



January 2021



VOLUME LIV

Sword & Shield

JAMES MADISON MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT NEWSPAPER



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v. Finals Week

Welcome to 2022!

Hi Spartans! My name is Anvika and I'm your News Editor. Hopefully, everyone was able to take a break from school and relax. And more importantly, hopefully everyone's ready for a new semester! A new year brings many new things and it's never too late to join a spring sport or club. In this issue, we cover everything from the musical at Memorial (Mamma Mia!) to how to stick to your resolutions to Memorial sports updates. Stay strong Spartans! Have an amazing January!



Anvika Annyapu

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What's happening **THIS MONTH at JMM?**

- 1 — No School-Winter Break
- 2 —
- 3 —
- 4 — School Resumes
- 5 —
- 6 —
- 7 —
- 8 —
- 9 —
- 10 —
- 11 —
- 12 —
- 13 —
- 14 —
- 15 —
- 16 —
- 17 —
- 18 — No school-Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 19 —
- 20 —
- 21 — Grupo Latinx de Padres Reunion:6:00pm-8:00pm
- 22 — End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester and No School
- 23 —
- 24 —
- 25 — Beginning of 3rd Quarter and 2nd Semester
- 26 — Facilities Feedback Session:Memorial High School
- 27 —
- 28 —
- 29 —
- 30 —
- 31 —

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FASHION TRENDS MAKING A COMEBACK

By: *Nadya Konadu*

What goes around always comes back around eventually. We see this happening practically everywhere we look – popular movies and TV shows from the 80s and 90s are getting rebooted left and right, midcentury modern furniture and décor are ruling the interior design world, and current fashion trends represent a mixed bag of all the best statement pieces from the decades.

Silk scarves – 50s

One fashion trend that is equal parts romantic and classic is the simple silk scarf around the neck.

Corduroy – 70s

Corduroy is coming back around, with pieces like the corduroy skirt being particularly fashionable.

White boots – 70s

The iconic white go-go boots of the 70s were chic and futuristic, and when paired with a colorful mini dress they made the perfect outfit for a night at the disco. Now we are seeing these boots back on the shelves in various lengths from ankle height to above the knee!

Chunky sneakers – 80s

The 80s was the decade of the sneaker. Everyone was wearing Levi's and white tennis shoes, the chunkier the better.

High-waisted jeans – 80s

High-waisted jeans have been back in style for a couple of years now, and we aren't seeing them go away any time soon.

Mom jeans – 90s

You know the type – the high waist and the loose-fitting leg that tapers just enough at the ankle, where it's usually rolled up and topped off with a sandal.

Chokers – 90s

The most iconic necklace of the 90s was by far the choker. Just about every female pop star sported chokers, adding the perfect dose of edginess to the sassy crop-top wearing singers.

Cargo pants – 90s

Cargo pants are back! Slim-fit cargo pants are in and can be paired with sleek sneakers and graphic tees for a cool, casual look.

5 WAYS TO STICK TO YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

By: *Olivia Zhu*

Do you have an ambitious New Year's Resolutions list? Are you doubting yourself if you can stick to them? Here are some tips to follow through on your wishes!

1. Create reminders for yourself

If you have some goals that can fit into your routine--such as exercising more, drinking more water, or spending more time studying, setting reminders for yourself can help you stay on track. These can be done on your phone, or even using sticky notes or asking the people around you to cue you will work.

2. Track your habits

Tracking the number of days you've kept up with your habits can help you stay motivated throughout the year. You can do this on your phone--some great apps for free are--or use a calendar or your school planner to mark off the days.

3. Share your resolutions with someone

If you share your resolutions with someone, you might be more willing to stay committed to your goals. Tell a friend or family member about your new year aspirations.

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4. Give yourself rewards

Setting rewards for yourself can help motivate you to stay focused. A few ideas are allowing yourself some time to watch an episode or two of your favorite TV show if you've kept up with your resolution for one week. Call up a friend to show off and share your progress, or treat yourself to a sweet for regularly drinking water for a week. There are many ways to create rewards that will encourage you to keep it up!

5. Do your resolutions with other people

team up with some friends or family to work towards a resolution! Not only will this make the goal-achieving process more fun, but it will also encourage you and your friends to persist! You can team up with others even if you have different resolutions--what counts is that you have someone supportive around you.

WINTER BUCKET LIST: 5 FUN THINGS TO DO WHEN IT'S COLD

By: *Nadya Konadu*

1. Build a snowman (or a snow angel)

Escape to a winter wonderland to make a snow angel or build a good ol' Frosty.

2. Watch a television series on repeat

How about getting into your comfy pajamas, grabbing a cup of hot cocoa and spending some relaxing time watching a fun TV series?

3. Going tubing or sledding

Who doesn't love to go sledding in the mountains?

4. Reading by the fire

The fire is even better when you have a good book to read.

5. Attend a field hockey game

Spend an afternoon surrounded by screaming fans, watching the field hockey players whiz by at an action-packed game.



THINGS TO DO IN THE NEW YEAR

By: *Olivia Zhu*

Happy 2022, Spartans! A new year means a new beginning. Here are some great ways to do or celebrate the new year.

1. Create New Year's resolutions

Turn over a new leaf in the new year! If there are any habits you gained from virtual learning that you want to break--such as sleeping late or using your phone during class--then now is a great time to find the motivation to do so.

2. Do some cleaning

Refresh and organize your house for a new start and feel for 2022! You don't have to do a deep cleaning--dusting a few nooks and crannies, donating old toys, or even simply cleaning up your room are great ideas.

3. Decorate your home

After cleaning the remains of 2021, why not redecorate your home for 2022? "Vintage" and "nature" are some trending interior themes.

4. Reflect on 2021

2021 was tumultuous in many different ways, and reflecting on events, whether international, national, local, or personal can help process your feelings to prepare for the new year. These don't have to be in complete sentences--bullet points, mind maps, or drawing something out are all great ways to reflect.

5. Write New Year's Cards

This is a great way to spread the new year cheer!

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These greeting cards can simply be a pithy message on a sticky-note or an elaborate craft using construction paper, glue, and markers! Send these cards to family, friends, peers, or friendly strangers!

6. Bake or cook something new

Is there a new recipe you want to try? Maybe that recipe you saw on Pinterest or the one that your neighbor shared with you? Spice up the new year by preparing and eating something new!



INTERVIEW ON VIRTUAL LEARNING

By: *Olivia Zhu*

Interviewee: Qing Ng

Q: How is virtual learning set up for the 2021-2022 school year?

A: The set up is basically the same to last year except we have it on a different platform- Pearson.

Q: What is your favorite part about virtual learning?

A: I get more control over my day with the time in the morning to get work done. It would be more difficult to do this in person because going from class to class, time spent in class is spent on getting settled, and other inconveniences take away time that I could use towards getting things done.

Q: What is your least favorite part?

A: My least favorite part is probably not being able to see people and make friends.

Q: How does it feel to be in your second year of virtual learning?

A: It feels the same.

Q: Now that we are nearly halfway through the school year, has your opinion on virtual learning changed?

A: No.

Q: Are you planning on returning to in-person school next year even if virtual learning is still an option?

A: It depends. But, most likely, I will be sticking to virtual learning.

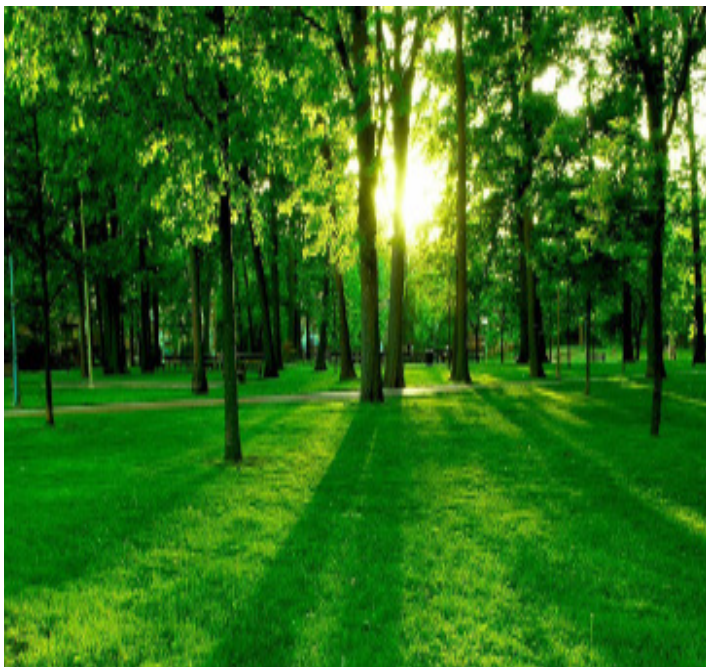
Q: Are there any club/extracurricular activities you have been participating in?

