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In other business:

- Kaffee Kang, of Kang Associates, gave the committee an updated version of the blueprints that showed the plan for the ceilings. It is designed so that most of the plaster ceilings will stay in place and only a few drop ceilings being added to the rooms like the bathrooms.

- Kang asked the committee for permission to cut open pieces of the roof to see which way the frame runs, but the committee held up giving it to her as they are waiting for a hazardous material report to be completed on the building. They want to make sure none of the proposed open areas contain asbestos. The report showed the only asbestos was found in the boiler room in the basement and in the glazing on the windows of the building.

- Committee members also discussed what needed to be done to restore the wooden copula at the top of the building. They were very concerned this be handled properly, because of the history this piece adds to the building. Kang said from her work, she thinks only the trim of the copula is rotted and that part could be replaced easily. She did not think the whole copula needed to be rebuilt though, which was what she was initially suspected.

Kang said all of the engineers involved in this project were in good shape, and that the committee should have an estimate on the entire project's cost by mid-November.

iGeneration



Alyssa Christianson

Getting Involved

The school year is in full swing across America and thousands of kids everywhere are probably already counting the days until winter break.

The monotony of school can often times affect the way kids are performing in their academics. My recommendation to solve this problem is extracurricular activities.

I'm sure we all heard this enough, everyone telling us to "get involved" or "play sports," but there are plenty of other ways to break up the dreariness of school other than sports or student government.

At Oakmont (Regional High School), we host a myriad of after school clubs, so you're bound to find at least one that you're interested. Also, if you're worried about time because you have a lot of homework or really hard classes, most of the clubs only meet a few times a week.

As for sports, although this season is already well under way, it's a good time to start considering a winter sport. Being involved in sports is a great way to make friends and also to begin organizing your time more wisely.

Sports take up a lot of time usually, so it does increase the stress on getting work

done for school, but oftentimes this stress will encourage kids to work better and learn to work more quickly but also effectively.

Student government and student council elections take place at the end of the year usually, unless you're an incoming freshman.

Both of these groups can also take up a lot of time and require attention to detail and major planning skills, but in the end are extremely rewarding. Knowing that you are involved in some of the important decisions surrounding either your class or the entire student body can really boost your confidence.

Also, if you're a junior this year, don't think it's too late to become active! If you're interested in something, don't be afraid to join up and get started! Most groups are longing for more members and you could be one of them!

Becoming active around school is also a good way for freshmen to become accustomed to the high school atmosphere. Being around upperclassmen who are interested in the same things as you can definitely make the change easier.

Although meetings and practices can become time consuming, the reward at the end of the season or school year is definitely worth it.

And as a side note, being involved in a group or sport is not a way to get out of your homework. Your teachers are still going to expect your homework to be done even if you did have a game until 8 p.m.

If the sheer joy that comes out of being involved doesn't convince you, then maybe

the simple fact that it will definitely make your resume look good will. Colleges love to see students who are involved.

Now, this doesn't mean you have to join up with every group or every sport in order to stand out. Being committed to one or two things 100 percent looks better than stretching yourself too far and only give 5 percent to everything

So if sports aren't your thing or if you're too shy to be in student government or student council, there is usually a club that will fit one of your interests.

If not, then get a group of your friends together and create your own club. At Oakmont, as long as a group has ten or more members and a reasonable interest, it can become a club.

The advantages of being involved in some club or group definitely outweigh the disadvantages. You can make new friends, do something you enjoy and make yourself look good to the colleges you apply to at the end of senior year.

And it's not too late to join now! Winter sports will be meeting up soon and clubs usually accept members year round. Or you can try your hand at running for office at the end of this year.

So get involved! Anything is possible!

Alyssa Christianson is a resident of Ashburnham and is a member of the Class of 2008 at Oakmont Regional High School. She is a on the varsity field hockey team and is on the student council for the second year.

WESTMINSTER

Westminster man works to improve emergency workers' effectiveness

By Nora Cardec

JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT

A local man is working to help design a product for emergency responders and the military to help them monitor their safety even when serving in other regions.

For two years now, Thomas Connell II has been running a project office for California-based Disaster Management Solutions in Westminster. The company provides a patient tracking system to be used in disaster situations whether natural or man-made.

"Our system is used by the Army, the National Guard and the Marines among other departments," said Connell.

Disaster Management Solutions is a software company that provides consulting services in three tracking main areas: people, equipment and personnel.

The Rapid Access of Privileges Training Operational Readiness (RAPTOR) is the major product of the company. This device provides secure credentials for first responders, which according to Connell, allows for better management during disasters and better coordination of first responders.

Through the use of a specially formulated identification card (identification and credentialing system) and the RAPTOR — a card reading device — allows places like hospitals and clinics as well as law enforcement and other emergency agencies to track information on massive vaccination efforts, emergency first responders and their credentials.

"Everything is encrypted and protected," said Connell of the product. "With today's technology, it is nearly

impossible to break."

The device stores all types of personal identification information from birth certificate, marital status, children and health history to licenses, degrees, certifications and current profession.

It is currently being used on first responder personnel such as emergency management technicians, firefighters, police officers, doctors and nurses.

The RAPTOR ensures that first responders can do their job any time, anywhere since their credentials can be obtained immediately.

"We work exclusively for local, state and federal agencies," said Connell of the private company.

Disaster Management Solutions works in concert with

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