



THE DEVIL'S HERALD

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Avon Grove High School, West Grove, Pa.

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COMMUNITY

Country Christmas supplies students chances to build and sell products

By
Myles Ruess
Staff Writer

Avon Grove Intermediate School's parking lot was packed with cars and its halls filled with stocked tables. Bustling with vendors and consumers, Avon Grove's beloved Country Christmas called in a crowd from 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. on Saturday, December 2.

Some of Avon Grove's staff and students ran their own stands, selling high quality, handmade items.

Senior Grace Brown sold her original handmade jewelry. Her authentic crystal and charm necklaces, rings, and earrings caught the eye of many who passed by.

Having started her business three years ago, this was Grace's second year as a vendor at Country Christmas.

"It's definitely the most money I make at any event or even selling online. This is the biggest one I do, so it's brought in more people and gotten my name out there more.

"It's a little nerve wracking at first because you have to get yourself out there and talk to people you don't know. It is honestly really fun to talk to people about what I make."

AGHS's very own Production Tech class made their annual appearance. Mr. Herrman's first period class filled their tables with handcrafted shelving, bird houses, and dog food and water bowl stands.

Production Tech class revolves around building and selling items at Country Christmas each year. Students buy materials and make high quality products for Country Christmas consumers.

Not only do students learn to make



-Photo by Myles Ruess

Mr. Herrman's tech production class shows off their wares at Country Christmas: J.J. Martin, Gabe Rieger, Aiden Perry, and Edwin Castano-Galarza.

their ideas come to life through important construction skills, but they also learn responsibility. Putting their own money towards their projects, students have the chance to earn their money back through Country Christmas sales.

AGI's fifth grade social studies and language arts teacher, Mrs. Kristie Rineer, attended Country Christmas for the fifth year. What started as a downtime hobby became racks and racks of holiday deco-

rations.

Her hand painted wooden panels and wooden ornaments called a crowd like no other. Mrs. Rineer's area was never empty, for there was a fairly constant flow of people.

As Country Christmas's popularity grows overtime, vendors have to start their preparations earlier. Mrs. Rineer started creating during the summer, but for next year she thinks she may have to start

even earlier.

Country Christmas brought together a wonderful community full of artisans and generous consumers, boosting small businesses.

EDUCATION

AI grows, affects teaching and learning

By
Joe Lewis
Staff Writer

Artificial intelligence will change how a classroom functions in the near future.

According to HCLTech.com, artificial intelligence, also referred to as AI, is the science of making machines that think like humans.

Some of the things that you do daily such as Google search, sending an email, and smart home devices such as Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri all include artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence is growing at a rapid pace. According to LinkedIn.com, "We can see significant advancements in various fields, such as healthcare, transportation and entertainment."

Dr. Kotch, the Director of Innovation and Technology at Avon Grove School District says that he is "excited for what the future holds for AI, but it's also new so we have to learn to use it the right way."

AI is brand new and it will open new doors, but with the new technology, there is a lot to look out for.

Checking off the box that says, "agree to terms and conditions," may mean that any information that you put in there may not be yours anymore, warns Dr. Kotch.

It's important to never put confidential information into an AI chatbot because it could lead to your information being stolen.

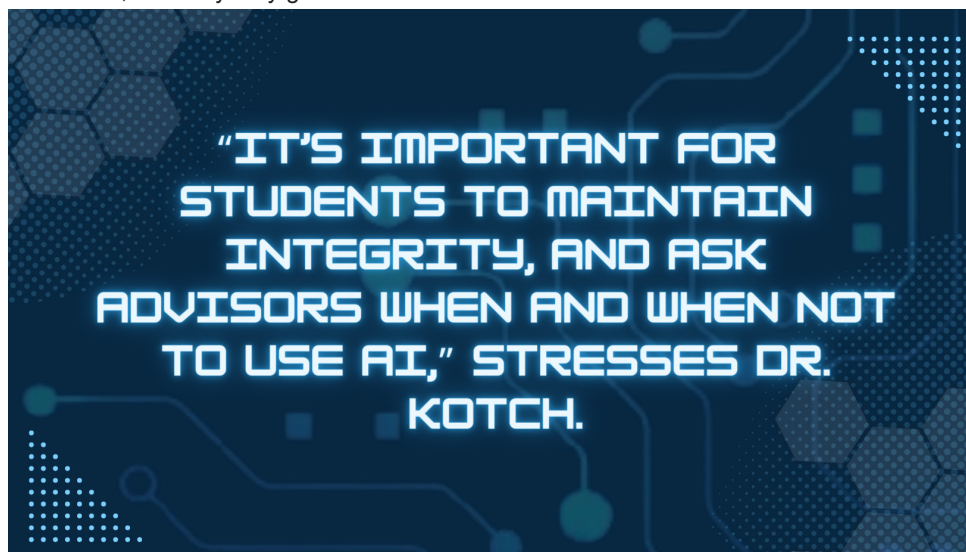
Students may be flustered while doing homework, and they may go to AI as a last

resort. In a school setting you have to ask yourself when and where not to use AI, in order to protect your image.