A: I have been doing WYSO in-person.

Q: What are some things that staying virtual has allowed you to do that going in-person wouldn't?

A: Virtual has given me more time during the day to complete other activities. It helps to make my schedule a lot easier to manage.





GREEN CLUB

By: Olivia Zhu

Are you interested in fighting climate change and staying green? Do you want to learn more about the earth's environmental issues and get involved in youth activism? If you answered yes, then Green Club is for you! Green Club is a student-led body that meets every Monday during flex. Club activities include learning about environmental issues, volunteering, gardening, and community trash pick-ups! If you have any questions, contact Claire, the club president: cineblett@madison.k12.wi.us

7 ACT/SAT TIPS

By: Olivia Zhu

For juniors and seniors, studying for the ACT and SAT can be stressful as spring dates are coming around the corner! To help you achieve your goal score, here are some studying tips to follow.

1. Create a long-term study plan

Start with identifying your testing date. From there, calculate the time you have left to study for the ACT/SAT. Divide up the number of weeks you have left leading up to your test date, and plan out what to do for each week--maybe for week 1, you'll work on the English section, math for week 2, etc. Creating a plan will help you stay organized and make studying less

stressful.

2. Block out time in your day for studying

Now that you've created a study plan, it's time to start studying! Think about how much improvement you want to make and then translate that to how much time you should spend each week studying. If you're very busy, maybe studying on the weekends for two hours is enough. If you have some more time on your hands or want to drastically increase your score, then maybe three times a week for three hours is the best. It can be hard to fit in time for ACT/SAT studying, so make sure you dedicate specific times in the day to get it done.

3. Study with a friend

For some people, studying with a friend helps with motivation and concentration. Call up a friend or two and do some practice tests or drills in each others' company. You can check tests and help each other figure out confusing problems. If you choose to study with friends, be sure to stay on track and avoid getting distracted.

4. Learn from mistakes

If you've already taken a couple of practice tests already and haven't gone back to check your mistakes, you'd benefit greatly in doing so! Even if you've reached your goal score, going back to review your mistakes will help reinforce your accuracy and prepare you for similar questions that may appear on the real ACT/SAT. As you check over your mistakes, ask yourself why the answer you chose was incorrect, and what to keep in mind next time.

5. Review basic concepts

The ACT/SAT tests material and skills that you've already gained throughout your years of schooling. However, it's not rare for students to forget a few things, like the difference between "imminent" and "eminent", how to solve a system of equations, or how to read a graph. If you find that you struggle with a certain concept, don't be afraid to spend some time away from taking tests and drilling sections to focus on a skill.

6. Find good practicing resources

There are a ton of ACT/SAT resources out there that

cont.

-tice tests, but you can find all past ACT tests for free on crackact.com. The College Board has 10 official SAT tests on its website for free, too.

7. Stay calm

As your test dates come closer, it's easy to start stressing. Chase away those what-if scenarios in your head and believe in the hard work you've put into studying. Even if you are disappointed by your score, remember that you can always take it again to improve! Get a good night's sleep and eat a proper breakfast before and on the day of your test. You can do it!

SENIOR ADVICE COLUMN

By: *Amy Qiao*

With the end of the first semester approaching, many students are busy with tests, projects, and tons of homework, so this one's just going to be a reminder to make time for the things you love. I know, I know, easier said than done, right? But I just want to stress two simple things that will hopefully allow you to do the things you want without falling behind on school work.

First, prioritize your personal activities just as much as you would prioritize school work. This means putting your hobbies, TV shows, or whatever makes you happy on your to-do list just as you would do with an essay or reading assignment and treating them with just as much importance as those tasks.

And as you prioritize the things that make you happy, make sure you're spending your free time on things that actually make you happy, not just things that temporarily distract you. Oftentimes, we take breaks by scrolling on our phones or binge-watching a random series Netflix recommended. But these things, while they may help us decompress for a short break or two, tend to not make us happy. Don't get me wrong, there are many shows that I love watching, but I sometimes find myself pushing it off and scrolling for hours instead. So when you're spending time on the things you love, just double-check that they're the things you want to do.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF THE MEMORIAL PARKING LOT

By: *Rowan Schreiber*

If you drive to school every day, you are well aware of the jumbled hellscape that is the Memorial parking lot. I think that lot of yellow and white lines makes me cry more than my teachers and assignments do. If you ever feel like you want to stress yourself out to the MAXIMUM, go try to get out of that cluster. Now, there are many students who whip it out of there like they've never operated a vehicle before. There are things that you should do, and there are things you should absolutely not. Because I am so generous and all knowing, I will list them out for all the clueless drivers out there.

DO:

- Commit to the maneuvers you are making. Don't make everyone else uneasy because you can't be assertive in the way you drive! When you drive confidently, the world heals.
- Let people in. Be the person who isn't a jerk, and good karma will definitely find you. Alternate feed, people! Alternate feed.
- Be patient. You aren't going to get out of that lot any faster if you make a big stink about it and ruin your own day. Just roll with the punches!

DON'T:

- DO NOT TURN LEFT. If you consciously take lefts when you know that the whole school is behind you trying to just get home, you're actually the worst person. Taking lefts takes time and is far more dangerous than just taking your right and letting your GPS redirect. You will get to where you need to be at the same time if not faster.
- Driving in the middle of the lanes of the parking lot is absolute chaotic evil behavior. Drive on the right, your massive tahoe cannot just bowl through the middle. Pick a side.
- Do not cut people off. That is honestly the rudest thing I can think of. Like if you are that dangerously close to my car I might file a restraining order against you.
- Moral of the story, don't drive dumb, and don't take lefts!

NATIONAL NEWS

COP26: A TURNING POINT IN THE BATTLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

By: Jonathan Buscher

Starting on October 31 and lasting until November 12, 2021, the 26th United Nations Conference of Parties, COP26 for short, met in Glasgow, Scotland for one of the most important climate change summits of the decade. Starting in 1995 and meeting annually, with the exception of the hiatus in 2020 due to Covid-19, this year's negotiations hosted 197 countries and included 130 world leaders, along with 40,000 other activists, business leaders, and negotiators.

Representing a critical moment in the fight against climate change, COP26 had four major goals: To secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5oC within reach, to adapt to protect communities and natural habitats, to mobilize finance, and to work together to deliver. These goals entailed revisiting and reassessing the Paris Climate Agreement, created during COP15 with the goal of, while aiming for 1.5oC, attempting to limit temperature increase to 2oC above pre-industrial levels, preventing some irreversible damage. During this previous meeting, leaders agreed to reconvene in 5 years to update their plans, and this convention was COP26. Specific goals were highlighted for each major section of the summit, including the targeting of phasing-out coal and deforestation, a switch to electric vehicles, and the encouragement of corporations to utilize more renewable sources of energy. Finalizing the official rules of collaboration previously started by the Paris Climate Agreement was also on the docket.

Following twelve long days of discussion and deliberation among representatives, a plethora of different outcomes emerged from COP26 to meet many of the predetermined objectives. In terms of coal power usage, this was the first time tangible commitments were created, with a total of 190 countries agreeing to phase-down global coal production by 76%. The term phase-down is critical here, as with Chinese and Indian officials interjecting late in proceedings, coal power will not be completely phased out by 2030. Additionally, 137 countries, containing a total of 85% of the world's forests, agreed to fund efforts to halt deforestation in their regions. In order to further reduce CO2 emissions, car manufacturers and countries alike, representing a total of 20% of the world's petrol burning cars, have agreed to phase these vehicles out by 2035, a large increase over the 5% commitment in 2019. In a separate Global Methane Pledge, over 100 countries agreed to cut the net global methane emissions by 30% in the common goal year of 2030. To conclude affairs at the COP26, various logistical commitments were created, including plans being assembled for another meeting next year and the prospect of Chinese and American collaboration to fight both nations' large CO2 emissions. To help finance developing countries, such as those in Africa and Latin America, in their fight against climate change, a 100 billion dollar fundraising goal was also formed.

The COP26 included many promising deals and pledges, many of which will take major efforts of collaboration between world governments, but if successful, represent a real chance at turning back the drastic effects of climate change.

