



# BHS

# VPA Department

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 19, 2020: CREATIVITY IN THE TIME OF COVID

Wonderful VPA Families,

This transition has been no joke for any of us, but with each new day, we're crafting new ways to find expression and inspiration. Here's a look at the week that was.

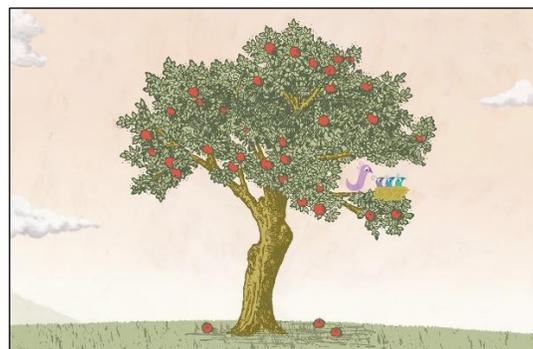
**"EMPTY NEST" BRIMS WITH RECOGNITION:** VPA Film & Animation's short animated film "Empty Nest" added another honor with its official selection to the 14th National Film Festival for Talented Youth. It's the first time any Booker High School film has been selected for the prestigious and acclaimed film festival. The festival, normally held in Seattle, will run online Oct. 23-Nov. 1.

"Empty Nest" is an animated adaptation of an Ethan Long story. Students Tallulah Bonifield, Janeth Rivas-Castillo and Maren Timpe worked on the film, which also has been accepted into the Sarasota Film Festival, Animation Block Party, and the All-American High School Film Festival. The full NFFTY lineup can be found at <https://www.nffty.org/festival-2020>. You can watch the film [here](#).



Left: Team "Empty Nest" : Janeth Rivas-Castillo, Tallulah Bonifield, Maren Timpe, and Matthew Abolafia.

Below: A concept drawing for the animation, which depicts little birds preparing to leave mama's nest.



**'BONE ORCHARD' BLOOMS HOPE:** The Theatre Department is rehearsing "The Bone Orchard" and "Spoon River Anthology," pieces exploring life, death and the ways in which memory influences existence. Several excerpts will be featured in the upcoming all-VPA extravaganza, "Phantasmic!," which is slated to be the VPA's first public event since March. "Phantasmic!" will feature selections from all VPA disciplines in an innovative, safely distanced format. Details to come.

The Theatre Level 2 class staged an in-class performance of "The Bone Orchard" Sept. 18, and the experience of the small, intimate performance had a profoundly positive impact on the performers. Sophomore Tori Greenlaw described how affecting performing was: "I didn't expect to be moved like that, but this was incredible."



Above: A sole ghostlight punctures darkness in the Theatre in-class performance of "The Bone Orchard"

**JET STREAM AND CATEGORY 5 CAST ANNOUNCEMENT:** Members of Jet Stream and Category 5 were announced last week, and the groups are gearing up for melodic magic yet again this year. The outreach bands' popularity has spurred director Alex Zickafoose to create a third band, a modern band in the mold of Category 5. The new band has not yet been christened, and Mr. Z is taking suggestions—band names are among the most creative in short-form literature! If you'd like to suggest a name for the band, email Mr. Z at [alexander.zickafoose@sarasotacountyschools.net](mailto:alexander.zickafoose@sarasotacountyschools.net).

**JET STREAM**

- Amanda Beall
- Morgan Deveney
- Bryn Dulitz
- Kobe Hills
- Jailyn Gentile
- Anthony Lobo
- Kate Mobley-Tarpley
- Vanessa Stover
- Leela Sundaram
- Kacey Watts
- Yoshi Wilson
- Anthony Wyatt

**CATEGORY 5**

- Nick Haywood- Drums
- Jose Hernandez- Guitar
- Bella Moreno- Vocal
- Colin Leonard- Guitar 2/Sax/Vocal
- Raul Ortiz- Bass
- Anne Marie Sledziewski- Vocal
- Ben Strom- Piano

**MODERN BAND #2**

- Saige Cherryholmes- Vocal
- Jose Hernandez- Bass
- Abbey Holdway- Vocal
- Caleb Horner- Keys
- Ethan Lubow- Guitar
- Judah Woomert- Guitar 2/Vocal

Right: "A Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On": the two modern bands rehearsed together on Sept. 14.



Ms. Purvis on her last day at Booker High School.