"It's important for students to maintain integrity, and ask advisors when and when not to use AI," stresses Dr. Kotch.

Inappropriate uses for AI in a school setting would include, writing whole essays, and using it during a test, which may lead to academic dishonesty.

The AGSD Academic Honor Code states



resort. In a school setting you have to ask yourself when and where not to use AI, in order to protect your image.

"It's important for students to maintain integrity, and ask advisors when and when not to use AI," stresses Dr. Kotch.

that "utilizing a writing bot to complete your work" is an example of dishonorable behavior.

Appropriate uses for AI would include using websites such as Mybib.com and Easybib.com to create citations for writing

pieces.

Ms. Krusen, a math teacher at Avon Grove, believes that there is a way for AI to be implemented into the curriculum.

Ms. Krusen stresses that AI will be harder to learn than if you were to learn how to do the work on your own. "AI will certainly make us lazier as a society," she warns.

Mrs. Brennan, an English teacher at Avon Grove, shares that AI could be a beneficial tool if used the right way.

"AI could be a great tool for students to get feedback and ideas for their writing pieces," Mrs. Brennan articulates.

Mrs. Brennan implies that it would be vital for students to learn how to use AI in an ethical manner, if implemented into the curriculum.

AI is being developed for schools that will be implemented into the curriculum.

"The AI will set guardrails for students in order to teach them to learn in a safe way," explains Dr. Kotch.

Dr. Kotch says AI makes us as a society get work done in a faster, and a more efficient way. Society will use AI a lot more in the future, illustrates Dr. Kotch, and a lot more AI is going to be integrated into teaching and learning.

COMMUNITY

Shine bright, Avondale

Annual Christmas tree lighting held

By

LeeAnn Baker
Staff Writer

Avondale hosted their annual Christmas tree lighting event on December 2. The borough marked the beginning of the holiday season as the community gathered for music, dancing, hot chocolate, treats, and most importantly—the Christmas tree.

Avondale Mayor Susan Rzucidlo was the head coordinator of this event. This event has been a longstanding tradition and is located outside Avondale Hall.

"Before I officially took office, I assisted the previous mayor, Steve Cummings, in decorating the building and setting up for the event. When I assumed my role, I continued the tradition Steve had set, including organizing the KMC Dancers to entertain the community. It's a wonderful, free family event, and I'm honored to carry on this tradition," explained Mayor Rzucidlo.

"We plan the event a few months in advance, maintaining a list of activities and a calendar for reservations with our DJ and dancers. November is a particularly intense month for preparation. We consistently host the event on the first Saturday in December each year," Mayor Rzucidlo stated.

Every year, the planners for this event incorporate new decorations and ideas from attendees, council members, and staff, making it truly a community cherished event.

This year the highlight of the event, aside from the lighting of



-Photo courtesy of Susan Rzucidlo

Avondale's Christmas tree was lit on December 2.

the tree, was the crowd ringing bells to welcome Santa.

"Each attendee receives a bell as a keepsake, and Santa makes time to meet with every child who wishes to visit," stated Mayor Rzucidlo.

Mayor Rzucidlo stated that typically around 100-200 people attend this annual event, making it an all-around attraction within the community.

"It's heartwarming to witness young children meeting Santa and sharing their hopes and dreams. Last year, we introduced

a new tradition of inviting the crowd to join us in dancing in the street, creating a fun experience that we plan to continue each year."

AG CLUBS

Giving back serves everyone involved

By

Ella Bartnik
Column

While the holiday season is typically comprised of warm thoughts about spending time with family, escaping daunting amounts of schoolwork, and being in the safe and nourishing environment we know as home, it is important to recognize that not everyone shares those same privileges.

As we navigate through the holiday season and approach the much awaited end of the year, it becomes the ideal time to sit back and reflect on the joys of giving.

This time of year is so commonly associated with the word "giving" and it's essential to recognize the various volunteer opportunities available for those who aim to give back to their communities.

From donating goods to partaking in food drives, volunteering and offering compassion to those who need it during the season of giving helps individuals make a positive difference in their communities.

Fortunately, Avon Grove School District lies in an area with plentiful amounts of volunteer opportunities.

Some local opportunities for students looking to become more involved with their community include:

Donating resources to food cupboards; locally, there is a food pantry located in Wester Chester

that has worked to donate over 3 million meals annually.

Participating in school-run events; currently there is a food drive that is run by our school's Humanitarian Club aiming to donate canned goods to those in need during the holiday season.

Volunteering at a soup kitchen; this provides one with hands-on experience in working to make a tangible difference in the lives of many who face food impoverishment.

Join clubs; while this might seem too simple to be true, a lot of Avon Grove's clubs place a heavy emphasis on embracing community service like the Sewing Club, Leo Club, and National Honor Society.

While welcoming the spirit of giving and becoming involved in volunteer work, not only will you contribute to the betterment of your community, but you will also experience personal fulfillment and growth.

