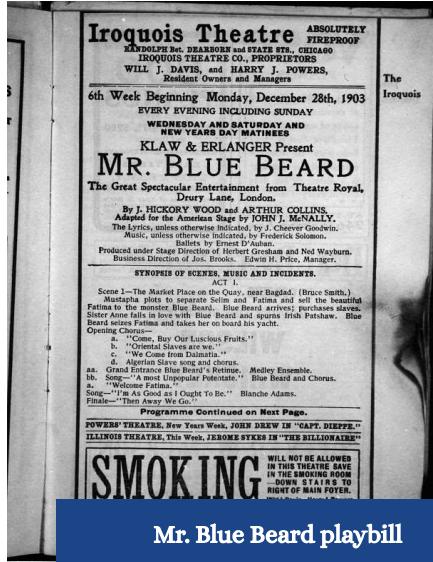


PANTHER PRESS



Haunted Chicago: Three spooky stories from our city

ABIGAIL RAMOS



You may have heard about creepy stories from history, like the Salem Witch Trials or Anne Boleyn's beheading. But did you know Chicago has its own spooky stories? With

Halloween having just passed, here are a few haunted sites in our city you might want to check out!

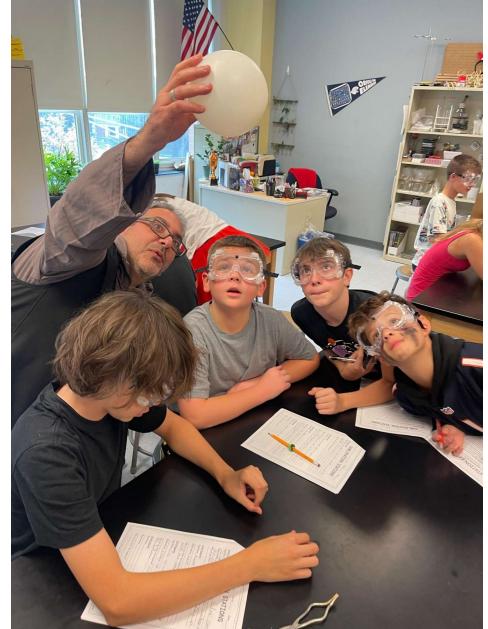
The Nederlander Theatre

Today, the James M. Nederlander Theatre is a beautiful place to see musicals. But long ago, when it was first called the Iroquois Theatre, it was the site of one of the deadliest fires in U.S. history. On December 30, 1903, the theater was showing its very first performance of Mr. Blue Beard.

Suddenly, a broken lamp set the stage curtains on fire. Even though the building was advertised as "fireproof," the flames spread quickly. The audience panicked, rushing toward the exits that were hard to find in the dark. In the chaos, many people were trapped. By the time the fire ended, 602 people had lost their lives.

Turn to Spooky, Page 6

Photo of the week



Mr. Micallef observes a dry ice, CO₂ experiment in Ms. O'Connell's 7th grade classroom.

Lettuce celebrate Garden Club!

MADELYNN CAREY

Some of you might know how important our dear Garden Club is to our school, but do you know anything about the important team of volunteers who run it?

I recently interviewed our cherished Garden Club adult volunteers, Ms. Esposito, Maria, Desi and Jennifer, and three student members of Garden Club. The most important thing they wanted everyone to know is that, unfortunately, some stuff has been going missing from the garden, which is affecting Garden Club deeply. Please keep an eye out when you're in the garden. If you notice anything suspicious, tell an adult immediately.

Here's what else they had to say:

Q: Why did you start helping with Garden Club?



Garden Club

Ms. Esposito: I started helping Garden Club because the person who had run the garden was not doing it anymore and I wanted to keep it going.

Turn to Garden, page 5



Cross Country

Emmett Julien runs in a cross country race.

Sept. 11 Cross Country race at Oriole Park

EMMETT JULIEN

This Sept. 11, the Oriole Park School Cross Country team had a race on home field against the Edison Park Elementary and St. Eugene Cross Country teams. These races have happened several times before, but this year, St. Eugene joined the race.

Turn to Cross Country, Page 5

Hustle, hit and never quit!

ALEKSANDRA DANIEL

Every year, 5th and 6th graders make up the amazing Oriole Park volleyball team. We play games on Saturday — sometimes with jerseys on and sometimes without —, and even if we don't do as well as expected, we don't stop there and keep training for the best.

