

“Our Town” Production

Director Devon Kasper’s eyes filled with tears as she introduced the Salida High School Drama Team’s production of “Our Town” on opening night, Friday November 12th. After almost two years without a production showcased to the public, the SHS Drama Team returns to the stage.

“It feels really fantastic to have a big show and a show that brought out a lot of people,” said Kasper.

“Our Town” was written by Thornton Wilder and the production was on the 12th, 13th and 14th of November. A teaser for the show occurred at SHS on November 10th where the team acted out the first part of the show to all SHS students.

Sophomore Clara Streeter, who played Mrs. Webb in the show, explained how the teaser felt for her, “We were showing the first bit of the show that we’d worked really hard on, and we didn’t know the outcome yet, but we were just hoping that we wouldn’t get made fun of too much at lunch.”

No jokes were hurled across the lunch table at the drama team, as the teaser was a great success along with the other three shows later in the weekend.

Drama has always al-

lowed the actors to connect with their given characters and relate to their feelings and personalities.

Streeter felt connected with her character, who was the strict mother of two children, “I think she’s hilarious,” Streeter said. “She’s this very strict, to the point woman, but then secretly she’s very prideful, and I think that I connect to that in a sense.”

The play “Our Town” involves around George Gibbs who was a young man with a bright future. George, played by sophomore Jasper Coen, was the star of his high school baseball team and had dreams of taking over his uncle Luke’s farm. He lived in Grover’s Corner, New Hampshire, with his father, the local doctor Frank, played by senior Wyatt Velharticky, his mother Julia, played by senior Jessie Rollins, and sister Rebecca, played by freshman Olive Ritchie. George pines after Emily Webb, played by senior Rebecca Russell, his neighbor and daughter of the local newspaper editor, Charles, played by sophomore Ben Smith, and Myrtle, played by sophomore Clara Streeter. During “Our Town,” the Stage Manager, played by senior Vander

Story by Gwen Ramsey

Ritchie, led us through three important days in the lives of these two families, waxing poetic about the meaning of life, legacy, and love. Set between 1901 and 1913, “Our Town” is a poignant reflection on small town life, simple love, and being present in your life, and remains relevant more than 80 years after it was written and awarded a Pulitzer Prize.

Members of the community were thrilled to come out and see the drama team’s hard work in action. Though the team did perform a show last spring called “Lovesick,” the turnout was low due to the mid-pandemic setting. This year, the team almost filled the auditorium each night.

Audience member and SHS sophomore Jack Landry said, “It was really exciting to go see a drama show in person for the first time, and it really added to the high school experience that we didn’t get last year because of Covid.”

Ryan O’Brien, parent of freshman actor Fisher Hollo-way-O’Brien, commented, “Knowing what work it took to get here for a lot of these guys and especially for the first timers is a big deal. Having things back on display [at SHS], and a return to some kind of normality was great, but also the chance to actually bring [the show] into the world we live in now was the most important part.”

OUR TOWN: *Emily Webb, played by senior Rebecca Russell, panics, venting to her father Charles, played by Sophomore Ben Smith, about her upcoming wedding. Both were performing in the Salida High Schools Drama Team’s production of Our Town, on November 12, 13 and 14th. Russell has been acting for years, including four years with the Salida High School Drama Team. Some of her previous roles include Horatio in Hamlet and the Singing Telegram Girl in Clue. Ben Smith is a newcomer, and this is his second play at Salida High School.*



Photo By Amelia Hobbs

Election Results

Story by Olive Ritchie

Although November means the conclusion of many things, it also brings new beginnings as the results of elections emerge. In Salida, there was an election for the school board. Jodi Breckenridge-Petit and Joe Smith were both reelected to their respective positions.

Breckenridge-Petit is excited to resume working on policies, relieved to see her hard work pay off, and reassured. Breckenridge-Petit was inspired to run for many reasons

“I came from a very modest background. A divorced family. Public educators scooped me up and carried me along. I got to where I am today because of public education. That’s the first reason, that’s my heart reason. I have skills that match up really well to the school board. I used to be a teacher. I am still a substitute teacher. I studied education and how adults learn not quite the same as young people. It’s a really nice pairing,” Breckenridge-Petit said.

Joe Smith was also delighted to know he was reelected. He is continuing to serve as the school board president while representing district 4.

“I feel happy and thrilled that the community continues to support me,” Smith said.

Both Breckenridge-Petit and Smith are enthusiastic about the integration of Colorado Mountain College (CMC) classes into Salida High School. They hope it will foster growth within high school students.

“One reason why [CMC classes are exciting] is continuing education for trades. Particularly in our state, a minimum wage job means that you’re going to struggle. If you have a certificate, a diploma, plus a welding certificate you can live in our community.”

She thinks getting a trade certificate can really help both students and the community. “And [jobs requiring a trade], I think, is where our greatest need is. Solar panel installation, welding, any of the construction jobs, graduating with those skills would be amazing.”

Breckenridge-Petit also thinks CMC classes can be a useful tool for students pursuing higher education. She hopes taking CMC classes in high school can ease the financial burden on parents by helping students’ earn associate degrees during high school.

“My dream is for someone who is interested in going to college to graduate with their associates degree,” Breckenridge-Petit said.

Breckenridge-Petit wants graduation requirements to include the exploration of careers. Both Breckenridge-Petit and Smith think the graduation requirements should be updated to better meet the needs of students in the present day.

“We have this enormous resource with CMC, and to keep our 1960s graduation requirements the same with this new resource and changing world just doesn’t make sense. They’re not bad, but we can make them better,” Breckenridge-Petit said.

