



The Season of



Giving



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THIS
ISSUE

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Goodbye 2019. . . . Hello 2020

A glance at some of this year’s most important political events

By Cristen Johnson



January 25th

US ends longest ever partial government shut-down.

March 12th

A college admissions scandal involving many wealthy and high profile individuals is uncovered.



May 15th

Alabama enacts a controversial bill banning abortion in most cases.



July 26th

The Supreme Court moves to allocate 2.5 billion USD toward the construction of a wall on the U.S southern border.

September 24th

The House of Representatives issues an official impeachment inquiry for President Donald Trump.



February 15th

Trump declares the southern border a national emergency.



April 18th

The redacted Mueller report, detailing the findings of the FBI investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, is released.



June 30

Donald Trump becomes first sitting US president to enter North Korea.



August 10th

American Financier Jeffery Epstein commits suicide while in prison. He was arrested for sex trafficking and was connected to people such as Bill Clinton, Donald Trump, and Prince Andrew.

October 26th

Isis leader Abu Baghdadi is killed by US operatives.



“I hope that climate change is better addressed by setting better regulations on the release of primary pollutants and that coal burning should be phased out and replaced with cleaner sources. If serious action is not taken and if more legislation is not implemented, then our planet and ecosystems will continue to change drastically and soon the damage will be irreversible.”
- Anna Yobp

“I hope for more people to be addressing sex trafficking as it is in our country. By uniting communities with awareness of the issue, I hope training for safety becomes much more common, [including] community-wide defense training opportunities [to] hopefully crack down on major trafficking centers such as Washington DC and Atlanta. People are dying every day from this multi-billion dollar ‘industry,’ and it is absurd for a country as well off as we are to allow these horrendous crimes to continue.”
-Katherine Williams

“I hope that by 2020 we have taken significant steps towards the reverse of climate change, such as reducing carbon emissions, eradicating the use of plastic bags, and recycling much more. Climate change is already creating irreversible damage to our planet and we can’t keep denying and putting off the fact that we need to do something about it. The American people are protesting and voicing their opinions, and not enough action has been taken in response to them. Our society, although cliché, needs to set aside our differences and unite instead of separating because of our beliefs.”
- Anna Girzone

“I hope that the person we elect in 2020 will listen to people’s genuine needs rather than their own political interests. For them, it’s beneficial to paint the other side as evil and wrong, but for us, it only causes division and black and white thinking. [However,] our differences help us stay balanced and are a big part of our democracy. After we accept this, then I think it will be a lot easier to stop acting hateful towards people with different opinions and instead be able to really consider and listen to the points others have to make.”
- Brenna Newson

“I hope that the current administration addresses the problem and secures the southern border regardless of how it is done, it is a pressing problem that needs to be solved. I [also] hope [that] the media would become non-partisan and present the facts as they come as opposed to masking their opinions as facts to support their agenda.”
- Darvn Roberts

“I just hope our government can stop being so ignorant and all one sided on every issue imaginable. I hope they can compromise better so we can be more unified as a nation. I think if both parties can meet in the middle and stop going for each other’s throats and ultimately destroying the government, we would be more efficient as a country.”
- Myles Crandall

Opinion: We need to hold all leaders accountable, not just Trump

By Cailyn Hooper

Members of every nation gather in a theater. As the lights dim down, a picture of Donald Trump flashes across the screen. The room is thrown into uproar; yells of “Cheeto” echo throughout the space. People stand up and throw things at the screen, yelling in rage. Profanities of every language are heard as the noise of the theater rises: a world united.

Trump is often perceived as a vile man. His policies have time and time again relied on xenophobia and fear, he has no real political experience, and he is well known for his excessive use of twitter: falsifying hurricane charts and calling out ‘fake news.’ Because of his request to Ukraine to look into Joe Biden, a possible impeachment looms in the distance. Looking further back, his track record is no cleaner: a past littered with sexual harassment allegations, and shady business practices. But despite these various policies and blemishes on his past, disapproval of Trump has become largely surface-level. Criticizing him is now an easy way for foreign politicians to gain popularity and cover up their own missteps.

When Trump tweeted that four nonwhite members of congress should “go back” to where they came from, Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau responded by saying, “That is not how we do things in Canada.” But... isn’t it? Trudeau can’t exactly take the high road on racial issues when just a few months ago he admitted to not knowing how many times he has worn blackface after three pictures of him in the racist practice surfaced. Trudeau’s condemnation of Trump is hypocritical and performative. Despite being known for his charm and progressive stances, Trudeau’s policies have not been much better than Trump’s. As the Nation writes, “Trudeau’s Liberal

Party had turned its back on Canada’s migrant justice movements and rejected visa applications at higher rates than previous governments, sent representatives abroad to discourage people from coming to Canada, refused to budge on calls to end the Safe Third Country Agreement, and continued Canada’s indefinite detention of migrants.” What Trudeau really seems to be saying is “it’s okay to be racist, but could you please be a little more discreet about it?”

