Winter is Here, RHS!

Winter Storm Juno Brings Early Dismissal and First Snow Day

By Alisha Cooper

On Monday, January 26, Winter Storm Juno hit the Northeast, bringing difficult storm conditions and leading to a rare early dismissal in the Rahway Public Schools. Staff and students learned the previous evening, Sunday, the 25th, that schools would close in accordance with a shortened day schedule in order to allow all members of the school community to make it home safely. On Monday evening, the school district declared a snow day for the following day, Tuesday, the 27th.

By the time school let out on Monday, snow was falling steadily, and the high school’s parking lot and cars were blanketed with the initial snowfall that announced the start of the year’s first snowstorm. The storm, originating in the Midwest, was expected to hit New England and the Northeast particularly hard. News reports and meteorologists were predicting blizzard-like conditions in New Jersey, in general, and Union County and Rahway, in particular. Snowfall of well over two feet was predicted in some areas, and winds were expected to reach hurricane-level speeds. Governors in New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island declared states of emergency and travel bans in anticipation of the worsening storm conditions. Rahway staff and students prepared for the worst.

Upon waking up on the 27th, however, many may have noticed that the blizzard that everyone was expecting had developed into little more than an average snowstorm. In Union County, snowfall was measured anywhere from six to twelve inches, and winds were moderate, far less extreme than the severe weather conditions earlier predicted. After some initial shoveling, street cleaning, and snow removal, Rahway, along with surrounding towns, was easily accessible by car, and residents, far from being trapped in their homes by a blizzard, were quite capable of getting around.

Midterm examinations at the high school, scheduled to begin on the 27th, were pushed back and began on Wednesday, the 28th, when classes resumed. All in all, Winter Storm Juno caused minimal disruptions to RHS but left Rahway residents wondering if more is to come.

2014 Ends on a High Note and 2015 Starts Strong

By Kelvin Caraballo

In this issue of Rho Eta Sigma, the staff has highlighted a number of exciting events from the end of 2014 and a few from the start of 2015. In the following pages, please find information about how RHS’s fall sports concluded, an update on winter sports so far, reviews of two of the Theater Department’s school plays, information on several assemblies and special guests, the high school’s College and Career Fair, some tips on fashion and what to wear this winter, and a number of other events and happenings at Rahway High School. Additionally, on page 7, we list the Students-of-the-Month from the beginning of the school year through January.

As we pass the halfway point of the school year, academic success is on everyone’s mind, as midterms end and seniors continue thinking about graduation, college admissions, and their futures beyond Rahway High School. We have a great deal to look forward to as 2015 continues. Enjoy this issue of Rho Eta Sigma.
A major theme of her talk was that she often changed,” she writes in her book, “now that I look at it. “My whole perspective on life has completely

Fences takes place in Pittsburgh in 1957 and examines a number of themes, including racial discrimination, family life, and employment struggles. The lead character, Troy, is a former baseball player in the Negro Leagues who was never able to secure the sort of life for himself he might have if baseball had been integrated. Troy has survived many obstacles and gone through many struggles and now does not want his son Cory to face the same challenges. Cory strongly disagrees with his father and wants to follow his dreams of becoming a football player. Rose, the mother, only wishes and hopes that Troy will honor Cory’s wishes and let him live his dream just like his father had.

Fences concludes with something of a surprise ending as Cory joins the military and Troy unfortunately passes away. Raynel, the child Troy has had with another woman who dies in childbirth, becomes the newest member of their family. Rose agrees to raise the girl as her own. In the end, we find the surviving characters accepting their lives as they are, accepting the difficulties and struggles, and moving forward. The reference to a fence reappears at the end of the play as an actual fence is built, and the metaphor of a fence represents in the play the sense of boundaries in people’s lives and the efforts to keep some things out and let other things in.

All in all, the cast of Fences did a terrific job portraying the characters August Wilson created over thirty years ago. Freshman Michaela Pereira said, “I loved how the true struggles and battles of African American men and women were portrayed throughout the show. So fun to watch. My peers showcased their talent. A brilliant production.”

