

The Buccaneer

Red Bank Regional High School / Student Newspaper / Feb. 29, 2024



The struggle is real

Every year, RBR fights to get cultural assemblies “right” — what’s the problem?

BY ISABELA ROJO

Red Bank Regional High School has been grappling with challenges in organizing and executing its cultural assemblies, for both National Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month. Each fall and February, it is common to hear students and staff discussing the presentations, with critics deeming the events boring or culturally irrelevant — some are as blunt as to say that they just straight suck.

SEE ASSEMBLIES, PAGE 7

STUDENT MUSICIANS ROCK AND ROLL ALL NITE AT FIRST BAND BATTLE

In what organizers hope will become an annual tradition, five RBR student bands and one teacher supergroup treated a head-banging crowd to epic guitar solos, chest-thumping vocals and mosh pit-worthy beats on Friday, Feb. 9, at the RBR auditorium. The brainchild of senior music major Cayla Lamegos-Outwin, the battle came together thanks to a fleet of student and teacher volunteers led by RBR Bands Director Kathryn Sarlo, who emceed with Lamegos-Outwin. Part showcase and part juried competition, the event served as a fundraiser for the RBR music program. The rockers of Nitress (top photo) were crowned champions, Officially Tardy took home the People’s Choice Award (bottom photo), and sophomore Alejandro Guerrero (top, left) was named Battle MVP for drumming in three of the five student acts. *Turn the page to meet the bands!*



JOYCE YANG / THE BUCCANEER





MEET THE BANDS

Get to know the music-makers who competed in the first RBR Battle of the Bands

BY JOYCE YANG & SAM MARTINEZ

SCAN THE CODE
FOR VIDEO OF THE
COMPETITION!

Officially Tardy

"We'll get the participation trophy!"

MEMBERS: freshmen Peter Rogers and Joey Sprizza, Jey Giberson, Emmett Dubrow

GENRE: Rock / Grunge / Little bit of everything

ORIGINAL SONGS: Fred's Lament, Terribly out of Tune

RECENT HIGHLIGHT: Jan. 21 showcase at the fabled Stone Pony in Asbury Park, N.J.



Catharsis

"For the People"

MEMBERS: senior Harrison Olesen, sophomore Alejandro Guerrero, sophomore Mark Pacres

GENRE: Doom / Punk

ORIGINAL SONGS: Tarnished Ropes, Echoes of an Empyrean Realm

Limite 109

"El limite no tiene limite!"

MEMBERS: seniors David Flores Valente and Jose Luis Jimenez-Rodriguez, junior Oswaldo Muñoz Salazar

GENRE: Mexican corridos

ORIGINAL SONGS: Rompe la dompe, Carnal, Basta



Gunk

"Bring back 900 mats!"

MEMBERS: junior Haakon Christensen, sophomores Alejandro Guerrero and Oliver Schrenk, freshman Nolan Stypul

GENRE: Hardcore

ORIGINAL SONGS: Take Action, Denied

UPCOMING SHOWS: March shows, plus other performances around the area



Nitress

"We love Gunk."

MEMBERS: seniors Nico Piesco and Liam Smith, sophomore Alejandro Guerrero, Chris Lazewski

GENRE: Grunge / Punk Rock

ORIGINAL SONGS: Admiration, Contradiction

UPCOMING APPEARANCE: Red Bank Elks' Lodge

Paper Jam

"Although we weren't eligible to compete in the Battle of the Bands, I think we all know who won: our fans."

Performing alongside a pile of decommissioned office equipment, the KISS-influenced group covered "Rock and Roll All Night" and the upbeat classic "Walking on Sunshine." Members included (standing, from left) librarian April Barry, security guard Tom Mancuso, English teacher Cass Dorn, supervisor Nick Timpone, and bands director Kathryn Sarlo, as well as (kneeling, from left) special education teacher Gabby Rosace and math teacher Caitlin Turner.



JOYCE YANG / THE BUCCANEER

Kitchen comp starting to



BY VANESSA MATONE

Since the start of January, the members of the RBR Culinary Club have been doing their annual cooking competitions. In each 30-minute, after-school contest, two club members compete against another duo to make an amazing dish with the designated primary ingredient. Then, a panel of judges led by Chef James Enny rates each dish by prestation, taste and creativity. Last year, there were only three cooking competitions. This year, the club has already matched that mark, with more competitions on the docket for February.

I participated in the first 2024 cooking competition on Jan. 10, along with senior Morgan Wright. We faced off against junior Freddy Munguia and junior Eduardo Ramirez-Uvera in a contest that featured chicken. We had 30 seconds to select our ingredients and decide what we wanted to make that would incorporate the primary ingredient. Morgan and I settled on bourbon chicken without the bourbon, while Eduardo and Freddy decided to make chicken parm. Morgan and I gathered ingredients like soy sauce, onions, brown sugar and parsley. Morgan

SEE COOKING, PAGE 14



COURTESY OF APRIL BARRY

Senior Angel Velasco (left) and junior Freddy Munguia currently sit near the top of the leaderboard of the RBR Winter 2024 Chess Tournament.