Politicians are not the only culprit of this hypocrisy. When Queen Elizabeth II hosted Trump at Buckingham Palace, she wore a tiara that was made of Burmese rubies, which protect from evil and illness in Burmese culture. After this incident, social media was ablaze with mentions of the Queen allegedly ‘throwing shade’ at Trump. Even if this choice of tiara was intentional (which is unlikely), it isn’t something to be applauded. The jewels used in this tiara were gifted to the Queen by the Burmese people while they were under Britain’s rule. Jewels acquired through colonialism are not exactly progressive.

Politicians use Trump as a shield: the more criticism he takes, the less they bear. They use Trump as a straw man, taking easy blows at him to obscure their own mistakes. Other politicians are guilty of the same transgressions as Trump, but they are less upfront about them. After Trudeau’s blackface scandal broke and his popularity was dwindling, he turned to using Trump for his campaign, saying, “We need to continue to have a strong government with a clear focus on standing up for Canadians, standing up to Donald Trump, standing up to the forces of populism and chaos around the world.” Criticizing Trump has become low-hanging fruit for politicians. As we project the entirety of the world’s evils onto Trump, vilifying

him alone, it obscures the problems of other politicians. Because of this, the bar for good politicians has been drastically lowered; now, anyone who isn’t Trump seems to meet the criteria.

Impeachment and “beating Trump” is not the end goal. Trump is far from the only problem facing society. Without

Trump, this country’s deep-rooted issues will still remain. Trump is not the only culprit of discriminating policies, and the U.S. is not the only country built on skeletons of the past. We must hold foreign leaders and other politicians to the same standards that we do Trump.

Graphic by Phoebe Offenberg

Unique hobbies on display

By Cailyn Hooper

Senior Robbie Alden

What is your hobby?

“I went to a camp called National Student Leadership Conference for video game design; game design has been an interest of mine for many years now, and it was a wonderful experience.”

What sparked your interest in it?

“Video games are my preferred medium for consuming fictional media; I love the art of storytelling through games and gameplay as well as all the components that go into creating a successful game.”

How have you improved at game design?

“I learned the basics on what goes into making a game as well as creating my own which was an incredible learning experience and really opened my eyes to how much I personally enjoy the art of designing a video game.”

What was the learning process like?

“It was difficult for me at first because I have no programming abilities. However, my amazing group that I was a part of picked up the slack, and I served more as a project manager and enjoyed myself quite a bit. I like being able to keep everyone on track and oversee all the gameplay and design decisions as well as marketing the final product.”



Senior Shannon McLaughlin

What is your hobby?

“My hobby is special effects makeup.”

What skills have you gained from doing special effects makeup?

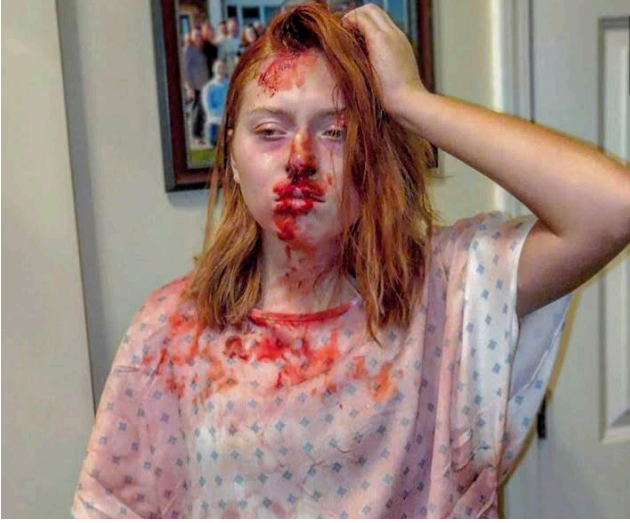
“I have gained a lot of dexterity from it; I am really good at painting and sculpting now.”

What was a notable event involving this hobby?

“I got to work with some of the makeup artists on ‘the Walking Dead’ once during a mass casualty practice at Kennestone hospital.”

How do you plan on using your special effects makeup in the future? Does it relate to your future career goals?

“I really just plan to keep it as a hobby. I want to be a surgeon, so the anatomy will help and knowing fake injuries may help with real ones.”



Junior Dalton Luedke

What is your hobby?

“3-D printing and 3-D modeling.”

When did you pick this up as a hobby?

“About three years ago when I got my first cheap 3-D printer for Christmas.”

How have you improved at it?

“I have gotten better [at] troubleshooting the printers and working with the various software involved with the machines. 3-D printing is still in its infancy, so much of the user experience is very tedious. After using 3-D printers for years, I am now able to fix most problems I may encounter.”

What was the learning process like?

“There is a considerable learning curve for new people, but I learned mostly from trial and error. Reading articles also helped me solve many problems in the early days. When I started, I was not able to create my own parts and models. Now, I am able to design basically anything from scratch and make it into a real part.”



The media center makes modifications

By Emily Hill and Valerie Ambriz

Walking into the media center at the beginning of this school year, students noticed one stark difference: no desktops. As technology is ever-changing, the media center’s traditional role has been evolving as well.