By Courtney Clarke and Melody Castillo

On November 17, RHS graduate Se’Quince Aiken spoke to an excited group of students about the publication of her recent book, Life is a Journey. Aiken, born with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy, a condition that greatly limits her physical abilities, discussed the inspirations and influences in her life, especially her family, and how she has been able to overcome numerous difficulties and adversity. She wrote the book, she said, with the help of her family and because it was a dream of hers to tell her story.

A major theme of her talk was that she often overcame challenges even when she initially thought she might fail. Perseverance was a big part of her story, and students in attendance were inspired by her presence and the message she brought.

Aiken emphasized, among other things, that so much of one’s reality is the way we choose to look at it. “My whole perspective on life has completely changed,” she writes in her book, “now that I look on the positive side of things.”

By Cedric Price

On November 21 and 22, 2014, the Rahway High School Center for Performing Arts Center put on an amazing production of August Wilson’s 1983 play Fences. The play included a seven-member cast consisting of the following students: Dion Grier as Troy; Hendryk Dyke as Jim Bono; Najah Hetsberger as Rose; Jay-Quan Johnson as Lyons; Mechi Brown as Gabriel; Chrizhawn Brown as Cory; and LaKyla Nash as Raynell. Fences was directed by one of the teachers new to Rahway this year, Ms. Jensyn Modero.

By Kate Torres

Congratulations to the Musical Theatre program of Rahway High School for presenting a very entertaining, scary, and funny production of Little Shop of Horrors. A special recognition goes to Ms. Allison Dooley and Mr. VanWyk for all of their hard work and dedication. Following a Thursday night dress rehearsal, the production took place on January 9 and 10. The well-known musical comedy of a hungry man-eating plant and Seymour, the floral assistant who discovers him, was interpreted brilliantly and hilariously by the Rahway cast.

Members of the cast included Dion Grier as the Voice of the Plant; Alex Ramos as Seymour; Mariah Grajales as Audrey; Mechi Brown as Mr. Mushnik; Chrizhawn Brown as Orin Scivello; Karissa Nabbie, Najah Hetsberger, Heidi Guillaumne, Daniela Rodriguez, Amanda Rolon, and Tiffany Morales as Street Urchins; Michael Akakpo as Bernstein; Jazlyn Pagan as Mrs. Luce; Emmy Melendez as Customer #1/ Radio Announcer; Tony Neal as Patrick Martin; and Jay-Quan Johnson as Audrey II Manipulation. The ensemble included Isaiah Bridgeforth, Gabrielle Gonzalez, Melody Maisonet, Tiffany Ponce, Brianna Por, Cassidy Star, Kate Torres, Sagzan Bernard, Lauren Labrano, Rayanne Melendez, and Ruth Salazar.

The production was a terrific blend of humor, horror, and music. Freshman Mikey Smith said, “The plot of the show was amazing, the songs were catchy, the actors were professional, and the singing was breathtaking. The show is a must-see. Rahway gave us something to remember.”
College and Career Fair Offers Opportunities to Students

By Kai Whitfield

On October 14, 2014, Rahway High School held the 17th Annual College and Career Fair in the Gymnasium. Retiring Superintendent Edward Yergalonis started the fair when he was a principal in the building several years ago. Reflecting on this, he said, “Now as my career comes to a close, I see how valuable an experience and what an opportunity this is for our students.” The event was organized by Ms. Stafford and Dr. Fields. It allows different colleges, employers, and branches of the military to visit the high school in order to interest students in what they have to offer. Representatives from the various colleges, careers, and military branches talked to students and parents about how joining their programs might benefit them in years to come, whether it be in securing employment in a specific field or gaining admission to a college or university.

The College and Career Fair showcased a wide range of potential employment and educational opportunities. For example, the representative from the University of Southern Maine discussed a whole host of academic and scholarship programs and said that “the university will allow students to reach their dreams.” There were also interesting careers that grabbed the attention of the many students in attendance. The Stenotech Career Institute was one very interesting school. It teaches stenography, which is a skill that involves writing in shorthand and taking dictation with a machine very quickly. The Stenotech Institute representative Dana Holland called it a “career, skill, and an art.” She also said it is a great career for young people and called her stenography machine a “piano of words.”