4 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE COVID PILL

By: *Olivia Zhu*

1. There are multiple COVID-pills out there

More specifically, they're called antiviral pills because they help infected individuals fight off COVID-19. Companies Pfizer and Merck have developed antiviral pills with the drug names Nirmatrelvir and Molnupiravir and are sold under the brand names Paxlovid and Lagevrio, respectively. Both have yet to be approved by the FDA for use, but could be in the near future.

2. Pfizer vs Merck efficacy

According to Pfizer, its pill reduces death and hospitalizations by 89% within three days of COVID-19 symptoms. Meanwhile, recent clinical trials have suggested that Lagevrio is not as effective as previously reported. Now, the pill decreases rates of death and hospitalization by only 30%, a 50% decrease from its previous efficacy report.

3. Administering Paxlovid

According to Dr. Robert Murphy, an infectious disease specialist and executive director of the Institute for Global Health at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, "You have to take 30 pills over five days. That's a lot of pills. That includes two ritonavirs and four Paxlovids per day. It's not like you pop one pill."

4. COVID-pills are not the only antiviral medication for COVID-19

One antiviral medication for COVID-19 in the US is Remdesivir, sold under the brand name Veklury. Other treatments that are being evaluated are Interferons (a group of antiviral cytokines), and the antiparasitic drugs Ivermectin and Nitazoxanide.

CLIMATE BILL

By: *Anvika Annyapu & Jian Wang*

On November 21st, 2021, the House passed the Build Back Better Act, a \$1.85 trillion spending bill to fight climate change, build on healthcare policies, and secure the US economic safety net. This bill has yet to receive backing from the Senate.

After the climate summit, Biden has been facing growing pressure from the global community to create a definitive plan to improve climate policies in the US. Due to this recent push, he has proposed a plan to reduce the US's contributions to the global climate crisis. The main part of the \$555 billion price tag is \$300 billion in tax incentives for producers and purchasers of wind, solar and nuclear power to speed up a transition away from oil, gas and coal. Electric vehicle (EV) consumers are eligible to receive up to \$12,500 in tax credits depending on what parts of the car were manufactured in America. The rest of the money would be invested in the construction of EV charging stations and updating the electric grid.

However, supporters and critics alike are claiming that this plan fails to meet Biden's optimistic climate agenda. Biden had initially advocated for a drastic change in the US's current environmental impact, but due to the revisions made by the opposing party to the bill, Biden's plan for a zero net carbon emission by 2030 has been shelved. Those opposing the bill believe that climate change should not be a priority for the US Federal Government as well as an unnecessary expenditure of federal funds.

This bill wishes to resolve a global health issue, one that is due in large part by the influx of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This reduction in CO2 emissions has the potential to prevent nearly 50,000 premature deaths by 2030. Climate change mitigation will affect every aspect of human life, future generations will be defined by the actions taken today regarding this controversial issue. "Each time you let these opportunities slip through your fingers, you're passing a much harder problem on to the next generation," said Kim Cobb, a climate scientist at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WHY CHUNKS OF GLASS ARE SCATTERED ACROSS CHILE

By: *Donghyun Vince Kim*

Across a 75-kilometer stretch of Chile's Atacama Desert lie twisted chunks of black and green glass that researchers believe are the remains of an ancient comet explosion that took place over the desert nearly 12,000 years ago. According to Peter Schultz, a planetary geologist at Brown University, the Atacama's stretch of glass is "the best evidence yet of a comet impact site on Earth".

Out of the 190 known impact craters scattered across Earth, none were created from comets. Most comets explode before making contact with the ground in events called airbursts. Despite producing strong amounts of heat and winds in these explosions, they only have a temporary effect, and thus can't leave behind permanent impacts like craters.

While the effects of airbursts fade with time in wet environments, the Atacama, the world's driest nonpolar desert, is more appropriate for preserving these impacts. The Atacama is abundant with sand, which when heated at high temperatures can produce glass. Most of the heat used to produce natural glass on Earth is from volcanic activity. However, the Atacama's glass plain is located kilometers away from the nearest volcano, leading researchers to suggest different heat events like airbursts.

Some researchers have also suggested that grass fires had created Atacama's glass after radiocarbon dating of the ancient plants indicated that the glass chunks may have formed during different time periods. However, researchers like Schultz concluded that grass fires were an unlikely cause because "there wasn't enough grass for fires... even long ago" and the glass had formed under temperatures of 1700 degrees Celsius, exceeding normal temperatures.

Airbursts also explain the twisted formation of the glass chunks. The airburst most likely generated powerful winds that flung the glass around so it folded into its twisted shape. The airburst's winds also explain why the glass was scattered across the Atacama and onto multiple sediment layers that had formed during different times, misdirecting researchers into believing the glass chunks were formed at different times. Ultimately, scientists have taken another step in preparing us for more groundbreaking discoveries that will uncover Earth's past.



GOOD NEWS

WORLD RECORD BROKEN BY THE 'PEDALING PICASSO' FOR HUGE GPS MAP DRAWING

By: Jonathan Buscher

On November 13, 2021, the British Anthony Hoyte, dubbed the "Pedaling Picasso" by some, spent 8 ½ hours, covering approximately 66.48 miles of London roadway to earn himself the Guinness World Record for the largest bicycle image drawn by GPS within 12 hours. The image was simple; a man with a mustache, but the purpose, a bit more complicated. Hoyte hoped to recognize the event of Movember, which annually is a way to bring up issues regarding men's health, particularly mental health, through the growing out of mustaches. Hoyte also mentioned some problems that arose during his excursion, including road closures, and immense crowds near the Portobello Road Market. Even though this may have altered his route, Hoyte still created a record worthy masterpiece.

DEER FORCES ITS WAY INTO TENNESSEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

By: Jonathan Buscher

Responding to a call on Tuesday November 23, 2021, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency quickly arrived on the scene of a classroom in Springfield's Westside Elementary. Their subject; a deer, who had entered into the classroom by pushing its way through an emergency exit. Luckily, no harm was done to the students in the room, or the young, 2.5 to 3.5 year old deer, although the room was in somewhat of a wreck, due to the occupation of the wild animal. The relatively lively and approachable deer was easily led out by officers of the resource agency, and the school day was resumed. While certainly not something you would expect to see in your school every day, the students must have been excited, and it provided a great opportunity for teachers to instruct about local wildlife.

64 YEAR OVERDUE BOOK RETURNED TO MARYLAND LIBRARY

By: Jonathan Buscher

Following a July 2021 announcement by the Baltimore County Public Library in Maryland that late fees for books, both current and future, would be eliminated, a large influx of books started to flow into the return basket. This rule change, as stated by the director of the library, Sonia Alcantara-Antoine, had the desired effect of breaking down barriers and making the library more accessible to the community. However, coming along with this was something that no one could have expected, which was the return of two very long overdue books. These two novels included Jubilee Trail, written by Gwen Bristow, which had a last due date of November 5 of 1957, as well as A Mother and Two Daughters, by Gail Godwin, due on March 10 of 1983. If the late fees had still been in effect, one can only imagine how much the holders of these books would have to pay.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

HOW TO WITH JOHN WILSON: A DELICIOUSLY UNUSUAL DOCUSERIES

By Felipe Rey

2020's most unique show is back on the air with HBO's sophomore season of a wholly new kind of docuseries, *How to with John Wilson*.

It's difficult to explain exactly what this show is in words, so I would recommend watching the trailer. Even John Wilson has a hard time explaining it. In the first episode this season, he describes it as a "memoir, essay...um...it takes place in New York." Each episode begins as a tutorial on some topic, which can range from how to cook a good risotto to find a parking spot. What makes this show special is the journey that he goes on in search of answers.

Throughout each episode, John finds hypnotically bizarre visuals to pair with his narration. As he ponders if he should invest in real estate, he cuts to a recording of the wreckage of a demolished house.

The show rarely stays focused on this central question the entire time. In every episode, the original question begins to fade away and is slowly replaced by some sort of interesting but narrowly related story. An episode about wine tasting starts discussing the cult involved in an acapella competition he went to in college, and an episode about how to invest in real estate could suddenly become an interview with a ventriloquist doll collector. It's almost impossible to guess what the topic of the episode was if you were just dropped into the middle.

And yet, what John Wilson does that's so special is he not only ties all these bizarre stories and inter-

views back to the original prompt, but he makes it meaningful. Every episode has its fair share of laughs, but at the end of the day, *How to with John Wilson* finds a way to create meaning in the mundane. In short, the show is a delightful concoction of riveting recordings, insane characters, and introspective narration which I strongly recommend viewing. John Wilson's 2nd season is set to end on December 31st.