Media center specialists Ms. Elase Franchini and Ms. Stephanie Judkins have made several renovations this year, with one of the major differences being the layout of the media center.

“There are no longer any non-fiction shelves that are on the floor, so we were able to move out the furniture and make it more open,” Franchini said. “[Removing the shelves] allowed us to get more laptops, which has been one of the biggest changes.”

Because of a county decision, the entire school has replaced desktops with laptops — the media center included. There are several responsibilities that come with this change.

“We have to actually check out the laptops, along with making sure they’re all charged,” Franchini said.

Both media center specialists have had to pick up extra work due to the media center’s changing role, specifically the use of new laptops.

“Checking in and out the computers has been the big change,” Judkins said. “It takes up more time than you

think.”

Because of these changes, the media center specialists were required to adapt as well. For instance, Franchini has noticed that classes are beginning to stray away from research papers. Because of this, the media specialists have been given the opportunity to try new things.

“The things we teach are different [now],” Franchini said. “We do a lot of creative things, like greenscreen videos and breakouts. It’s just changed what we do.”

Despite undergoing several changes, there is still more to be done. For example, the media center specialists’ plan on implementing a program called OverDrive later this year that provides digital access to books.

“Not a lot of kids want to come in and have an actual book in their hand, but they’re always on their devices. So, if we can get [students] reading on [their] devices, then that’s a win for us,” Judkins said.

Although the changes have been welcomed by students so far, there have been a few downsides.

“We’ve had issues with the laptops running out of power by seventh period and an obvious issue with Office 365,” Judkins said. “But, I don’t think it has been a negative change.”

Despite some setbacks, the media center has successfully organized several

events, such as the Halloween escape room in which students attempted to decipher puzzles during their lunch period.

“We want to do more escape rooms [in the future], definitely,” Judkins said. “A lot of teachers are asking for escape rooms, so those are going to become a big thing for classes.”

The goal of this revamped me-

dia center is to ultimately attract more students—whether that be for checking out books, using laptops, or participating in an activity—while keeping up with technological innovations. These changes were made to adapt to student life and will hopefully continue to help students in many ways.



Media center specialists Ms. Elase Franchini and Ms. Stephanie Judkins have hints in the media center for the Halloween-themed escape room. The media center has undergone several changes this year, including replacing desktops with laptops. Photo taken by Emily Hill.

Students showcase their unique holiday traditions

By Valerie Ambriz

SERBIA
Marko Petrovic (12)

“Growing up in a Serbian-American household I celebrated the Serbian equivalent to Christmas, which is called Božić. We celebrate it on the seventh of January because we follow the old orthodox calendar. I enjoy [this holiday] because there are lot of cool traditions we do that’s a part of it. In the morning when the sun rises, one of the men of the household goes off and essentially recreates what they used to do in the village, where one person of every household goes to the neighboring house and throw[s] wheat seeds on the door to share the news of the birth of Christ. Since we’re the only Serbians in the area, I just go outside and pretend to be the person who throws the wheat seeds. [We also] take an oak tree and cut off one of the branches; we burn a part of it and say a certain prayer. It is supposed to symbolize starting the new year and burning off the old stuff.”

ITALY
Keira Schroter (10)

“My mom grew up Roman-Catholic, so she’s trying to teach us how she grew up and how her family grew up. My mom’s side of the family all grew up Roman-Catholic, so for Christmas time we do the seven-course fish meal which is shrimp, lobster, salmon, salted cod, mussels, squid, and clams. I really enjoy it because it’s a time [that] we get to spend with family I haven’t seen, sometimes, in over a year. I think [this tradition is] important because it brings our family together; it just brings us all together to sit down, have a meal together, and enjoy our time.”

UKRAINE
Ella Yaroshnik (10)

“When [my parents] were back in their home country, [Ukraine], they celebrated [Christmas] a bit different. The only thing that’s different celebration wise is the food that we eat. On Christmas, they would make this porridge that would take a few days to make. My mom makes blinchiki, which is just the Ukrainian word for crepes, with a cream cheese-ish filling inside with strawberry sauce. In Ukraine, rather than celebrating Christmas on the 25th of December, they celebrated it in January 8th, and it was for three days. [This tradition] reminds me that my family is not the average American household; it makes me feel more connected to their roots and mine.”

GREECE
Nia Cooper (12)

“Easter is big deal in Greece, so my family goes all out on Easter, to keep all the traditions going. We follow a traditional calendar, so it falls either before or sometimes after American easter. [For traditions,] we throw plates on the ground and yell “OPA.” My god-parents usually get a whole lamb and cook it. We hit each other’s eggs and instead of saying, ‘Christ is risen, truly is risen,’ we say, ‘Christos Anesti, Alithos Anesti.’ [A favorite] memory was when I was really little, my aunt actually chased me around the backyard with the eye of the lamb and told me it would make my vision better and make me smarter.”



