

AQUINAS

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Scranton Community Raises Air Quality Concerns

EMMA GRAFF
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On March 13, the Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania presented the findings of their radioactive emissions study on fracking wastes.

The town hall meeting was in the Loyola Science Center Auditorium. Attendees included students from The University of Scranton, the NEPA Green Coalition, the Friends of Lackawanna nonprofit organization and virtual participants.

The PSR PA is a nonprofit striving to protect the health of Pennsylvanians one community at a time, PSR PA Executive Director Tonyehn Verkitus said. Verkitus' team traveled to Scranton to notify community members about power plant facilities and landfills in Lackawanna County that are producing air pollution, Verkitus said.

For example, Lackawanna Energy Center in Jessup is about a 15-minute drive from The University. It is ranked fourth for having the most direct greenhouse gas emissions in Pennsylvania, according to the environmental organization PennEnvironment and their "Pennsylvania's Dirty Dozen" list.

The PSR PA study involved collecting air, water and soil samples and using a Forward Looking Infrared camera for optical gas imaging. Tam-



EMMA GRAFF / STAFF PHOTO

Society for Sustainability and Conservation members after the PSR PA town hall.

my Murphy, environmental health advocacy director, shared her experience sampling the air at MAX Environmental Technologies Inc. in Yukon.

MAX is a hazardous waste landfill Murphy and other PSR PA members visited during the coronavirus pandemic. The landfill guide asked them

to try breathing the air without their masks, Murphy said.

"Immediately my tongue went numb, my mouth was watering and I

had a horrible taste. The only way I can describe it is like you lick the back of an envelope, it had that adhesive taste and did not leave my mouth for probably about four hours," Murphy said.

Others had headaches and cough symptoms that subsided when their masks were placed back on, Murphy said. The landfill guide told Murphy that in five years 14 people who lived next to MAX died of cancer, Murphy said.

The PSR PA sampling detected toxicity, but the radioactive emissions were not as extreme as expected, Murphy said. Soil sampling from other landfills, pipelines, fracking sites and homes also surprised the team as the findings showed equal radioactive accumulations rather than major hot spots, Verkitus said.

The extractions from the facilities were within the legal limits, but what the limits should be from a public health perspective is debated, Murphy said. Low but constant detectable emissions can be more dangerous, Murphy said.

Christina DiGiulio, field thermographer and scientific consultant, captured the emissions of hydrocarbons from smokestacks at Lackawanna Energy Center with a FLIR camera.

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Scranton clinic plans opening in 2024

SAMANTHA SONNIE
CO-MANAGING EDITOR

The University of Scranton is working with Geisinger Hospital to open a student-run clinic for the uninsured.

The clinic will open in January and be located in Leahy Hall. It closed in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The clinic will provide more diverse forms of care than the original clinic, according to the Geisinger website, including physical examinations, primary care, pre-work physical examinations, adult pre-education physical examinations and sick visits.

The partnership is a way for people to receive medical benefits while students gain hands-on experience. Class of 2025 medical student Madison Gladfelter said working with

the patients provides lessons that her textbooks cannot teach.

"A student-run clinic never lets medical students forget they are not treating the disease, but a patient," Gladfelter said.

The clinic will focus on establishing personal connections with the patients to help medical students see beyond the disease or injury the person may be suffering from, Gladfelter said.

According to the Geisinger website, the Rev. Joseph Marina, SJ, The University president, said the student-run operation is an expression of Jesuit values.

The clinic allows students to be men and women for others while serving the community.

Julie Byerley, president, dean and chief academic officer of the Geisinger Commonwealth School



SAMANTHA SONNIE / STAFF PHOTO

The new clinic will be located in Leahy Hall.

of Medicine said the clinic makes health easier for the communities, according to the Geisinger website.

"It will serve the long-term needs of some of our most vulnerable neighbors, while also offering invaluable opportunities for residents and medical students to work with a variety of other learners to deliver quality primary care," Byerley said.



Michael O'Malley, director of The University of Scranton Church Choir.

COURTESY OF TOM SALITSKY

University Class of 2027 Welcomed by Jesuits

VICTORIA SCRUSE
CO-MANAGING EDITOR

On Aug. 26, the class of 2027 arrived at The University of Scranton to begin its college journey.