Your move! Chess tourney enters final rounds of play

BY APRIL BARRY,
RBR LIBRARIAN

“Critical thinking is the most important factor with chess. As ... in life, you need to think before you make decisions.” — Christopher Hikaru Nakamura, five-time U.S. Chess Champion

The RBR Winter 2024 Chess Tournament, with 24 fierce competitors, is in its final rounds of play as this issue is going to print.

Players are following Swiss tournament rules, so no player is eliminated; the player with the most points at the end of the tournament wins. Participating students schedule play with

their opponents before school, during MODs, or after school. RBR Principal Julius Clark and math teacher Sara Tomas are also competing.

All students and staff are welcome to come to the library Chess Zone and challenge another Buc to a game.

The highest tournament point totals currently belong to:

- Will Aninowsky (10th)
- Lamar Birch (9th)
- Jack Johnson (12th)
- Freddy Munguia (11th)
- August Ray (10th)
- Danilo Ruiz (10th)
- Angel Velasco (12th)

Listen for final tournament results in the coming weeks.



COURTESY OF KATHRYN SARLO

The RBR Concert Band and RBR Jazz Band joined forces at the Winter Band Concert in December.



COURTESY OF CARA SCACCO

At the Jan. 26 Winter Dance Showcase, junior and senior dance majors from the RBR Visual & Performing Arts Academy (below) performed a contemporary piece that senior Emily Ketterer choreographed for her IB Dance class, while their underclassmen counterparts (above) staged a hip hop number by sophomore Francesca Pianoforte.

WINTER Arts ROUNDUP





Félicitations!

La Société Honoraire de Français de Red Bank Regional accueille les nouveaux membres...

Nicolette Adamczyk	Avery Grootenboer	Alana McNair	Dana Ruset
Max Ansell	Daniya Hassan	Keller O'Hara	Julianne Staub
Georgia Attardi	Honor Hile	Avery Pasko	Michael Straniero
Sophia Bald	Alexa Laido	Rox Perez-Hernandez	MiKayla Stratton
Sydnee Bowden	Fatima Linares	Lily Peterson	Dyllon Varcadipane
Quincy Eigenrauch	Guadalupe Lopez-Ramirez	Luna Pitanza	Christopher Xicotencatl-Rodriguez
Aaron Espanol	Ella Marcus-Maines	Easy Jack Portman	Keileb Yap
Jose Garcia-Paredes	Will Marziarz	Eduardo Ramirez-Uvera	Ava Zucosky
	Gianna Mastroianni	Zocha Resh	

On Jan. 11, the RBR French and Spanish honor societies welcomed some 70 new members through the traditional passing-of-the-flame ceremony presided over by senior officers Rowan Martin and Abby Murphy of the French Honor Society, as well as Avery Venino and Cami Issenman of the Spanish Honor Society.



¡Felicidades!

La Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica de Red Bank Regional bienvenida a los nuevos miembros ...

Evelyn Alba Rodriguez	Kayce Coscia	Sam Martinez	Emma Ostervich	Kaitlyn Szabo
Estephania Arevalo	Lesly Cautencos Rosas	Mar Mejia-Tizatl	Sheyla Perez	Helen Varela
Jess Bajcic	Keira Fagan	Avery Merrill	Kevin Ramirez	Johnny Vasquez
Katherine Bikker	George Geisert	Aileen Monahan	Daysy Reyes	Nick Walker
Suri Castillo	Jessica Gomez	Trey Moore	Braydan Sainato	Mary-Kate Wicinski
Mariela Castillo Jimenez	Tim Kelly	Nyla Morton	Joselyn Sandoval-Hernandez	Sutton Wickman
Keyla Campoverde	Selina Lin	Caitlin Murphy	Dylan Simon	Jayla Wilson
Krissy Chen	Amelia Maffet	Cindy Nanez	Claire Smigie	Olivia Yarusi
	Gissel Marroquin-Chaper	Mac Orth	Nedene Soliman	

ASSEMBLIES, FROM PAGE 1

Calls to help plan Black History event go largely unheeded

The negative reception seems to come down to recurring issues that have persisted for years, such as a lack of student participation and representation, and the broader question of how to effectively celebrate and educate on cultural diversity within our school.

In the lead-up to the 2024 Black History Month assembly on Feb. 15, RBR Visual & Performing Arts Academy Supervisor Lisa Boyle painted a vivid picture of the challenges she encounters throughout the planning process as the driving force behind the cultural assemblies. First, there's the tight schedule for the Hispanic Heritage assembly: Since National Hispanic Heritage Month begins within a week or two of when school opens in September, Ms. Boyle starts "preparing at the end of the previous school year, in May. I meet with the Multicultural Club students and advisors; depending on the year, I meet with the Spanish Honors Society and the Dreamers" — all clubs that involve Hispanic students and faculty.

Although the Hispanic Heritage assembly has historically received backlash for not being culturally relevant, it seems to be looking up, as the past two October shows featured growing numbers of Hispanic student and staff participants. Additionally, the student response seemed to become more positive. This, Mrs. Boyle thinks, comes from the increase of Hispanic students not only involved in the performances but in the planning of the assemblies.