MEMORIAL THEATER COMPANY'S WINTER MUSICAL: MAMMA MIA

By: Eliana Sauer

It's that time of year again! The talented performers and crew members of Memorial Theater Company are hard at work preparing for their upcoming winter musical. The show this year is "Mamma Mia," and it will be directed by Julie Houck and our very own Ms. McMahon. "Mamma Mia" tells the story of Sophie (Jillian Sytsma) who is preparing to get married. While preparing for her wedding she finds her mother Donna (Izzy Zeman)'s diary, which detailed relationships with three men before Sophie was born. Sam (Elijah Edwards), Bill (Emmit Thom), and Harry (Charlie Maloney). Sophie never knew who her dad was, and in an effort to find out she invites all three to her wedding, without telling Donna. As Sophie attempts to find her dad, Donna relives old memories, and tries to find love herself.

The musical will be performed in our own Memorial Auditorium on from February 24-26 and more information about ticket sales will be available soon. We are always looking for more hands to help out backstage with sets, lights, sound, costumes, and makeup. If you're interested feel free to join our Google Classroom with the code m6alnsf, come to our meetings after school every Tuesday in Theater 300, or come to a crew meeting Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30-8. The Memorial Theater Company has been working hard to put on a great show for everyone, so please spread the word and come watch if you're able!



15 UPCOMING MOVIES IN 2022

1. Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse - Part One

Animation, Action, Adventure | Post-production
Miles Morales returns for the next chapter in the Oscar-winning Spider-Verse saga, an epic adventure that will take Brooklyn's friendly, full-time neighbor Spider-Man across the Spider-Verse.

Directors: Joaquim Dos Santos, Kemp Powers, Justin K. Thompson | Stars: Shameik Moore, Hailee Steinfeld, Oscar Isaac, Issa Rae

2. Thor: Love and Thunder

Action, adventure, fantasy | Post-production
Fourth film in the Thor saga.

Director: Taika Waititi | Stars: Karen Gillan, Matt Damon, Taika Waititi, Natalie Portman.

3. Black Panther: Wakanda Forever

Action, Adventure, Drama | Currently filming
A sequel that will continue to explore the incomparable world of Wakanda and all the rich and varied characters introduced in the 2018 film.

Director: Ryan Coogler | Stars: Martin Freeman, Angela Bassett, Daniel Kaluuya, Danai Gurira



4. Avatar 2

Action, adventure, science fiction | Post-production
Jake Sully lives with his new family on the planet Pandora. When a familiar threat returns to finish what was started earlier, Jake must protect Pandora.

Director: James Cameron | Stars: Michelle Yeoh, Kate Winslet, Sigourney Weaver, Zoe Saldana

5. Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness

Action, adventure, fantasy | Post-production
Unknown plot.

Director: Sam Raimi | Stars: Benedict Cumberbatch, Elizabeth Olsen, Rachel McAdams, Chiwetel Ejiofor.

6. The Batman

Action, Crime, Drama | Post-production

In his second year of fighting crime, Batman uncovers corruption in Gotham City that has ties to his own family, while battling a serial killer known as the Riddler.

Director: Matt Reeves | Stars: Peter Sarsgaard, Zoë Kravitz, Barry Keoghan, Robert Pattinson



7. Mission: Impossible 7

Action, adventure, thriller | Post-production

The seventh installment in the long-running series.

Director: Christopher McQuarrie | Stars: Cary Elwes, Rebecca Ferguson, Tom Cruise, Vanessa Kirby.

8. The Flash (I)

Action, adventure, fantasy | Post-production

The plot is unknown. Feature film based on the comic book superhero, The Flash.

Director: Andy Muschietti | Stars: Ben Affleck, Michael Keaton, Temuera Morrison, Ezra Miller.

9. Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom

Action, Adventure, Fantasy | Post-production

Unknown plot. Sequel to the 2018 film "Aquaman".

Director: James Wan | Stars: Jason Momoa, Amber Heard, Nicole Kidman, Temuera Morrison.

10. Black Adam

Action, Fantasy, Sci-Fi | Post-production

Unknown plot. A spin-off of "Shazam!" centered on the film's anti-hero, Black Adam.

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra | Stars: Dwayne Johnson, Sarah Shahi, Pierce Brosnan, Joseph Gatt.

11. **Fantastic Animals: The Secrets of Dumbledore**

Adventure, Family, Fantasy | Post-production

The third installment in the “Fantastic Animals and Where to Find Them” series that follows the adventures of Newt Scamander.

Director: David Yates | Stars: Jude Law, Mads Mikkelsen, Katherine Waterston, Eddie Redmayne.

12. **Halloween Ends**

Horror, Thriller | Pre-production

The saga of Michael Myers and Laurie Strode comes to a chilling conclusion in this final installment.

Director: David Gordon Green | Stars: Jamie Lee Curtis, Kyle Richards, Andi Matichak, Nick Castle.

13. **Morbius**

PG-13 | Action, Adventure, Drama | Completed

Biochemist Michael Morbius attempts to cure himself of a rare blood disease, but inadvertently infects himself with a form of vampirism.

Director : Daniel Espinosa | Stars : Jared Leto, Michael Keaton, Adria Arjona, Jared Harris

14. **John Wick: Chapter 4**

Action, Crime, Thriller | Post-production

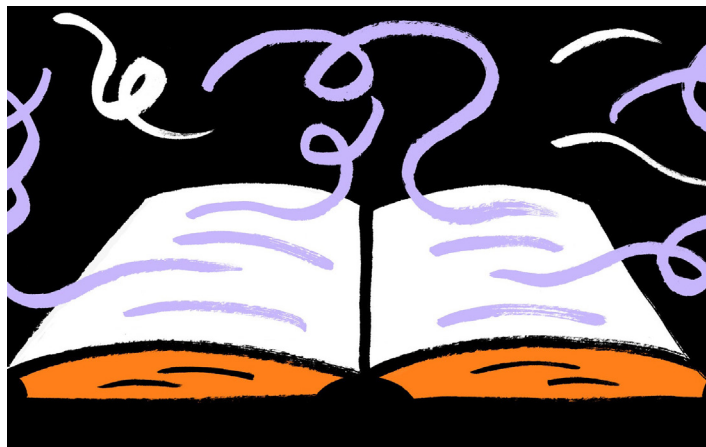
Director: Chad Stahelski | Stars: Keanu Reeves, Donnie Yen, Bill Skarsgård, Laurence Fishburne

15. **Jurassic World: Dominion**

PG-13 | Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi | Completed

The plot is being kept under wraps.

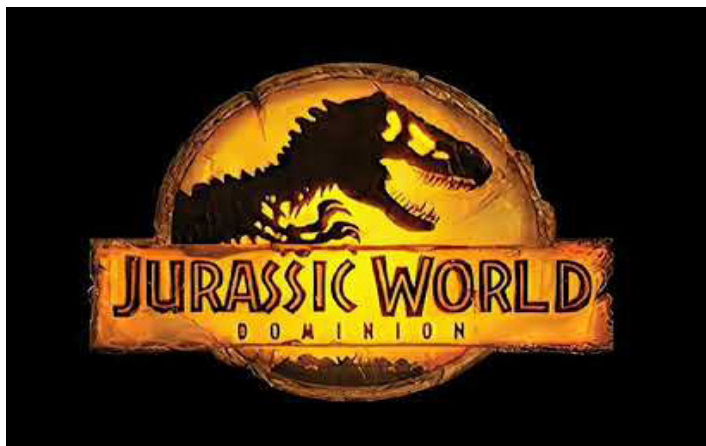
Director: Colin Trevorrow | Stars: Daniella Pineda, Bryce Dallas Howard, Chris Pratt, Sam Neill.



POETRY COLUMN

By: *Ben Arnoldusson*

Let us dream
Let us dream of a future
A future bigger and brighter
Not only of the lighter
But a future of the fighter
The little kid who grew up without notion
Let them be the motion the moment
In which the ocean comes to the tide
Let them lead a path to greener grass
In which they can believe to become president
The amendments are made for change and evolution
Let us be the revolution the newer solution to this
chaos
Because we are not broken
And we are
Not done
We are a country with 2 more then 1
We are United with belief and a cause
Now let us applause for we have gotten
And gotten this far
And we continue to grow
Let us hold out a hand and share what we know
We create the flow we are artists and athletes
Families and friends
We started back there we are not near the end
Life must change we must turn round the bend
Those before us who created this land
This industrial power we lend out a hand
We believe we are grand we believe that we can
The little kid who said I can dream it so I know
That I can let us us brand out our arms
Not only to fight
But also to hold.
America let us be the gold.