Feeling a great sense of accomplishment after volunteering and providing service to somebody isn't just a coincidence; it is a universal psychological experience that stems from your role as a volunteer that gives you a natural sense of pride and personal identity.

The act of giving through volunteerism provides a unique opportunity to connect, work with, and share experiences with others through contributions for the greater good.

COMMUNITY

896 Pie, Casa Italia, Pasquale's IV compete for local customers

By

Hannah Strawhecker
Column

For many families, pizza is a go-to meal. Whether it's having one less home-cooked dinner to plan, or catering for your child's sports team which is full of picky eaters, pizza is an easy, comforting food for anyone to eat at any time.

I reviewed 3 popular pizza shops off of route 896 in order to provide you with a trustworthy analysis of the best pizzeria in the area. For reference, I ordered one slice of cheese pizza at each shop in order to come up with a fair comparison of each shop. Here are my takes:

896 Pie

896 Pie is a local pizza shop located in Landenberg, PA. The owner, Brent Hollars, has been making pizza since he was a high school student at Avon Grove High School.

"I started delivering pizzas in 1993 at Rosa's in West Grove. I always enjoyed it," said Hollars.

Hollars, who has owned 896 Pie for 7 years, claims that his "pizza recipe has not changed. It has always been the same."

896 Pie is unique because of the variety of their menu.

"We have all kinds of crazy different pizzas: a Big Mac pizza, chicken bacon ranch, sesame chicken pizza, and really good cheesesteaks."

Some complain about the pricing (\$3 per slice before tax) but it is because of the quality that is put

into making pizza at 896. "We put a lot of love into our stuff and we use the best ingredients we can."

896 Pie sells a slice of cheese pizza for \$3, coming to \$3.18 with tax. Their small 12-inch pizza costs \$12, and the large 16-inch pizza costs \$15.

The pizza is on the thinner side, but the ratio of cheese-sauce-crust could not be any better. The pizza has good stability and is rich in taste.

The customer service there is great as the owner and employees greeted me with a smile as soon as I walked into the shop.

I would recommend 896 Pie to anyone and everyone who loves pizza and is looking for a local pizza shop to buy from.

Casa Italia Pizza & Pasta

Casa Italia is another local pizza shop located on route 896. The employees were very amicable and helpful.

Casa Italia translates to "Italian House" in Italian.

The restaurant is dedicated to providing authentic Italian tasting meals like pizza and pasta.

One slice of cheese pizza costs \$3.18 at Casa Italia. The pizza was very saucy and the cheese was perfectly melted, making it stretchy. The slice was larger than the slices at the other restaurants.

Between regular and specialty pizzas, their large menu provides many options for Italian lovers.

Their pasta menu includes spaghetti, lasagna, penne, ziti, ravioli, and many more. They also have strombolis, sandwiches, burgers,

and steak hoagies.

The seating at Casa Italia is plentiful and provides enough space for large groups of people. It is very homey and was decorated nicely for the holidays.

Casa Italia is a pleasant local restaurant and I would recommend their menu for all of your Italian cravings.

Pasquale's IV

Pasquale's is a chain restaurant with many locations. The closest one is Pasquale's IV, which is located on route 896 in New London.

Many families are loyal to Pasquale's because of the convenience of the location.

Though the owner declined an interview, the website claims that their mission is to provide "excellent quality, great value, and friendly service."

The restaurant is casual and has minimal seating, although they do provide excellent take-out service.

Another reason people love Pasquale's is because of the pricing. One slice of cheese pizza sells for \$3.13, which is cheaper than both 896 Pie and Casa Italia.

However, the taste is much different. Pasquale's pizza has more of a charred taste, since the crust was toastier. It was fairly stable, although I wish there was more sauce.

I would recommend Pasquale's IV to those who are looking for an affordable local pizza shop.