AP Psychology students break the norms

By Cailyn Hooper

As senior Lili Brower, the yearbook’s Editor in chief, made an announcement, junior Riley McClure answered her phone. The students around her were shocked; they had never seen McClure be disruptive before. An argument soon ensued as Brower criticized McClure’s blatant lack of respect. This event did not take place in a world where all social niceties were forgotten and basic human decency was thrown out the window—this was a world where social norms were broken.

For an AP Psychology project, students were required to go against normative behavior and record the results. This year, the final projects were due on Nov. 14. Before this final deadline, students had to submit a proposal to get their teachers’ approval for their projects.

Students wrote down the results of the project, including how it compared to their predictions and any ethical concerns the project had. For McClure’s project, she had Brower fake an argument with her after taking a phone call.

“I was nervous and uncomfortable, [but] I would say it was [a] positive experience overall,” McClure said.

After putting on her performance, McClure debriefed the class to make it clear the scene was for a project. This project gave McClure a deeper understanding of the subject.

“It allowed us to realize how much our society is based on social norms we see every day that we learned about in class,” McClure said.

AP Psychology teacher Mr. Travis King has been doing this project for at least four years, ever since he started teaching the class.

“I found early on [that] it was basically just kids doing something silly. I wanted them to be more mindful of the actions they were taking on and create more of the research essence in it,”

King said. “[I wanted them to] consider the ethical aspects and some of the cultural aspects because a lot of the behaviors that they took on and exhibited would be perfectly appropriate and normative in other parts of the world and other cultures.”

Out of all his years doing the project, the project that surprised him most was when one of his students, who was always social and well-put together, showed up to school with a completely different appearance. This action prompted concern from her teachers and friends and got her called to the counselor’s office.

“[She looked like] she got pulled out of the gutter that morning. I think that [project] was the biggest one that I found shocking because it even got me when I saw her,” King said. “I didn’t even think in terms of the project. I was like, ‘Oh my God, are you okay?’ And then she kind of winked at me and I [went], ‘Oh, okay.’”

Breaking social norms can incite a strong reaction from others since they are deeply ingrained in our culture. King believes this is because we have an innate desire to fit in and have an ingroup.

“We want to find our place in the world, wherever it is. And through that we tend to adhere to the norms,” King said. “We want to be part of the group as opposed to the one that’s coming against it and challenging the norms.”

Social norms can benefit society by providing needed structure, but this can sometimes come at the cost of a person’s individuality.

“I think it can, to a degree, hinder someone’s individualistic tendencies [and] their degree of creativity and willingness to share,” King said. “We see that sometimes in the classroom; I’ve seen situations where because of strict rules, people aren’t as active and involved there.”

Although some social norms are beneficial to society, others are a product of their time. Throughout history, people have challenged

normative behaviors that needed to be changed.

“Our society is one that changes and evolves, and it’s not going to occur if you don’t have people stepping up and challenging norms in certain situations. How our society responds to that challenge dictates how that movement goes forward,” King said.

To combat harmful social norms, King suggests we try to be more understanding of people.

“It’s easy to judge something from an outsider’s perspective and view it as weird or non-normative, but to understand the essence of

that behavior or why it occurs gives us a better understanding of the individual,” King said. “It helps our society grow and come together, which I think can only be a good thing.”

Although this project may not directly help students on their AP exams, King believes it helps students understand psychology as a process and understand themselves better.

“The most important thing to me is [that] I want [students] to learn something about themselves or something they can at least take forward and use,” King said.



Senior Nora Greene takes a sip out of a customer’s coffee before serving it to them. Greene broke this social norm for a project in AP Psychology. Photo provided by Nora Greene.

Capitalism is ruining the true meaning of Christmas



By Phoebe Offenberg

Tension fills the air as the people around you anxiously wait for 8:00 a.m. to arrive, your stomach is full after your big Thanksgiving meal, and the crowd begins closing in. You hear the sound of people not-so-discretely pulling plastic wrap off the mounds of toys and hover boards, so they can get a head start. The time is now 7:59 a.m., and the crowd of people, wanting to get their Christmas shopping out of the way, closes in even tighter. The clock strikes 8:00, and the madness begins. There’s yelling in aisle nine, and people pushing and shoving right next to you. Watch your feet or someone will run over your toes with a cart full of TVs and virtual reality headsets.

If you’ve ever gone to Walmart on Thursday night, after Thanksgiving, this scene will sound familiar. The Black Friday crowd is just one of the many examples of how, to many people, Christmas has become more about material things, rather than the “true meaning of Christmas.”

The “true meaning of Christmas” means different things to each individual person. The religious meaning of Christmas is obviously celebrating the birth of Jesus. Although my family is not

super religious, we still celebrate the holiday, just not the religious aspect of it. Personally, I believe that the holiday season is about coming together in your community and spending time with your family and friends.

Capitalism has had a big impact on making Christmas more about the stress of finding gifts for family and friends than the actual meaning of it. Many businesses put out their Christmas products and promote their sales the day after Halloween, bombarding consumers with sales and ads for expensive gifts and trends. We don’t even get to enjoy the beginning of the holiday season without worrying about everything we need to buy for the people we love.