However, the struggle intensifies for the Black History Month assembly. For the Hispanic Heritage assembly, there are three (or more) RBR clubs Ms. Boyle can visit to talk to Hispanic students and advisors, to discuss what representation means to them and ways to create an educational and entertaining assembly. However, the absence of a Black student alliance creates a significant roadblock to this type of thoughtful planning. Ms. Boyle explained that she has to take a different approach when it comes to

coordinating the Black History Month assembly for February. She revealed that all the way in November, "I begin by putting announcements out to the school to come meet me [to share ideas and help plan]— and no one shows up, which is a shame."

It's a vicious cycle: The lack of student participation on the planning side becomes apparent in the assemblies; in turn, that negatively impacts the reception of them and makes students less likely to want to participate in the future.

Last school year, "we had about 30 students who

were going to these [Black History Month planning] meetings," Ms. Boyle recalled. "[They] had really great ideas, but when it came time [for] the assembly, everyone pulled out the week before. We

had plans for a few dance performances by Black students; they backed out. Students were planning to perform a song; they backed out." When no one came forward to help develop a segment to commemorate the 50th anniversary of hip hop, one of the advisors of the RBR Multicultural Club, who is White, had to script a tribute that was passed off to the Media Production Academy to produce. *[Editor's note: That advisor was Kelly Rizzetta, who is also the faculty advisor of this newspaper.]*

Records from the Mutlicultural Club indicate 27 students each attended *some* of the nine Black History Month planning sessions that were held last school year. Only three of those students attended five or more planning sessions; most attended just one session. Another 12 students said they would participate but did not attend any planning sessions.

One common criticism of the cultural assemblies is about the VPA's level of involvement. Many believe that the assemblies, due to lack of cultural representation from students of color, end up feeling

*Do the work.
Don't just sit on the
sideline and talk about it.*

— **Julius Clark, RBR Principal**

SEE ASSEMBLIES, PAGE 8

ASSEMBLIES, FROM PAGE 7

Clark urges students to ‘be a part of the solution’ they seek

like just another VPA showcase. As the VPA supervisor, Ms. Boyle says featuring the VPA performers is her last resort, yet it all too often becomes her only option. When almost all of the planned segments from non-VPA performers fell apart shortly before last year’s Black History Month assembly, it fell to Ms. Boyle to, “basically, come up with something to fill space,” she stated.

“I understand the frustration,” she continued.

“[It’s] really easy to vent your frustrations, but how does that help me when there is no effort to actually participate? No effort to actually fix the problem?”

The care in Ms. Boyle’s tone is palpable as she articulates the ongoing struggle she has faced in the five years she has been leading the VPA. She reminisced about the

cyclical nature of the problem over her two decades at RBR, extending beyond her current role as an administrator and back to when she was a Spanish teacher. Her exasperation is evident when she questions the lack of effort and accountability on the part of students, stating, “I am at the point where we might have to end the assemblies altogether.”

“The biggest thing in order to make these assemblies go well is that you really need students involved,” RBR Principal Julius Clark stated, placing a significant onus on the student body to actively participate in the planning and execution of these assemblies. Mr. Clark, who took an active role in planning and performing in this year’s Black History Month assembly, claimed that for cultural assemblies to be truly representative and meaningful, a diverse array of voices and perspectives must contribute to the planning process, remarking, “This is an opportunity where the students can take the ball and run with it.”

Like Ms. Boyle, Mr. Clark recognizes that the only

way students are going to be engaged and respond positively to the assemblies is if they have an active role in planning it, allowing them to define their own representation as a member of a culture. While he acknowledges the role of adults in guiding the process, the emphasis is on student agency. At the end of the day, the assemblies should reflect the voices of those within the student body.

Mr. Clark also emphasized the importance of

*I am at the point
where we might have to end
the assemblies altogether.*

**– Lisa Boyle, RBR Visual & Performing Arts
Academy supervisor, lead organizer of
cultural assemblies**

representation and the need to break down misconceptions. He dismissed the notion that participation in the Black History Month assembly should be exclusive to Black students: “The fallacy is, ‘You have to be Black to participate,’ or ‘I don’t want to participate because I might get shunned for not

being Black’ — to me, that is ridiculous.”

“That’s not what I want it to be about,” Mr. Clark stated, when asked about the common refrain among students that they do not want to be associated with RBR’s cultural assemblies due to the negative response and criticism that often follow them. “That’s not what it should be about.” And then, in words that echoed Ms. Boyle’s, “I believe that if you have criticism about it, then be part of the solution.”

Mr. Clark wrapped up his thoughts by noting, “Black history is American history. You don’t see it too much in textbooks or in the curriculum; maybe we get a mention here or there. That’s why I feel that this is important: Because you don’t learn about it in class, these assemblies are important to let people know why Black history is part of American history. ... I hope that, one day, [the full scope of Black history] is already taught and known, and all cultures are

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ASSEMBLIES, FROM PAGE 8

Education is key to better cultural representation on campus

ingrained within our American culture.”