-Photo by Hannah Strawhecker
896 Pie in Landenberg



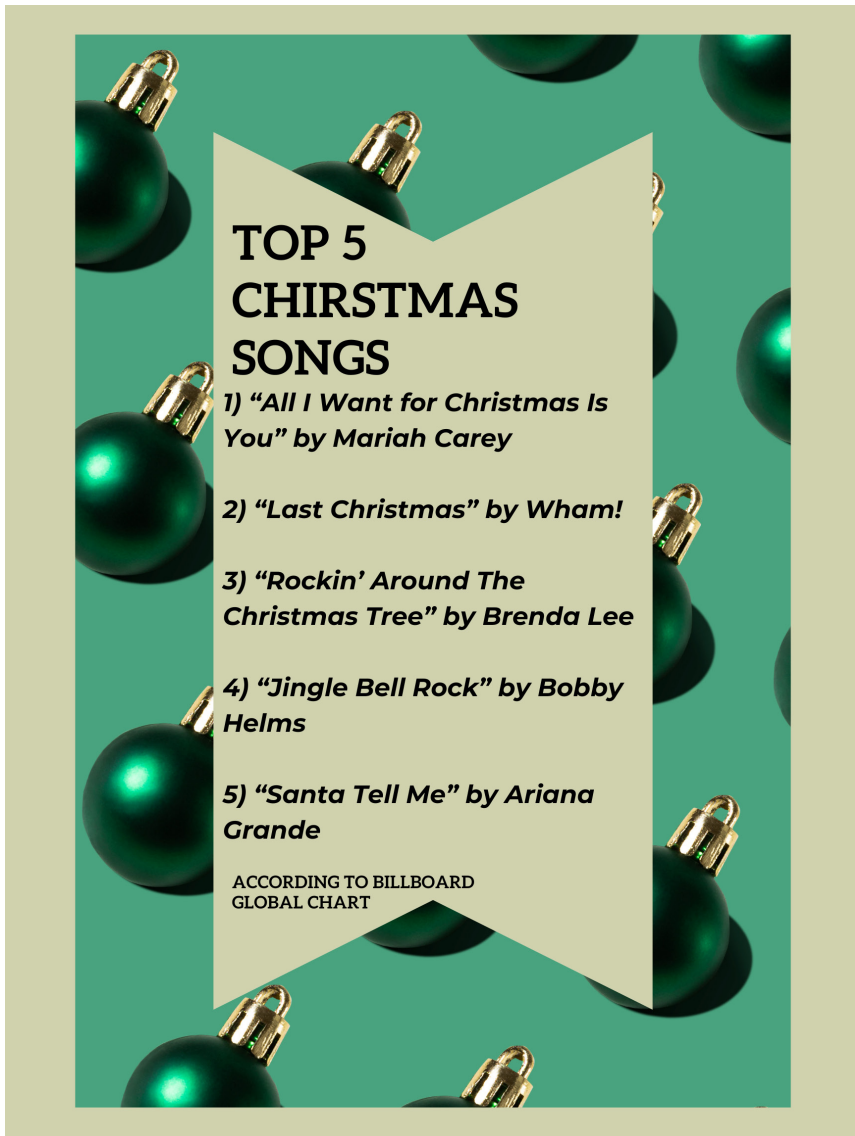
-Photo by Hannah Strawhecker
Casa Italia in Lincoln University



-Photo by Hannah Strawhecker
Pasquale's IV in New London

HOLIDAYS

Popular Christmas music spans generations



By
Mary Kate D'Ambrosio
Column

"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" when the snow starts falling, there are chestnuts roasting on an open fire and "Jingle Bells" are ringing.

It's been widely debated when the appropriate time is to start listening to Christmas music, when the right time to decorate for the holidays is, and what the right time is to buy a Christmas tree.

One of the most popular debates though is what is the best Christmas song?

According to Billboard Global Chart, Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" holds onto the reign as "Queen of Christmas," ranking number one for the fourth year in a row.

She is followed closely by Wham!'s "Last Christmas" at number two, and "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree" sung by Brenda Lee not far behind at third.

Billboard's top chart ranking is determined based upon how many times a song is streamed and the amount of sales.

So if you're looking to make the perfect

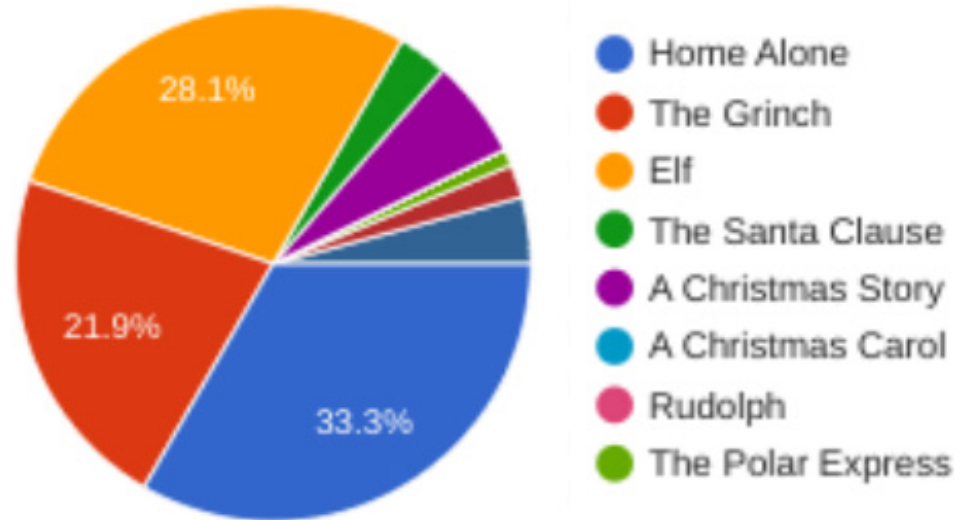
Christmas playlist to listen to during your break, according to the global chart, you should consider intertwining the following:

1. "All I Want for Christmas Is You" - Mariah Carey
2. "Last Christmas"- Wham!
3. "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree" - Brenda Lee
4. "Jingle Bell Rock"- Bobby Helms
5. "Santa Tell Me" - Ariana Grande
6. "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" - Michael Buble
7. "Underneath The Tree" - Kelly Clarkson
8. "It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year" - Andy Williams
9. "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!" - Dean Martin
10. "Feliz Navidad" - Jose Feliciano

Hopefully Avon Grove will have a "Wonderful Christmas Time" and get to experience a "White Christmas" this year.

