The paper that students will research and present is based on a topic they pick in 11th grade. By the end of the student's junior year, their topic will be picked and they will start researching over the summer. Their topic can be on any global issue they choose. Once their senior year begins, they will discuss their research and topic with Ms. Layne. The laureate is about 15 minutes long and must be 5,000-6,000 words. It will be presented in the spring of the student's senior year and the student will present in front of a panel of teachers and community members. One of Ms. Layne's students, Elizabeth Roche started her laureate her

junior year in Mr. Hemricks AP English language class. In his class, students had to write a pre-laureate paper, which was around 3,000 words. This helped prepare them for the actual laureate. While this did help her prepare, Elizabeth said the hardest part was, "making sure that I meet with my mentors all the time." It is important to meet with mentors because you have to meet with them to take notes and get credit for your work. The laureate will be challenging but will also be worth it in the end.

This year's laureates ended just a few short weeks ago. When talking about the 2017 laureates Ms. Layne said, "I thought the laureates were fantastic. I said at the beginning of the year that these kids came up with the most innovative topics that I've ever had." The laureates were an overall success.

Many students have used their laureates to get into great colleges and to receive amazing scholarships. One of Ms. Layne's past students got a full ride to MIT and another received a grant. The student who received the grant was also paid to continue her research of her topic while in college. Many students have been picked over others simply because they have done more in depth research. Completing a laureate can simply start by taking Ms. Layne's speech and debate class.

The incredible Ms. Layne can do it all. She teaches speech and debate, global perspectives, laureate, and an English elective. This year she is teaching a freshman writing class as her English elective. Ms. Layne chooses these topics because she has a degree in communications and she has a general passion for teaching these subjects.

One of her classes that help the most with life skills is her speech and debate class. Skills learned in this class will stick with a person their whole life. Speech and debate can usually help put a person on track for their laureate class. However, it is still a great class to take for public speaking skills even if you're not planning on taking the laureate class.

There are probably no other courses that are as compre-

# FCA-The Great Revolution Of Faith

By: Pamela Peralta

The mission of the FCA club is to present to coaches and athletes, and all whom they influence, the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their mission is to serve him in their relationships and in the fellowship of the church. To see the world impacted for Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

Eric Maya is the advisor of the FCA club of Gulf Coast High School and he also teaches AP world history. The club currently has twenty five members. Members which do not have to pay any fees of any kind while they attend the club.

"To me, it is an honor to be the advisor for such an amazing club and to help such great kids accomplish a relationship with God," said Maya

The club has helped out the community in different ways, the members visit sports camps around the community of Naples in effort of giving back. By visiting these sports camps, the members have the opportunities to talk to young athletes about God and help them through any situation with the power of prayer. They also "adopt a family" every year during the holidays to donate clothes, food and toys for the little members of the family.

FCA focuses on giving students the opportunity to express their faith without fear and to show their love for God, openly. It offers students the ability to get close to God on a public campus which can be a challenge for some students. The club meets every Friday



Photo Courtesy of Google Images

during lunch at the gymnasium where they share different real life experiences and the same passion to impact other students. The club often invites guest speakers such as pastors from different churches, people with different testimonies of how God has impacted their lives, and students that want to share their life experiences.

"Seeing the students become closer to God and to each other has been one of my biggest accomplishments as an advisor," said Maya

The club is planning on having a fun day in the month of April. This fun day will include different games and a guest speaker.

"This club is perfect for students that have a

passion to teach others about the love of God and that want to make an impact on others lives," said Maya

Students still have time to join this club and be part of such a great movement that FCA is making all over public schools. This club is not only for athletes but also for all students who would like to join. Be a part of this great community and help out your own community by giving others the opportunity to share their faith and their love for God.

## New Addition to Shark Family!

By: Zya Crawford



Valerie Mysibega

Everyone knows that moving can be difficult for any teenager; leaving friends, family, and just about everything that's familiar to you. But how about moving to a completely different continent, half way across the world?