To another RBR educator of color who was involved with planning the 2023 and 2024 Black History Month assemblies, Mr. Clark’s goal is highly idealistic. “Representation is important — that’s why you want to have an assembly,” said the staff member, who requested to remain anonymous.

The crux of the issue, the faculty member suggested, is a lack of representation within the classroom. In other words, lack of student participation isn’t the only thing that diminishes the quality of RBR’s cultural assemblies, but also an overall lack of knowledge about Black issues and history.

“Who do you think of when I say ‘Black history?’” the educator asked. Probably the basics, the ones that are oft repeated throughout one’s time in school: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X. “They are the same names,” the faculty member remarked, with a sense almost of exasperation. “These names are important, but they do not represent the whole of Black history. It seems to me that we only teach these names because it is easy to do so.” The message: Black history does not stop at Martin Luther King, Jr.

Roxanne Judice, a U.S. history teacher who, like Ms. Boyle, has also been at RBR for two decades, agrees with this message. That is

why, in her classroom, she strives to teach history in an accessible way by trying “to not make it just a bunch of people and events to remember. If you only talk about one person or event, [history] just becomes a series of disconnected factoids.”

These names are important, but they do not represent the whole of Black history. It seems to me that we only teach these names because it is easy to do so.

— RBR staff member, reflecting on the need for more comprehensive and relevant cultural education, which goes beyond well known civil rights reformers like Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ms. Judice reflected upon the story of Rosa Parks, who “is so much more than that just that one act of bravery,” refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in

Alabama in 1955. Ms. Judice discussed Ms. Parks’ life before that famous moment, when the civil rights icon worked as a seamstress for a local department store and as a secretary for the NAACP. After that well publicized moment, when Ms. Parks was arrested for her defiance, she lost her job, struggled financially and received countless death threats for the rest of her life.

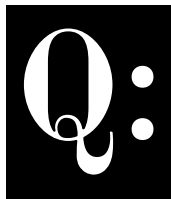
“We think she became a hero in that moment,” Ms. Judice noted, “but in her lifetime, she worked hard for her cause and faced great adversity, and it caused great hardships in her life.”

So, what could we do to improve future Black History Month assemblies? The anonymous faculty member suggested “honor[ing] the small yet equally important roles within Black history, ... even within our community. We could honor Mr. Clark, as we did last year, as a Black principal. We could share the story of someone within the community who, for example, opened the first Black-run business.”

“Not all of us face adversity on the same scale as Martin Luther King, Jr. or Harriet Tubman, but it is adversity nonetheless,” the staff member continued. “People face adversity every day because of their heritage and culture. It is more important to recognize that.”

Ms. Judice suggested a return to guest speakers who could share

SEE ASSEMBLIES, PAGE 12

BUC BEAT | Voices from the halls of RBR

What are your plans* for Presidents' Day weekend?

**Polled prior to the vacation, during the week of Feb. 12-15.*



FRESHMAN

"My friends are going to a picnic on Friday, to celebrate 'cause we're not in school."

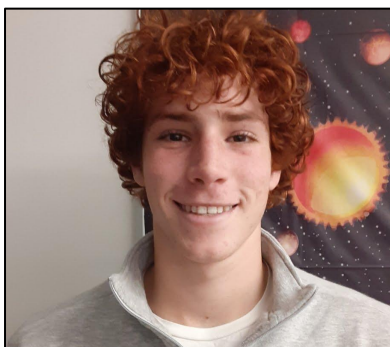
— *Ava Santos*



SOPHOMORE

"[Go] to shows, play guitar, spend time with my girlfriend, and be happy."

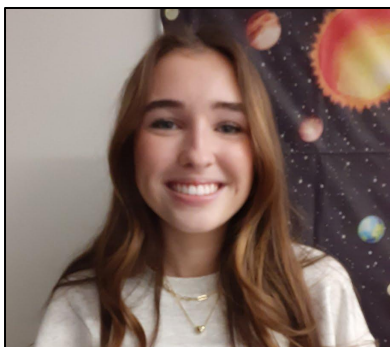
— *Val Secrest*



JUNIOR

"On Friday, I'm celebrating my friend's birthday ... dinner, and then we're gonna play poker afterwards. ... I'm going to Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania with my friend Philip. On Sunday, I'm going to church and then gym. ... I might go to paintball with my friends."

— *Max Ansell*



SENIOR

"This week[end], I'm hanging out with my friends and sleeping."