When I was younger, I remember hardly being able to sleep on Christmas Eve because I just couldn’t wait to see the presents Santa brought for me that year. I would always make a long Christmas list with everything I wanted and was so excited to get presents. I recognized that Christmas was not all about the presents, but my primary focus of the holiday season was the gifts. Every year, my family and I would still volunteer in our community and come together to celebrate traditions, but I still wanted presents.

I know it sounds selfish, but it is difficult not to get caught up in the material aspect of it all, especially as a child. There are advertisements on TV that are directly targeted towards children during the Christmas season. They show other kids playing with their new toys and gifts. Even in stores, you’ll see that toys are put on display where children will see them. Everyone makes a big deal about Santa and whether kids will be on the naughty or nice list. Capitalism has played a large role in ruining the true meaning of Christmas.

To many people, the holiday season is filled with the stress of finding the right gifts for your family and friends or even having the best decorations up on your house. The movie “The Grinch” is the perfect example of this. In the beginning, everyone is frantically scrambling to get all their gifts before Christmas Day. At the end of the movie, everyone realizes that Christmas means so much more than toys and new TVs. All the whos of Whoville came together in their community and forgot about the material aspect of Christmas for just a few minutes. They all put their differences aside and spread loving and happy energy throughout their neighborhood. This is what I



think Christmas should be about.

In this day and age, life is so fast paced that we don’t have time to sit back and enjoy it all. I think Christmas is the perfect time for this. Take time to get involved in your community; there are plenty of volunteer opportunities this time of year. Pause for a moment to enjoy the small things. Sit by the fire with your family and drink hot cocoa. Bake cookies for your neighbors, or invite them over for dinner. The holiday season really is the most wonderful time of the year, and we need to learn to be more present and avoid the pressures of capitalism.

Junior Phoebe Offenberg stands with her family for a Christmas photo. Every year they always make sure to give back to their community and donate to chairities. Photo provided by Phoebe Offenberg.

A Not So Merry Winter



By Rhyann Connolly

You wake up to another winter day in Hickory Flat, the blinding sun piercing through your window. The heat radiates through the glass as you force yourself to get out of bed and throw on your routine outfit of jeans, a t-shirt, and a sweatshirt, just in case one of your classrooms is colder than usual. It’s early December, and all you can think of is how unfortunate it is to have a sunny holiday season.

Stuck in a town with no pretty snow to take pictures of to enhance your Instagram feed, no fun snow to go play in for the hours you spend outside every day, and no sweet snow to make the air seem even colder as you remark how wonderful the bite of cold smacking you in the face feels. It’s just not fair. Other states get to experience a REAL winter season, while you’re trapped in a town where the lowest temperature is 30 degrees.

Now, travel about 1,044 miles north, and you are in Old Forge, New York, where mountains are high and temperatures are low. I used to call this cute little town home. Hidden between the Adirondack Mountains, Old Forge is known for its village-like atmosphere, beautiful mountain-scapes, and glistening lakes. You would think that all these features would make for the perfect place; however, this perfect place does not shine so bright for countless months out of the year.

With the expectation of below freezing temperatures and the occasional

pile of white snow among miles of dirty, gritty “slush,” Old Forge is one of the coldest towns in New York. It set the lowest recorded temperature in all of New York history on February 18, 1979 at a shivering -52 degrees. While -52 degrees is not a consistent temperature, Old Forge still remains pretty cold, especially throughout the months of December and January. Last year, these months consisted of an average temperature of 17.55 degrees, 34.9 degrees being the high and 3 degrees being the low; these temperatures do not include the wind chill which often is the factor that brings the weather below zero.

To say the least, the months of December and January are not the most enjoyable for these Upstate New Yorkers. Living an average day in Old Forge or basically any town north of Pennsylvania looks a little bit like this...

I wake up one winter morning to the blinding sun piercing through my window, but this time it is even brighter as the sun’s beams reflect off the freshly fallen snow, that is, unless it has been a few days since that last snow fall. In that case, the sky is most likely gray, and the ground is a mixture of white snow, brown slush, and a sheet of hidden black ice underneath. I shiver under the seven blankets I piled on top of myself the night before and dread even the thought of having to crawl out from under all these layers.

I fight the urge to stay in bed and finally walk over to my closet to pick out an outfit for the day. I consider the fact that jeans may not be enough to keep my legs warm and can already feel the coldness I will endure in the collective three minutes I will spend outside throughout the day. I also realize that despite previous efforts in the last few weeks, I will lose the battle in the fight of fitting my North Face jacket over my long sleeve shirt, t-shirt, and sweatshirt.

