

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

raising awareness for international issues

writer rachel lehman
designer sam amonette

Olentangy Model United Nations is a district wide club in which students from grades 6-12 work to model how to solve issues in countries around the world. While the club creates awareness for social issues, it also creates leadership experience for students for problem solving in real world scenarios.

Every year, each group conducts research on countries and hypothetical ways to solve the country's issues. When they find their resolution, they present their ideas at a summit to the other teams across the district. This year's summit was held virtually on Microsoft Teams on Feb. 27.

"Due to the necessary precautions, they decided to make the summit fully online. This is definitely not what I hoped for because meeting with others at the summit was the best part of Model UN, but it was a necessary decision. It's the best we can do for this year," sophomore OMUN member Achintya Perumal said.

To prepare for a summit, teams across the Olentangy district look

into geological, financial and societal issues in different countries to come up with a solution. They spend a lot of time looking through databases and primary sources to find evidence to support their final claim.

"In the months leading up to a summit, we go through multiple stages of assignments pertaining to research about our countries with our individual groups that have to be turned in by certain dates," sophomore OMUN member Brandon Pham said. "After, we turn in our final resolution, we prepare our speech and get comfortable with our topic to get prepared for presenting it at the summit."

Leaders in OMUN work year-round to make sure everything is organized and prepared for when next fall comes around. This includes picking new officers to lead the next year and getting all forms and papers written and organized so that people are ready to form groups and pick the country they want to represent.

"While most of the other officers work to make sure different groups are ready for their presentations and speeches at different schools, we're

making sure staff will be at the summit, working out technology issues, and planning and writing most of what will go on in the summit weekend," General Assembly President Ethan Hunter and senior said.

There's more to OMUN than researching ways to find solutions to issues in countries. Some groups participate in the summits costume projects where they wear cultural clothing to show off their country. They also hold other events such as talent shows and trivia night.

"The work towards making a resolution can be hard, but the summit makes everything worth it. I would highly recommend it to other students: not only is it a chance to meet and get closer to friends, but it's also a chance to really grow your knowledge of international issues and other cultures in an enjoyable way," Perumal said.

The countries that won the awards for outstanding resolution were Greece and Russia. Sweden was the winner of the talent show, and China won the costume contest.



Pictured: The science olympiad club practicing the talent show portion of their summit

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS earning graduation seals

writer jake denner

designer keegan richards

Students are graduating to the next grade at the end of the school year. Requirements have been changed several times in the past and have been changed again due to COVID-19 restrictions.

For the graduating class of 2021 and 2022, students are required to have 20 credits of classes by the state, but the school also requires an additional elective credit and a fine arts credit. Both the state and the city allow the three original pathways to graduation. However, the students graduating in 2021 and 2022 are eligible for graduation by fulfilling the seal requirements that are required for subsequent classes.

"We are getting a new program called School Links that will help students track graduation plans and requirements. This program is going to replace Naviance. It will also be used for college and career searches and transcript requests," guidance counselor Pam Otten said.

The graduating requirements for the class of 2023 and beyond have the same class credit requirements. However, the class of 2023 is also required to display competency with scores of 684 or higher on Algebra I and ELA II tests, or by one of the three alternate ways: showing proof of a signed military contract, showing technical skill and career experience or by taking College Credit Plus.

The answer to most questions can be found on the Ohio Department of Education website. They break down the requirements by graduating class and answer most questions about graduating," guidance counselor Stephen Gunther said.

The class of 2023 and beyond have a final graduation requirement in seals. There are nine state-defined seals, and three from the school. In order to graduate, a student must have at least two seals, one of which must be from the state. Seals are earned by meeting certain requirements such as enlisting in the military for the Military Enlistment Seal or demonstrate proficiency in English and another world language.

STILL MAKING MUSIC performing arts update

writer emma clute

designer keegan richards

As the second semester continues, the performing arts programs have started working on their spring events. Choir, orchestra and band have had to make changes because of COVID-19, but they're all pushing through and keeping the music alive.