Meet Valerie Mysibega, a freshman who has recently moved here all the

way from Nairobi, Kenya. When asked how she felt about the big move she said she was "Really excited, but also kinda sad because I was leaving my country, my friends, and knowing that I was going to be around people who didn't speak my language." Valerie spoke a form of Swahili in Kenya.

It took about one year for the whole process; to be unionized and to get their paper work. Then Valerie and her family went to the US Embassy in Nairobi on October 2016 to get their papers checked out and to get their visas, which took three hours. Finally, on December 5, the Mysibega's were ready to begin their journey. They had a 4pm flight, but had to get there a couple of hours early to get bags and documents checked. Then they were off to Dubai, which took five hours by plane. They stayed there for two hours until their sixteen hour connecting flight to Orlando was ready. Finally, their long journey was over. While staying in Orlando for a bit, Valerie's mom received a job for a hospital in Naples, and moved down January 10th. Valerie started school soon after.

"There are mostly boarding schools in Kenya. School was from January to October, 8 PM to 5 PM. All of the students in grade 9 had to take the same subjects. We stayed in one classroom for all subjects, and different teachers would come to us. We had to wear ties with our uniforms every day. Here we use a lot of technology. In Kenya, you had to have good handwriting because we wrote a lot! Unlike here where we use computers to type essays. Students take studies seriously, because some families couldn't afford school. People here are given the privilege to learn."

Despite how hectic her life has been recently, Valerie has already made new friends, attended school clubs, received good grades, and performed with the all-girls choir for MPA. Valerie's journey is inspiring, and hopeful. We are so happy to have her here and for her family to start a new life in the United States.

## Suit Up!

By: Pamela Peralta

Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is an educational simulation and/or academic competition in which students can learn about diplomacy, international relations, and the United Nations. MUN involves and teaches researching, public speaking, debating, and writing skills, in addition to critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership abilities.

"We focus on giving kids the knowledge of the different nations," said Suzanne Sulard, the club advisor.

Suzanne Sulard has been the club advisor for 16 years and is also teacher at Gulf Coast High School. The club focuses more on having a voice in international affairs and having the ability to command a large room. The club helps the community in many ways, it gives the society a sense of voice and rights when it comes to international issues. It also helps the community by giving back. Members recently participated in the flood that occurred in New Orleans by collecting canned foods, school supplies and necessary items for the victim's survival.

The club gives students the opportunity to learn how to express

themselves in a model way and gives them the skills to learn how to properly conduct research. Alongside this, the club also gives them knowledge of international affairs and international issues that concern the United States. The club consist of 140 members. These members pay for their own trips and expenses while they are traveling and they travel at least five times a year to different states and various parts of the states. They have traveled to New York, Virginia, Georgia and Tallahassee so far and they are planning to visit Florida Gulf Coast University the week of March 6th, to participate in one of their competitions.

"We compete about different topics, mostly international issues and topics that are relevant to world history. The committee picks the topics and assigns it to the students," said Suzanne, the club advisor

The club is holding their first conference to middle schoolers this September. The purpose of this conference is to talk to students about the benefits of attending the club and to explain to them how being a part of this club can help them and give them the skills that they are going to need for the future. By being a part of the Model UN club, students learn how to handle a crowded room, command attention for issues of their interest, and research information properly. Along with all of these skills, it gives them confidence.

This club is perfect for students to get out of their comfort zone and experience a journey of learning.

## A New Swift Stroke of the Bow

By: Sophia Vellozzi

Many are unaware that Gulf Coast High School has a newly formed Fiddle Club. The Fiddle Club is a small group comprised of instrumental string players. It exposes the student musicians to a variety of compositions involving fast-paced tempos and lively beats.