This year we got two new coaches, Coach Pamula and Coach Sophia!

"I'm very happy because I get to see all my teachers and old school, which is very memorable. I'm living off my legacy by coaching," said Sophia with her mom, Coach Pamula, agreeing.

"Well, I wanted you girls to learn basic skills," said Coach Pamula. "I also wanted to know you at such a young age." On our practices on Thursdays from 4:15 to 5:30 p.m., we start off with stretches, practice bumping and setting, and work on our past flaws like "communication," said fifth grade player Maddie O'Clare.

We also work on being more aggressive, "instead of watching the ball fly by," said player Alexandra Pamula, daughter of Coach Pamula and Coach Sophia's sister.



Oriole Park Volleyball team

Then, we play Dead Fish, Queens or a drill in which we stand in line and one of the coaches passes the ball and we can hit it any way we want. When we hit, we have to go to the back of the line.

Our high score is 54 points. The star 5th and 6th grade girls get Starbucks gift cards.

In total, we had four games in the month of October.

Go Panthers! 🏐🏆



Dr. Riff

A day in the life: Dr. Riff

EVELYN RABIOLA

Have you ever wondered what our principal, Dr. Riff, does on a casual school morning?

First, as you might see him do, he stands outside, greeting people and keeping the streets of our school drop-off line safe. Then, Dr. Riff goes inside the school and into the office to listen and watch the morning announcements.

Next, depending on the day, he'll visit different classrooms and hallways. On the day I shadowed Dr. Riff, checked on our middle school hallways and classrooms. After this, he went to Ms. Anderson's class in first grade. Dr. Riff then checked on Mr. Hamilton's music class, which happened to be Mrs. Reynolds's class in fifth grade. After listening to the class' two quick performances on the pBuzz (a plastic instrument that helps students learn how to play a brass instrument), Dr. Riff went back to the office to make sure things were running smoothly. Of course, on different days, he may have meetings and school events to attend, but on this day, he just did what he usually does. After I saw what Dr. Riff does, we gathered for a short interview.

Turn to Riff, page 7

The beeping

ROSE MC LAUGHLIN

I was sprawled across the couch, scrolling on my phone, when the beeping started. A single, grating beep, coming from somewhere in the apartment. I put my phone down and sat up a little. I waited to see if there would be more, but the house was silent. I was about to lay back down when I heard it again: beep, beep. Was I hearing things?

Half standing up, half rolling, I got off the couch and made my way across the living room.



Turn to Beeping, page 7

A helping haunt

KENNETH GRAVES

As we remember the season of Halloween, the Panther Press team and I came up with a fun and creative way of engaging readers with an interesting scary story. The goal was to collect a spooky anecdote from a teacher in the school that I'd then turn into a first-person narrative.

The following chilling adaptation comes from Mrs. Becker. It is a re-telling of a life-saving encounter her friend had with the paranormal. But did the encounter really help or just bring her closer to harm?

I had always been skeptical of the supernatural. It seemed too bizarre for me to even comprehend. Until one day that changed my thinking. When I got home from work one night and got into my apartment, my friends all began to tell me these crazy happenings within and around the apartment. "The room got so cold at one point, I had to put on my winter coat." said one of my friends who had encountered a so-called, "paranormal."



"I felt it too," said another one of my friends. They then went on and on about how they felt a hand on their shoulder, or how the lights would flicker on and off all of a sudden. It went on like this for days, non-stop talk about some presence that just let itself in. I thought they were all playing some weird prank on me until Oct. 30 at around 7:30 p.m. It had been a long day at work and I thought I deserved a treat. I decided to pick up a ripe pineapple and cut it when I got home.

Once I had put my stuff down and gotten into the kitchen, I pulled out a long paring knife. And so, without thinking, I quickly began to cut it. But then, the room changed. It became still. All was quiet and calm. The room, in an instant, got so frigid, the water for my tea started to freeze. However, as I

pulled my attention back onto my hand, I saw the state it was in, millimeters away from getting chopped clean off.

Then, as all hope seemed to be lost, and my fingers were to be no more, I felt a sudden light push of my knife in the opposite left direction. I was stunned.