**END OF AN ERA:** Booker High School bid adieu to head custodian Debra Purvis as she announced her retirement after 31 years of service in the district. Purvis, who has been at Booker High School for 5 years, has led award-winning custodial crews and has been a great friend to the VPA, offering invaluable support to our events by taking care of our needs and ensuring an inviting, clean, and orderly facility for our patrons and students. Ms. Purvis shared that she arrived extra early on Friday, Sept. 18, "to open my campus one last time." We'll miss you, Ms. Purvis, and are grateful for your years of service and leadership.

**SUPPORT NEEDED!** Just Our BHS bands are looking for financial support to help with the purchase of instrument masks that allow for safer playing of woodwind and brass instruments. Currently the players use medical masks that are cut to allow for playing, but the split widens easily, reducing their efficacy in mitigating viral spread. We're partnering with Mask-erade Custom Masks, which produces a safe mask for playing, with a reinforced passage that Velcros shut when not in use. If you'd like to help by donating \$10 (for one mask) or more, please contact Rebecca Abrahamson, and thanks for making a difference!



Senior Wendy Alvarado's mask demonstrates the gap that develops in the masks currently used by instrumentalists.

**ART FOCUS OF THE WEEK:** While it may seem a big jump to provide dance classes concurrently, Dance Department Chair Courtney Smith is finding a groove and learning how to seamlessly integrate her remote learners into the lesson with her in-person learners, resulting in classes that are intimate and dynamic, wherein the dialogue and physical communication between the screen and the studio feel organic and meaningful. Ms. Smith has also taken the challenges of Covid dance instruction and turned them into important lessons that will outlast the pandemic. Dancing in masks, for one, can be difficult, but Ms. Smith sees it as an opportunity for her dancers to develop mastery of breath control. Moving within the confines of a taped-off box also can feel limiting, but Ms. Smith has framed this as a chance for her dancers to learn spatial awareness that is vital to success in the professional world.

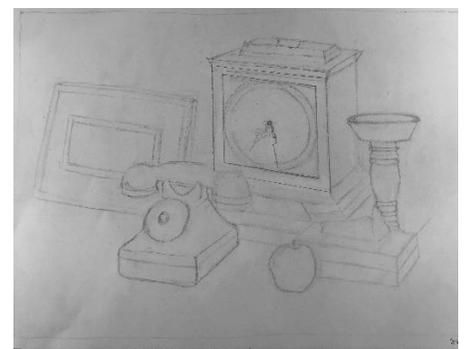
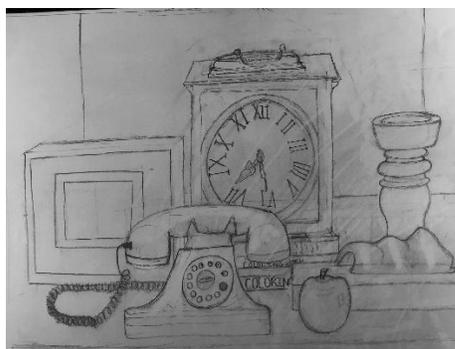
In this lesson, the feedback generated was centered on breath control, and sophomore Thalia Matos provided feedback about using exhalations to emphasize certain movements. The observation ignited a robust discussion of the moments when exhales can punctuate a choreographic point.



Far left: Smith leads level 4 dancers through phrase.

Immediate left: almost close enough to touch: Ms. Smith shares a moment with Matos.

**ART FOR YOUR EYES:** The Level 1 class in Mr. Strenk's drawing class have been hard at work creating still life drawings using one- and two-point perspective. Strenk, who also teaches at Ringling College, was so impressed with their first completed work that he has submitted them for our families' viewing pleasure. With this much talent and skill, the future will hold immense achievement for these artists.



First works: Left: From freshman Sophia Chursina; top left: from freshman Amanda Saucedo; top right: from freshman Annabelle Truong.

**AND SOME GENTLE REMINDERS:** Parents of remote learners, please remember that the district prohibits parents from entering the online learning space; this is tantamount to entering a classroom and becomes a distraction. We love to see you, but please make appointments to visit teachers and friends after the dismissal bell rings.

**UPCOMING DATES:**

Sept. 25: Deadline for the Florida Hispanic Heritage Month essay contest. Details: [floridahispanicheritage.com](http://floridahispanicheritage.com).

Oct. 20: Picture Day!