HOLIDAYS

'Home Alone,' 'Elf,' 'The Grinch' top Christmas movie list



Ninety-six Avon Grove High School students responded to a survey on their favorite Christmas movies.

By
Cailin Maley
Column

When it's time to get into the Christmas spirit the temperature starts to drop, the Christmas decorations come out, and the radio is playing your favorite Christmas songs. One of the most classic ways to get into the Christmas spirit is getting under a nice, cozy blanket, making popcorn and hot chocolate, and watching Christmas movies.

Of course, everyone has different opinions on what their favorite movies are. There are so many classics that can make you feel the warm, fuzzy feeling of Christmas.

I had about 100 people take a survey and pick their favorite Christmas movies, and here are the rankings.

The movie ranked first is *Home Alone*. *Home Alone* is about Kevin McCallister, an 8 year old boy, who gets left home alone while his family is on vacation for Christmas. Then, two burglars try to rob his house, and he sets up a bunch of traps in an attempt to stop them.

I think *Home Alone* is such a classic and funny movie that I could watch over and over again and never get sick of. I always laugh at moments like when Kevin turns on the TV and scares the pizza delivery guy, or when Kevin puts the tarantula on Marv.

"*Home Alone* is by far the best Christmas movie. There are so many funny moments and the characters never fail to make me laugh. The music also contributes so much to the film. *Home Alone* always gets me into the Christmas spirit," says sophomore Emma Poser.

The movie that ranked a close second was *Elf*. In *Elf*, Buddy lives at the North Pole with Santa and all the other elves. But he is actually a human and not an elf, and

when Buddy finds out he wants to travel to New York to meet his real dad, he goes on an adventure, discovering many new things along the way.

I think *Elf* is a great movie if you want a good laugh. I love scenes like when Buddy is in a snowball fight, or when he is exploring New York and doesn't know how anything works. It always gets me in the Christmas spirit.

"*Elf* is just such a funny movie. It never fails to get me in the Christmas spirit. You just can never go wrong with it," says sophomore Lyla Rowe.

The movie that ranked third is *The Grinch*. *The Grinch* is about a man who is very miserable and grumpy and he lives in Whoville with his pet dog Max, and he makes a plan to stop Christmas for all of Whoville.

The Grinch is my all time favorite Christmas movie. I think it is such a great concept and it just shows how Christmas can make anyone happy. I love all the versions, though the live action one does scare me a bit, but they all just make me feel so excited for Christmas, just like any good Christmas movie should.

"I believe *The Grinch* is a great Christmas classic. It shows the true meaning of the season," says sophomore Ella McCleary.

One of my other favorites that didn't make the top three is *A Christmas Story*.

A Christmas Story is just so funny and I love the scene where Ralphie's mom puts on his little brother's snow suit, and it's so big and puffy that he can't even keep his arms down.

HERALD SPORTS



Dec. 22
Boys Ice Hockey
vs. D'town West, 6:45p.m., Patriot Ice Center

Dec. 28-29
Boys & Girls Basketball
Avon Grove Holiday Tournament

Dec. 29
Wrestling
@ Marple Newtown

For The Record				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
W	2	3	3	9
L	2	1	4	0
T			1	

Note: Records as of Dec. 17.

EDUCATION

Is cursive relevant?

By
Will Gorman
Staff Writer

When you think of the biggest document in US history, what do you think of?

One of the most notable things on the Declaration of Independence are the signatures.

These signatures shaped what has now become an iconic document in this country.

The writing style they used to sign their name is called cursive.

Cursive has been around since the 1500s, according to Wonderopolis.com, and was very popular back in those times.

People used to sign documents like this and even write letters in cursive.

Cursive could help distinguish a person's handwriting for the person reading it without seeing the

name on that letter.

Over the years, however, the use of cursive has seemed to die down.

The main reason for this is the use of writing emails and sending text messages.

The main argument for using cursive is to sign your name on something.

However, in schools, cursive has become less prominent.

Cursive used to also be taught in almost all schools and now is mainly taught in Catholic schools.

Junior Sebastian Binstead does know cursive but only uses it at certain times.

He joked, "I know how to do cursive, but I only do it when I sign my name on a piece of paper or ask for my autograph."

"It is important to know it because if someone needs your signature it would be weird to not write your name in cursive."

While this goes for the idea that cursive is still relevant, English teacher Mrs. Brennan disagrees.

"Cursive is not relevant because of the use of technology like computers etc. where you can just write an email," she said.

While she did say it's not relevant anymore, she did add that she thinks AG should teach cursive, "I do think we should because it helps with motor skills for your brain at a young age."

Cursive can also be used to be creative and help express people's creativity throughout their writing.

Senior Jamar Williams called it a lost art form adding that it isn't relevant anymore but that it can express creativeness.

Safe to say it will be interesting to see whether cursive has a resurgence or will truly be a lost art form.