Students' first day included the Welcome Liturgy, held in the Byron Recreation Complex. Students were invited to attend with their families. The Rev. Joseph Marina, SJ, The University president; Lauren Rivera, vice president of student life and dean of students, and Student Government President Karla Shaffer each spoke at the Mass.

The University Church Choir sang

gospel songs after the blessing from Marina to welcome the new Scranton families. The Jesuits gave the class of 2027 pins at the end of the Mass as symbols of their next four years at The University. The students then gave the pins to their parents to hold for them until their graduation day.

Michael O'Malley, choir director, organized the music and rehearsed with choir singers.

He was asked the following interview questions:

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INSIDE

WRITE FOR US!

We want to hear from you. Send story ideas to Editor-in-Chief Emma Graff at emma.graff@scranton.edu.



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Hope remains as humanities enrollment declines

LYDIA GROSSMAN
STAFF WRITER

Over the past decade, enrollment in the humanities has reached an extreme low. As new trends rise, so does student enrollment in STEM departments and health care programs. Although new trends account for some of the shift, it doesn't explain the major decline in humanities.

The University of Scranton's humanities have faced the same struggles with lack of student enrollment, one example being the English department. Jones DeRitter, Ph.D., a professor of the English and theatre department, was able to offer perspective.

Having worked in the department for 33 years, DeRitter has experienced firsthand the decline of student interest and enrollment. He noted that the decline didn't start until the 21st century, specifically the last 10 years.

"A lot of students are pressured by their parents to major in something that will pay off very quickly, historically, traditional liberal arts disciplines even up with the other disciplines eventually, but given the problem with student debt these days, young people have to achieve financial independence perhaps a little sooner than my gener-

ation did, and that limits their choices and affects their strategy for what to do as an undergraduate," DeRitter said.

Senior English major Olivia Hudak shared the same opinion when initially choosing a major. Hudak began her first year at the University as a business administration major; however, she quickly realized she missed doing what she loves. Hudak defied the push toward trending majors and crossed over to the English department.

When asked if she would recommend the English department to undergraduates she said, "I would tell them to take a couple of writing classes and English classes because you do need it for your degree regardless of what your major is going to be. But you might fall in love with it just like us."

Although enrollment is nowhere near what it once was, department members, like DeRitter, have hope for the future.

"The optimistic spin on it is to say, well the pendulum swings back and forth. Ultimately it all evens out and we will build back up to something close to where we used to be, but it will take time and peoples careers happen at different points in the pendulum," DeRitter said.



LYDIA GROSSMAN / STAFF PHOTO

The University of Scranton is not immune from the national trend of declining enrollment in humanities programs.



ALEX NUNEZ / STAFF PHOTO

The University of Scranton plans to open a new health, science and cybersecurity center at 300 Madison Ave.

University receives federal grant money to fund new health, science and cybersecurity center

ALEX NUNEZ
STAFF WRITER

The University of Scranton plans to open a new health, science and cybersecurity center at 300 Madison Ave. Plans for the new center have not been finalized.

The project is being partially funded by a federal grant secured by U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright's office. The grant will cover \$16.6 million in costs. According to The Times-Tribune, The University has estimated that the total cost of the project will be \$39 million. It is unclear how the remainder of the project's cost will be paid for, but more details will be released in the coming weeks.

The new building is an example of The University's commitment to expanding and developing its STEM programs. The cybersecurity program in particular shows The University's embrace of technology-assisted learning that has become a mainstay since the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, The University has offered many on-line classes even after the end of in-person restrictions.

According to U.S. News & World Report, The University was ranked among the best schools in the country for on-line business classes, as well as other distinctions related to its virtual education model. The purchase of the new property reinforces the school's commitment to expanding and

improving its integration with technology. The Rev. Joseph Marina, SJ, president of The University, noted the project's importance for the future of STEM at The University.

"The building will serve as a hub for future program development," said Marina in news release.

The new building will be located across from Brennan Hall. The University acquired the property in April 2019 for \$950,000. The area is currently being used as a temporary parking lot for staff, commuters and residents, according to The University's parking map. Some students have expressed concerns that the project could worsen the parking situation on campus.