SUCCESSION REVIEW

By: Felipe Rey

HBO's prestige drama television series has returned for its third season, and the stakes are higher than ever. Succession's new season begins with a divide in the family following the events of the season two finale, and it ends with an unexpected turn that will leave audiences eagerly awaiting season four.

Succession is a mix of satire and drama which follows the Roys, the family running the Waystar-Royco media conglomerate, and their unending battle for power. Though the entire family is unbelievably rich, every single member, from cousin Greg to Logan Roy, the man in charge, wants more money and more power, and they'll never stop pushing for it. Spoilers for Season 1 and 2 of Succession:

The show's new season deals with the fallout of Kendall's actions at the end of Season two, where he accused Logan of being in charge of the cruise ship cover ups before walking off stage and beginning an attack against the family corporation. The family is forced to take sides, and the future of the company is put into question.

While the new season is great, it lacks much forward movement until very late. The majority of the episodes still focus on the end of the previous season, without much new happening. In contrast, season two moved on in less than two episodes from season

one's shock ending after Kendall accidentally led to the death of a waiter. Despite this small issue, the show continues to have impeccable writing and does actually emotionally push forward many of the characters. Kendall no longer feels like a selfish brat, and Siobhan's relationship with Tom is dealt with a lot more, particularly in the finale. Roman finally gets his time in the spotlight after being mostly sidelined for two seasons, and his bizarre relationship with Gerri gets a very interesting push forward. Overall, I would argue that its dark humor, complex characters, and intricate plot make this the best season of Succession so far, and I would highly recommend checking out the show if you haven't already.

PEACEMAKER PREVIEW

By: Felipe Rey

While DC had a rocky start in setting up their cinematic universe, it seems that they've finally found their stride. After James Gunn's critical success with The Suicide Squad, he is now working on a new series for DC which he wrote during the film's production, Peacemaker. Originally written during the pandemic just for his own entertainment, the series became a real possibility and was eventually developed along with several other DC TV shows. Peacemaker follows the journey of the titular character Peacemaker, or Christopher Smith, one of the key characters of the Suicide Squad. Peacemaker is a trained marksman who sees himself as a fighter for justice, and as he says, aims for peace "no matter how many men, women, and children I have to kill to get it".

Though details on the series are limited at this time, some information can be gleaned from the trailers. Peacemaker will be on a Suicide Squad-like team comprised of some government agents, a new character called Vigilante, and a hyper-intelligent eagle. The show's focus will be not just on Peacemaker's new missions, but also his background, his father, and the moral implications of Peacemaker's unending fight for peace.

If this series is anything like James Gunn's previous works in the superhero genre, the show will likely be a sensational ride of music, exciting action, and humor. The series is set to premiere on HBO Max on January 13th, 2022.



WHEEL OF TIME PREMIERE REVIEW

By: Jonathan Buscher

The *Wheel of Time*, a 14 book epic fantasy series written by Robert Jordan was recently put to screen by Amazon, being released as a Prime original series. Following in the footsteps of shows such as *Game of Thrones*, *The Wheel of Time* already is stepping into its role as the next major piece of fantasy media. The first 3 episodes, all of which simultaneously premiered on November 19, 2021, provide an excellent hook to drag anyone into this new world.

“Leavetaking”, the first episode of the series, opens with Moraine (Rosamund Pike), an Aes Sedai, or a woman who can channel a force known as the one power, and her warder Lan (Daniel Henney), who are setting out to find the Dragon Reborn, a person destined to either save, or destroy the world. The pair is drawn to the Two Rivers, a small village, where Moraine, using her abilities, is able to narrow this hero down to five people, Egwene, Nynaeve, Mat, Perrin, and Rand, all young adults in the town. Soon after, it is discovered that they are being hunted by the dark one, an evil and unknown force, as Trollocs, monstrous and humanoid beings attack during a festival. This is followed by, as the title suggests, the group fleeing the town in a hurry, with little time to say goodbyes. The remaining episodes of the premiere, titled “Shadow’s Waiting” and “A Place of Safety”, as well as much of

the rest of the show follow the journey of this troop to the White Tower, an Aes Sedai stronghold, where they hope to discover which of the five really is the Dragon Reborn.

Filled with twists and turns that any fantasy lover will enjoy, the first few episodes are full of world-building, storytelling, and detail. Although this premiere is quite accurate to the corresponding book, *The Eye of the World*, there are a few major

deviations from the story, including characters and events being added and removed. While some aficionados of the novels might be disappointed, these changes often help to simplify the already complex plot and need for large scale character development. Additionally, director Uta Briesewitz clearly took some inspiration from *Game of Thrones*, including some amounts of unnecessary violence, especially within the first episode. Made quite realistic with excellent visual effects, these same effects also serve to support the rich characterization and world-building that open the show. The more complex, unpredictable, and engaging plot, as well as intriguing character relationships, make viewers wish for more at the end of every episode. Even

though it is largely based on the book series, no reading is necessary to enjoy the *Wheel of Time*, as it is a fully fleshed out fantasy adventure, bound to make any veteran fan or newcomer laugh, cry, and maybe jump a little in fear or excitement. Audience responses have been positive so far, but the *Wheel* weaves as the *Wheel* wills, and only time will tell where Amazon will take this series next.



BADGER WOMENS VOLLEYBALL RETURNS TO FINAL FOUR

By: *Abigail Sullivan*

Wisconsin Women's Volleyball is going back to the Final 4 for the third year in a row! The BIG 10 champs started the 2021 NCAA tournament strong as they swept Colgate, Florida Gulf Coast, and Minnesota in each of their first three matches. Middle Blocker Dana Rettke wrapped up the sold out Minnesota match with a game winning kill, securing the Badgers spot in Columbus, Ohio, for the Final 4. Despite the impressive win, it was an emotional goodbye for the graduating class which includes Dana Rettke, Grace Loberg, Lauren Barnes, Giorgia Civita, Sydney Hilley, and Julia Wohlet. Head Coach Kelly Sheffield shared, "this group will be remembered as not just one of the best volleyball classes in school history, but one of the best classes in any sport in school history." With that being said, it's not over yet for the Badgers, as they are set to play number one seed and undefeated Louisville on December 16th. With a win, they will secure their spot at the NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship. This team fell short in 2019 with their devastating loss against Stanford in the Championship match, and then again in their 2020/21 season they fell short to Texas in the semifinals. The Badgers have never won a national championship and are determined to change that this year more than ever and bring home a much deserved win for these seniors.



NFL PLAYOFF PICTURE

By: *Donghyun Vince Kim*

After 13 weeks of football, we finally have our first team eliminated from the playoff race... and surprisingly it wasn't the Detroit Lions. The Houston Texans are now the first team to be eliminated from this year's NFL Playoffs. Other teams are seeing some major changes. The Patriots, who finished the 2020 season at 7-9, are back on top in the AFC as of Week 14. The Chiefs have also steadily gained their spot in the playoff picture after a rough start to the season. And, more importantly, the one major thing that hasn't changed is that the Lions and Bears are fighting for the worst rankings in the NFC. With that said, let's examine some teams in the playoff picture with the SportsLine projector.

Things are fairly clear in the NFC. First, the Packers now need a win against the Bears and a Vikings loss to clinch the NFC North. On the other hand, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers need a win against the Buffalo Bills and a loss from both the Carolina Panthers and New Orleans Saints to clinch the NFC South. SportsLine strongly suggests the fight for #2 seed in the NFC between the Pack and the Bucs is too close to call because both teams are likely going to finish with the same amount of wins. The Dallas Cowboys have a 79.9% chance of winning their division in the East, and taking home a win against Washington will certainly secure the title. The Arizona Cardinals out of the NFC West are the projected NFC champion at 18.23%, and with the return of QB Kyler Murray and WR DeAndre Hopkins, SportsLine projects they are favorites to win the SuperBowl as well. The Los Angeles Rams have lost 3 or their last 4 games, but with the San Francisco 49ers, they are the top Wild Card contenders. The Philadelphia Eagles and Washington Football Team are the likely contenders for the #7 seed in the NFC.

AFC teams are also locking in. The #1 seed New England Patriots have a 29.49% chance of winning the conference, with the Kansas City Chiefs right behind with a 15.72% chance.