Many of the students who attended felt that the event was really going to help them to decide what career they might like to have or what college they might wish to attend once they have graduated. Senior JaTyre Epps remarked that one of the main things he was interested in was the military because he was thinking of enlisting. He also said, “Exploring what college is right for me is another reason I’m here, because I’m thinking about getting a degree in psychology.” Parents also had similar positive feelings and were optimistic about the possible benefits to their children. Jacqueline Porr, mother of senior Brianna Porr, seemed excited about the night. She said, “I think it’s great, because students can explore colleges they may not have even thought to consider.”

Broadcasting Students Spend Day with Senior Citizens

By Alisha Cooper and Kelvin Caraballo

On October 16, Ms. Palermo’s Broadcasting class visited the Rahway Senior Citizens Center. Seventeen students participated in the event, which involved painting pumpkins and getting ready for Halloween with Rahway’s senior citizens. Ms. Palermo and her students put on the event at the invitation of Ms. Ellen Staunton, who is in charge of activities and events at the center. The students brought a festive mood and a spirit of giving with them, and their efforts were greatly appreciated. The students seemed to get as much out of the event as the senior citizens. Senior Deshawne Bunyon said, “I was happy to help and share my talent and was really happy with the pizza!”

Students served lunch, spent time with Rahway’s senior citizens, and provided entertainment. One highlight of the visit was when students performed their version of Michael Jackson “Thriller.” Senior Isaiah Bridgeforth, said, “The people were very generous to us. They gave us lunch and a treat bag. I had fun learning and performing the dance, and I met new people and was impressed with the seniors’ costumes.”

The entire day was a great success for students and seniors alike. Ms. Staunton was very appreciative, commenting, “Thank you for bringing a smile to the faces of Rahway seniors.”

Marching Band Enjoying Successful Year

By Dayana C. Alvarez

The RHS Marching Band had a great deal of success this year under the direction of new band director, Mr. Miguel Bolivar. The marching band won several awards and competed in numerous competitions, including one at the state level and one at the national level within its circuit. Mr. Bolivar shared, “We finished 10th in the state and 15th in the nation, with percussion placing 7th overall, in USBands Group 4A. The marching band has also won a number of 2nd and 3rd place awards at local shows and also won best percussion at a local show as well.”

Additionally, the band participated in the Winter Wonderland performance at Rahway’s annual tree lighting ceremony on November 28 and performed at the Beacon Theatre in New York City on December 6 with a group called Ballets with a Twist. The event was sponsored by the True Colors Fund, co-founded by Cyndi Lauper, to work to bring an end to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth homelessness, to encourage more people to get involved in combating prejudice, and to inspire more citizens to work for equality and dignity for all people.
On January 6, RHS alumni returned to the high school for a special event honoring those students who passed Advance Placement examinations with a score of 3, 4 or 5 in the past three years. The “Advanced Placement Celebration and Alumni Panel” featured remarks by Mr. Farinella and special guest, Dr. P. Roy Vagelos, 1947 RHS graduate and retired chairman and CEO of Merck.

The high school currently offers 16 AP courses. Special recognition was additionally awarded to three groups of students: “AP Scholar with Distinction”, granted to students who received an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams; “AP Scholar with Honor”, granted to students who received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams; and “AP Scholar”, granted to students who received scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.

In addition to remarks by Mr. Farinella and Dr. Vagelos, a highlight of the event was the alumni panel, in which several former students spoke about their experiences with AP. The students included Nicole Davis, Emera De Los Santos, Valerie Huezo, Zaniya Joe, Darren “DJ” Lesinski, Liam Mark, Shirley Rios, Gabriel Rolon, Yuleisy Ortez, and Emily Tavares. They represented a wide variety of colleges, including Penn State, NYU, Amherst, Seton Hall, Cornell, and the College of New Jersey.

Ms. Mannix moderated and organized the event and was enthusiastic about how it turned out. She said, “It was an opportunity to celebrate our students and the AP program.”

