

# PANTHER PRESS

## FILLING THE COLD MONTHS WITH PANTHER PRIDE

### Zarate - The Magic Behind OPS Youth Choir

ISABELLA COSTILLA

In this newest interview, I will be talking about the true secret behind the beautiful harmonizing success of the OPS youth choir. We will be looking into what really goes on behind the songs of these singers in the OPS choir. The man who will be providing us with this wonderful information is the one, the only, the Magnificent Mr. Zarate. The one who guides the singers to sing in pop-music voice to the quietest Melody. The great conductor himself who pulls everything together into the most harmonizing beautiful pieces that your ears have ever heard.



OPS Choir Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

As I hurried down the stairs to get to the music room to start my very delayed meeting for our interview. I had only one thought in my mind: What will I find out? Finally, I was able to get Zarate and I to start our meeting. It went a little bit like this. I asked “what inspired you to start the Ops choir?” Mr. Zarate responded, “That was a lifelong dream of mine since college to start a Youth Chorus. Choir kids enjoy singing and expressing themselves through song and music. It’s a way to show what they love to do most and not to hide their special talents.” As I moved on to the next question here was his response. “What Is your goal for the future of the OPS choir?” He replied, “To have the choir grow and to have them compete in a festival”. My next question was this, “What was your favorite thing about choir?” “My favorite thing about choir is having students who want to be there to sing a new song together for the first time.” My last and final question, “What do you admire most about choirs?” His final reply, “Giving students who want to sing a chance to do so on a stage.”



### Saying Goodbye to Lorado Taft: A Teacher's Reflection

ABIGAIL RAMOS

As the news spreads that Lorado Taft Outdoor Education Center will be closing, many students and teachers are feeling sad. For years, Lorado Taft has been a special place where learning happens outside the classroom. It’s where friendships are made and students face challenges in the great outdoors. Ms. Bloom, one of the amazing fifth grade teachers who has been part of the program, shared her thoughts about what Lorado Taft has meant to her and the students.

**Abby:** What will you miss most about Lorado Taft?  
**Ms. Bloom:** I will miss being able to learn outside. The activities and lessons we do there are unique and can’t really happen in a classroom. The nature around us helps the students learn in ways they can’t anywhere else. I know I’ll miss that.

**Abby:** How did you first hear about Lorado Taft?  
**Ms. Bloom:** We first heard about it from teachers who went when they were teaching 4th grade. They always talked about how great it was, and when I started teaching, I knew I wanted my students to have the same experience.

**Abby:** What made you choose Lorado Taft for the 5th grade tradition?  
**Ms. Bloom:** For me, it’s the special time the kids spend outside with their classmates. It’s a chance to bond and grow

closer, and it makes the whole class feel like a family. It’s an experience they’ll never forget.  
**Abby:** With Lorado Taft closing, where will the 5th graders go now?  
**Ms. Bloom:** We’re not sure yet. We hope to find a facility like Lorado Taft, where students can still learn outside and do activities that help them grow. But for now, we’re still looking for the right place.

**Abby:** Why is Lorado Taft so important to you?  
**Ms. Bloom:** It’s important because it helps kids step out of their comfort zones. They experience things there that they won’t normally experience in a regular classroom. It builds their confidence and teaches them important life skills that go beyond academics.

**Abby:** How do you feel about losing Lorado Taft?  
**Ms. Bloom:** I feel bad for the students who won’t get to experience Lorado Taft. It’s been a tradition for so many years, and it’s hard to imagine not having that special place for learning and growing.

While Lorado Taft will no longer be there for future fifth graders, its impact on students and teachers will live on in the memories and lessons it provided. Its closing marks the end of an important tradition, but the lessons learned there will stay with everyone who had the chance to experience it.



# BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

ROSE MCCLAUGHLIN

Battle of the books is an afterschool club where the group reads, talks about, and answers questions about various books on a list every year.

Mrs. Reynolds and Ms. Bloom started Battle of the Books during remote learning, connecting with their students, talking, and reading once a week. It kept spirits up, especially since remote learning was very lonely. The team now represent Oriole park in the cps battle of the books, and Mrs. Reynolds and Ms. Bloom coach them every year. It is open for all 5th and 6th graders, and competes every year possible.

Mrs. Reynolds and Ms. Bloom started battle of the books because of their shared love of reading and literature, wanting to talk about it outside of just class. They were excited to start the afterschool program, and worked hard until it became battle of the books today. The books covered are usually relatively recent, and they think the wide variety of themes covered made it even more meaningful!

Battle of the books at oriole park is for 5th-6th graders only, but there is a program for 7th-8th graders, included in

## EMMET'S COMEDY CORNER

EMMET JULIEN

### 5 DAD JOKES FOR THE AGES

Q: What did the cupcake say to the frosting?