(cont...) Although KC has a 58.6% chance of clinching the West, the LA Chargers are also hunting the AFC West crown with a 37.7% chance. Even after an unexpected loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Baltimore Ravens are expected to clinch the AFC North by a wide margin. The Titans have also claimed the #2 seed and are likely to clinch their division despite the absence of Derrick Henry. Before the Pats took over the top spot in the East, the Buffalo Bills were on a roll to the playoffs. Sadly, after losing 3 of their last 5 games, they have now fallen to seed #5 as a wild card contender. The Indianapolis Colts, Steelers, and Cincinnati Bengals are fighting for the final #7 seed in the playoffs.



MLB LOCKOUT

By: *Nolan Sullivan*

For the second time in as many years, negotiations between Major League Baseball and its' Players Association have come to a standstill. While last years' debate was regarding the eventual return of baseball amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, now the two sides have completely reached a stoppage due to a much bigger problem. The CBA, or collective bargaining agreement, between both groups, expired on December first. This means that for the first time since the 1994-95 offseason, the industry has essentially shut down completely. Free agents cannot be signed, players cannot be traded, contracts cannot be extended; in a time where teams typically are worried about preparing for the upcoming season, they can't make any roster moves.

While the issues between the MLB and the Players Association are complicated, I will try to simplify them as much as possible. Essentially, the players are frustrated with the overall competition gap from top to bottom in the League. Year after year, teams seem to give up on the season wise known as "tanking", draft pick. While this is increasingly common in Major League Baseball is because teams are not willing to spend money on player payroll. On the other end of the spectrum, in big markets such as the New York Yankees are not only willing to spend millions of dollars on their payrolls, they also have owners that can pay a 'luxury tax' to keep even more super-



stars on salary. year, many teams seemingly before it even begins, other-in order to receive a higher something that is becoming across major sports leagues, in big reason why this happens forced to spend any amount of during each season, prompt-and become cheap. On the teams with wealthy owners Los Angeles Dodgers or New able to spend hundreds of

From the owner's perspectives, some can see why they are hesitant to agree to so many stipulations put forward by the Players Association. Before the lockout, many teams like the Texas Rangers, Detroit Tigers, and even Tampa Bay Rays splurged big on multi-year, several hundred million dollar contracts for star middle infielders. On the mound, the New York Mets threw \$130 million at Max Scherzer, who has been one of most vocal players speaking against the League about the CBA offers they had made.

All in all, it's going to be a very long offseason for Major League Baseball. Many higher-ups within the sport have suggested that the 2022 season may be delayed for weeks and even months if negotiations continue at the rate they're currently moving at. As baseball fans, all we can hope for is that both sides can come to an agreement as soon as possible that not only protects the future of the players, but the integrity of the sport as a whole.

SPARTAN ATHLETES ANSWER “WHAT ARE YOUR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS FOR YOUR 2022 SEASON?”

By: Lydia Lenz

Ciara Haas (Gymnastics)

“My goal is to probably make it to State, by working hard at practice and having fun with the team.”

Jack Barden (Boys Swimming)

“For me I want to get to State in the 100 back and 200 IM, as well as at least one relay.”

Sydney Weier (Girls Basketball)

“I would say, get closer as a team and work hard and challenge each other to get better and win a bunch of games.”

Alexa Schaefer (Gymnastics)

“I want to qualify for State both individually and as a team this year.”

Brody Weiler (Wrestling)

“To be a state qualifier. Along the way I want to continue working hard both in practice and on my own, on top of placing well at tournaments.”

Olivia Morgan (Girls Basketball)

“My own personal goal is to make a three pointer during a game, and my team goal is to leave everything out on the court while also working together to not regret what we’re doing while we play.”

Ariana Riano (Girls Soccer)

“This indoor season I’m working on getting stronger and gaining more speed on the ball, my footskills are already improving. Another goal is getting to open gyms and captains practices to be more ready for this coming spring season”

Lauren Sparks (Girls Basketball)

“My goal is to work at coming together more as a team this year. I also want to be a leading example for the younger players in the program.”

INTERVIEW WITH THE WISCONSIN INSPIRE SYNCRO TEAM

By: Amy Qiao

The Wisconsin Inspire synchronized figure skating cooperative is relatively new in the synchro world, but they already embody the “go big or go home” mentality. The group formed just two years ago in 2019, and they already feature a Junior team, competing for the first time this season. To get more insight on what synchro means for the Wisconsin Inspire Junior team as the season is kicking off, I sat down with Josie Schellpfeffer, a Senior at Memorial who has competed in synchronized figure skating for the past ten years.

What do you love about being on a team? How do you feel it’s different from individual skating?

“I like being on a team because I have friends, and we have a close bond. We have to be there for each other, we have to trust each other, [and] when we reach our goals, we know it’s because everybody put in the work to do it. We’re all there for a common goal.” She elaborated, “When you compete individually, maybe a few people cheer for you or whatever, but when you finish a synchro program, you’re all still there together, hugging each other, and you’re not alone.”

What has been the hardest part about this season, with it being the first year competing as a Junior team and at national events?

“The hardest thing is sometimes finding the motivation to be at our best because it’s a hard sport, and even when we work hard, it can feel like it’s not taking us anywhere. As a team, we have to just keep going, even when it’s hard.”

What are your goals for upcoming competitions?

“We hope to get 80 points in our long program and 40 in our short.” In words that non-synchro skaters can understand, “We just want to keep improving scores from each competition, and feel proud of what we do.”

And finally, what is one thing you want everyone to know about synchronized skating?

She responded with a simple but important statement: “It’s harder than it looks.”

MIDSEASON SOCCER UPDATE

By: Donghyun Vince Kim

Before the start of December, England women's football team wrote history in their World Cup qualifier against Latvia. Setting the biggest win in its history with 10 different scorers and four hat tricks that were each from separate players, the Three Lions crushed Latvia with a final match score 20-0, breaking the record for the biggest win in a World Cup qualification match of all time set just days before by Belgium (19-0). But the football world is concerned after this match. Some believe that this match didn't only tarnish the game and image of football, but the 20-0 blowout didn't offer any learning opportunities for the players and coaches to develop as a team. Fans are now demanding football associations like FIFA and UEFA to address this situation and understand that nobody benefits from these kinds of games.

A few days earlier in Paris, Lionel Messi won his seventh Ballon d'Or, the most prestigious individual prize in football, once again becoming the player with the most Ballon d'Or wins of all time. The PSG star received 613 points in the voting, passing runner-up striker Robert Lewandowski of Bayern Munich by a mere 33 points. Lewandowski was favored to win last year's Ballon d'Or, but the ceremony was cancelled due to COVID, leaving the Polish striker empty-handed. Messi believes his "key" to winning this year's prize was winning the Copa América with Argentina in July. 2021 was a tough year for Messi — FC Barcelona didn't clinch the Spanish title and was knocked out from last year's Champions League tournament. However, his first international win with Argentina was enough to convince the football world yet again that he is indeed one of the greatest football players ever.

Mid-December, the UEFA Champions League group stage matches have now been concluded. With the draw of the Round of 16 table, some notable matchups include Liverpool-Inter Milan, Manchester United-Atlético Madrid, and PSG-Real Madrid. Consisting of two legs, or matches, the Champions League knockout stage will be broadcasted mid-February and early-March. By the start of June, the football world will then know who holds the football crown of Europe.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS HAVE ARRIVED

By: Nolan Sullivan

This year of college football has undoubtedly been one of the most surprising in recent memory. Since its inception during the 2014 season, the College Football Playoff has been dominated by the likes of Alabama, Clemson, and Ohio State. While this year's tournament may still include the defending champion Crimson Tide from Tuscaloosa and their Heisman winning QB Bryce Young, there are two brand new faces to the competition.

Coming into postseason play at 13-0 from the American Athletic Conference are the Cincinnati Bearcats. After a heartbreaking loss in last year's Peach Bowl to Georgia on a last-second field goal, Cincinnati has been on a tear. Led by Senior Quarterback Desmond Ridder and a strong defense held down by All-American Cornerback Ahmad Gardner, they trampled their conference opponents week after week while also picking up an impressive win over top ten ranked Notre Dame in South Bend. The other program entering the Playoff for their first time will be the Michigan Wolverines. Just when it seemed like the writing was on the wall for Head Coach Jim Harbaugh after years of underperforming and constant disappointment, the Maize and Blue have seemingly taken Harbaugh out of the hot seat. Their most impressive win came during the final week of conference play, where over 111,000 fans packed into the Big House in Ann Arbor, as fierce rivals Ohio State pulled into town looking to clinch their spot in the Big Ten Championship game. Thanks to a five touchdown performance from tail-back Hassan Haskins, the Wolverines earned a trip to Indianapolis where they eventually manhandled the Iowa Hawkeyes.

