

PHOENIX RISING

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Mrs. Zahn transfers from Turtle Creek to Phoenix to be assistant principal

By Anna Lock and Emily Lock
Phoenix Rising staff



Mrs. Zahn

Mrs. Rebecca Zahn, Phoenix Middle School's new assistant principal, did not always have her dreams set on her current position.

"I had always wanted to be a veterinarian and grew up surrounded by dogs, horses, cats, chickens, cows and many other animals," she said. "In high school I worked with a large-animal vet, and that is what I wanted to do. The main reason I went to Michigan State (University) was because I was accepted into their pre-veterinary program.

"However, once I began the program, I knew I would never be able to put animals to sleep, so I decided to become a teacher. I have always believed that teachers make the biggest difference in the lives of children and I wanted to do whatever I could to support teachers. Becoming a principal was the logical step in helping teachers."

She also studied at the Institut De Touraine in Tours, France.

Her early-life work consisted of "picking blueberries every summer starting when I was 13 years old. Before I came to the Delavan-Darien School District, I worked in Racine for 25 years, first as a French and Spanish teacher, and then as a principal," said Mrs. Zahn.

She chose French and Spanish because she loves learning languages and travelling, as well as working with kids, she said.

Previous to coming to Phoenix this school year, Mrs. Zahn was the principal at Turtle Creek Elementary School in Delavan. Then she switched positions with Mr. Christopher Fountain, the previous Phoenix assistant principal, to work at Phoenix.

So what are the biggest differences in switching from Turtle Creek to Phoenix?

"Getting to know all of the staff," said Mrs. Zahn. "Fortunately, many of the current students at Phoenix went to Turtle Creek, so I already knew many of them. I am really happy to be back at a middle school, because I love working with sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students."

Her husband is a biology teacher at Horlick High School in Ra-

cine, and he also coaches power lifting. Their four oldest children (Katie, Darius, Nina and Dan) are in college and work part-time jobs. A son, Ben, is a junior at Horlick, and their daughter, Danya, is in second grade at Turtle Creek.

Mrs. Zahn, 51, and husband Steve will be celebrating their 25th anniversary this December.

"My family and I love pets," said Mrs. Zahn. "Right now we have one dog, Bosco, and our cats, Spooky and Macchiato. Our dog, Zoe, just passed away last week, and we are all missing her a lot."

Aside from her school life, Mrs. Zahn also has many hobbies.

"In my free time, I love to do a lot of things. My son, Ben, plays varsity football and I love watching him play. I also enjoy photography, travel, cooking, fishing, reading, cross stitching and being outside in nature," she said. "I love anything to do with animals, and my family and I foster dogs for a rescue in Milwaukee. I am also obsessed with all things 'Pinterest.'"

Mrs. Zahn and her family live in Caledonia, which is near Racine, so she commutes about 70 minutes to come to Delavan. She was born in North Carolina, and grew up in Grand Haven, Mich.

"I moved to Racine in 1989 for my first teaching job, and have been in Wisconsin ever since then. Once our son, Ben, graduates from high school in two years, my husband and our daughter, Danya, and I plan to move to Delavan, and I can't wait!" said Mrs. Zahn.

School year going swimmingly for newest Phoenix counselor

By Anna Lock
Phoenix Rising staff

You could say Mrs. Amy M. Sylvester-Knudtson, otherwise known as Mrs. SK, has landed a "whale" of a job as a new guidance counselor at Phoenix Middle School this school year.

This is Mrs. SK's first full-time job in a school-related environment. She went to college at the University of Wisconsin-White-water for both her bachelor's degree in elementary education and her master's degree in school counseling.

"I had a short-term substitute position as a school counselor at Edison Middle School in Janesville for a few months last year," said Mrs. SK. "I also completed my six-month student teaching position at Clarendon Elementary in Mukwonago, as well as abroad in Cuenca, Ecuador, back in 2014."

She also coached volleyball at a different school and is now

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coaching seventh-grade girls volleyball at Phoenix.

"I started playing volleyball when I was in seventh grade," said Mrs. SK. "I played until I was a junior in high school. I have had experience coaching girls volleyball before at a previous school, Marshall Middle School in Janesville. However, I was the assistant coach for that team so it's exciting to get to be the head coach for the seventh-grade team here at Phoenix.