The planning for the annual choir showcase has started and some changes have had to be made to the typical three-day event in the auditorium with songs that all fall under one theme.

The students got to choose between a "30-minute concert outside wearing masks and socially distanced with the audience doing the same, an hour-long virtual concert with an outside viewing option and a fully virtual concert," choir director Cheryl Brooks said.

The choir students picked the fully virtual concert, which will premiere online like the fall and winter concerts did. Virtual donations will be accepted to support the choir instead of selling tickets.

The orchestra has also had to make some changes to its usual spring plan, with the focus more on individual work than big group numbers.

"We usually have an independent or group piece we work on for the OMEA contest along with concert music for class," junior and violinist Emma-Cait Cogan said. "This year, we're doing more independent and skills-based work."

The band is also affected by the COVID-19 restrictions. Typically, the spring is when the band prepares for the OMEA large group contest, where

it takes three songs to perform.

"We're all preparing a solo, ensemble and a large group piece because OMEA is only requiring one piece in their large group competition this year, rather than three," junior and trumpet player Greyson Thagard said. "We are required to present our solos and ensembles for the class, but we're not required to take them to the competition."



Junior Greyson Thagard's ensemble practices its performance

HERE WE GO AGAIN

covid easter: part two

writer emma clute
designer teresa christian

Easter: the only major holiday that has been affected by COVID-19 twice (so far). This year the holiday will be looking similar to last year, but with more acceptance that it's for the safety of others.

The way Easter was celebrated two years ago seems almost unrecognizable now, with community egg hunts and visiting family in-person without masks.

"Before COVID, we would wake up and do an Easter egg hunt," junior Ryann Allender said. "Then, we would get ready and go to church before we went to my grandma's house for lunch and another Easter egg hunt with all of my cousins."

One major change this year is people are more prepared and

comfortable with gatherings with people wearing masks because COVID-19 isn't new and the vaccination process has started.

"We will still go to a masked church service, but we aren't going to my grandma's house," Allender said.

Some families have opted to participate in a virtual mass instead of an in-person one this year.

"The church we normally go to has been filming mass and posting it on YouTube, so we'll watch that and then probably cook something and eat with just my family," junior Tatum Lather said.

Online church service is something that has been happening since last year and has been very successful in allowing people to attend church in a

safe and comfortable way.

"There are a lot of people who watch live, then other people watch later," Pastor Dan Rebon said. "It has been good. A lot more people are listening than would normally listen," according to Mansfield Journal.

Many people are hopeful that this will be the last Easter that's celebrated virtually or with masks, and that COVID-19 will be long gone by this time next year.

"If everyone is vaccinated within our family and more churches open back up, then I think Easter will look kind of normal next year," Lather said. "However, I try to not look forward to anything, because we never know what might happen between now and then."

GOTCHA, APRIL FOOLS

april fool's day pranks and tricks



writer teresa christian
designer teresa christian

Dating all the way back to 1582, April Fools' Day was created when France switched to the Georgian Calendar, a new reform of the Julian Calendar, according to History.com. The new calendar started the new year on Jan. 1 rather than March 1.

Those who were late to hear the news became the center of the joke and were named the, "April Fools". Today, some take part in this tradition by doing pranks, small or big, to joke with family or friends.

"I took a coin and placed it underneath a water bottle and

pretended I did a magic trick saying, 'the coin is now in the water bottle'. I had the person come up and look into the water bottle only to squeeze it into their face," sophomore Bemí Gedfaw said, explaining the coin underneath the bottle prank.

Senior pranks are popular amongst senior high school students in America, especially around April Fools' Day. Seniors across the country have pulled pranks as crazy as listing their principal's house on sale for below market value to placing chickens in the school overnight and being chased by staff, according to Seventeen Magazine.

"My dad got a lift and brought it in with a U-Haul truck so when we finished unloading it, I thought it would be a good idea to prank my friends," sophomore Augustine Davis said. "I took a picture of the truck and sent it in a group chat saying I was moving out of the neighborhood and they bought it and starting to get concerned as to why I didn't tell them sooner. But the next day at school I told them it was a prank."