After defeating Georgia in the SEC Championship game, Alabama was able to retake the number one seed in the Playoff Rankings that had evaded them for months after falling to Texas A&M back in October. The Crimson tide are nearly two score favorites in their opening game against Cincinnati with the line set at -13.5. It's safe to say that most fans won't want to see the same outcome as usual in this year's Playoff, so it'll be interesting to see how these new teams match up against the experienced SEC powerhouses.

WINTER FIGURE SKATING UPDATE

By: Amy Qiao

In the past month, a lot has happened in the figure skating world. As the Grand Prix events continued, records were broken, competitions canceled, and of course, many quads landed.

First, let's take a look at the final Grand Prix event, the Rostelecom Cup in Sochi, Russia. We can't talk about the Rostelecom Cup without gushing over Kamila Valieva's virtually flawless, record-breaking performance. Her short program, consisting of a triple axel, triple flip, and a triple lutz-triple toe combo, scored 87.42, the highest score ever awarded for a short program in women's figure skating. Her free skate was no different, featuring three quads and ballerina-like footwork and spins. Valieva skated away with another gold medal, beating her own world record of the highest score in the women's short and long program and highest overall score.

The Rostelecom Cup was the final event in the Grand Prix series and was the final event to determine the lineup for the Grand Prix Final (this year scheduled to take place in Osaka, Japan). The Grand Prix Final lineup included many US figure skaters such as men's skaters Vincent Zhou, Nathan Chen, Jason Brown, and ice dance duos Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue and Madison Chock/Evan Bates. However, just days before the competition, the organizers of the Grand Prix Final announced it would be canceled due to the growing concern about the Omicron variant. Although the ISU says there is a chance the event will be rescheduled, the fact that the NHK trophy was successfully hosted in Japan only a month ago shows just how tumultuous this season is.

The cancellation of the Grand Prix Final also raises concerns about the upcoming European Figure Skating Championships and Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in January, and of course, the 2022 Winter Olympics. But hopefully, with effective Covid protocol, figure skaters can continue to deliver breathtaking performances and break records along the way.

NBA SEASON UPDATE

By: Nolan Sullivan

Over two months into the NBA regular season, the fight for the top seed in both conferences is shaping up to be a good one. In the West, Steph Curry and the Golden State Warriors have jumped out of the gate, holding the one seed for weeks. Contributions from wings Jordan Poole and Andrew Wiggins have greatly made up for the absence of All-Star guard Klay Thompson, who looks to return soon after the New Year. Close behind the Warriors are the runner-ups from last seasons' NBA Finals, the Phoenix Suns. Shooting guard Devin Booker has continued his great stretch that led the team to the Finals last year, and allowed them to go on an impressive 18-game win streak during November and December.

In the Eastern Conference, it looks like it will be a three horse race for the top seed. Superstars Kevin Durant and James Harden have propelled the Brooklyn Nets to the top of the standings, despite the absence of guard Kyrie Irving due to his vaccination status. While many expected them to have struggles without a key member of their star trio, the Nets haven't missed a beat. For years, it seems as if whenever the Bulls struggle, the Bucks have success, and vice versa. Whichever way you look at it, the two teams that sit just 90 minutes apart from one another never seem to have a competitive matchup with much meaning. This year, after the Bulls made various splashes in free agency, and the Bucks brought back their Championship winning roster, it appears as if a rivalry may be rekindled between the two teams.

For the most part, the 2021-22 NBA season has gone on without issue similar to most major sporting leagues, having little to no issues with COVID-19. However, in recent weeks, various teams have been hit hard by the virus, prompting teams having to play games shorthanded and even leading to postponements. After testing positive for the virus, 3x All-NBA Center Joel Embiid said, "I really thought I wasn't going to make it. It was that bad. So I'm just thankful to be sitting here." Embiid thankfully was able to make his return after a nearly three week absence, and the Sixers are certainly grateful to have their leader back on the court.

OPINIONS

BRIDGE WEEK VS. FINALS WEEK

WHY WE NEED BRIDGE WEEK

By: *Jonathan Buscher*

Bridge week, one of the many changes resulting from the 2020-21 school year, has again been implemented by MMSD, replacing finals week, its predecessor. Rather than conducting the traditional finals week which has been dreaded by students both for the sheer amount of studying needed to prepare as well as the large grade percentage, the week will be focused on helping students struggling in certain classes. While it's certainly a shift for teachers to make, bridge week does a few major things for students, the most notable being stress reduction.

Students already have a lot of stress, with 49% reporting feeling a great deal of it daily, according to a study by NYU. Among the chief causes of this anxiety is getting good grades, including on final exams, meaning that removing finals with bridge week can help reduce overall stress tremendously. Additionally, a lack of understanding in key areas of the material can make studying difficult for some and result in even lower grades on finals as the student in question falls further behind in the class. Bridge Week solves this issue by providing exclusive attention to filling in those gaps, where the teacher does not have to juggle supporting a pupil and teaching the class, allowing students to have the knowledge they need to start the next semester.

While it can be argued that finals prepare students for their college education, students can both burn out from the stress of final exams, and those who are struggling won't have the chance to fully understand content needed for future education without bridge week.

IN FAVOR OF FINALS

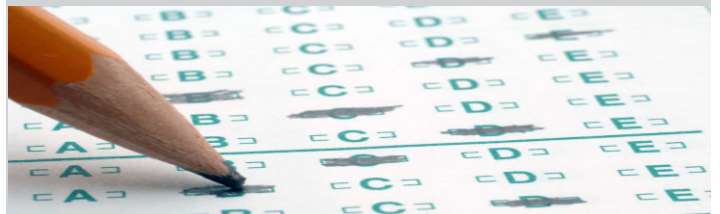
By: *Elliot Weix*

The end of the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year fast approaches, and with it a holdover from last year's virtual learning: Bridge Week. As a stop-gap measure that replaced final exams, Bridge Week offered students additional time to hand in missing assignments or make up summative assessments. It was meant to combat the challenges presented by virtual learning amidst a hectic year. Now its time has passed.

Bridge Week has been rendered almost completely redundant by the no-penalty policy for turning in late work. Students are given the opportunity to finish assignments at any time, and missed assessments can be completed during lunch or study halls. While Bridge Week may offer a dedicated time period to work on improving grades, I believe such an opportunity could be integrated by other means.

Perhaps the solution is to combine the retake opportunities of Bridge Week with final exams. The final itself could act as an opportunity to both improve grades and show mastery. For example, in a math class, if one does better on the final than on a test, that test score could be dropped and replaced with the final grade. No matter what course of action is taken, Bridge Week must—at the very least—change.

The week-long period of review and work time is, in most cases, only addressing the symptoms of a much larger problem: lack of resources to assist students in school. The root cause is one best addressed in a legislative manner, which means the school itself can do little about it.



NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS ARE DUMB

By: *Rowan Schreiber*

New Year's Resolutions are, simply put, tiring. You wait all fall and winter to start a habit and put a goal into action, just to drop it a week or two later. That's an excuse to push off your goals ten months from now if I've ever heard one. Here's how the cycle works: create a resolution, start strong for the first few days of January, and then forget about it by the 7th of the new year. It is simply waiting to start something, only to completely let yourself down when you can't uphold the habit. In other words, it is simply setting yourself up for failure. All of this pressure leads up to New Year's day, only for it to amount to nothing!

I propose this: we should set goals whenever we feel like we want to put them into action. We shouldn't save all of our new habits for one day a year- it's restrictive. They just never work the way they should. As humans, we primarily try to avoid disappointment, yet we do it to ourselves every single year! Instead of making a day specific to resolutions, let's hold ourselves accountable to our goals during all parts of the year- Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Goals are good, but saving them for later and putting them on the back burner is not.



TEN TRULY GOOD NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

By: *Nadya Konadu*

1. Drink plenty of water

This may be one of the most common New Year's resolution ideas... But, that doesn't make it a bad one!

2. Move more, sit less

Between desk jobs, long commutes, and stay-at-home orders, I think we're all guilty of sitting too much.

3. Make plans to take a mini adventure

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there's quite a bit of uncertainty about the future. So setting a goal for big travel plans might still be a bit out of reach at this point.

4. Prioritize eco-friendly choices

Making a positive impact in the world might feel futile as an average person.

5. Volunteer more often

6. Adopt an attitude of gratitude

The simple act of giving thanks has scientifically proven benefits.