— *Catherine Sack*

THE BUCCANEER STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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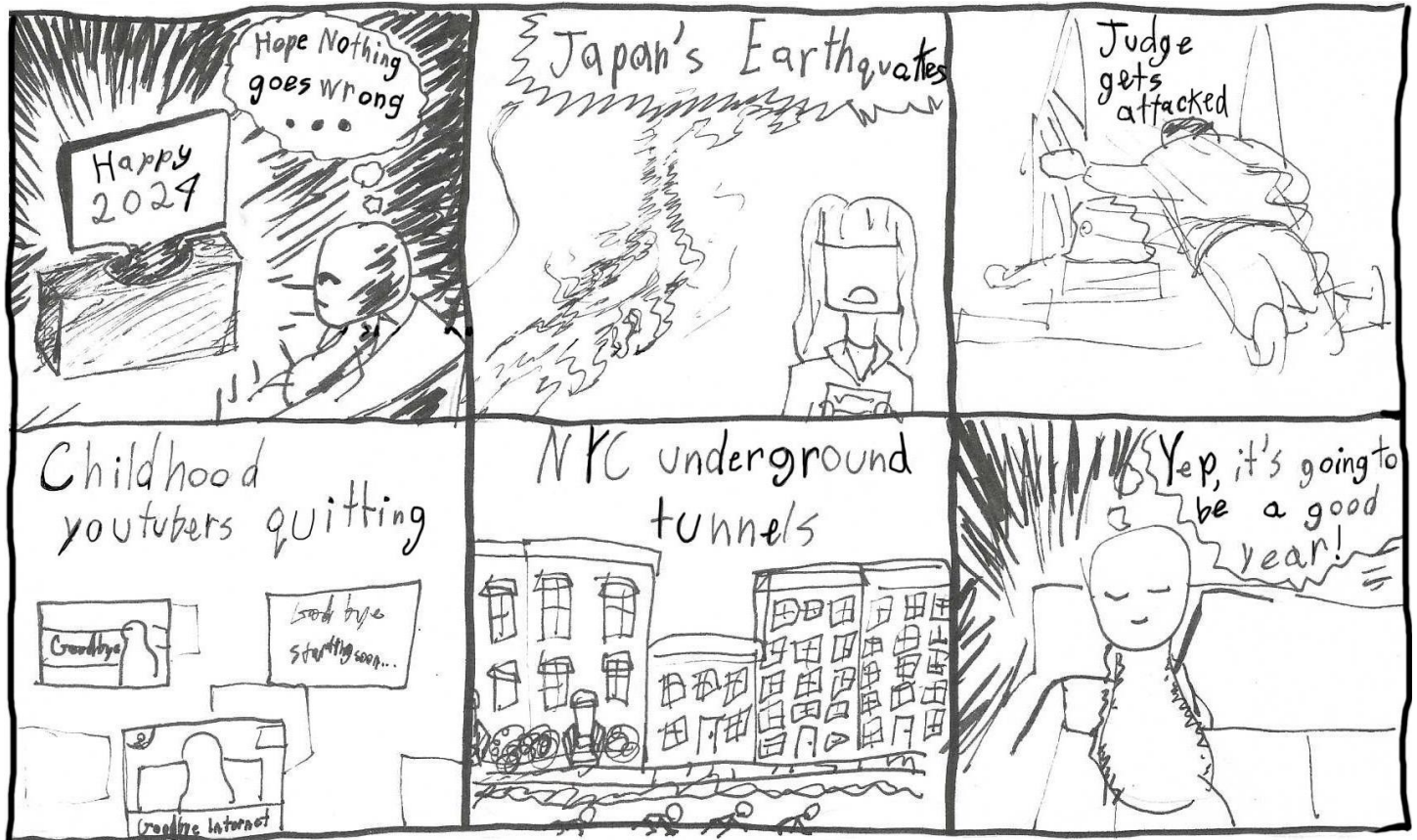
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The *Buccaneer* staff meets after school on Thursdays in Room 242. The paper is always looking for students interested in writing, editing, layout design, photography and illustration. If you want to receive notifications about newspaper meetings and deadlines, join our Google Classroom (3vtuxok) and/or Remind thread (text "@bucpaper" to the number 81010). Any questions, ask a *Buccaneer* staff member or stop by Room 242.

HAPPY NEW YEAR | Ash Pena-Martinez



ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN | Kira Ashton-O'Connor

WORD SEARCH



Coolidge
Jackson
Jefferson
Kennedy
Lincoln
McKinley
Nixon
Reagan
Roosevelt
Truman
Washington

T	D	Q	Q	L	N	E	L	P	K	C	K	A	N	M
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ASSEMBLIES, FROM PAGE 9

Judice: Shift cultural assemblies' focus to individual voices

their own experiences, as there is a degree of vulnerability to a first-person account that she believes would engage students.

"When we only focus on people in power, we lose sight of individual experiences within large moments of adversity," she noted.

Mr. Clark left it at a simple call to action: "Do the work. Don't just sit on the sideline and talk about it. Unfortunately, I see this all too


often. There's not enough people doing the work to make it better. Put in the time, put in the work, come to the meetings when we ask for volunteers."

The looming possibility of ending cultural assemblies reflects not only the immediate struggles administrators face in planning them, but also the broader issues surrounding cultural

representation and education within our school. This serves as a reminder that these assemblies are important, despite the historically negative reception. In order for them to become positive experiences, students must engage, for it will not only foster celebration and representation, but understanding of diverse cultures within our school community.

STAY TUNED! MORE TO COME ON THIS TOPIC . . .

This year's RBR Black History Month assembly took place on Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024, after the interviews for this piece were conducted. *The Buccaneer* will be following up this spring, to gauge student reception and solicit ideas about ways to move forward. We are curious to hear your thoughts and receive actionable suggestions for the future, so keep an eye out for opinion surveys in the coming weeks. If you feel particularly passionately about these issues, consider joining our staff. See details below.