On December 3, Ms. Barb Baltrinic spoke to RHS students and faculty about her new novel, A Founder for All: Abraham Clark, Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Clark has a connection to our area because he is buried in Rahway Cemetery and lived in nearby Roselle. Ms. Baltrinic is a former public school teacher and a direct descendant of Abraham Clark. While researching his life, she became passionate about his story and it inspired her to write the page novel. A major theme of her book is that Clark was a man of the people who fought for the rights of everyone. “He is an ancestor for all common people,” she said.

Ms. Baltrinic’s visit came about through the efforts of Ms. Peloso and Mr. Mendes. Ms. Baltrinic was in the area for a book tour and contacted the high school. With the assistance of school secretary Ms. Kallinosis, Ms. Peloso and Mr. Mendes organized a group of interested students, realizing the importance of the chance to learn about some local history and the opportunity to discover more about someone who played a direct role in the nation’s founding.

Ms. Baltrinic’s presentation to students was mesmerizing as she explained his story and the exhaustive research she undertook to uncover his life. Students and faculty were impressed. Ms. Peloso said of the event, “It’s an opportunity to have someone visit who has direct connections to a historical figure.” And student Billy Both said, “I found it very interesting that there is so much history right where we live.”

The event was a wonderful example of Rahway’s efforts to bridge the gap between the arts and athletics. Coach Brad Edwards, head baseball coach, collaborated with Ms. Sue Krivenko, the REA president, and Ms. Jensyn Modero, representing the high school’s theater program, in order to make the event happen and secure funding. Ms. Anjanette Highsmith, middle school science teacher, handled photography for the event.

Coach Edwards spoke of using the event as a learning experience to educate the Rahway community about youth baseball opportunities in town and to encourage a deeper appreciation of the sport. He said, “I saw this event as an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of our sport and teach our players about the historical context of baseball and the struggle of minorities in baseball.” Ms. Modero spoke about connecting the themes of the night—racial discrimination, civil rights struggles, and segregation in sports—to some of the themes recently explored in the Theater Department’s production of Fences. She said, “August Wilson uses the convention of the Negro Leagues to portray the injustices felt by the main character Troy [in Fences], so working with Coach Edwards and the REA to bring ‘A Night Around the Diamond’ was the perfect collaboration.”

A reception followed the event, sponsored by the REA. Additionally, the REA was able to offer Dr. Hogan an honorarium through an NJEA PRIDE in public education grant. Representing the REA, Ms. Krivenko, said, “This event in particular brought together our actors and our athletes, and their parents, to better understand the experience of those who played in the Negro Leagues. Our students discovered the history of the sport and the emotions of the players in a time of great discrimination in our country. From the stories that were shared we saw how far we have come, but better understand how much further we must go.”

RHS Hosts “A Night Around the Diamond”
By Matthew Angrisani and Ashley Kuc

On November 12, at the Rahway High School Center for Performing Arts, an event was held called “A Night Around the Diamond.” The event celebrated the life of Mr. Robert Scott, a former Negro League baseball player with the New York Black Yankees. The event was sponsored by the Rahway Education Association, Rahway’s Athletic Department, and the high school’s Theater Department. The night served to highlight not only the accomplishments and struggles of Mr. Scott specifically but also to emphasize the plight of African-American athletes in an era of segregation, the history of civil rights in America, and the importance of diversity and overcoming prejudices. Also in attendance that night was Dr. Lawrence Hogan, Professor Emeritus of Union County College, and one of the most renowned historians of the Negro Leagues.

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Author Barb Baltrinic with her book about Abraham Clark.
Fall Sports Wrap Up
By Jefferson Gabriel and Dayana C. Alvarez

Varsity Football
This year’s varsity football team was led by captains Sean Twerdak, Tyler West, and Edrice Patterson. The team had a challenging season, finishing with a 1-9, and, according to Coach Mobley, its first losing season in 15 years. “One good thing we can take from this season is we have a lot of underclassmen that gained valuable experience,” Coach Mo said, determined to look on the bright side. “Playing time being the greatest teacher, hopefully we’ve learned what we need to do so we can get back to a winning season next year.”