7. Pick a time to wake up & stick to it!

It'll be difficult at first with your warm, comfy bed calling to you. But in the long run, waking up at the same time will help you improve your sleep quality.

8. Try something new

This idea is pretty open-ended!

9. Floss every day

For real. Easier said than done, but your dentist (and teeth) will love you for it!

10. Make time for self-care

Out of all of the New Year's resolution ideas, this one should be a priority!

DID COP26 DO ENOUGH?

By: *Jonathan Buscher*

The recent and extremely critical COP26 in early November of 2021 resulted in numerous commitments from world leaders in efforts related to action about climate change. While these pledges certainly will improve prospects in some areas of this battle, not enough will be done to truly reverse the issue of climate change by the critical year of 2030. Among these changes were efforts to reduce CO₂ and methane emissions, finance the further utilization of electric cars and renewable energy, and the restoration of deforested areas, all of which contribute to either lessening greenhouse gas emissions, or removing the gasses from our atmosphere. All of these commitments point towards a single goal, of keeping global temperatures from rising more than the target 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Based on recent scientific research by numerous organizations, 1.5°C represents a tipping point in catastrophic climate damage to our planet. More specifically, according to a 2018 report by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), even the slight difference between 1.5°C and 2°C could mean half as many with a lack of water, 4 inches in sea level rise, significantly fewer extreme weather events, and the potential salvation of the West Antarctic ice sheet. According to the director at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Johan Rockstrom, “Once we pass 1.5°C we enter a scientific danger zone in terms of heightened risk.” Thus, it is of utmost importance that the results of COP26 met the strict guiding destination of 1.5°C.

One might think it is easy to decide the success of this summit if calculations regarding these policies are done to determine if world temperatures will rise above 1.5°C, but the reality is not so simple. A variety of other factors also impact this, including additional future policies being created, and if all countries will hold their end of the bargains made during COP26. As of right now, the current policies set forth before COP26 would result in a temperature rise of 2.6-2.7°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, meaning that as a planet, we are more than a degree off track of our critical goal. Even with COP26 pledges, only 0.1°C was dropped off of the previous 2.4°C figure, which assumed all countries achieved their goal set out by the Paris Agreement. A fraction of a degree

difference could mean catastrophic changes, and therefore, COP26 was somewhat of a failure. Although some action was taken, as of now, not enough was done to change the outcome.

There are several factors contributing to this letdown, the primary being the failure of action on the part of developed countries. First of all, some of the largest carbon-contributors, including Russia and China, only slightly changed their NDCs, or Nationally Determined Contributions, laid forth by the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. Little impact can be had, even if work is done elsewhere if these nations don't step up to face the issue. A further shortcoming was the lack of fundraising, as developed countries fell far from reaching the previous 100 billion dollar goal to provide to developing countries. Since less fortunate nations rely more on coal as a cheap source of fuel for their economy, this funding could have provided a major boost in reducing CO₂ emissions. Finally, many countries put forth more lofty goals for new NDCs following COP26, which, although significant, has led to predictions of failure from experts due to these nations' faulty track records in regards to accountability in climate action.

Although not as much success was achieved as had been hoped, some accomplishments still resulted from COP26. If all pledges are followed from the conference, 1.5°C will be maintained by 2030, and the rise to 2.4°C will occur after that decade. Additionally, major pledges were made by some of the wealthier and critical nations, such as net-zero commitments of either CO₂ or GHG emissions by 2050 by the US and EU, 2060 by China, and 2070 by India. However, there is the catch that, based on similar historic commitments by these same nations, not all of these goals are met, meaning failure is likely in this case as well.

Taking into consideration all of the results of COP26, the summit did enough to combat climate change for the current moment, but based on data of the decades after 2030, contributions made will only postpone and exacerbate the coming impacts of climate change.



EVERYTHING I LOVE ABOUT SUPERSTORE

By: Amy Qiao

A few months ago, I finally finished watching the NBC comedy Superstore, which ended earlier this year in March. I didn't plan to watch the whole series- just an episode- but the immediate sense of chaotic comedy balanced with sentimental scenes drew me in, and I finished the first season almost instantly. Especially with comedies, it's not always that the first season connects with the viewers' sense of humor right away. But Superstore came right out of the bat with a hilarious season, all while addressing the lack of benefits such as maternity leave for department store employees.

This same sentiment carries throughout the series, especially with the final season. During the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, many television series shut down production, including Superstore. This gave the writers time to reflect on the direction they wanted to take the sixth season, and I think they used that opportunity brilliantly. The final season opened with an episode that recapped everything the employees went through during the pandemic, from the uncertainty of its severity to the toilet paper raids to dealing with a shortage of PPC resources. The first episode also focused on the Black Lives Matter movement by looking at how performative activism, from people and companies, can be ignorant and harmful, and the mindset people should use when tackling such issues.

From the beginning, Superstore has made viewers feel much more represented than many other comedies at the time. Starting around the time NBC hits The Office and Parks and Recreation ended, Superstore includes a much more diverse cast and explores how race, gender, and sexuality affect the employees without making it feel forced. The show stars America Ferrera, a Latina actress, alongside, AAPI actors Nichole Sakura, Nico Santos, and Kaliko Kauahi, and African-American actors Colton Dunn and Carla Renata. Although the cast is diverse, it never feels like they are tokenized, with the writers exploring multiple storylines in how racism affects their day-to-day life. The writers also make many jokes centering around race and gender without it diminishing the discrimination the employees face like it sometimes feels in The Office.

This leads us to the cherry on top of the amazing sundae that is Superstore. The jokes are ridiculous, well-written, and add to each character's personality. There's not much I can say to describe just how

hilarious the show is except to just go watch it. Start the pilot episode, sit back, and get ready to fall in love with a stupidly funny show.



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# CHRISTMAS COOKIE REVIEW

By: *Rowan Schreiber*

Now that Christmas is over, it's time to answer the question: what's the best Christmas cookie? Gingerbread? Sugar cookie? Molasses? Peppermint? Peanut butter chocolate?

In my personal opinion, gingerbread and sugar cookies take the cake. Specifically, though, the sugar cookies that come in the plastic box from the grocery store. Are we kidding? Those things are insane. Perfectly soft, melt in your mouth type of texture, with the best frosting and sprinkles known to all of mankind. I would be lying if I said these were not one of the top ten things my taste buds have experienced. If you're planning on making sugar cookies, don't. You might as well go buy yourself a container of those soft sugar cookies from the local Walmart because the homemade ones won't even come close. Homemade sugar cookies should just be made illegal for how short they fall compared to the delectable goodness of store-bought ones. Just don't do it! Save yourself the trouble.

If you thought I was only going to shine light on store-bought cookies, you were dead wrong. Can we get some commotion for gingerbread?! It is simply put: a classic. People who use gingerbread to make gingerbread houses are a disgrace. These classic cookies are too good to be used in construction; leave that to the graham crackers. When you think of Christmas, you think of a gingerbread man, on a plate of cookies, next to the most brilliantly lit Christmas tree. They're a holiday staple, and a perfectly soft gingerbread cookie trumps all. When it comes to these two staple cookies, they will literally never disappoint. The moral of the story is, when you eat cookies this Christmas, don't eat cookies that suck.



# DWAYNE "THE ROCK" JOHNSON'S PROBLEMATIC PORTRAYAL OF MASCULINITY IN FILM

By: *Fiona Cork*

Before reading this op-ed, please note that I have nothing against The Rock as a person. This is merely a critique of what he represents in the film industry.

I actively do not watch movies starring The Rock (unless they are forced on me). Aside from the obvious, e.g. him playing the same role in each film and him...clearly being a wrestler first and foremost, the archetypal character he portrays and what it represents is the poison to (and of) Hollywood.

We have a crisis on our hands- a crisis that affects little boys everywhere- that is, the portrayal of masculinity that can be found in every one of his characters. The presence of Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson (and his archetypal character) in a film automatically delegates the male deuteragonist to the role of comic relief. Know why? It's because Hollywood doesn't think the public can conceptualize masculinity as anything other than brute strength and muscle. A family man with a bit of a dad-bod going on? No thank you. An intelligent-yet-scrawny computer hacker playing the antagonist for no other reason than his apparent lack of badassery? I'll pass.

His newest film *Red Notice* does, however, show a lot of promise on this front, with the industry's favorite everyman Ryan Reynolds playing 'The World's Greatest Con-Man', a suave and intelligent (though admittedly misguided) joker-esque vigilante- a stark contrast to the bumbling, stuttering, looks-challenged, obsessive nerd-type character seen in supporting roles, and I hope such progress continues to be made in his films.



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