"I absolutely love coaching my volleyball girls! They work so hard at practices and games and I absolutely love seeing them improve. I have lots of girls who struggle with serving and it's amazing to see them in games and practices start to make their serves (get) over. They get so excited and you can just see how proud they are of themselves!"



Mrs. Sylvester-Knudtson

She also worked at a summer camp for Boys and Girls clubs in Chicago with mostly "city" kids. She said that changed her life "for the better."

Mrs. SK, and her immediate family, which consists of her husband (Matthew), her dog (Beau) and her cat (Belle), decided to move from Whitewater to Elkhorn, though her husband continues to work in Whitewater. She has been married for almost two and one-half years. Matthew works as a Director of Business Services at Whitewater's Central Office for the Whitewater School District.

"Basically, he does a lot for the financial aspect of the district," said Mrs. SK about her husband. "He doesn't work directly with kids, but does a lot to make sure all of the finances are in order."

Although Matthew still works in Whitewater, she decided to come to Phoenix as a guidance counselor.

PHOENIX RISING

Staff - Anna Lock, Emily Lock, Felipe Leal, Zachary Miller, Kaleb Guzman, Ethan Kraayeveld, Camden Lockhart, Ryan Flitcroft and Zabrya Russell

Advisor - Thom Aiello



Staff - Jacob Prado, Morgan Lock, Trinity Dement, Kaia Warner

Advisor - Thom Aiello

Design - Wendy Shafer

"I accepted the position at Phoenix Middle School because, when I was interviewing for the school counselor position, I had done a lot of research about the school and the district and I was NOT disappointed in what I had read," she said. "I was also really excited that I would get to practice my Spanish by communicating with many of our students and parents."

However, being a counselor was not on her mind when she was very young and had other career ideas swimming in her head.

"When I was in third grade, I wanted to work at Seaworld! I love swimming and being in the water and I thought it would be so cool to work with dolphins and whales," said Mrs. SK. "Eventually, my feelings changed and, from then on, I wanted to be a teacher. While working through my elementary education degree, I decided I wanted to take my degree a step further and become a school counselor."

Little could she also have known back then that she would end up at a school close to home.

"I grew up in Salem, Wisconsin, and I attended Westosha Central High School. Westosha Central is in our (Southern Lakes) conference and (is a) rival of Delavan-Darien (High School)," said Mrs. SK. She competed in some sports in her youth, including basketball, volleyball, track and cross country.

There were also many challenges to achieving her dreams, just like many challenges students may face today. She said there were some financial issues, as well as some family obstacles.

"Luckily, with the help of a strong family and friend group, I was able to work past those obstacles to achieve my dream," said Mrs. SK.

One might say that Seaworld's loss was a win for Phoenix.

Riding a bike brings many benefits

By Felipe Leal

Phoenix Rising staff

Why do people love to ride bikes? What is so good about it? Are there any "bad" things about it?



Steven Fouts

If you ride a bike to places, then you should know how it feels. If you love to ride your bike, and have researched biking, you discovered it takes about two weeks to lose at least 10 pounds just by riding your bike for fun. An average bike ride takes me 10 minutes, while riding my bike around town almost every day.

Mr. Steven Fouts is pretty much the only other person I know who rides a bicycle to Phoenix Middle School every day for work or as a daily activity.

"I love riding my bike to work every day, just because it lets you think about whatever you want without any distractions," said Mr. Fouts, a seventh-grade math teacher.

It was mentioned to him there are distractions sometimes, such as intersections, deaf people if you live nearby downtown and if you go through the Wisconsin School for the Deaf area for work,

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etc. We talked about the physical and mental positives it gives your body. I told him I have been losing a lot of weight ever since I started riding to school, and he told me the same.

We discussed the psychological part of biking, and how it can calm you down if you're mad, sad or if you have any other negative emotions.

"Whenever I feel mad I like to pedal as fast, or hard, as I can. It lets me put my anger out if I need to," said Mr. Fouts.

Those are just some of the benefits of riding a bicycle, to school or anywhere.