Girls Tennis
The Girls Tennis team this year was spectacular. Its record was 16-1. The girls were undefeated in their conference and regular season and only lost in the second round of the state tournament. Coach Remley noted that the team “made history this year by having the best record ever in Rahway High School. They were also the first tennis team in Rahway’s history to win a conference championship.”

Aidah Muhammad, Tiffany Rivera, Aliyah Shell, Indy Florencio, and Karolina Rosso went undefeated in conference play. Additionally, Aidah was selected first team all-conference at 1st singles, Zaynah Muhammad was selected second team all-conference at 2nd singles, Diaiy Caba was selected honorable mention at 3rd singles, Tiffany and Aliyah were selected first team all-conference at 1st doubles, and Indy and Karolina were selected first team all-conference at 2nd doubles. Rounding out the team this year were Nathalie Bernier, Natalie Cepeda, Nathalia Jimenez, Ashley Borgella, and Chyna McCall.

At the team’s dinner, Coach Remley was presented with a mounted autographed tennis ball. The plaque read, “Not just a team but also a family.” Congratulations to every single girl that came out and joined the team this year. The Rahway community is very proud of you.

Cross Country
The cross country team had a strong start to its season. The boys and girls team opened at the prestigious Randolph Invitational, both finishing in the top five. Corey McGhie was the leader of the boys team, finishing 7th overall. Senior captain, Damonique Harris, led the Lady Indians. The team went 2-0 in dual meets early in the season, beating rivals Union Catholic and Arthur L. Johnson of Clark. Corey McGhie and Rodrigue Joseph had a 1-2 finish for the Indians. Kabeer Downey, Rodrigue Joseph, JaTyre Epps, and Deshawne Bunion rounded out the top seven. Chasity Docteur led Rahway with a solid finish and a personal best performance. Assata Edwards, Gabrielle Charles, Savannah Cook, and Abisola Atilola rounded out the top five for Rahway.

Boys Soccer
Captains Evan Carbahol and Cesar Ferreyra led the boys soccer team to a very good season. The team record was 7-7-2. Coach Romeo expressed optimism about the season and appreciation for the effort of his players.

“We had a very good season,” Coach Romeo said. “We also had a lot of good wins. We beat Linden, which is one of the top teams in our county. We had a good showing in the state tournament. The guys played hard all season. As far as effort is concerned, we were happy with what they did the entire season.”

Volleyball
The team captains for this year’s volleyball team were senior Courtney Vicisko and sophomore Zamira Abdullahi. The team’s record was 6-14. Coach Lashelle Bunion notes that “some of the biggest highlights of the season was the team being ranked 12 out of 20 teams in the Union County tournament, and the team making it to the preliminary round of the Group 2 state tournament.”

Girls Soccer
The girls soccer team had a very successful season led by junior goal keeper Jordan Rudy. The squad shut out nine teams on its way to a 15-3-0 record. Offensively, the team scored a total of 61 goals, while the defense allowed only 16 goals all season. The team suffered one loss in regular season, one loss in the county tournament, and one loss in the state tournament.

Seniors Emily Beenders and Mia-Sade Greene and sophomore Michaela Woolley were selected for the first team Watchung Conference All-Star team. Junior goalkeeper Jordan Rudy and freshman Trinity Garay received honorable mention. Emily Beenders, Mia-Sade Greene, Michaela Woolley, and Trinity Garay were recognized as All-State players at the NJGSCA All-State banquet on January 4.

Coach K is very proud of the team’s performance this year. He said, “Our success was led by the strong commitment of the players who attended the summer 7v7 tournaments, going undefeated in all three, and taking three first place trophies.”
Winter Sports Update
By Jefferson Gabriel

Bowling
We had the chance to quickly catch up with Coach Keat and ask him for a brief update on the bowling team, which enjoyed so much success last year.