"I have to drive to work every morning and I don't have a parking pass. It's hard enough to find street parking now. One less lot might make street parking impossible," said Sammy Kramer, a senior education major.

While some students may be concerned about parking, no plans have been finalized. The University may have to accommodate the lack of parking space in their final plans for the project.

When asked for comment, The University said it could not comment further until plans have been finalized. It was noted that plans are expected to be complete in the coming weeks.

New English, theater chair shares her plans

BRENNA PARKER
STAFF WRITER

The University of Scranton's English and theatre department welcomed a new chair at the beginning of the fall semester. Susan Mendez Ph.D., a professor at the university of nearly 20 years replaces Prof. Joe Kraus after six years of leadership. Mendez is looking forward to the potential of her new position.

Kraus commented on stepping down from his position as chair, expressing how although it is an important and impactful job, he is happy to hand the reins to his colleague. He joked, "I did it for six, maybe we can get six out of Susan?"

When asked about how she feels about her new position, Mendez said, "I just never thought of myself as someone who would be at the helm of an English department, let alone an English and theater department. But I'm glad for it, I'm glad for it, because I get to help my colleagues do their best work."

Kraus praised Mendez's credentials, saying, "She has a lot of leadership roles across the university, when it comes to processing and approving courses. People have enormous regard for her across the university." He later said, "I know Susan's immediate agenda is to get a number of class proposals through."

When asked about her plans and outlook on the future of the department, Mendez said, "I hope in my time, however long or short it is, I can just ease that on with new courses, maybe new hires, maybe revisions in the major, that's to be seen, but definitely new courses that will really give students a sense that the field is maybe not what they're used to thinking of as English classes from grade school and high school."

She said as we move further into the 21st century, so should our analyses of literature and what qualifies as text. She mentioned potential new courses, saying, "We're trying to make our curriculum make sense. There's an exciting new course that's being proposed now: Queer Writers and Writing is going to be a special topics course by Dr. Tad-



BRENNA PARKER / STAFF PHOTO

The University of Scranton's English and theatre department welcomed a new chair at the beginning of the fall semester.

ros." Mendez also said that being only the second woman to be chair of department is amazing progress. She also recognizes that there is much work that needs to be done.

"Our department has been very male dominated and merely in number. I wouldn't say that it is oppressive in that way at all, but, purely in number. But that is interesting, because that is not representative in our students, in college demographics about who identifies as men and who identifies as women. And the passage of time doesn't seem to alleviate that."

Mendez summed up her thoughts on this new position, "I hope to maybe ease the way a little bit, to make the work for my colleagues a little easier, and the work for our students a little bit more fun to engage, and more relevant."

Hershey Park Trip Success for USPB



ALLISON SLOVAK / STAFF PHOTO

First-year students attend their first USPB event.

MORGAN RYAN STAFF WRITER

On Sept. 9, The University of Scranton Programming Board hosted a trip to Hershey Park open to all students at The University.

Students rushed to RoyalSync to purchase tickets, which sold out within three minutes of registration opening.

Hannah Kohn, executive chair of USPB, commented on the event. "It's always been a big hit for a lot of students. Tickets sell out really quickly."

After a week of anticipation, the

lucky 60 students gathered around the flagpoles to take the two-hour bus ride to Hershey.

Despite high temperatures and long lines, students made the most of the day. Some faced formidable roller coasters such as the Candyonium, Storm Runner and Fahrenheit.

Others found joy in riding the old-fashioned race cars or the Kissing Tower. Between rides, they were able to find refuge from the heat by enjoying refreshments like funnel cakes, chicken tenders and ice cream.

Ellie Jones, first-year computer en-

gineering major, spoke about her experience. "I had a blast on the Hershey trip," said Jones. "It was so much fun to explore and go on rides with my new friends from college."

Kohn said the Hershey trip is a staple USPB event, always producing an impressive turnout. "We sell a certain number of tickets, and usually all those tickets are filled," Kohn said.

Students have more events to look forward to this semester. The USPB has planned events such as a visit from Native American performer Larry Yazzie and a Latin dance night with the Multicultural Center.

Students can also look forward to Midnight Madness, a charity event featuring The University's athletic teams.

"It's a really great environment to get people excited ... and enjoy the whole event and the performances that we have," said Kohn.