JOIN THE PHOENIX RISING STAFF
Contact Mr. Aiello at thomaiello@gmail.com

Opinion:

Sharing the joys of bike riding

By Felipe Leal

Phoenix Rising staff

Ever since I learned how to ride a bicycle, I adored riding it. It's so calm, quiet and peaceful for me. For other people, I hope you feel the same.

While interviewing seventh-grade math teacher Mr. Steven Fouts, he told me he did family activities. I thought, "Wow, that sounds like fun!"

He also told me the same I had told him about losing weight. He told me that every day he rides to work, he feels like he's getting better at riding, and I feel the same.

He also told me it feels amazing to ride a bike in the snow. With the soft crunch of rubber tires cutting through thick, wet snow, I feel the same as he does. I agreed with every single word he said during our interview.

I love this topic and everything about it. I hope you will learn to love it as much as I do too!



OPINION PAGE

Opinion: Adjusting to middle school challenges going fine

By Emily Lock

Phoenix Rising staff

I am a sixth grader at Phoenix Middle School. I know there are lots of new changes, like switching classes, using a hall pass, changing for gym, lockers with locks, memorizing two different combinations, having homeroom and weekly prizes.

At first I was nervous for middle school. I had so many questions, like "What if I got lost or what if I am late for class?" I was always scared that I was going to get lost, but then I realized there is nothing of which to be afraid.

It took me a while to really get used to middle school. I used to think middle school was going to be really scary. I see now that it's not so bad. The classes are hard, but they're just preparing you for the real world.

Everyone talks about how middle school is big. Well, it is big, but you are in the same hallway for everything except allied arts. So it's not that bad. When I woke up that morning, I didn't want to get out of bed.

When I got out of bed, my stomach turned and I had butterflies in my stomach. I tried to come up with all of the good things that could happen. Then, when I got there, the butterflies got bigger. Then we actually did stuff and then I saw that middle school is really fun.

I also know that the punishments are harsher. So be good. When I got my gym locker I couldn't get it open because I had to remember lots of numbers. Now I can get it, no problem, and I think you can too. I hope your first day was amazing, as was mine.

Opinion: How I spend my winter breaks

By Zachary Miller

Phoenix Rising staff

Every winter, I do this - I make igloos. I can't really make it good because the snow is like a slushy. But I use a maker and build a tiny square wall. Then I make it into a big snowball.

Once complete, I put it at the bottom of a hill. Then I go to the top of the hill with my sled, breeze down the hill and into the snow - with snow all over!

After that, it is time to go inside. Then, in comfy pajamas, it is time to play with Christmas presents, watch a movie, eat dinner, and have a good night.

SPORTS

Volleyball serves up a fine season

By Coach Amy Sylvester-Knudtson
For the Phoenix Rising

The Phoenix Middle School volleyball team spiked its way through its competition and served up wins throughout the season. Although the 2017 season did not include as many games as prior years, the Phoenix Comets did not disappoint in their increased skills and knowledge of the game.

The Comets competed against Elkhorn, Whitewater, East Troy, Waterford and Lake Geneva.

Thank you for an amazing season, girls!

The athletes included:

8th Grade:

Faith Allen
Melynna Arreola
Isabel Calhoun
Cheyenne Corning
Tija Eglite
Jaiden Elliot
Sarai Manriquez
Bobby Neal
Elizabeth Sanchez
Sofia Seitz
Marissa Torres-Raby
Gracie Zomer
Coach: Ben Herlund

7th Grade:

Jaida Arellano
Cassidee Baumeister
Mia Colunga
Mady Fonseca
Jennylee Garcia
Kaitlyn Guevara
Lillie Jaime
Mallory Jedlicka
Aislinn Martinez
Melani Mayorga
Juana Porras
Emily Rodriguez
Addy Teeter
Madi VanDeBogert
McKenzie Weiss
Kyra Wolworth
Gracie Yartey
Alexia Soto
Coaches:
Tracy Foley and
Amy Sylvester-Knudtson



Another successful flag football season

By Clay Nelson, Athletic Director
For the Phoenix Rising

Another successful flag football season has ended at Phoenix Middle School. The student athletes involved in flag football showed great spirit, resolve and determination throughout the season. They stretched their athletic ability to maximum potential as seen by the number of nail-biting contests held on Mondays and Thursdays in September and October. No fans went home disappointed as the student athletes put on a show worthy of Camp Randall.