Coach Keat told us that highlights of the season so far include finishing first place in the Warren Wheeler tournament and first place in the Baker tournament. “The team,” Coach Keat said, “is currently ranked 8th in the state and team member Darius Singletary has been placed on the prestigious “Bowler to Watch” list. Additionally, the team won the North 2, Group 2 State Sectional Championships. Singletary bowled the highest series out of 175 bowlers.

Good luck to the team as it advances to the State Finals.

Boys Basketball
We caught up with Coach Conroy about the boys basketball team. Conroy expressed optimism about the start of the season. He said, “The team is off to a 10-2 start. Edriece Patterson, Jordan Tutt, and Michael Famosa are leading the way and all three are averaging double figures in scoring.”

The team was in first place in its division when we last spoke with Coach Conroy. Best of luck to the team as they move into the heart of the winter season.

Track
Winter track is off to a great start. Coach Bunion said, “While many people have doubted the strength of our team, in the first stages of the championship season we have proven them wrong.”

The boys recently placed second at the Union County Relays, while the girls placed third. This is the highest finish for the girls in five years. The top performance on the boys team went to the winning 4x400 relay, which consisted of Terrance Anderson, Deshawne Bunion, Nasir Velez, and Kabeer Downey.

Deshawne Bunion has been the leader of the team this season having run some strong performances already. He recently broke the school record in the 600m dash, running the second fastest time in Union County history and is currently NJ #1 and US #8 in the event. The girls team broke the school record in the 4x800 relay already this season. The team of Assata Edwards, Chasity Docteur, Gabrielle Charles, and Mia-Sade Greene broke the school record by 24 seconds. Although the boys team is very young, the talent is making a strong statement. Jordan West broke the school sophomore record in the shot put. Corey McRorie broke the school sophomore record in the 3200.

Wrestling
The wrestling team is off to another great start, under the direction of longtime coach and Hall of Famer, Coach Stueber. This year’s captains are Devin Jefferson, David Winters, Evan Goodridge, and Justin Drake.

Devin Jefferson continues to be a powerhouse for Rahway, winning the county tournament, the Nottingham tournament, and the Rahway tournament. “There are a handful of young guys,” Coach Stueber said, “who are really good.” He went on to say, “Sabri Murray, he’s really come alive for us this season. David Winters has beaten a couple of tough kids. And Lovinsky Philippe has come up with some big wins in the last couple of weeks and a couple of nice pins.”

After advancing to the state semifinals, the Indians fell to Delaware Valley.
# Students of the Month

**September/October**

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**January**

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<td>Danielle Aiken</td>
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<td>Makenzie Martin</td>
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Ever the perfectionist, *Rho Eta Sigma*’s managing editor Kai Whitfield double-checks some facts with Ms. West.

Michaela Pereira finishing yet another assignment.

Members of the French Club at your service.
Winter Fashion
By Nathalie Bernier

The leaves have fallen off all the trees, the temperature is dropping, snow is falling, and "OMG WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR BOOTS!!" You've guessed it folks, it's winter!

Don't worry, just because it's getting colder doesn't mean your outfits have to consist of: sweatpants, hoodies, and those old UGGS you've been wearing since eighth grade. Find out how to make your outfits go from DRAB to FAB!

Attention! Nothing is wrong with sweaters as long as they're worn the right way. Oversized Sweaters paired with jeans, skirts, a colorful pair of pants will make any outfit look effortlessly chic.

Another staple that needs to be added to your wardrobe are lots and lots of scarves! They serve as a neck warmer and a fashion statement. The great thing about scarves is that they can be added to just about any outfit and make it look ten times better.

Now, to keep your little piggies warm, boots are exactly what you need. Boots come in EVERY color, but brown and black boots are the ones that will match about every outfit you wear.

I know some people hate the idea of wearing an ugly old jacket or coat that hides their awesome outfit, but wait! Your jacket can be a little taste of how cute your outfit is under it. This season's toppers come in all shapes, colors, and sizes— including leather jackets for when you feel like a rock star, trench coats for the rainy days, and parkas for the “Yikes, I hope the heat is working at school” days.

Following even just a few of these tips should leave you feeling more confident this winter season. Good luck and happy fashion!