The club meets every Monday from 2:15-3:00 after school. One does not have to be involved in a musical class at school in order to join. The instruments played include guitar, mandolin, cello, violin, piano, harp, and dulcimer. A dulcimer is a wooden instrument with an elongated and rounded body that has a total of two strings per note. It can be played by bowing, plucking, and even strumming. During practices every Monday, the group focuses on honing their skills by initially practicing separately on their individual parts, and then uniting as a group to prove what they have mastered. Skills they must ultimately master are easier said than done. Fiddle music entails inconceivably rapid music that requires the students to subsequently move their fingers just as fast. The fiddle music even comprises of two parts: a harmony and melody. The students can select which part they would like to play for each arrangement.

Ms. Tara Buonamici directs the

Fiddle Club. She plays with the club and selects the short tunes for the club to play. Currently, they are practicing songs such as "Mrs. Janieson's Favorite" and "Mary, Young and Fair." Fiddle Club member, Faessa Dorival, explains, "Fiddle Club has made me a better player overall because of the requirement to play very fast. It is much easier to play my orchestra pieces now that I must play much more difficult material." The club is certainly an abundance of fun, and is a fantastic opportunity to learn a string instrument.

The club will have a concert on Tuesday, May 9, at 6:30 pm. The participants are thoroughly excited for the Fiddle Club's first performance. They have been practicing incredibly hard on dominating the crucial skills required to play these intense compositions of music. Fiddle Club student, Faessa Dorival, comments, "All it takes is practice, practice, and more practice. Hard-work and passion need to be there for the musician to excel." Fiddle Club clearly requires a student who is prepared to work hard and persevere, for they cannot get discouraged if they are unable to master a passage. Either way, Fiddle Club is an unprecedented school club that is sure to gain popularity as more discover how much fun it can be!

## Tricky Trivia!

By: Katie O'Brien

Who doesn't love a good trivia game? If you love trivia, competition, and ultimate bragging rights, then you should definitely join the scholar bowl. The scholar bowl, is an academic team that competes in various competitions. On a single team there are usually up to four or five players and the game may be about 30 minutes or longer. There can be multiple teams competing or just two teams that compete and there are various topics that may be discussed. Topics such as history, fine arts, English, current events, and science. The scholar bowl can be played by young students in elementary school all the way up to college students. The game is played using a buzzer system; a moderator will ask a question and students may buzz in if they have the answer. The buzzer allows a player to interrupt the reading of the question if they know the answer and once a team buzzes in and answers correctly, they will receive a point. However, if a person buzzes and is incorrect, no one else on the team may answer for that question.

The scholar bowl in Collier County is played by middle school and high school students. The top six high school scholar bowl students are chosen to represent Collier County at the Commissioner's Academic Challenge. This is a state wide tournament and last year Collier County placed third in state.

The Gulf Coast High School scholar bowl

is run by the wonderful, Ms. Lenhart. She not only runs Scholar bowl, but is also a science teacher. She has been running scholar bowl for three years. When Ms. Lenhart was talking about why she joined scholar bowl she said, "I love the trivia aspect and enjoy practicing with the students. They amaze me every day with the things they know!" She has done an amazing job with the scholar bowl teams as proven during last years' competition, the Collier County Public Schools high school tournament Gulf Coast High School came in second place with 177 points, winning \$150. Currently, this year's scholar bowl team is now entering the quarterfinals of the A-team competition in Lee County. The team members are working hard to prepare for this competition and the matches can be watched on YouTube through the Lee County School's channel.

The Scholar bowl is one of the best academic teams to be a part of and students enjoy competing against each other to see who the best is. They are great teammates who are genuinely happy when someone has a good round. The scholar bowl is an all-round impressive and intelligent team.

# Sports



By: Michelle Odontuya

## Strike! The Eagles Are Out

The shark baseball fans came out today to support the players during their home game on Thursday, March 2, 2017. The team played against George Jenkins High School from Lakeland. The team played the best they could and it was definitely surprising to see their loss. They are a great team with a great coach with great average performance scores and wins almost all their games. Although its hard to tell what went wrong at this game, the shark's baseball team will still dominate and pull through with great wins at the upcoming games this season- that much we know!