News Briefs

Taylor Swift named Time's Person of the Year

The 2023 *Time* Person of the Year was Taylor Swift. Swift is such a talented storyteller, song writer, singer, musician, and so much more. She moves so many people with her music. According to *Time Magazine*, Swift is a smart businesswoman who has built an empire worth over \$1 billion. She is also a celebrity who gets a lot of attention, and she really does know how to use it. Taylor Swift has always been big, but over this past year, "She became the main character of the world," says *Time Magazine*.

~By Cailin Maley

Google AI chatbot, Bard, gets upgraded into its sister, Gemini

ChatGPT's Google rival, Bard is due for a new upgrade in 2024. According to Techcrunch, while Bard has the abilities to explore creative ideas and explain things simply, Gemini will be capable of "more advanced reasoning, planning, and understanding." Bard was already more advanced than ChatGPT but studies show that Gemini "outperformed" ChatGPT. Gemini will not only be its separate self, it will be combined with Bard in phase one as more and more knowledge is gained about Gemini. The subunits of Bard and Gemini are: Gemini pro, ultra, and nano, and Bard advanced; a combination of Gemini pro and Bard. "This is the biggest single quality improvement of Bard since we've launched," according to Sissie Hisao, vice president, general manager, and Bard assistant at Google according to TechCrunch.

~By Giselle McCullough

FALL PLAY

Tinker Bell takes the stage with faith, trust, and a little bit of pixie dust

By
Riley Wiercinski
Senior Editor

Epic sword fights, the fear of growing up, a terrifying pirate with a hook for a hand, a couple of random children from London, and so much more soared onto the stage during the theater department's investigation of life's most important question: Do you believe in fairies?

"This show meant a lot to me, since my first show ever was *Peter Pan*, and our director Cali [Heath] was Wendy, so she was the first person I ever looked up to. It meant a lot to me to get this part," said junior Jameson Williams, the reigning Wendy Darling.

Keeping with the theme of revitalizing Disney classics after *Alice in Wonderland* in the fall, the theater department took the stage with an upbeat rendition of *Tinker Bell*. Not only did the show entertain audiences both young and old, but it incorporated over 30 students from the elementary school cast.

"It's cool to work with children from second to twelfth grade. It's definitely a wild range of students and the most exciting part is having such a large amount of the community involved," says director Cali Heath, the current theater and public speaking teacher at the middle school.

"They were actually really good and knew what they were

doing," noted Mary Kate D'Ambrosio, who played a Lost Boy named Tootles. "A couple of cast members, myself included, used to do elementary cast, so we know all the work the kids do. We know that they work hard, and it's great to see that they practiced a lot."

Tinker Bell wasn't only a great opportunity for the elementary kids to improve their acting skills, it allowed our resident high schoolers to break out some new tricks.

"I feel like, personally, going from *Grandma Addams* to an egg to a woman who murdered her husband to a little boy, has diversified me quite a bit. I've basically gone through every stage of life," says senior Ruby Queen, who portrayed Peter Pan.

Others got to continue honing their skills into a specific character type.

"I've always been kind of in the antagonist role or some other character like that. I was Jafar twice, and then Mal Beineke, who was just a bad guy, then the Mad Hatter, who is obviously insane. Now, I'm Captain Hook," says M Welch, or as he's more commonly known around the school, Windstorm Welch.

The cast obviously had an amazing time throughout the creation of the show. Tech Saturday was definitely the highlight of the rehearsal process, with the mystery of the plastic duck invasion.

"Someone bought a bulk bag of plastic ducks on Amazon and placed them into every nook and cranny of the auditorium, and in every pocket of every costume. We still don't know who did it!" exclaimed Queen. "It was almost like *Chicago* part two with the amount of people who got framed for the ducks."

"[The cast] is super happy and positive, and I feel like we really bonded throughout the whole thing," noted Brady Fox, who played Captain Hook's always humorous right-hand man, Mr. Smee.

The most agreed-upon challenge of the show was trying to get the accent just right.

"I started with a really bad Spaniard accent. I fumbled around with French, and back to Spanish, threw a little Russian in there, and somehow made my way back to Spanish," said Welch.

Another challenging aspect was the large fight scene. Though it might have been a daunting experience, the fight scene was the most talked about part of the evening aside from Isla Palkovitz's brush with death.

The crowd roared, screaming their support for the dying Tinker Bell before them.

While the cast might have had some minor setbacks, the crew was off and running with the full rehearsal time spent in the auditorium.



-Photo courtesy of Lily Queen

Ruby Queen's Peter Pan instigates a duel with M Welch's Captain Hook.

"I think this was a lot easier to put on than *Alice* since we only had the auditorium for about a week before the show and the set is quite a bit bigger with fewer moving parts," said assistant stage manager Taylor Remsburg.

The theater department is always looking for new cast and crew members along with pit performers to take on their rendition of *Mean Girls: The Musical*, in the spring.

"We really are struggling for boys to join the theater program right now. This is a call for anyone who wants to come and join us. We are desperate for boys!" exclaimed director Helen Whitehouse. "We had to find a show with a female-heavy cast and there isn't many of them out there."