I prepare myself to walk out to my car that my parents started 10 minutes ago in hopes of defrosting the windshield before I leave so that I don’t have to spend another five minutes scraping the ice off. I put on my

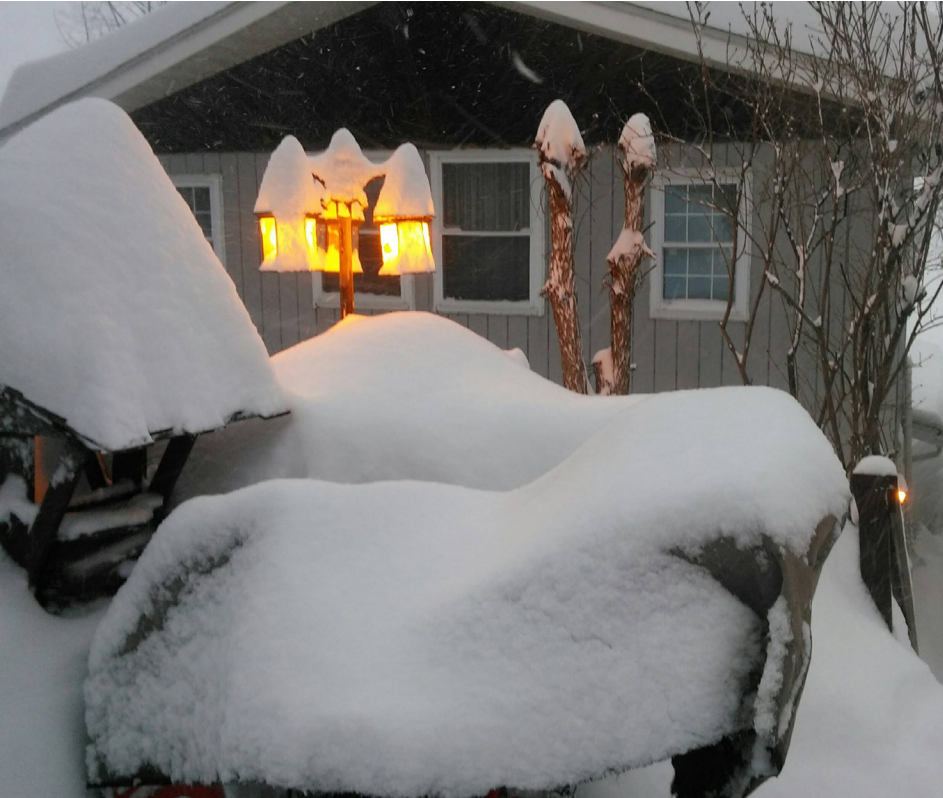
warmest hat, my thickest scarf, and my most insulated gloves. As I open the door, I feel the air instantly turn my cheeks a stinging red, and with my first breath, my nose freezes together. I regret deciding to wear sneakers, cringing and knowing the inevitable fact that I will be stepping into snow at some point today.

With the first step I take towards my car, I do everything I can to balance—the last thing I need this morning is to slip on a patch of sneaky black ice again. Still shivering, I hop in my car, crossing my fingers that the gas hasn’t froze. As I drive away, I notice the snow starting to pile up once again in the driveway despite all the effort my dad put into snow blowing it only 20 minutes ago. 18 inches of snow fill the town, and no, we don’t have a snow day.

I will admit that snow is pretty. My family and I used to take walks around our

neighborhood during the first snowfall every year with cups of hot chocolate in our hands and excitement in our hearts, but this excitement has its limitations. After two weeks of freezing temperatures, this winter wonderland does not seem necessary (especially when it continues into May).

So, while snow may be what makes the holiday season complete in your book, you are most likely not considering every other element that is brought along with it. Wouldn’t you much rather spend nights harassing our county’s Twitter page to call for a snow day at the sight of a snow icon on your weather app than be staring out the window as another foot of snow falls knowing that the day will continue as usual regardless? As a former New Yorker, I can confidently say that Georgians really do not know how good they have it and that a “white Christmas” is definitely not all it is hyped up to be.



This blanket of snow covers everything from rooftops to cars outside the Connolly household. This photo was taken in Old Forge on December 15th of 2018. Photo provided by Rhyann Connolly.

Staff Editorial



Cans collected during the food drive run by the Junior ROTC to help feed the needy on Thanksgiving. The Junior ROTC held the food drive for the last several years. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! A man, dressed as Santa Claus, swings a bell over his head, the small, metal box ringing into the cold outside a crowded Macy’s. He calls out asking for donations for the Salvation Army. You see him from a distance—you can’t miss these guys from a mile away, no matter how hard you try. You start to feel guilty because you really wouldn’t like to give up the fresh \$20 bill your grandma just gave you for “being a sweetie,” but you see other people giving change and loose bills to the faux Santa. You get to the bucket for donations and decide to drop in your coveted \$20 bill. A wave of relief washes over you. You have made a difference, and you have truly helped someone this holiday season.

With the holidays upon us, we delight in the thought of the impending joy of being with family and friends, bundling up to escape the cold, and looking forward to a new year. While many look forward to receiving gifts and large meals, many others in our community do not have such luxuries and struggle to make ends meet in these busy months. This is a time where we must remember that some of us are not as fortunate, and there is no better time to give back to our communities. There are endless ways that we, as a community, can give back whether it is donating clothes, presents, food, or time. No matter what you celebrate, this is the perfect season to give back to those who really need it.

