

Biodiesel club adapts to restrictions

Bridget Reichmuth
Of The Talon staff

COVID-19 has affected every club in some way last year and this year, Biodiesel Club is no exception, as it has also experienced its fair share of cancellations and postponements of weekly meetings.

Although meetings did not occur during the first semester of the school year, Biodiesel Club has now been able to hold meetings again. Biodiesel Club sponsor Darrin Peters said that the pandemic has affected the capacity of how many students are able to participate in meetings.

“We did not meet in the spring or fall semesters of 2020. Currently, we have six to eight students who meet after school on Monday and Thursday to make glycerin soap,” Peters said.

For some students, they have decided not to partake in various clubs and activities this year as a result of the pandemic. However, senior Allison Byrne said that she is still attending the Biodiesel Club meetings.

“For the past couple of years, the soap team has just been me and [senior] Sarah Roberts in Mr. Peters’ room making the soap after school every week. Now that we’re seniors, we’re training a group of non-senior students about the ins and outs of the soap process so that they’re able to carry on without us when we leave. Without the opportunity to meet face-to-face, I don’t know how we would have been able to do that,” Byrne said.

Even though the Biodiesel Club has been

able to have meetings in order to produce soap from waste glycerin, the club has not been able to meet to discuss the chemistry of biodiesel, automotive, or agriculture. Club co-sponsor Bob Schaeg said that due to the limited amount of students that can meet as a result of the pandemic and the close contact that the students may have, they have not been able to hold meetings that engage in other aspects of the Biodiesel Club.

“Some of our meetings in the past have had anywhere from 10-20 students participating, and there’s just no way to have that many people gather and still stay safe. Some of the work that’s done in the club meetings involves working on the vehicles or maintaining the Biodiesel Processor, which involves a lot of close work as well as sharing tools which we really can’t do safely right now,” Schaeg said.

Now that Biodiesel Club meetings are taking place, Roberts said that although the size of the club this year has not displayed any challenges, the aspect of staying socially distanced has been harder.

“The main difference from previous years is that we all have to try to stay distanced when we’re making the soap, which makes it a little more difficult than we’re used to. But, since the soap making part of Biodiesel Club has always been a little smaller, we haven’t had any issues,” Roberts said.

COVID-19 has led to numerous cancellations of events and activities for the Biodiesel Club, including the Spring Car Show. Schaeg said that it is unfortunate for everyone involved in working and planning the event.

“One of the really disappointing things this year is that normally, at this time of the year, we’d all be working on planning for our Spring Car Show that we hold in the



Freshman Ethan Puglisi-Downey pours glycerine soap into a container held by senior Sarah Roberts on March 11. Biodiesel began selling soap to Dobbs Auto Center this year to raise funds for the program. (Photo by Kavya Ramesh)

parking lot at Summit, but due to Covid restrictions, it’s not something we can do this year. It’s a shame because the Car Show community really enjoys coming to Summit and supporting our students,” Schaeg said.

Byrne said that although the event is stressful to organize, it is a lot of fun and positively affects the Biodiesel Club.

“Every year, we have a massive car show that acts as our main fundraiser. We have music, raffles, food, and car owners from all over St. Louis come together and display their vehicle to others. Last year and this year, we haven’t been able to hold this event,

which has been devastating for me since I look forward to it so much every year. On the plus side, in the absence of the car show, we have been able to sell almost 50 gallons of soap to Dobbs, which is way more than we’ve ever produced before,” Byrne said.

Roberts said that the Spring Car Show is extremely fun to be a part of.

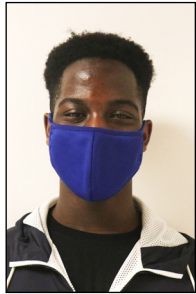
“A lot of different groups from school get together to provide things like food, and all of us students get to handle the responsibilities, like checking in cars. It’s our biggest fundraiser of the year, and it’s a great experience to have,” Roberts said.

One year later *Students reflect on quarantine*

Kavya Ramesh
Business Manager

One year ago, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the United States and forced almost everyone to lockdown in their houses. While there were a lot of hardships, many found new ways to occupy themselves and developed new habits which will continue to impact their everyday lives.

Senior Isaac Opoku:



“I learned how to make new [foods] such as cream puffs, different cakes, pastas, and soups. I always like [cooking], but it was fun having time to experiment more,” Opoku said.

Freshman Darya Weintz:



“I focused on playing the piano which I had recently stopped doing. When we were quarantined, I kind of just picked it up on my own rather than doing virtual lessons,” Weintz said.

Junior Mason Brown:



“I would go for a run just about everyday to get some exercise. I was pretty proud of myself that I found a new way for me to exercise and stay motivated at home,” Brown said.

Sophomore Lily Tarticchio:



“I started exercising way more as I did a lot of workouts from the YouTuber Chloe Ting, but it did not work well for me, so I made my own workouts. I bought a medicine ball,” Tarticchio said.

Junior Amelia Bell:



“I taught myself how to crochet a cardigan during quarantine. It’s a patchwork cardigan, so it had a bunch of different squares that I made individually and then put together,” Bell said.

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