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RITON VOICE

Triton High School

Triton's Student-Produced Newspaper

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Introducing This Year's Big Batch of Golden Apples

Thirteen Teachers Recognized for 25+ Years of Service



By **Alexandra Flodman**
Staff Writer

Brian Forget was going to be an architect. Timothy Coyle was going to be a lawyer. Now, each finds himself with 25 years of teaching at Triton behind him.

Forget had intended to go to school to be an architect after taking several drawing tech classes in high school.

"I realized after I spent a summer with an architect, that they spend 80 percent of their time fighting with people ... it wasn't something I wanted to do," said Forget. Today, Forget is the superintendent of the Triton District. However, he began his career as a Student Teacher at Pine Grove School.

In both the middle and high school, there are 5 "Golden Apples", and 13 total in the district. "This is the largest batch we have had in awhile," said Forget.

A Golden Apple Award is given to a faculty member after they have been working in the Triton Regional School District for 25 years. The physical trophy is a fake apple painted gold. However, Forget said the school was considering changing the award in years to come. This award recognizes the experienced teachers of Triton, and shines a light on their dedication to the school.

Mrs. Nancy Tsakirgis, a Social Worker in the Middle School, decided to work with adolescents because she wanted to help them. "Like many clinical social workers, there was something in your childhood that impacted you, and the way I dealt with it helped me realize that I had that skill ... I knew in High School" she said.

This is unlike Coyle, a History teacher, who had planned on going to law school. He was a legal assistant in both Los Angeles and Washington DC, beginning to get ready for law school. However, the lawyers he was working with were constantly complaining about how they were always travelling and they had no time for their families. "When I was a kid, my dad moved around a lot, and that put a lot of pressure on my mom," Coyle said.

Now that they have 25 years in the Triton District, they don't regret their choice. Each "Apple" commented on how their favorite aspect of the Triton Community is the people.

They all commented on how some of their most memorable experiences in Triton are because of the people they work with.

"All the folks here are really nice," Ms. Frieda Boyle, an

Instructional Assistant, said.

Her thoughts echo those who have also been at Triton for an extended amount of time. Each Apple praised the community aspect of the District. Tskakirgis fondly remembers the student vs staff volleyball game fundraiser, as well as a staff sing-a-long at the annual Winter Concert. However her favorite memory is watching "students that were going to quit, graduate," she said with a smile.

A lot can change in two and a half decades. Coyle remembers some significant physical changes, like the remodeling of Triton, as well as the current renovation at PGS. However, he commented that while the students of Triton have physically changed, their mindset and determination haven't. "I don't think that kids and their expectations and their behaviors in school change all that much," Coyle said.

Boyle agrees, commenting on how all of her "youngsters" stay relatively the same each year.

The "Golden Apples" of Triton are a valuable asset of the Triton Community. Most teachers work an average of 14 years, according to NEAtoday.com. This group of teachers has overcome this national average.

"I love what I do" said Tsakirgis. "I wouldn't want to be doing anything else."



Newly minted "Golden Apple," Mrs. Nancy Tsakirgis in her office in the Triton Middle School (Flodman photo).

Is Vaping at THS on the Decline?

By **Leonard Dobson**
Staff Writer

RIP vaping, at Triton at least.

Over the past year, vaping and the use of nicotine at Triton High School has been on the decline, while the use of counterfeit cartridges appears to be on the rise. The use of vapes containing nicotine is still high amongst seventh to ninth graders and girls, according to school administrators and students the *Triton Voice* interviewed.

In preparation for this story, the *Triton Voice* interviewed more than 20 students and administrators. All of them reported that fewer students are vaping this year. What caused the falling number in vapers?

Three years ago, vaping was at its peak, according to Assistant Principal Scott Brennan, a time referred to it as a vaping "boom." So what is currently killing vaping? Will the die-hard fans let it die? One of the *Triton Voice's* sources, a junior stated, "I love nicotine, I do not care if I die from it."

This student said his smoking habits have led him to cough up blood and black flem, and this reporter noted that he had a horrible cough, and he did indeed hack up a black tar like substance into the sink as the interview was being conducted. Upon being asked about his health conditions, he said he knew it was all of the inhalants he put into his lungs that did it to him, and he didn't care. "I do not care if I die from it, I will never die until I'm dead on the floor."