Giving back doesn’t necessarily mean buying hundreds of dollars’ worth of presents or spending 18 hours at a soup kitchen. While these are spectacular acts of kindness, giving back does not have to be some grand act for all to see. It can be giving a few dollars or spare change to charity, donating canned food left over in your pantry, or even donating an old winter coat. There are

countless ways to help others, and there is no bad way to do it.

One of the easiest ways to give back is to simply donate money to charitable institutions like Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, or even the register at Kroger or Publix. During the holiday months, there are donation centers everywhere from outside grocery stores to shopping centers that are always taking up donations. While many don’t take credit cards, it shouldn’t be too much of a hassle to get cash if there isn’t any on hand. One concern people have about giving money to these institutions is how much money actually goes towards the people they are trying to help. According to NBC news, 82 cents of every dollar donated to the Salvation Army goes towards their projects and programs. On average about 75 percent of all proceeds brought in by charities goes towards the programs with the rest going to things such as fundraising. Despite worries of effectiveness, donating is still a great way to give back.

Another amazing way to give back can be donating presents or food. Many of the same organizations who take monetary donations also take physical donations. Giving needed items may even be easier than giving money as there are Toys-For-Tots donation boxes in almost every Target or Walmart, and Sequoyah’s Key Club also does a winter clothing drive. While you may have to spend a little more money to buy toys or gifts, it is definitely worth it when imagining the joy it may bring a child who was expecting nothing. Many schools and stores have a program where you can sign up for a specific gift for a child or have a toy drive box for new and unopened toys. When donating clothes, there is almost no purchasing required. Everyone has an old winter jacket or old jeans that they can’t fit into or

wear anymore, so instead of just throwing them out, it is the perfect time to donate them so other people can use them.

Giving back isn’t just about donations; another major part of it is volunteering and spending time working for the community. Trying to find a place to volunteer may feel daunting, but the holidays can be a very easy time to find somewhere to donate time and energy. MUST Ministries is always taking in volunteers to help the less fortunate year-round. Some of the activities they need the most help in is sorting food and clothes, running the food pantry and kitchen, and participating in the toy shop for parents to pick out toys for their children during the holidays. There is a MUST in both Canton and Marietta that make it very easy to volunteer. Another opportunity is helping to hand out boxed or bagged lunches to the less fortunate through organizations such as Feeding America. One of the more intimidating aspects of volunteering is finding time to work, but you don’t have to spend ten, five or even any more than three hours. No matter how long you volunteer, it is time spent trying to make someone’s life just a little bit better, leaving an impression of kindness and compassion on them that will last for a long time.

Giving back is one of the most rewarding things that you can do especially during this giving season. No matter what you practice, what you believe, or what you have, volunteering and donating can be just as big of a gift to you as it is to those who are receiving your kindness. It may feel scary or like you just can’t fit it into your schedule, but any form of giving back, even the tiniest donation or the shortest amount of volunteering, can make a monumental difference in someone else’s life. This holiday season, take a break from the “Elf” marathon and go out and make a difference in our community.

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- Editor-in-Chief**
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- News Editor**
Valerie Ambriz
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Grant Davis
Hannah Rogers
Cristen Johnson

Sequoyah High School
4485 Hickory Rd
Canton, GA 30115
770-721-3200

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A new playlist just in time for the holidays



“All I Want for Christmas” is You by Mariah Carey

“I’ll Be Home for Christmas” by Pentatonix



“Let It Snow” by Bing Crosby

“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” by Andy Williams

“Feliz Navidad” by Jose Feliciano



How to make your ugly holiday sweater not so ugly

By Tatum Beckwith

You do not have to wear the same tacky sweater with leggings and sneakers for your next party. An ugly sweater does not mean you have to have an ugly outfit. Creating an outfit that is cute but still festive can be hard, and it may not seem like you have many options. I promise they are out there. Say goodbye to your drab holiday outfits and say hello to shining at your next holiday party.

Layering is the best way to be comfortable but still look like the star on top of the tree. You could always wear a skirt to make it a little trendier, but layering your sweater on top of a plain dress adds extra pizzazz. If the sweater is at an awkward length with the dress, you could crop or tie the sweater to fit your waistline. A dress is a little more comfortable than a skirt, and the bottom of the sweater will hit at your waistline like the waist of a skirt.

When choosing your footwear, it is easy to fall into the sneaker hole. If you want to make the outfit stand apart, add statement shoes. Colorful ankle booties or even cool sneakers can add so much to a boring outfit. Pair your sweater with ripped jeans, add a cool belt, and tuck the front portion for an added detail. Pattern on pattern is a trend coming back, so coordinating patterned booties or color blocked sneakers would elevate

your sweater game.