JOIN US!

GOOGLE CLASSROOM	3 v t u x o k
TEXT REMINDERS	From your phone, text the message "@bucpaper" to the number 81010
MEETINGS	After school each Thursday in Room 242
NEXT UP	Our next issue will hit newsstands at the end of March. Content deadline = mid-March

FROM THE ARCHIVES | JUNE 18, 1969

The Buccaneer

The Voice, Spirit and Conscience of Red Bank High School!

Vol. 23, No. 10

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Dialogue Participants Try To Break Racial Barriers

"How to deal with the problem (racial and social barriers) is indeed a difficult chore . . . The answer lies in dialogue between the students on a massive scale," states the Student Council Dialogue Report, put together by the students who participated in the program.

"While disagreements often arise, understanding and respect for one another is achieved in frank, open discussions. Not only do students understand each other more, but free discussions initiated and run by students destroys social barriers and enables the student to reason beyond the realm of his home environment."

According to the report there is racial prejudice in both the black and white student and to a lesser degree, in the teachers. These racist feelings are expressed more by attitudes such as "quick cursory glances and a haughty manner" rather than open statements.

Regional Snag Hit

The report cites as a major cause of this tension the current lack of regionalization of the high school. The students who participated in the sessions agreed that the sending district school system "often convinces him (the student) to associate only with a certain group of students and to either shun or fear others . . . when these students come to Red

Bank they naturally avoid, or sometimes patronize black youth." Almost all of the students advocate an integrated K-12 regionalization.

More student say in curriculum and more black culture in the courses where suggestions made by the students. According to the report, "The majority concluded that black history should be incorporated more within the curriculum and not taught separately."

Want Academic Lore

The report continues, "Many black students felt their group was being pushed into taking general courses because they were not being analyzed in a proper manner . . . Red Bank youths feel they should not be penalized for an inferior educational system. Testing alone did not seem an adequate means of deciding one's future, but one's personality, background, and desires are more relevant."

The students recognize many faults in teachers such as ignoring students who question their opinions, assigning "busy work," and not motivating the students.

"Students also felt that some of their classes were not properly planned, and this led to wasted, uninteresting periods . . . Only an interesting, well prepared lesson and fair treatment of students will gain such respect."

Class of 1976 alum Bruce Peterson recently gifted The Buccaneer student newspaper some editions of this paper from the 1968-1969 school year, a time of great transition for both the district and the nation. As America grappled with the fallout from the Tet Offensive, the twin assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and a bitterly divisive presidential election, Red Bank High School broke ground on the building we now call home and prepared to add "regional" to its name. As we mark the conclusion of Black History Month, it is both enlightening and sobering to look back on an item from the June 18, 1969 edition of The Buccaneer, reprinted here. The demographics of our district have changed quite a bit since 1969, but one look at the quoted excerpts from the 1968-1969 student council's "dialogue report" shows that the challenge of creating true equity and understanding in a school whose student body is as segmented as ours remains frustratingly elusive.

COOKING, FROM PAGE 4

Culinary Club heating up RBR kitchen with weekly contests

started to cut the chicken and other ingredients while I set up the stove and started to caramelize the onions on a pan with the help of friend and fellow Culinary Club member senior Sam Lewis. After I caramelized the onions, I started to make the sauce for the chicken while Morgan started to cook the chicken. When I was finished with the sauce, I gave it to Morgan to put over the chicken.

On the other side, Eduardo and Freddy assembled cheese, breadcrumbs, sauce, hamburger buns and, of course, chicken. One of them worked on their sauce while the other breaded the chicken.

Both groups scrambled to plate their dishes and add their finishing touches. When time was up, we brought our dishes to the judges: seniors Rosa Tochiuitl- Juarez and Javier Ocotoxtle-Zacahua, plus Chef Enny. The judges tried both of our dishes and liked them very much. It was a close competition, but Eduardo and Freddy won.

The Feb. 1 competition saw sophomore Sofia Havard and junior Eduardo Ramirez-Uvera take on sophomores Michelle Aponte-Huerta and Kevin Tenahua-Garcia. Their primary ingredient was pasta, which Sophia and Eduardo decided to pair with alfredo sauce and sausage, while Michelle and Kevin went the penne alla vodka route. Sophia and Eduardo went into the refrigerator and pantry to grab butter, alfredo sauce, penne pasta and sausage. Sofia started cooking and slicing

the sausage, while Eduardo started to cook the pasta and make the sauce.

On the other side of the kitchen, Michelle and Kevin gathered tomato sauce, penne pasta and a few substitutes for vodka. The team started to make the sauce and cook the pasta, but when Kevin had to depart the competition, Javier stepped up to help Michelle cook.

Sofia and Eduardo plated on white dishes with little green garnishes on top. Michelle and Javier also used white plates with green accents and added parsley on top of the pasta. Both teams finished just as time ran out.

This time, my cooking teammate Morgan and I served with Chef Enny on the judges' panel. Sofia and Eduardo gave us their alfredo dish first. The pasta was delicious and creamy, and it melted in the mouth. (When we commented on that, Eduardo said he put a whole stick of butter in the sauce!) We judges agreed it was tasty and wholesome.