A: I'd be muffin without you.

Q: Did you hear about the cow that saved the world?

A: It was legend-dairy.

Q: Why is the word dark spelled with a k?

A: Because you can't c in the dark.

Q: What's a monster's favorite dinner?

A: Spook-etti.

Q: How does Tinkerbell make breakfast?

A: In Peter's pan.

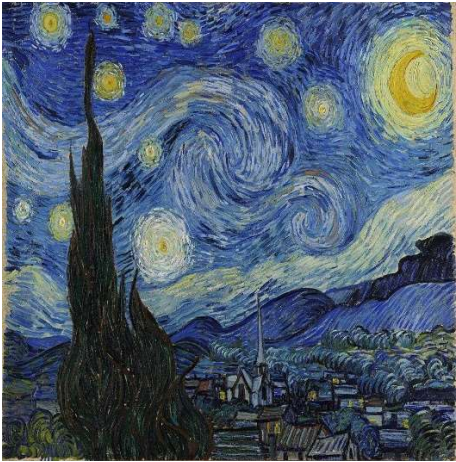
**Editorial Retraction:** Edition 1 and 2 of the Panther Press subtitled this section, "Jokes My Grandmother Told Me". This was a misunderstanding on the part of the Editing Staff, Apologies. Those jokes were from Emmet's personal collection.

### In our next Issue:

- World Famous Oreo Smooth Recipe
- Alice in Wonderland Behind the Scenes

many schools and high schools, like Taft and Lane tech. Oriole park doesn't have one because running the 5th to 6th grade one is enough work, but somebody could run it one day for the 7th to 8th graders!

Out of the many books read for battle of the books, Ms. Bloom says her favorite was "Two Degrees" by Alan Gratz, a novel written in three perspectives, about three kids who are all affected by climate change. She likes how it teaches us how our actions affect not only us, but the entire world and everybody around us. Mrs. Reynolds says she has read a lot of books, which she normally wouldn't even choose, but her favorite currently is "Aniana Del Mar Jumps In" by Jasminne Mendez. She says it made her feel many different emotions and think about the different ways stories can be told. She thinks the style of writing, narrative verse including concrete poems, haikus, and tankas, capture the struggles, relationships, and dreams, of the main character, Ani, perfectly. She thinks the mix of Spanish and English creates powerful imagery, making Ani's journey even more meaningful. She thinks it is a very touching story.



## Art and Artists

LUCAS AGUILAR

There were many types of art and artists in history, and one artist was **Vincent Van Gogh**. Van Gogh is most famous for his piece, Starry Night. The painting depicts a gorgeous view from his asylum room window, this image of the night sky dominated by the bright moon at right and Venus at center left, over the French city. Created in 1889, the oil painting was created only with short strokes making vivid blue and yellow swirls.

**Wanted: Senior Editor; Student who enjoys editing and formatting!**



## Krav Maga

SANTIAGO LANDEROS

If you've passed by Jewel or have gone to Jewel near the school lately you might have seen the Krav Maga building. Many people overlook this building. This is a self-defense and fitness center that teaches Krav Maga and boxing. Krav Maga is an Israeli martial art. Krav Maga is practiced by the Israeli military and it is meant for street fighting such as getting out of a hold and defending against someone with bad intentions.

Imi Lichtenfeild the founder of Krav Maga developed it in the 1930's. He was born on May 26, 1910 and grew up in Bratislava, in Slovakia, and is between Hungary and Austria. His dad was a Chief Inspector in the Police Force who owned a gym and had a great athletic background. Imi and his family were bullied daily. So Imi decided to make a system of practical self-defense techniques based around a body's natural response to a threat.

With Imi's background knowledge of martial arts he was able to construct these simplistic self-defense practices. In 1944 Imi was in Israel, he was recognized for his fighting knowledge there. Imi started training fighters, Elite units of the Haganah and Palmach, Security Officers, and Police Officers. By the 1940s, Imi was the Chief Instructor for fitness and close quarters combat for the Israeli Defense Forces. In 1964 Imi retired and started teaching civilians. Krav Maga was adopted by law enforcement agencies, military corps, third party protection units, and ministries of education around the world. In the 1980s Daren Levine introduced Krav Maga to the United States and taught it to civilians. Imi died on January 9, 1980 and will forever be remembered for his great self-defense and his famous quote "so that one may walk in peace."

**If you are (5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders) interested in Journalism, Editing, Photography, Comics, Poetry . . .**  
**The Panther Press Team meets every Tuesday from 11:10 to 12:10 in Mrs. McGuffey's Room.**