When asked about which did the most damage to him, he stated that it wasn't the vaping of nicotine, but the fake black market oil cartridges. Several students said they also believed that these black market cartridges are responsible for the recent illnesses among young students

MEET THE TEACHERS

Nearly 40 new teachers joined the district this year. We profiled almost all of them

By **Madison Landry & Kyla Prussman**
Staff Writers

Bright orange walls, vibrant multi-colored floor tiles, huge windows, encouraging messages on colorful bulletin boards, such as "I'm not good at this"... YET," a new smart board and even a science lab.

Jillayne Stutz is a new 5th grade teacher to the district, and the well-organized and welcoming environment she has created in her classroom shows just how passionate she is about this job.

"I didn't want to have a job that was just a job, that I went to every day and came home," said Stutz. "For me, if I'm going to spend my time doing something, it has to be a calling... a passion," said Stutz.

Stutz has taught 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. After having children she decided to step away from the classroom to homeschool them. As her kids got older, Stutz decided to go back to teaching, but was training other teachers on how to teach math in Salem. Stutz then decided she missed working in the classroom with kids, and decided to apply for the job opening at Pine Grove. Once Stutz returned to the classroom with kids, she noticed an immense change in teaching from 1998 to the present. It has caused her job to change as well.

"Teaching now recognizes kids as individuals, and it sees that there are different ways to learn..." said Stutz. "Now that's not how teaching is, it's looking at the student and saying what do you have that's strong about you and how can I foster that."

Even from a young age, Stutz loved school, she loved the idea of school, she loved the concept of learning. Stutz started teaching in 1998 in Las Vegas. From there she went on to

teach in Lynn, her own home, Salem, and now Pine Grove. Stutz found that she had a natural gift and a natural calling for working with children. Stutz's biggest goal towards teaching was that she wanted to make a difference in her students' lives.

"I have 5th graders who are now 30 years old who found me on Facebook and remembered something I did or something we did," said Stutz. "That to me is valuable, that's the biggest thing about teaching to me."

When Stutz is teaching she makes sure to try and individualize everyone in her classroom. Stutz believes that all students are different and have diverse ways of learning. When walking in to her classroom there is a feeling of acceptance. Stutz makes sure that her students know it's okay to learn differently. She does this by telling students that it's okay to not understand something at first, then Stutz will try and help them learn it in different ways that might work better for their learning style.

In the Triton district, every new teacher receives a mentor. The mentor serves as someone who observes how the new teacher is adapting to the new job. They are also there to serve as someone the teacher can talk to if they have questions. According to a study done in April 2014 by the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and the American Institutes for Research, 86 percent of new teachers with first year mentors are still

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TRITON VOICE

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Inside fifth grade teacher Jillian Stutz's PGS classroom, walls are bright, technology is new, and learning is adaptive (Prussman photos)

Triton Regional School District is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, disability, or any other factor as defined and required by state and federal laws.

A Triton Alum Returns to Her Home District

Pine Grove Aide, Danielle Warren

By Derek Cotter & Liam Murray

Staff Writers

From Salisbury Elementary, to Triton, to Southern Vermont College, and now Pine Grove. Teaching aide, Ms. Danielle Warren has returned home to help teach the next generation of elementary schoolers.

Pine Grove has been completely remodeled, and along with the new school, Warren brings a fresh style of teaching to the classroom environment.

Warren has performed countless acts of kindness around the Triton area. Warren completed four internships around New England for amazing causes like Alzheimers and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Along with raising her own kids, Warren has also provided child care for three young children in need.

Warren's journey to where she is today starts off somewhere that many of us call home, Salisbury. Warren grew up in Salisbury where she went to Salisbury Elementary and eventually found herself at Triton. Believe it or not, Warren walked the path many of us follow today, roaming the same halls and sitting in the same desks as we do today. Graduating in the class of 1998, Warren was a true student athlete, she did softball, track, and cheerleading as well as sung for the triton arts program. However, the most important thing Warren got from Triton was a sense of direction. Twenty to fifty percent of students enter college as undecided, according to journals.psu.edu. In her senior year at Triton Warren took a class called Human behaviors (Now Psychology taught by Ms. Lewis). From the get go, Warren loved the class and knew that helping people would be her purpose and passion.