"Come and give us a try. We are very flexible and we understand that people have other commitments and we always try to work around those commitments. You can speak to any of our cast, crew, and tech involved and they know we are one big family, and we have a lot of fun."

Please note that you do not have to be an actor to participate in theater. They are looking for students of all talents, including dancing, singing, and playing instruments, or even students who have the confidence to just get on stage and perform for their peers.

TCHS provides another career pathway

By
Connor Graber
Staff Writer

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning are some of the most popular paths at the Technical College High School.

There are many paths to a great career after high school. The Technical College High School is another option that students can take and offers a variety of different careers and classes.

TCHS has eight different types of programs. Each one of these programs has different subsections that focus on specific things.

The architecture and construction pathway has two subcategories. There is carpentry and there is HVAC and refrigeration.

HVAC stands for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning and this is the path that Rodolfo Mondragon and J.T. Neil took.

They both have jobs at this stage but in separate parts of HVAC. Mondragon is in residential HVAC and Neil is in commercial HVAC.

Mondragon started the HVAC program his sophomore year and was able to leave for TCHS in October. He would go to TCHS after his morning classes here at the high school.

Mondragon was doing everything he could to fill his resume in the two years he was at TCHS.

After getting a job, he only has to go to TCHS every other Wednesday. He now starts work at eleven in the morning.

Neil started the program at the same time but was able to start his job last year. He was able to work through the summer.

For Neil, he has to travel as far as two hours away for some job sites and has to leave as early as 9:00a.m. to get there on time.

For a student to get a job, they need to find a company willing to have co-op students work for them. There is also the chance they find a company looking for young people.

"It took me a while to get my job because other companies were not determined to do co-op with me," said Rodolfo Mondragon.

For J.T. Neil, he said, "The likelihood of me getting a job is a lot higher because a lot of companies want younger people."

Mondragon does not plan on attending college as he said, "I would recommend it due to the new paths you could take by furthering your education in HVAC."

Neil also does not plan on going to college as of now, but also thinks it is a great option and said, "People are always going to need HVAC."

He feels school has not changed and said, "Having this job is nice. You are getting to experience lots of new things."

Having the job did not affect Neil as his job was understanding and he was able to participate in a full golf season for school.

Mondragon waited until soccer season was over to start his job, as he was just starting and did not have the same amount of experi-

ence as Neil.

Some students may decide to take this route and it is a good option to get a quality job right out of high school, and for these two students, during high school.

There are many different pathways to take to get out of the cookie-cutter schedule and find your career.

Final stretch before application deadline

Tips for last minute college applications and preparing for the new FAFSA form

By
Maddie Butler
Senior Editor

With many deadlines scheduled for right after the holidays, many seniors have been working diligently to get their college applications done.

The process of applying to college is often harder than anticipated as all of your achievements and hard work have to be dwindled down to a few supplementals, one choice essay, and random fill-in-the-blanks.

Outside of just applying, there are numerous tasks one must also complete before being done including filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application, sending self-reported scores, and checking up on other potential materials that can be required by a college.

If required, it is crucial that self-reported academic records (SRAR) are completed, which are usually sent out to students in an email after the college receives their application, and a comprehensive list of colleges that do require them can be found on SRAR Support Center's website under "Which colleges/universities accept the SSAR/SRAR."

A student that chooses to submit self-reported scores, such as ACTs or SATs, must also send those to colleges that they apply to.

Self-reporting SAT scores can be done through the College Board's website, which is also possible to do for ACT scores within the ACT website.

The process of reporting scores and filling out SRARs often come after the onerous task of writing a personal essay that is required by most colleges when applying through Common App.

As most people find out, the most daunting part of writing your college essay is choosing the topic as there are so many options that could convey more about a student's identity to colleges/universities.

Avon Grove English teacher Ms. Mills has read over many college essays during her time as a teacher, and "recommend[s] picking something that is unique to you" as well as a topic that is

"something you feel like you can say a lot about."

Through this short anecdote packed with details and lessons, Ms. Mills instructs that a student should aim to "show who you are to the admissions counselor instead of telling them."

The ability of a student to "dive into a lot of detail rather than just list facts about [their] resume" as well as paying attention to word counts is definitely valued by colleges, according to Ms. Mills.

Especially for supplementals, Ms. Mills recommends a "less-is-more" kind of attitude by focusing on a "specific example and then diving into that experience of what you did" in order to "show how you came to learn that lesson about who you are."

If you aren't sure that your essay meets the standards expected for college applications then Ms. Mills ensures that "most, if not all, of the English teachers here are willing to read your college application essays before you submit them."

Supplementals are essays written for each individual college that are typically shorter, but as stressed by Ms. Mills, it's crucial to pay attention to the given word limits for each prompt.

Prompts for these supplementals can be found within each college application within Common App, so it's important to fill out these questions with time before the deadline in case any optional/required supplementals are embedded within the section.

Senior Tyler Dalton wrote 84 supplementals in total for the 19 colleges he applied to, and shares that even though some may be optional, they are definitely helpful for the school to learn more about your experiences "at home, in your activities, on trips, or at jobs."