The baseball team is run by Coach Rosa, who is also a social studies teacher Gulf Coast. Before beginning to talk about the results of the game, the basics of the game must be understood. There are nine players on each team who alternate between playing defense and offense. There are different fielding positions and plays that go along with the game of baseball. There is the position of center, pitcher, first baseman, second baseman, right fielder, center fielder,



PHOTO COURTESY OF GCHS

left fielder, third baseman and shortstop. The objective of the game is to basically hit a home run. The game on Thursday started off uneventful with 0-0 for the first half but then the George Jenkins team gained the lead with a point in the 2nd half. There was still hope for the sharks

as everyone was still anticipating for them to catch up. Then the game really picked up in excitement when teams tied on the 6th! However, then the George Jenkins school proceeded to score again. This made the game extremely emotional as they were so close and they played their hearts out

but unfortunately it just wasn't their time.

The baseball team is usually not one to lose as they win most games so this was a little bit of a disappointment for the team. The baseball fans are definitely some of the best fans as they support the players with an

immense amount of cheering. The game was filled with families of the players and the best supporters. As for the loss, the baseball players have conditioning and will hopefully improve in time to get back on their feet for the next game.

## Upcoming Sports Events

### **Girls Softball**

4/7/17 - Naples High  
4/8/17 - Naples High

### **Boys Baseball**

4/6/17 - Le Senior  
4/13/17 - Palmetto Ridge

### **Girls Tennis**

4/4/17 - Seacrest Country Day  
4/6/17 - Community School

### **Boys Tennis**

4/4/17 - Seacrest Country Day  
4/6/17 Community School

### **Boys Lacrosse**

4/4/17 - District Semi-Finals  
4/6/17 - District Finals

### **Coed Track**

4/4/17 - Golden Gate  
4/7/17 0- Charlotte High

## Lady Sharks Defeat Golden Gate!

By: Maddie Morey

The Gulf Coast High School junior varsity lacrosse team defeated the Golden Gate High School Titans on Tuesday night with a score of 15-1. Throughout the game, the Sharks utilized the strategies learned in practice to dominate the playing field on their home turf.

In the first quarter, Gulf Coast started out with a lead. The first goal of the game was scored within the first minute by the Sharks. After that, the Sharks continued their scoring streak as they continuously drove down the field towards the goal on offense. Gulf Coast's endurance proved to be an advantage as the players were able to make runs time and time again. When the buzzer sounded to end the quarter, the score was left at 4-0.

After the break, both teams returned to the field re-

freshed and ready to play. The Golden Gate Titans were determined to lessen Gulf Coast's lead. The Titans reversed the play to score a goal. However, the Sharks adjusted to the play and responded by scoring more goals before halftime could even begin. Gulf Coast formulated offensive strategies incorporating passing routes and offensive setups previously discussed during practice at halftime.

In the third quarter, the Sharks found their groove and sped up the pace of the game. Gulf Coast drove long passes down the field to keep the play on the Titans' defensive half for the majority of the matchup. Communication was another factor in the Sharks' victory, as passes would not have been as successful without it. Additionally, on defense communication is key to

keep every offensive player from the opponent's team covered. The defensive game from Gulf Coast skillfully cleared the ball from their defensive end of the field to eliminate any scoring threats from the Titans in the second half.

As the Sharks discussed their gameplay over the water break, players were instructed to slow down the pace of the game and utilize defensive strategies to keep their lead strong. Gulf Coast High School's players focused on keeping possession, allowing the clock to run, and securing the team another victory. This is the team's fourth win of the season and the Sharks are looking to keep their impressive record when entering the second half of their season.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GCHS

## Black History Month: History and 2017 Highlights

BY: ZYA CRAWFORD

Black History Month is celebrated every February for achievements by Black Americans. It is a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. Many of us know this, but how did it really get started? Today you are going to learn about the origins of Black History Month, along with some highlights on others contributed to celebrating this year.