The USPB is determined to get students aware of and interested in their future events. They market to students on their social media and by placing posters around campus.

"Hopefully in doing that, we'll be able to reach students, especially first-year students who are new to the

school," said Kohn. "Our main goal for this year is to get that story of who we are out there and known."

The USPB has already started off strong in this attempt, Jones said. "I am definitely interested in future USPB events," Jones said. "The whole trip was very organized and I felt like they knew what they were doing"



ALLISON SLOVAK / STAFF PHOTO

Student poses with Hershey's Jolly Rancher statue.

Bridget's Book Review Debut



BRIDGET ULMER STAFF WRITER

"The It Girl" by Ruth Ware was definitely one of my favorite reads of 2023. It was in my top book reads list for months before I saw it in a bookstore and finally decided to pick it up. After three pages, I was hooked. It has a dark and mysterious tone that makes it difficult to put down and will keep you guessing until the very end. Taking me less than a week to read, this book is fast-paced and does not leave anything unanswered.

Unlike some mystery and thriller books, "The It Girl" jumps right into the story. From the first page, you are constantly wondering not only who committed the crime, but why. The story is told in present day and in flashbacks, but from the point of view of the same person, Hannah. Although she is portrayed as an unreliable narrator, Hannah is unwilling to quit, and her stubbornness is what keeps the story going. In the flashbacks, the plot begins with Hannah through her first year at the University of Oxford and the drama between her and her roommate April. April, as we discover from the first page, is dead by the end of the year.

In the present day, 10 years later, Hannah is still haunted by the damaging events from that year at her University but has managed to put most of it in the back of her mind. Suddenly, the death of April's convicted murderer digs up the traumatic memories and decade-old questions about April's death. From what we read in the flashbacks, April seemed like the type of person that everyone loved, so what motive could someone possibly have? We're introduced to the main characters and one of the reasons I enjoyed the alternating timelines is because we are able to see how much they have changed in the 10 years. It was interesting to see how the death of their friend affected them, and how they chose to move on with their lives.

The past and present narration made it so much more satisfying when the story unfolded, and I was able to connect the dots. The tension between scenes had me on the edge of my seat, and there were so many "a-ha" moments scattered throughout the chapters that it kept me reading until well after midnight. I felt like I was in the story, discovering clues right alongside Hannah.

Something that helped me enjoy the read was the setting. It has a dark academia feel to it. With the intriguing whodunnit as the main attention-catcher, the scene around them casually adds to the haunted feeling you get while reading this book. Reading "The It Girl" during the fall was the cherry on top as it added that extra spooky element every murder mystery book needs. By the end, I was questioning everyone and didn't trust anything until I read the last page. Ware does a great job hooking you in and doesn't let you go until everything's out in the open. I highly recommend this book because there is not one boring page in it. It's jam-packed with new motives and theories and is the perfect recipe for a suspenseful book.

QUESTION FROM PAGE 1

Q: What inspired you to have a career as a pastoral musician?

A: When my music teacher quit during the middle of the year, a friend and I who played the piano started taking over the school Masses. All of a sudden, one thing led to another and this became my life. At my school, there was a sister who was like the principal whom I credit with my vocation to be a pastoral musician because she was the one who encouraged me to play at Mass and from then I started playing at my parish.

Q: How do you decide the songs for Mass?

A: I start with the readings of the day, so the church has a lectionary, then I see what speaks to the community. I always have a running list for songs that can be introduced and see

what song would work well. But then I also think about current events going on in the world. For example, anything on the news or events on campus. The song at the Welcome Mass, "Tend the Ground" ties into the Laudato Si, which is an ongoing 7-year program to make The University a Laudato Si university.

Q: What feelings do you want the music you select to evoke?

A: I hope the feelings would be of hope and inspiration. Knowing that the students have a calling from God enables students to realize that calling or hearing the voice of God in a new or maybe a different way that you don't pick up some of the readings or the homily alone. Music tends to have the power to bring out different types of emotions. I hope that it is a way that students can connect with the voice of God that is speaking to them.

IGGY'S CORNER



JACK OLONOVICH
STAFF CARTOONIST



EMMA GRAFF / STAFF PHOTO

Christina DiGiulio, Tammy Murphy and Tonyehn Verkitus presented PSR PA study findings.