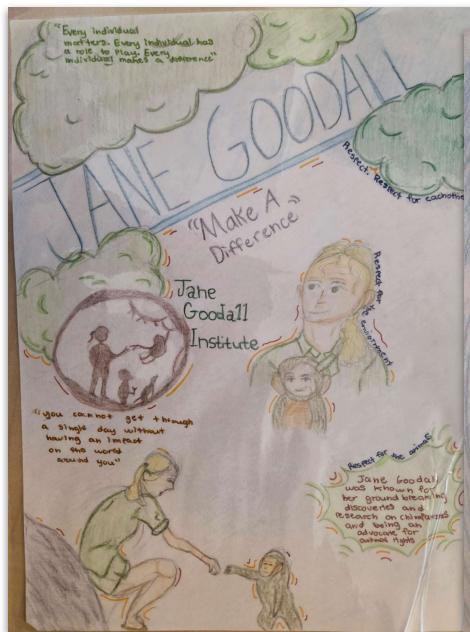
I could not believe that whatever just happened, happened. It was as though this force, this, presence, had existed for just a fraction to save me from losing an appendage. And as the world unfroze, I noticed that I had a pretty nasty cut that oozed onto my hand. I went over to my friends to ask if they could drive me to the Emergency Room. Though as I went to knock on their door, I felt a sudden pulse run through my body and then to my hand and to the bleeding finger.

The lights fizzled and then cut out. And when they turned on again, the bleeding had completely vanished.

My friends to this day don't believe my encounter with the "presence," on account of my lack of belief beforehand. That night, I was unable to fall asleep.

Turn to Haunt, Page 7

Jane Goodall drawing contest winners!



Abigail Ramos, 7th grade
Danylo Mochalov, 4th grade
Ashley Reames, 8th grade
Veronika Hnidyk, 4th grade

Cross Country

From page 1



This year, Cassius, the son of Oriole Park School Cross Country team's Coach R, could join the team as a fifth grader. As you might already know, his daughter,

Delilah, is on the team, too. This year at the races both his kids got first place in their age group. When we asked him how he felt about this, he said, "I am so invested in everyone's growth as runners. From those that finish in the top to those that are trying out the sport for the first time, watching them work through the struggle of the sport and feeling pride in themselves when they beat their previous time has been a wonderful gift that this sport keeps giving."

Garden

From page 1

Maria: I enjoy gardening and (I also did it) for my kids and other kids.

Desi: I love gardening! My father had a very nice garden. He grew a lot of different fruits and vegetables. Working in the Garden Club reminds me of him.

Jennifer: I love gardening and I wanted all kids to have a chance to learn how to garden!

Q: What's your favorite part of Garden Club?

Ms. Esposito: I just love seeing the kids in the garden and when they get excited about finding bugs.

Maria: Harvesting the food, when you see your hard work pay off.

Desi: Working with the children and seeing their enthusiasm.

Jennifer: Watching the kids learn where food comes from!

Q: Will you keep helping with Garden Club after your children leave?

Ms. Esposito: I think I will try to help, but probably not be in charge.

That shows just how good of a coach is.

These races do not mean anything toward the city cross country competition. As a runner of the team, myself, I know it is good not to have pressure on yourself, maybe try to beat your personal best, and enjoy the race. We also asked Coach R. what he enjoyed about the races.

"The journey," he said. "At each race, I see the beginning, middle and end of each of the runners step out into a challenge and accomplish a goal that many kids their age would rather avoid or see as a punishment."

When we asked Coach R. if he thought the Oriole Park School Cross Country team did well against the other teams, he said, "Our team has done amazing this year as individuals and as a team. Our runners are definitely being noticed for all the right reasons." Also, when we asked, "Were you proud of your team?", he said, "Immensely. From the kindness they express to each other and the hard work they put in

each practice, I could not ask for a better group of student athletes."

Great job to the runners on the team. Also, when asked, "On a scale from 1-10, how much did you enjoy the races?", Coach R said, "It's 10,000," which is an inside joke.

Interview with Ms. O'Connell:

Q: Why did you come to the race?

A: I came to the race to see and support the students. I was excited to see them run.

Q: Were you surprised about how fast some of the kids were?

A: I was! I knew Delilah was really fast but was surprised by everyone else, too.

Q: Who were you rooting for?

A: Everyone! I was happy to see Emmett, Michael and Nickolas competing. I didn't know they were on the team.

Q: Have you ever been in cross country?

A: Yes, and I used to run half marathons. I think I've run about eight of them.