Then Michelle and Javier brought us their dish, which looked like it was made in a restaurant and looked fancy. The judges thought it was very good and tasted organic and fresh. We gave the penne alla vodka the edge in the presentation category, but the alfredo dish topped both the taste and creativity columns, making Sofia and Eduardo the winners.

The third competition was on Feb. 7, and the matchup was between the duo of Javier and senior Ethan Smith and seniors Michael Ibrahim and Dylan Bruno. Their secret ingredient was rice.

Javier and Ethan decided to make a chicken rice dish. Michael and Dylan decided to make a rice dish with pasta and an egg. Javier and Ethan gathered their ingredients from the pantry and started to cook their dish. Michael and Dylan started cooking their rice and the pasta simultaneously, then finished with the egg. Both teams were finished when the timer went off.

The judges for the third competition were Freddy, Eduardo and Chef Enny. Both teams' dishes were very good, and it was a tough to declare a winner. The judges talked it over and decided that the winners were Javier and Ethan.





PHOTOS COURTESY OF COACH CONNOR KEATING
Sophomore Mike Holzapfel (above) fought off a player from Toms River North in a Jan. 31 matchup that saw the Bucs blow out the Mariners, 13-6, at their home arena, the Red Bank Armory. Holzapfel finished the night with three goals and an assist.

ICE HOCKEY

RECORD: 5-13

HIGHLIGHTS: Senior Gus Filippelli set the school record for saves in a career. Senior Lucas Nijnens, junior Will Ogden and sophomore Owen Montgomery all received All-Division Honors.

FINISH: The Bucs narrowly missed a chance at their first state tournament berth since 2013 when they dropped the play-in game, 6-3, to Nottingham over Presidents' Day weekend. The boys closed out the season in style with an exhibition game last week against Freehold Boro at the Prudential Center in Newark.





COURTESY OF LAWRENCE HICKS

Senior Lawrence Hicks won the Monmouth County Championship in January and set a school record for the high jump with this 6-foot, 6-inch leap.

Buc track stars soaring to new heights

COURTESY OF
COACH BRENDAN
MCGOLDRICK

- Senior Lawrence Hicks set two school records this season: He jumped 6'6" in the high jump (previous record was 6'2") and 21'1" in the long jump to break a 20-year-old record of 20'9". Hicks also won the Monmouth County and Shore Conference championships in the high jump, both in January. Next up, Hicks will square off against other top New Jersey long jumpers this weekend at the Meet of Champions on Staten Island.
- Senior Nate Homefield became the Central Jersey Group 3 shot put champion on Feb. 11 with a throw of 41'8.25".
- Junior Trey Cummings set two personal records on his way to a second-place finish in the 55-meter dash at the Central Jersey Group 3 Championships on Feb. 11. Cummings' 6.73-second time qualified him to compete in the Group 3 Championship meet the following week.
- Sophomore Julia McCormack placed in the pole vault at every meet this season. An 8'6" jump earned her second place at the Monmouth County Championship meet in January and the title of second-best pole vaulter in Lady Bucs history. McCormack placed third in the event at the Central Jersey Group 3 meet on Feb. 11 and competed at the Group 3 Championship meet the following weekend.
- The relay team of Abby Plattel, Evelyn Alba, Bella Vega and Violet Blum placed fifth at the Central Jersey Group 3 Championships and qualified for the Group 3 Championship meet as well.



BOWLING

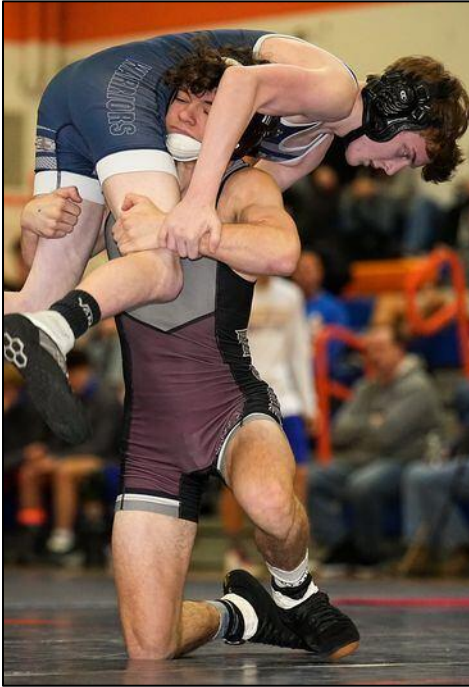
BOYS' RECORD: 43-10

GIRLS' RECORD: 5-37

HIGHLIGHTS: The Bucs advanced to the second round of the state tournament with a victory over Neptune, 2-1, on Feb. 12. Junior Dylan Krueger (center-left in team photo) led the team with 658 pins. The personal-best performance put Krueger's career total over the 4,000-pin mark.

FINISH: The Bucs' exited the state tournament in the quarterfinal round with a Feb. 20 loss to Matawan, which played out at Bowlero Lanes in North Brunswick.