Throughout her senior year, Human behaviors quickly became Warren's favorite class and it brought her a passion for something, helping people. Warren received the Human Behavior award by the end of her senior year for outstanding performance in the class and a true passion for the subject. That passion for helping others stayed with Warren and guides her to this day. When asked what her favorite part of her job was, Warren stated, "My favorite part of this job is being part of the enrichment aspect of a child's life." Two teachers who work with Warren at PGS were asked what they notice about Warren that stands out most and they replied "[She] already has a natural sense of how to help," stated Elizabeth Butler and Colleen Murray. "Her approach to assisting them (the kids) is different than how a normal IA would." After Triton, Warren attended Southern Vermont College for her bachelor's degree in Social work/Human services. Warren loved college and it gave her skills and tools to become a true master of her field.

After graduating from Southern Vermont College, Warren decided to return to her roots by starting work at Salisbury Elementary as a substitute to cover long term absences. It was working at Salisbury Elementary where Warren realized her interest in working with special education students. In addition to working at Salisbury elementary Warren got hired at the Salisbury boys and girls club as the director for "at risk teens." After being a substitute at SES for a while she was invited to substitute at Rowley, and after substituting at Rowley for two years they hired her as a full time IA. Now a full time IA at Rowley, Warren has now found her rightful place.

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who vape. A survey of 20 students showed that 11 said vaping does more damage for its unknown effects and the massive levels of nicotine they contain. Nine students said that black market cartridges, though not as common, are the cause of the damage. None felt that the recent Massachusetts vaping ban will stop kids from vaping since they can purchase in New Hampshire.

One junior said that despite knowing students are not using real cartridges, they are ok with it since he as well as many other students say they knew who fills up their cartridges. However they did state that they didn't know one hundred percent what actually goes into them.

One freshmen said that middle school students vape nicotine and are more careful where they vape. It was reported that they are caught less because they are fearful of the strict punishments enforced on vaping. "They are all sus about it, half are fearful of it, while the other half

'Smart, self-confident, passionate, and dedicated'

Seventh Grade Teacher, Nicole Toothaker

By Ethan Mosteller & Stone Butler

Staff Writers

Mrs. Nicole Toothaker's classroom is the type of classroom you would only find in a movie. Take one step inside Mrs. Toothaker's seventh grade social studies classroom, and all you want is to be taught in it.

Her room consists of beautiful flower art on top of newly painted ocean blue walls. The class seemed to be brightened from her Buddha statue that sits right below an outstanding triptych map of the world.

The students in the class were very happy and seemed to enjoy the activity they were working on in class, along with learning from Mrs. Toothaker.

"She got me an entire stack of Amelia Bedelia books for my birthday" is what Toothaker said about her 2nd-grade teacher Ms. Duffy, who inspired her to start a teaching career.

When she was in elementary school, Toothaker struggled in school with reading. Her goal for her career in teaching is that she continues to find the drive to help others, and teaches them the same way she was taught all those years ago.

Toothaker comes from a family of teachers. Her older sister is a 2nd-grade teacher in New York and her younger sister is a middle school math teacher in Lawrence. Out of all three of them, she was the first to get into teaching. Both of her sisters changed their careers.

Toothaker went to Southern New Hampshire University and Lesley College to major in history and minor in education. She also went on to get her master's in Special Education.



Obvious care was put into Toothaker's room décor, including maps, statues, and art (Staff photo).

Toothaker works under Alan MacRae, principal, and Mrs. Heidi Mongeau, assistant principal of Triton middle school. They both had good words to say about Toothaker and see a great amount of potential for her teaching career at the school.

"She is very engaging to students and has a very inclusive style. Everyone participates and is heard in her class," said MacRae. He believes she makes students feel like they are the priority, and said in an email that "she has great confidence about her and a very positive personality!"

Mongeau shared a similar sentiment with MacRae, "Mrs. Toothaker is passionate about teaching and learning and is willing to share her ideas with her colleagues." Both MacRae and Mongeau pointed out that Toothaker held an "archeological dig" activity, that MacRae says "brought a hands-on approach to Social Studies. Not something we often see in that content."

Before coming to Triton this year, Toothaker left her teaching job at Lawrence High School because the commitment at the school interfered with her time with her kids.

just think its cool and are people who jumped on the bandwagon when it got cool." stated one freshman,

Brennan said that 7th, 8th and 9th graders are vaping the most right now. Ages 13-15 is a very early time to start becoming addicted and this may turn into a deeply rooted nicotine addiction. He stated that a lot of the usage is done on the bus now, as well as the stalls of the bathrooms.