Q: Would you like to see something like this at Oriole Park again?

A: You bet! It was super easy to walk over to the park, and didn't take long since everyone ran 1.5 miles in just over 10 minutes.

Q: Do you think you will come next year?

A: Can't wait!

Q: Do you think we did well against the other cross country teams?

A: Yes, I think OPS kids were the first three to four to cross the finish line. The other team worked hard to finish, too.

Cross Country is open to 5th-8th grade students. The City Championship was on Saturday, Nov 1, at Washington Park. This was the first time since 2020 that we have had an entire team qualify! The 8th-grade girls placed 3rd at regionals and will try to place in the top 5 at City.



Maria: Yes.

Desi: Yes, I plan on it.

Jennifer: It's a long way away, but I think yes.

Ms. Esposito is the founder of Garden Club, a club that is a cherished after-school activity by many! But before Ms. Esposito, there was a garden, but no club. It didn't become a weekly activity that students could sign up for until she came along.

Turn to Garden, page 6



Spooky

From page 1

The alley next to the theater became filled with victims who could not escape. Today, this area is still called the “Alley of Death.” The tragedy shocked the nation and led to big changes in safety rules for theaters, helping to protect people across the country. If you ever go to the Nederlander Theatre to watch a musical, keep an ear out. Some say the voices of the people trapped that day can still be heard inside the theater!

The Drake Hotel

The Drake Hotel is one of Chicago's most famous and luxurious hotels. It opened in 1920 and has hosted celebrities, presidents and royalty. But it also has a famous ghost.

The hotel is said to be haunted by the “Lady in Red.” According to the story, she attended a New Year's Eve party at the Drake in 1920. That night, she found out her fiancé had been dancing with another woman. Heartbroken, she went up to the 10th floor and jumped down to her death. Guests and



The Drake Hotel

staff have claimed to see her ghost wandering the halls, still wearing the red dress she wore that fateful night. Some visitors also report flickering lights, cold spots, and even mysterious whispers.

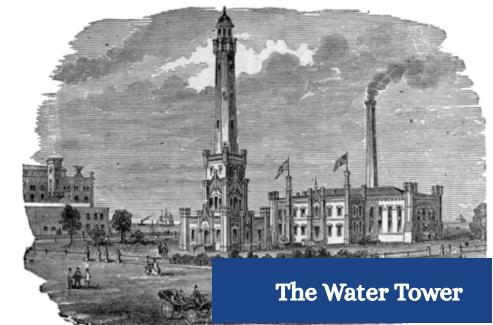
So, if you ever step into the grand lobby of the Drake, keep your eyes open, you might just see the infamous “Lady in Red.”

The Water Tower

The Chicago Water Tower, built in 1869, is one of the city's most recognizable landmarks. It's also one of the only buildings that survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which destroyed most of the city.

As the legend goes, during the fire, a man stayed inside the tower to keep the water pumps running. Sadly, he

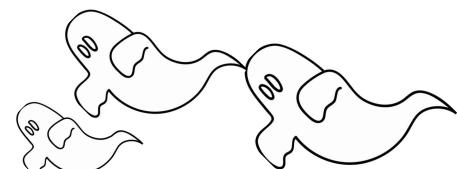
never made it out. Since then, people have reported seeing his ghost looking down from the tower's windows. Some even claim to see his shadow moving inside.



The Water Tower

Today, the Water Tower is a proud symbol of Chicago's survival, but it also carries a ghostly reminder of one man's sacrifice.

So, next Halloween, if you're looking for a scare, you don't have to leave the city. Chicago's ghosts might be closer than you think!



Riff

From page 2

Evelyn: What is your typical morning schedule at home before work?

Dr. Riff: I get up before anybody else. I wake up at 5 a.m., make myself breakfast and pack my lunch. I usually see my eldest daughter and wife before I leave, but my youngest daughter is still asleep.

Evelyn: What is your favorite part about being a principal?

Dr. Riff: My favorite part is seeing the really cool people I get to work with every day. Seeing the 5th graders play the pBuzz was definitely one of my favorite parts of the day.

Evelyn: What career did you want to have when you were little?

Dr. Riff: When I was younger, I wanted to be a doctor. Then, I wanted to be a musician. I became a music teacher and got inspired to become a principal. Now, I'm the principal of Oriole Park.