The event grew out of “Negro History Week,” from noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. It began in Chicago summer of 1915 (asalh100.org), half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. That September, the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by black Americans and other peoples of African descent. Known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the group sponsored



PHOTO COURTESY TO GOOGLE IMAGES

a national Negro History week in 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Woodson wanted to help educate black and white Americans about blacks and their accomplishments and potential in a way that would benefit everyone. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures. In the decades that followed, mayors of cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing Negro History Week. In the decades that followed, mayors of cities across the country began issuing

yearly proclamations recognizing Negro History Week. Thanks in part to the Civil Rights Movement and a growing awareness of black identity, Negro History Week had evolved into Black History Month on many college campuses. President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and

the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history (history.com).

Here are just a few of the amazing things accomplished and recognized during this year’s black history month. ‘Sesame Street’ joined the crew in honoring black history by airing out various old clips from its archive. Among aired, were three vintage clips which featured black icons like; Erykah Badu, Maya Angelou, and Ray Charles (yourblackworld.net)

Black actors, actresses, and artist are serving look after look on red carpets this award season. Chance the Rapper won 3 Grammys, including best hip-hop album of the

year. Six black actors and actresses were nominated for some of the top categories at the 89th annual Academy Awards. Viola Davis won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in “Fences,” Denzel Washington was nominated for Best Actor for his role in “Fences,” and Mahershala Ali and Naomie Harris won in the Best Supporting Actor and Actresses categories for their roles in the Best Picture-winning “Moonlight” (theallstate.org).

Another successful and productive Black History month has come and gone. Here’s to next year, for more great things to come.

## Earth-like Entities: The Discovery of Seven New Planets

BY: ISABELLA NAPOLES

Forty lightyears away, or about 235 trillion miles, a miniature system of seven Earth-like planets has been discovered around a dwarf star known as TRAPPIST-1. It is extremely rare because the planets have similar dimensions to those of Earth and have temperate climates, meaning there is a possibility of water being on the planets’ surfaces. This in turn leads to the possibility of some form of life. The solar system was named after the telescope that discovered it, TRAnsiting Planets and Planetesimals Small Telescope. These findings were announced at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

The planets, currently known as TRAPPIST-1 a, b, c, d, e, f, and g, all orbit the same star. This star is very red in nature, so it is speculated that the light it gives off is salmon-hued. The planets closest to the star seem to be tidally locked, meaning they only face one way from the star. This results in a perpetual night on one side and a perpetual day on the other. Researchers noted the extremely small distance the system spans. If placed in our solar system, the dwarf star, along with its seven planets, would fit between the sun and Mercury. Regarding the environments of the planets themselves, they seem to be rocky rather than gaseous. Currently, the most habitable planets are e, f, and g, which may contain oceans on their surfaces. Planet f seems to be the best candidate for supporting life; it is cooler than Earth, but may be suitable with the right atmosphere and greenhouse gases.

In May of 2016, researchers studying the dwarf star through TRAPPIST noticed small, eclipse-like shadows that interrupted their vision every now and then. This was an indication of the presence of planets and other types of satellites, and further research confirmed the existence of an initial three planets. The research continued by employing the help of space-based telescopes such as the Spitzer. This scope aided in the determination of orbital periods, radii, masses, and distances from the central star. The last four planets were discovered more recently by the Spitzer Telescope.

“I think we’ve made a crucial step towards finding if there is life out there,” stated Amaury Triaud, a study author and astronomer at the University of Cambridge.

The key to finding life on other planets is through finding the correct combination of gases. The goal of researchers is to define the atmospheres of each planet over the next decade and to look for liquid water, another indicator of life. So far, astronomers have determined that the atmospheres are extremely

thick; if one was to stand on the surface of one of the planets, he or she would receive 200 times less light but the same amount of heat as here on Earth. This being said, the sky view would be clear, and one would be able to see all the other planets at a size up to two times larger than the Moon.

In 2018, the James Webb Space Telescope will be launched and positioned about one million miles from Earth to observe the universe and starlight through the atmospheres of other exoplanets.

“Spitzer will follow up in the fall to further refine our understanding of these planets so that the James Webb Space Telescope can follow up,” stated Sean Carey, manager of NASA’s Spitzer Science Center at Caltech in Pasadena, California, “More observations of the system are sure to reveal more secrets.”