Brennan said he believes it is not all the vaping students faults. Younger audiences may have been targeted by the big vaping companies and exploited because of their lack of understanding of the product. He understands kids are addicted and can't do a lot about it. He doesn't want to catch them anymore; he just wants them to stop.

Mr. Kurt Riese, an IA at the school who sometimes monitors the bathrooms, stated that his intent of going into the bathrooms was not to catch the kids vaping, but to make them stop. He said he is worried about the peer pressure involved in pack mentality.

"There are still eight to 12 regulars in the bathroom,"

Following in his past teachers' footsteps

Phys. Ed teacher Christopher Gogolos

By Brycen Cray

Staff Writer

Christopher Gogolos, a native to the area, has returned to teach physical education class at Triton.

"I've definitely enjoyed my time here, the place is amazing," said Gogolos.

The Triton Regional School District has received some new teachers this year. One of them being a Physical Educator, Gogolos. He says he doesn't teach in any unique way, but he uses techniques from his past school phys ed teachers to teach. Right now, he's teaching in the middle school gym and he's teaching with passion.

Gogolos spent his childhood near Triton. Eventually he got a football scholarship to Endicott University, and while going there he decided to study criminal justice. After awhile of studying criminal justice he just wasn't that into it anymore, he said. That's when he got an invitation to a physical education class with some of his teammates.

He went for a little and started to like it, so eventually he started studying it. He thought about what made him happy to help him find out what he wanted to do. He remembered that he loves sports/games so he became a football coach. This eventually led to him becoming a physical educator. He came to this conclusion because of the fun memories he had as a kid in gym class. He liked his teachers and he even uses some of their teaching methods today. Especially his middle school phys ed teacher.

"I feel like I follow in his footsteps, said Gogolos.

Gogolos said he loved how sarcastic his teacher would be, and he liked how his teacher would push everyone to do better. Gogolos said that, all he wants is for his students to work hard and most importantly, to have fun.

When asked what he would do if he didn't choose being a P.E. teacher he said he would work in video production. It turns out he does video production on the side for fun and built a good small client base. When he was a kid he loved creating videos and much like gym, he decided to keep doing it as an adult.

All and all, Mr. Gogolos is a native who returned back to his home area to do what he loved as a child: Create videos and doing activities outside. He looks up to his past P.E. teachers and uses their techniques to his advantage. He hopes his students will challenge themselves and try to improve, but most importantly he

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teaching, compared to the 71 percent without mentors. Erica Geyer is also a 5th grade teacher at Pine Grove School, and is Stutz's mentor for her first school year here. Geyer says that Stutz is very positive, and it is clear that Stutz has a passion for what she does.

"I think she's doing great," says Geyer. "I mean I am really excited to have her as a team member. She is a great fit for our team in general..."

Despite the crazy start of the school year, with the fifth grade hallway being the last hallway to be finished in construction, teachers weren't given lots of time to unbox their things, so Stutz didn't receive a lot of help with navigating the school.

Stutz adapted quickly according to her colleagues, and is fitting in nicely.

Nicole Laperriere is the Vice Principal at Pine Grove School, and she knew Stutz would be perfect for the job from the first interview.

"Mrs. Stutz I will tell you, when we first went through the interview process, we knew she was gonna be amazing," said Laperriere.

Laperriere said that Stutz doesn't even seem like a new teacher to Pine Grove, she is already adapting so well to the new school.

It is clear how much Stutz cares about her job and her students, she took time out of her summer to be at Pine Grove speaking with parents about their children to ensure they would have a great school year.

"She's just part of the Pine Grove family now," said Laperriere. "She's just fit in so nicely."

said Riese. "That's not so bad compared to last year's 20."

Riese said kids are seeing the news and smartening up, as well as being scared to get caught. As for the black market cartridges, he stated it's harder to catch them now. He used to catch them in the parking lot smoking or smell it on them while walking by. However now, the cartridges don't smell, and they are small like a Juul so they are only found on rare occasions.

Vapers caught today at Triton, instead of being suspended and fined, are fined, then sent to a seminar class after school once a week for eight weeks as punishment. One female sophomore who went to this class stated that it was a good experience. She said they discussed the side effects of vaping and what it could do to their bodies in the future. The teacher of this class, School Adjustment Counselor Mr. Joe Celia stated that it was not meant to be a punishment but instead an awakening to the harm it may cause.