HYDROCARBONS FROM PAGE 1

Hydrocarbons, while permitted emissions, release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases when combusted, Society for Sustainability and Conservation President Emma Warras said.

The footage is a reminder of emissions the human eye cannot see unassisted, Student Government President Karla Shaffer said. Shaffer interned for the PSR PA and is deciding how her presidency can be a platform for eco-friendly campus initiatives.

The findings sparked student discussions about the air quality at The University.

Emily Burgers, environmental science major, said most times she does not have an issue breathing the air and feels safe drinking the water because of the filtering systems.

"But there are times when the air has a foul smell or feels heavy to breathe in," Burgers said.

The foul smell relates to observations the Friends of Lackawanna co-founder Michele Dempsey and Marywood University students made

about the Keystone Sanitary Landfill. The Friends of Lackawanna have been fighting against its proposed expansion and pungent odor, Dempsey said.

Marywood students also noticed the smell. They had air monitors placed on campus to track what was happening for an independent study, Verkitus said.

Installing air monitors in community homes is the PSR PA's current project. Air monitors are an easy way to collect more data and engage citizens with their own advocacy tool, Verkitus said.

"We can all advocate for ourselves ... if you see, smell, hear something that is odd, just report it to DEP. A simple action like that is so helpful for what we do," Verkitus said.

The DEP is the Department of Environmental Protection. Environmental incidents can be reported using the DEP PA website.

The DEP Northeast branch will host a town hall Oct. 16 in the LSC Auditorium, room 133. They will discuss environmental justice in the region and request that questions are submitted prior to the meeting. Contact Karla Shaffer for information.

SPORTS

Men's Golf Wins With Historic Swing

MOLLY WHITE
STAFF WRITER

The University of Scranton men's golf team secured a win with the program's first hole-in-one.

Gehrig Shannon, second-year accounting major, teed off on the ninth hole at Glenmaura National Golf Club. His swing was one to remember.

"It was my first hole-in-one. I didn't know it was the team's first until we were at dinner and my coach told me," Shannon said.

The shot was something he did not expect.

"I got lucky. I missed the green and it bounced off a mound and went in," Shannon said.

Shannon said the experience was extra special because his parents were there to witness the shot.

"I saw my dad put his hands up and the ball drop into the hole. That was definitely the coolest part," Shannon said.

The team had more of the course to complete after Shannon's achievement.



Gehrig Shannon during the match against Bloomsburg University.

COURTESY OF ROYAL ATHLETICS

"I had nine more holes to play after, which was hard to focus on after something like that," Shannon said.

Shannon regained his focus and led the Royals to victory with a score of

299 over Bloomsburg University (303) and a score of 299 over King's College (351).

Now his focus is on the remainder of the fall season and preparing to defend

the team's Landmark Conference title in the spring.

"I'm looking forward to the chance at another Landmark Championship," Shannon said.



ALIYA SHAHUM / STAFF PHOTO

The University Police Department.

Welcome to the Investigation Station

ALIYA SHAHUM
STAFF WRITER

Calling all true crime lovers. The Aquinas is introducing a new corner of the paper dedicated to investigating crimes reported on and around campus, safety tips and the history of crime in Scranton.

My name is Aliya Shahum, and I am a first-year student with a double major in forensic chemistry and biology.

My goal for this column is to communicate with The University of Scranton Police Department to bring readers up-to-date information about the most recent campus investigations.

But that is not all. I will be interviewing University police officers about current issues on campus, such as improvements to security and advice to help students stay safe.

I have scheduled an interview with The University of Scranton Chief of Police Donald Bergmann. I hope to discuss topics such as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act), the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report and other campus safety concerns.

In future articles, readers can look forward to in-depth discussions about how we can help keep students safe and the different protocols on campus that help protect everyone.

University police have scheduled Emergency Response Training from 10 to 11 a.m. Oct. 16 in the DeNaples Center, room 405. Information and a sign-up sheet can be found in your Scranton email inbox.

Field Hockey Player Makes History in Shutout

WESTON CAMILLONE
STAFF WRITER

Scranton field hockey dominates the offensive zone with a forward player helping to secure the victory with her 3-point night.