In addition to applying to colleges, students need to fill out their FAFSA applications if they plan on receiving federal financial aid, and to allow for states as well as colleges/universities to determine how much they will provide for individuals.

Although the FAFSA form has not yet been released to the public, there are still steps that students can take to prepare themselves as it will be released by

December 31.

Students should make an account on the FAFSA website, StudentAid.gov, prior to the release of the actual form, and new changes to the FAFSA structure for the 2024-2025 term means that "contributors" should also make their own accounts as well prior to the release.

Contributors, a new term for the FAFSA process, has been added this year so that people who are connected to a student based on dependency, tax filing, or marital status can be taken into account for federal aid. Although, it's important to note that the status of a contributor does not make someone financially responsible for the student.

Possible contributors that would require their own FAFSA account include step parents, biological/adoptive parents, and a spouse of the student, but contributors will not be required to provide a social security number in order to make an account once the application has been officially released.

Once the form has been released, students will also be able to add up to 20 colleges within their FAFSA account, which is a generous increase from the 10 college/university limit that has been used in years past.

In addition to allowing students to add more colleges to apply the aid to, students will also be able to view their progress while filling out questions as well as their contributors progress in the form.

The ease of filling out the application has also been increased by a reduction in the number of questions on the application from 108 to 46 for the 2024-2025 term.

Federal tax information will be transferred directly into your account rather than manually entered by each individual, but this means that you must provide consent for the information to be sent before gaining access to the form.

Not only must a student fill out their FAFSA once they have applied, but they also must take on the anxiety-ridden task of waiting for college decisions to come out.

Due to the decision dates for most regular decision colleges/universities, most will hear back from their schools come March, and students then have to focus

FAFSA UPDATES 2024-2025

- 1) Separate accounts needed for contributors
- 2) 20 available spots for colleges/universities within account
- 3) Students can view the progress of their own as well as their contributor's forms
- 4) Federal tax information transferred directly
- 5) Reduction in number of questions on form

on making a difficult decision on where they will actually attend.

Although the process of picking a school is different for everyone, Dalton chose to apply to 19 schools in order to have the ability "to see how much scholarship money or other opportunities a school can provide" in order "to decide for [himself] what the best option is after receiving all of [his] results."

Some of those who applied rolling, early, or active decision have already heard back from colleges/universities, such as Nate Schinzel who was recently accepted to the University of Vermont (UVM) under their early decisions deadline.

In order to apply early decision, Schinzel had to be sure that the University of Vermont was the right choice for him as this round of admissions is binding.

Aspects that helped Schinzel to choose UVM were the exceptional "environmental science program, good skiing [opportunities], and the culture of the school."

If you haven't heard back yet from early decision or early action

then it's likely that the college/university has later decision dates, which can be checked within application portals as well as online within their websites.

It's important to remember that those that are deferred from their schools upon receiving decisions can still be admitted to the college/university as their application will be considered again for regular decision.

This is an anxiety-ridden time for most seniors no matter where they stand in the process: accepted, rejected, waiting for decisions, deferred, or still working on applications, but it's important to remember that these efforts are not for nothing as this is where you will likely spend the next 4 years of your life.

Therefore, it's important to focus on one step of the application process at a time and think about the positives no matter what decision you receive.

Dalton adds to this outlook, "The process works out for everyone, and you will end up where you're supposed to be, even if you are disappointed at first."

Winter solstice today, cold moon next week

By
Adam Swift
Column

As of the publication of this paper, it is the best time to stargaze all year. Winter is especially good for stargazing due to the lack of moisture in the air, and since heat is just movement of atoms, when the air is colder, the atmosphere is more still than when it is hot out.

Stillness is a big factor in astronomical viewing within the atmosphere. If the air isn't still, then dimmer objects can be washed out.

If you are reading this on December 22, the winter solstice is today. This means that the Sun is the lowest in the sky that it will get at our latitude.

As you may know, that means today is the shortest day of the year.

Also, today is the Ursids meteor shower. It is the last notable mete-

or shower until January.

Next, in chronological order is the "cold moon." The "cold moon" is a widely used word for the full moon of December. Other names include "oak moon," and "snow moon."

As for the January events before the fifth issue...

On the third of January, Earth will reach perihelion. This is the Earth's closest point to the Sun in its orbit.

You may ask then, "Why is it colder if we are closer to the Sun?" The location of the Earth in its orbit only affects the temperature in regards to the angle we are at during the day, not distance.

In winter, we are angled away from the Sun during the day, making it colder. On the night of the third into the morning of the fourth, the Quadrantids meteor shower peaks, the first shower of the new year.

The eleventh of January is the



first new moon of the year. Given the average winter conditions, it may be a good idea to go stargazing.

On the morning of the twelfth, Mercury reaches its longest west-

ern elongation, meaning it will be most visible in the mornings just before sunrise.

Editor's Note: All data and information sources are from the

National Aeronautics and Space Agency's website (nasa.gov).