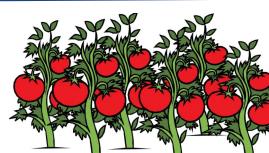
Evelyn: Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

Dr. Riff: I love food. I don't really have a favorite food, but like everyone, I like unhealthy food like pizza. Food is one of my favorite things in the world. I think about it all the time.

Well, my dear friends, I believe that concludes our shadow and interview with Dr. Riff. I hope you've enjoyed this segment and learned something about our beloved principal, Dr. Riff.

Garden

From page 5



Q: Why did you start Garden Club?

Ms. Esposito: Because I wanted to have an after-school club to help with the garden and make a chance for kids to be in the garden.

So far we have discovered the origins of Garden Club and had an interview with

the club's leaders and volunteers, but what really makes a club a club? The members! Now let's hear what Garden Club's members think!

Q: What's your favorite thing about Garden Club?

Caelina: I don't know, I love everything!

Elise: Me too! I love everything!

Alan: Picking the vegetables.



Q: What's your favorite fruit/vegetable to eat that grows in the garden?

Alan: Tomatoes

Elise: Potatoes

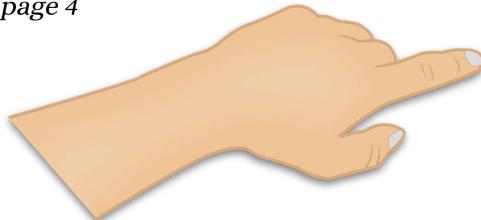


Caelina: Carrots

There we have it, folks! We've all learned how amazing this club really is, so if you're looking for a club to join, consider joining Garden Club!

Haunt

From page 4



Every creak of the floorboards and hum of the refrigerator, along with every light gust of wind outside, were intentional — like the apartment itself was watching.

I kept looking at my hand, thinking the cut could somehow be re-opened at any moment, yet I couldn't see any traces of the wound. Days went by, but something in the air of the apartment still felt off. It would get cold for no reason. Shadows would move in uncertain patterns that I could only attribute to the lights.

And every so often, in the reflection of the kitchen window, I swear I would see a figure behind me: blurry, unmoving and waiting.

I told myself for a long time that whatever happened that night was a miracle. That something out there saved me. And more often now, when I catch that same blurry reflection staring back, hand pressed against the glass, gauging my every move, I am less and less sure I was actually saved.

Beeping

From page 7

I went to the hallway and took down the fire alarm, checking if it was out of batteries or something. Nope. I had changed it just the other day, I remembered in the back of my mind. The beeping continued, drilling into my skull and through my brain.



I went into the bathroom, checking the cabinet, checking everything I could see. Nothing. It felt like the noise was swarming my brain, poking until I went mad. I sprinted across the hall, into my bedroom. Under the bed? Nothing. In the cabinet? Just a photo of my first car, a used Honda civic. I was so proud when I got it and first drove to high school with my friends.

I checked the next cabinet, praying I would find the source. Just some random medical records I had from when I was a kid. I always had a problem with getting sick, and my parents had taken me in to get it checked out. I picked at a hangnail, panic consuming me. Where was it coming from? Would I ever find it?

I tore across the room in a fury, not even realizing I was tearing it up. I was scratching at the walls like a feral animal. Nothing was

in there. I ran through all the rooms, searching. I threw food out of my fridge in a rage. Bananas, cheese, milk ... anything I could find was now on the hardwood floor. Part of me, the calm part, registered that I shouldn't let the food go bad. Oh well, that didn't matter at the moment.

I moved on, throwing open cabinets and drawers. I heard the vaguely familiar sound of glass shattering as I threw something to the ground. There was nothing, nothing at all.

Nothing that had caused the beeping. *Nothing*. Was that the last room? I think it was. My apartment was wonderfully spacious, but it didn't have a basement or any guest rooms. As my fury simmered down, like water dumped onto hot coals, I took in the mess. Had I really done all of this just to find out what was

causing a beep?

That's when I woke up, tangled in the sheets of my hospital bed. Sweat was running down my bandaged forehead. The car crash had done a number on both me and my car, huh? I remembered the feeling of truly flying. A moment of peace before reality hit, before I hit the concrete ground. I had been so proud of that car, and now its window was completely shattered. Now, as I laid alone in my hospital bed, all I had to hold onto was the beeping of my life monitor.

Beep ...

Beep ...