The coaches want to thank all the players, parents, fans, referees, supervisors and ADs who helped make this season a success.

Roster

Isalas Cardona	Dahminick Markling
Lillia Chapman	Letter Winner Timothy Rakowski
Jaida Crusan	Codie Rauscher
Brianna Gunnink	Ana Skovera
Holden Harms	Dakota Taylor
Jonah Ludtke	Jacob Volkert



Pioneering: So, why be a part of the school newspaper staff?

By Thom Aiello
Phoenix Rising and
D-DHS Cometeer advisor



In an era where attacks on the media claim “fake news” and where some say young people are tuned out to the news, why is it important to continue putting out the Phoenix Rising newspaper and revive the Cometeer high school newspaper? Actually, that long question answers itself.

The students who are on these staffs so far work very hard to offer up sound news stories and personal opinion pieces. There is nothing fake about it. And the effort is there to get fellow students, staff, parents and others to “tune in” and see some of what is happening in the worlds of middle school and high school.

As a small group of students, who were members of the Phoenix Middle School newspaper club that put out Phoenix Rising in recent years, moved on to Delavan-Darien High School, they were interested in continuing with having a newspaper. The once-proud Cometeer had faded out, and it would have been easy to leave it for dead. Out of sight, out of mind. No funding available anymore for the high school paper. So, why push for a revival against the odds?

The answer is pretty simple.

The Cometeer is back, and the Rising is continuing, because the students need a voice. Doesn't that seem increasingly important in this day and age? After writing that sentence and looking at the time - 9:44 p.m. on a Sunday night, the day of a mass shooting in Texas - it feels especially important to do something positive. Helping to advise students in their journalistic efforts seems like a worthwhile endeavor for an aging person who still holds the values of journalism close to his heart.

So, here we are.

The students who worked hard to put out this edition should be commended. The club meetings, held at the Phoenix library this school year, are (hopefully) fun as well as informative. Boys and girls of varied backgrounds getting together, coming up with story ideas and so much more. However, especially because the club is rekindled at the high school level with a bit later start, the first issue for this school year is a combined one, as you have probably already noticed. Phoenix Rising on one cover; the D-DHS Cometeer on the other. It will be nice if there is enough support and if there are enough contributions to each have separate issues this school year. Otherwise, this will be the route for 2017-18. (Last school year, the Rising had three editions, with each being more pages than the one before.)

That being said, join us students!

At this point, there are no juniors and seniors from D-DHS on the staff. We're just starting to get some eighth graders involved at Phoenix. Students, you are needed. And, hopefully you will realize, you need the newspaper also. Have your voice heard. Don't let your educational years fly by and miss the chance to get involved with something memorable. As many before you have stated, being a part of a school newspaper is a nice thing to have

in your back pocket when you go to attend college or even enter the workforce. The point is not to turn every student into a future journalist, though some students have moved into the media or related fields. Being on the staff(s) shows you are a person willing to get involved, a person who cares about their school and the world around them.

Some at D-DHS are, or will be soon, old enough to vote, join the military after high school, or even run for political office! Think about that. In Manitowoc, a high school student defied the odds and was elected to the city council at 18 years old. He became the mayor four years later. Could a student at D-DHS get involved by serving on the school board or a city council or a town board? The key is involvement, and that is what is being asked of students here - to get involved in their own schools and communities and, in this case, to do it through your newspaper.

There are so many areas to get involved in, and it's never too late to join. Just some areas of interest may include: news, features, sports, music, opinion, entertainment, photography, art, comics, profiles, previews/reviews (of movies, music, books, video games, etc.). These are great opportunities to express yourself and show Comet pride as well.

Perfect pumpkin preparation



Children, sometimes with a little help from adults, painted and decorated pumpkins during a Spooktacular! event Oct. 27 at Aram Public Library in Delavan. The event, moved from Phoenix Park because of very cold weather, also featured many games, candy, apples, beverages, a costume contest, prizes and music. At least a few Phoenix Middle School students volunteered to work at the event. **Phoenix Rising photos by Thom Aiello**