Many people enjoy the entertainment that comes out of the spring seasoned day. "I enjoy April Fools' Day, but it's become too obvious to prank someone," Gedfaw said.

INTERACT CLUB

bettering the community

writer rachel lehman
designer carissa long
photo mckenna mcconell

Interact Club is a club that focuses on providing service opportunities and projects for students to help in the community. Interact members do things from sending sweet letters to people to making a big difference to people in need.

So far, they have donated food and helped out at "People In Need" in Delaware, written Valentine's Day cards to a local nursing home and have made blankets for foster children through "My Very Own Blanket".

"This year we've also started a tutoring program where members meet with students over conference calls," sophomore Interact Club officer

Molly Shannon said. "Some things coming up include a snack drive for the Ronald McDonald house and some other spring community events."

The officers, vice president and president of Interact Club do much of the behind-the-scenes work to make sure things run smoothly. Officers are usually in charge of organizing games and events on weekends at nursing homes, but unfortunately with the pandemic, they can't do anything in person.

"My job is to help suggest ideas for different events, prepare for them and do the behind-the-scenes stuff after an event is over. This can include delivering and picking up different supplies or organizing items that were donated," junior and Co-Vice President Abby Schroff said.

Some other things that the Interact Club does is hosting fundraisers for different charities in both spring and fall. This year, they're planning on donating the money they raise towards a covid relief program.

"I definitely think that people should join Interact Club because it's not that big of a commitment, and it's a great way to help out your community and get service hours for National Honor Society," Senior and President Julia Mauger said.

If you're not in Interact Club already, make sure to join next year. People who want to join need to fill out a Google form, make sure to listen for announcements and attend the quarterly meetings.



GOING BEYOND

honor societies to join

writer jake denner
designer carissa long

Honor societies are a common type of club, with the purpose of recognizing excellence in specific academic areas depending on the type of honor society. Several of these types of clubs exist at the high school.

Honor societies exist for several different fields like world languages, stage performing arts, music arts and business. The honor societies have certain requirements to enter, such as: being enrolled in Spanish IV or AP, being a member of the Spanish Club, having a GPA of 3.2 and being a junior or senior in order to join the Spanish Honor Society.

"We participate in with Spanish Club activities, events and service projects. We want students to exhibit enthusiasm about Spanish and academics by striving for their best in Spanish class, accepting responsibilities, working with others and making an effort to use Spanish in and out of class with students and teachers," Spanish teacher and Spanish Honor Society co-adviser Sonia Sink said.

The National Honor Society is the broadest category, not being restricted to specific fields. Juniors and seniors with a 3.5 or higher GPA are eligible to join by filling

out an application on Schoology and submitting recommendation forms from adults. Students must have performed volunteer hours all through high school to be eligible.

"The National Honor Society is a nationally recognized organization that highlights student scholarship, service, leadership and character. The NHS organizes volunteer and leadership opportunities for students to help the community. Students can get a greater sense of community by helping out with the opportunities the National Honor Society provides," History teacher and National Honor Society adviser Leslie Hosgood said.

LEARNING IS MORE THAN JUST GRADES

why standardized testing is doing more harm than good

writer samantha amonette
designer carissa long

In America, students have to go through standardized tests. According to WGU, from grade Kindergarten through 12th grade, students will spend about 20-25 hours testing, which equals to about 112 standardized tests. Students get stressed out preparing for tests given by the government to measure their "intelligence".

Intelligence isn't measured by how well students can memorize things in order for a computer to tell them how smart they are.

Because the test results aren't released until months later, the tests don't give students or teachers any feedback on how to score better.

According to CBS, four in 10 districts report having to wait between two months and four months before getting state test results. The lack of timely results means teachers begin a new school year not knowing where a student needs to improve.

These tests also encourage students to cheat in order to get a good grade that they think their future depends on. The students stress out to get a good grade and cause a harder time taking the test.