COMING UP: Senior Michael Banfield is slated to return to Bowlero Lanes this morning to compete in the NJSIAA Bowling Individuals Tournament.



WRESTLING

RECORD: 9-8

COMING UP: Senior Dom Sena (left), sophomore Tyler Palumbo (right, above) and Kevin Ruland (right, below) are representing RBR at the NJSIAA Wrestling Individual State Championship, a two-day tournament currently under way in Atlantic City, N.J.

PHOTOS BY RICHARD O'DONNELL
FOR NJ ADVANCE MEDIA



COURTESY OF COACH ERIC MELONE

The Bucs boys' bowling squad – including sophomore manager Philip Dostie, senior Saeed Ellis, senior Michael Banfield, junior Dylan Krueger, junior Kristian Ernst, senior Joe Anan, sophomore Ryan Romanski, and junior Ryan Sweeney – reached the quarterfinal round of state tournament play in a successful season that saw the boys go 15-2 in their division.



RBR swimmers cap successful season with state tourney forays

PHOTOS & RECAP COURTESY OF
COACH JENNAMARIE NEYLAN

MONMOUTH COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Jan. 21, 2024 | Toms River, N.J.

The RBR girls finished the day at No. 4 on the leaderboard and in the process set a new school record in the 200-meter freestyle relay, good enough for second place in the event. Other highlights included a second-place finish in the 200-meter freestyle relay, and senior Sophie Masonius went best times in the 200-meter freestyle and 100-meter backstroke events.

The RBR boys also placed fourth, with honorable mentions going to the following relay teams:

- 200-meter medley (3rd): Will Babik, Luke Bardinas, Ryan Bailey, Gunnar Eckerstrom
- 400-meter freestyle (4th): Will Babik, Max Ansell, Ryan Bailey, Gunnar Eckerstrom

SHORE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Feb. 2-3, 2024 | Toms River, N.J.

For the second year in a row, the Lady Bucs took

silver with a first-place, school record-setting performance in the 200-meter freestyle relay from Maya Freeman, Avery Guild, Sofia Schweers and Amira Washington (pictured, Page 18). Sophomore Washington — who also set individual school records this season in the 100-meter butterfly and 100-meter backstroke — reigned as Shore Conference champion in the 100-meter butterfly event. Other Shore Conference Championship highlights included:

- 100-meter butterfly (3rd): Maya Freeman
- 100-meter breaststroke (3rd): Sydney VanDeBoe
- 200-meter medley relay (3rd): Maya Freeman, Avery Guild, Sofia Schweers, Amira Washington
- Three swimmers qualified for the Meet of Champions: Schweers (50-meter freestyle), VanDeBoe (100-meter breaststroke), Washington (100-meter butterfly and 100-meter backstroke)

The RBR boys notched another fourth-place finish at the conference championships on the strength of standout performances from sophomore Babik (5th in 100-meter butterfly, 7th in 100-meter backstroke) and senior Eckerstrom (2nd in the 50-meter freestyle).



BOYS' SWIMMING

RECORD: 7-2 | DIVISION: 5-2

FINISH: The Bucs qualified for the state tournament but were forced out in the first round with a heartbreaking 87-80 loss to Lawrence Township.

COMING UP: This weekend, senior Gunnar Eckerstrom will compete in the 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle events at the Meet of Champions. The marquee meet, which features the top high school swimmers from all over the state, will take place at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology in Sewell, N.J.



GIRLS' SWIMMING

RECORD: 9-2 | DIVISION: 7-0

FINISH: The Lady Bucs' perfect division record ensured the B-North title they brought home last year stayed put at RBR. The Bucs sailed through the quarterfinal round of state tournament competition with a decisive 117-52 victory over Colts Neck on Feb. 7. Less than a week later, the Bucs' state title quest ended in the semifinal round with a 93-77 loss to the Warriors at Manasquan.



COURTESY OF ASSISTANT COACH CHRISTOPHER DESIERE
Junior Caroline Polloway (trophy, right) was named tournament MVP, and sophomores Synai Blychanton (No. 30) and Zoe Gulley (No. 35) were named to the all-tournament team after (from left) sophomores Kristen Connors, Riley Joyce and Riley Wheeler and the rest of their squad landed RBR's first WOBM Christmas Classic Tournament title.



GIRLS' BASKETBALL

RECORD: 16-9

HIGHLIGHTS: As 2023 drew to a close, the Bucs edged Wall 54-51 to earn their first WOBM Christmas Classic Tournament title. John Truhan notched his 100th win as RBR head coach. On Jan. 13, the Bucs upset Manasquan (then the top-ranked Shore Conference team) in a thrilling 42-41 finish.

COMING UP: The fourth-seeded Lady Bucs have been demolishing the competition in state tournament play, first with a commanding 68-36 put-down of Freehold Boro on Feb. 22, then a lopsided 73-28 victory over Carteret in the quarterfinal round on Tuesday. The girls are scheduled to face off against top-seeded Ewing in the semifinals today.



COURTESY OF ASSISTANT COACH CHRISTOPHER DESIERE
The Lady Bucs sent up a cheer after a big three-pointer by sophomore Katherine Doody (No. 21).