The discovery of these seven Earth-like planets has been another giant leap for mankind. As technology advances, more exoplanets and other space entities will continue to be discovered. More research into the TRAPPIST-1 system is necessary, but the planets hold a high potential for containing some form of life. Until this breakthrough occurs, the search for life continues.

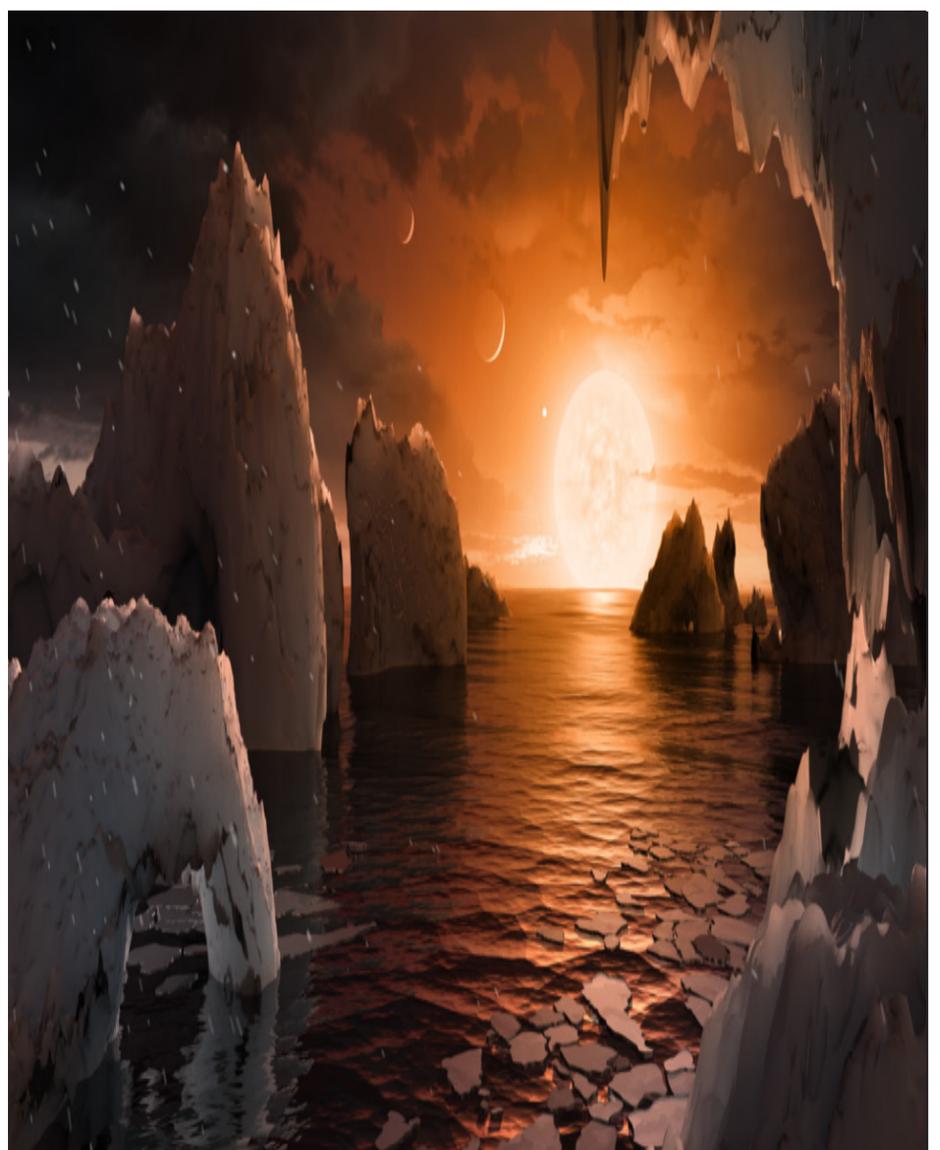


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