According to ASCD.org, brain research suggests that too much stress is psychologically and physically harmful. And when stress becomes overwhelming, the brain shifts into a "fight or flight" response, where it is impossible to engage in the higher-order thinking processes

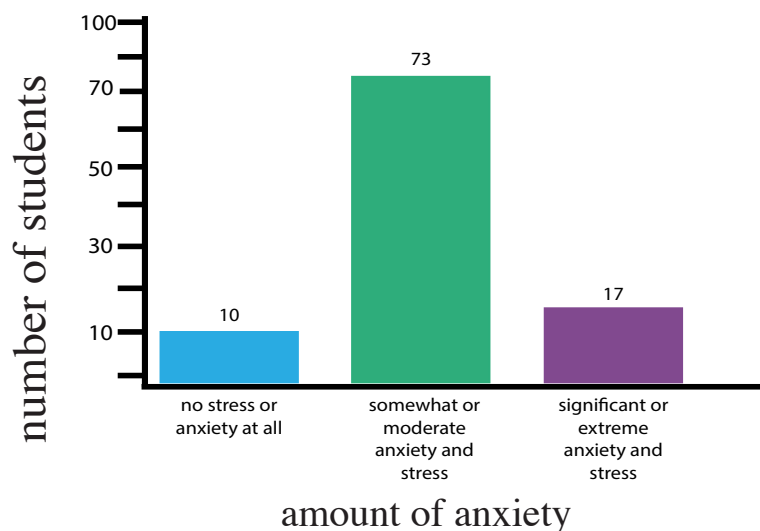
"losers" and better test takers are considered "winners". This mindset creates the low scorers to have bad self esteem and low expectations for themselves.

It also negatively affects the teachers. Teachers' jobs also depend on how well their students perform on these tests and base their teaching on only making sure their students do good on the test.

The reason for standardized testing isn't even for educational purposes; it's for the test company to make millions of dollars to judge kids on memorization skills. According to WGU the United States has spent about \$1.7 billion on standardized testing. According to PSU.edu, standardized tests are paid by taxpayer dollars when the tax money could be used better in other places like repairs and better materials for learning in public schools.

Standardized tests don't measure the students' intelligence. Thankfully for this year's admitted class of college students they were not required to send in ACT or SAT grades in order to apply and get into college.

Given how many students still got into college without their standardized testing scores should reflect how unnecessary these tests are and how schools should stop giving them out.



that are necessary to respond correctly to the standardized test questions.

Testing also creates another problem for students where students who score low are considered

COVID-CATION spring break plans for 2021

writer & designer taylor stewart
illustration carissa long

freshman lily barron:

"I will mostly be staying home hanging out with some friends. I only hang out with the same couple of friends, and we always make sure to wear our masks if we go anywhere. I will also be attending a volleyball tournament in St. Louis."

junior ethan johnston:

"This spring break I will be staying home, which is not much different from any other year. I plan to catch up on my schoolwork and spend some time with family. I will also have a few lectures for my class at Columbus State that week, as our spring break does not line up with theirs."

sophomore aryan bommena:

"For spring break I'm planning on staying home and relaxing, possibly spending time with friends while following COVID guidelines. I also play a spring sport so I will most likely have practice."

senior maggie van fleet:

"I am not doing much. I mainly plan on staying home and hanging out with some friends, visiting my roommate for college and probably going to babysit."

ideas on how to stay safe while on vacation:

- Always have hand sanitizer in a convenient spot.
- Wipe down your hotel room before and after your stay.
- Bring plenty of masks to ensure you will always have one handy.
- Quarantine before and after your trip to keep both yourself and others safe.
- Remember to social distance as much as possible.
- Try to eat outside if weather permits.

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

writer & designer taylor stewart
photos carissa long

FEBRUARY

Olivia Upchurch
Ellie Beck
Paige Kadar
Erika Brown
Xander Hake
Logan Thomas
Lauren Berend
Sidney Brisson

PIONEER PRIDE BARS

Tristen Hatfield - Jan.
Trevor Lehrke - Jan.
Aidan Elliott - Jan.
Kees Condon - Feb.
Joey Gillespe - Feb.
Jonathan Peterson - Mar.