Katie Redding exceeded 100 career points during the game against Kings College in a convincing 6-0 victory Sept. 6 at Weiss field. It was a night to remember for Redding.

Scranton wasted no time on the scoring sheet as they got one on the board at the 1:42 mark.

Redding scored the opening goal after a penalty corner assisted by Lauren Franco, leading the fans into an early frenzy.

The excitement continued three minutes later when junior Reagan Dolan scored at the 4:26 mark.

Redding would later score a second goal in the first quarter off a precise assist from senior Bridget Abraldes with 10:33 on the clock. Scranton finished the first quarter with a 3-0 lead.

Scranton scored again in the third quarter from a short distance shot by senior Elle Collins with 33:33 on the clock. The game's momentum was fully in the Royals' favor.

Just four minutes later, Redding's swift shot was saved. It left an open

rebound for Abraldes' second goal of the game and Redding's third point of the night.

That third point solidified Redding as the sixth player in Scranton field hockey history pass 100 career points. Redding is the most recent player to do so since 2014, sealing her name in the history books for the program.

Redding spotlighted her teammates that have been great players on the field but also significant motivators off the field. She credited them with helping her achieve the milestone.

"At the end of the day it's not just me who won that award, its everybody who helped me get that award too. I am a forward and it is my job to score but I can't score without my teammates because they are the ones that set me up for success and they're the ones that constantly have my back," Redding said.

Redding and her teammates are extra motivated realizing that this is their last year together as a team. Redding has formed a tight relationship with her team and knows this could be the last dance for them.

"We're really tight. They're my best friends and last year we ended on a



COURTESY OF ZJ MORSE

Katie Redding, center during player introductions.

really poor note and we've all taken that really personal. This is a last-ditch effort for a lot of us," Redding said.

The Royals ended the game 6-0

with a total of 21 shots and only allowing one shot from the Monarchs. The Royals look to be top dogs in the conference again with playoff success.

Women's Cross Country Looks to Repeat Success

MOLLY WHITE
STAFF WRITER

The University of Scranton women's cross country team prepares to defend their title this season.

The team reflected on the 2022 season's accomplishments as they trained to run the trails. The women's cross country team took first place at the 2022 Landmark Conference Championship for the first time since 2009.

They then placed third at the NCAA Mid-east Regional Meet. This was the highest regional finish in team history. Graduate student Jessica Hoffman brought home the 2022 individual conference title and a 29th place finish at the NCAA National Championship meet.

This year the Royals look forward to returning top runners and new runners recruited by head coach Bill Burke.

Samantha Hoffman, a junior nursing major, scored for the Royals with a seventh place finish at the 2022 Landmark Conference Championship. Hoffman placed 21st at the Mid-east Regionals, earning both All-Conference and All-Region selections.

"Last year really felt like my first cross country season, since I just started in this sport in the middle of my freshman year," Hoffman said.

Hoffman is used to the training of the sport, and is ready to show the new students how to get settled in.

"I feel a bit more accustomed to it all,

and I'm looking forward to welcoming in the freshman and supporting them," Hoffman said.

Emily Hopkins, sophomore kinesiology major, and Olivia Tullman, senior nursing major, are both All-Conference selections. Tullman took 13th at the 2022 Landmark Conference Championship while Hopkins took 14th.

Tullman is preparing to compete in her final season with the team.

"I'm trying to make the most of my last year here, both academically and athletically," Tullman said.

Tullman said she is looking forward to spending time with her teammates.

"We're a close-knit team and we get to be together all year with both cross

country and track," Tullman said.

Tullman said that the team effort is strong because they are all in the same race, facing the same challenges.

"We don't get to communicate that much during competition but it's still such a team effort, knowing everyone is out there pushing through the same mental and physical challenges that you are," Tullman said.

The team's dynamic has been built stronger through the tough races and long seasons they face together.

The team's mindset is that no matter if they win or lose, they will support each other all the way to the finish line.

"We're focusing on ourselves, if we win or don't win so be it. We'll go out there and give it our best," Hoffman said.

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Did you know our Editor-in-Chief Emma Graff has an advice column? It is called "The Everyday with Emma." Click the link in our bio to ask her your questions on Google forms.