She also wants to implicate a multi-tiered support system within the school system. The goal of the support system is to make sure every kid is well-educated and has help with behavioral health. It is tailored to every individual student; it will provide support in subjects in which the student is not as strong.

“If we could have all our students grow up with that support system, it would bring me to tears,” Breckenridge-Petit said.

In order to improve students’ mental health, the school board hired Cassie Stauch, a counselor from Solvista. Breckenridge-Petit is pleased with this decision despite the money it requires.

“I am willing to put our money where our mouth is on students’ mental health,” she said.

With a slew of changes and challenges occurring within the school system, Smith and Breckenridge-Petit hope to support students and staff within the school system as much as they can.



Courtesy Photo

GRADUATING: *Above: Ethan NeJame Zeist sits on top of a truck while posing for his senior portraits, NeJame Zeist plans to travel through Central and South America before attending college. Below: Macy Mazzeo smiles in a field of flowers during her senior photo session. Mazzeo hopes to attend college but would love to travel as well.*



Courtesy Photo

School Resource Officer Position Paused

Since 2017, School Resource Officers have been a part of the Salida School District. They were seen in the halls, around the building, and even in classrooms.

Now, the position has been temporarily suspended, and the school, along with the Salida Police Department (SPD), is trying to find the best way to move forward.

As the district assesses the roles of the SROs and whether they will return, patrol officers are parked outside the schools every morning.

Principal Talmage Trujillo explained, “I met with Sergeant Cliff [of Salida Police Department] to discuss the morning police patrolman and his duties and how to continue that practice in a way that supports the school.”

Trujillo also noted how the response time of SPD has seemed to be unchanged whether SHS has had an SRO or not.

“Things don’t feel all that different because every time we’ve needed a police officer to come and help support us with a police matter, criminal matter, or any other support role, the police have

responded very quickly.”

SHS has had a good relationship with SPD and SROs since the program was implemented in 2017.

CJ Meseke, who was the SRO from 2017 through 2019, explained what the job was like for him.

“During my time as SRO, I was able to learn a lot of new things I was not taught about in the police academy. I was given the opportunity to work alongside incredible educators, counselors, students and staff who helped me better understand this job and provide assistance and education in areas not given in a patrol setting.”

While Meseke was the SRO, he helped coach wrestling. He also helped create the Remind program dedicated to helping freshmen and sophomores learn how to drive. Meseke also helped create and teach drug education classes.

“Teaching these classes and many others gave us the opportunity to take off the uniform and humanize ourselves a bit by teaching and answering all the questions high schoolers want to know and ask the police,” he said.

Graduate Adventures Begin

Story by Amelia Hobbs

It is now half-way through the seniors’ last year in high school. A lot of seniors are deciding to go to college after graduation. But a few others are hoping to travel and gain worldly experiences before continuing the rest of their lives.

Senior Ethen NeJame Zeist will graduate at the end of this semester and take a few months to travel. Ethan is an avid mountain biker who was on the high school mountain bike team and also on the SHS boys soccer team all throughout his four years in high school.

NeJame Zeist said “I’m hoping to take a semester in Guatemala, and then in Central America or South America.”

College is also on a lot of seniors’ minds. A lot of seniors plan on going to college, or another form of secondary school. Ethan plans on attending college after he returns from his travels.

In high school students have easy access to all different types of hobbies, but in college it might not be as available. NeJame Zeist hopes to do a bit of surfing and mountain biking while in Guatemala before entering college where he will focus on his studies.

Senior Macy Mazzeo played volleyball and ran track. She was also involved in the National Honor Society and participated in clubs such as Eco Club, Knowledge Bowl, and Chess Club. In terms of her plans after college she explained, “I do want to go to college, and I applied to around 11 different schools. I plan to major in Chemistry or Biochemistry to enter the medical field or a career in lab research.”

High school teaches people so much about everything from themselves to the world around them.

NeJame Zeist said that paying attention has helped

him be successful.

Because seniors have gone through all four years of high school, they often have more experience with high school. NeJame Zeist gave some advice to his freshman self that might help underclassmen.

He said, “Study more and don’t sit in the back of the class.”

Mazzeo however, said “Don’t be afraid to get out of your comfort zone, things might be intimidating but taking that harder class or joining that club is always worth it.”

Leaving everything you’ve known is hard, but some people are ready to leave and explore the world. NeJame Zeist said, “I’m ready to leave but also it’s bittersweet [...] All my friends are here but I’ve also lived in Salida my whole life.”

Story by Lucia Zettler

The role of an SRO is complex and very different from the role of a regular police officer. One of the problems that the school district and some students are experiencing is that the role of the SRO has been a bit unclear.

In September, Senior Jessie Rollins, the president of the Extraordinary Teen Council and City Council Youth Representative, sent out a survey to learn how students feel about the SRO position. One of the main

results from the survey was that many students just don’t know what the SRO does.

Trujillo said, “One of the things that is going to be really important for us moving forward is clarifying the role of the SRO.”

At the end of the day, the goal of having officers in the school buildings is to help keep students as safe as possible.

“Almost all of us, if not all of us, have an aim to increase student safety,” Tru-

jillo said. “Achieving student safety informs almost everything we do. Having an SRO on sight always comes with the aim to do just that, to increase student safety.”

Regardless of if we have an SRO or not, the SPD will still play a large role in keeping students safe.

Meseke explained, “Even though you might not see us everyday, we are still here and we will always care about your safety and success.”



Courtesy Photo

CONNECTION: *Former SRO, CJ Messke coaches a wrestling team of former students in 2018 at Salida High School. His position within the high school gave him opportunities to bond and work with students on a deeper level both in and out of the uniform.*