Your shoes always need a partner, so use a little 90’s inspiration for your socks. Rachel Green from Friends could always be spotted in knee high socks or black tights. Black tights are a great touch if it is not too cold but just cold enough to wear something under a skirt. You are probably thinking, “knee high socks? As if,” but paired with heels or ankle boots, these socks will have you “sleigh” at your party.

Your sweater does not need to be the only thing that pops in your outfit. Pants do not have to be plain jeans. Mixing textures and materials can add something special. If you do not mind standing apart, metallic pants would make you shine brighter than the star on top of the tree. Plaid is a great pop of pattern to mix with your tacky sweater especially since plaid is a winter staple.

Accessories are everything when you are trying to sleigh at your holiday party. Adding a pair of statement earrings or a necklace would add a little sophistication to your outfit while keeping it fun and flashy. Gold is always a good go-to for the holidays, but if your sweater has cool tones use silver and warm tones should correspond with gold jewelry. Consistency in your color pallet will make the outfit come together.

A good hairstyle could make or

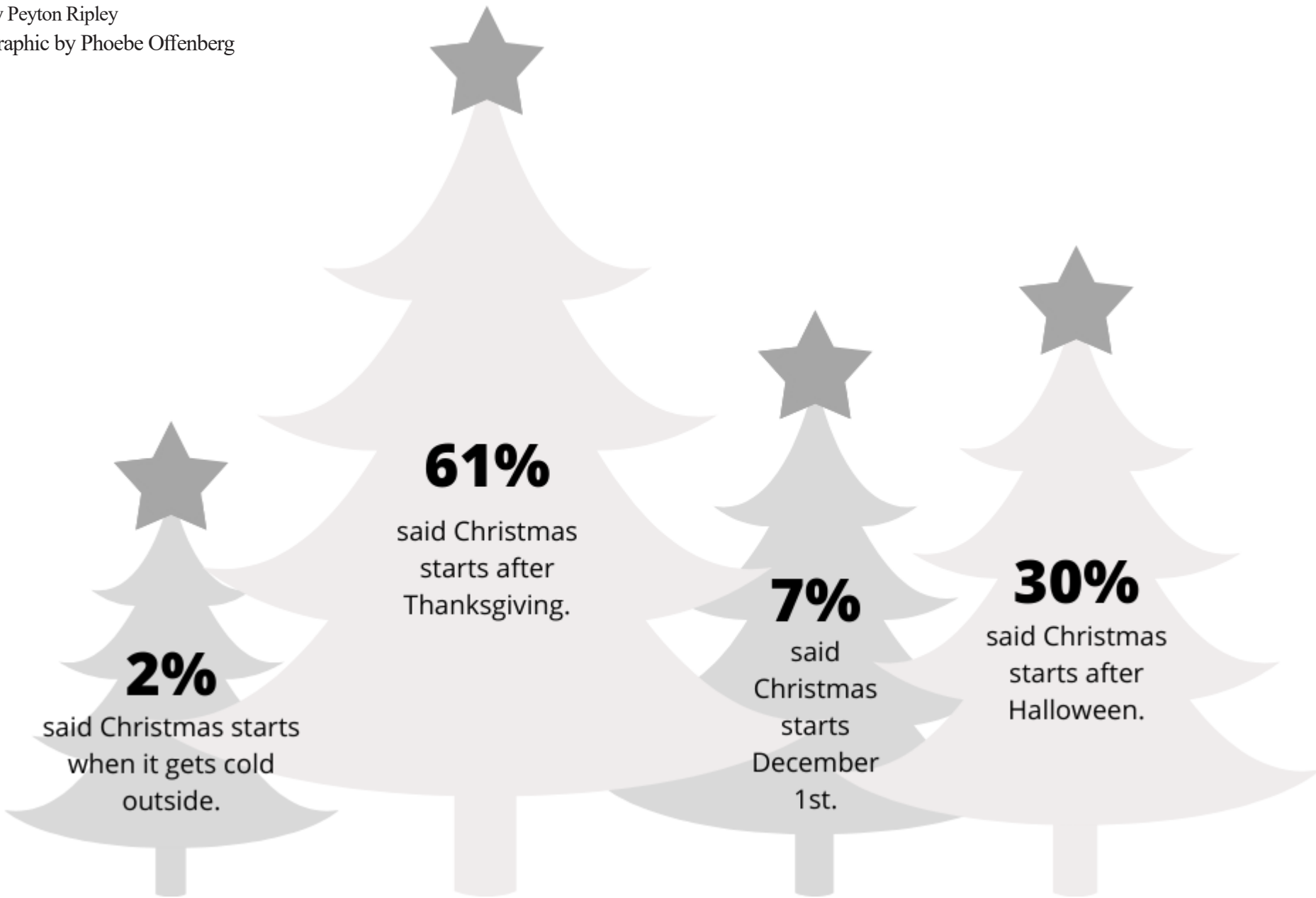
break your outfit. If you want to stick with the sophisticated look, a slicked back high ponytail would be an elegant touch to your outfit. Big loose curls would make the outfit more whimsical and fun. Hair accessories could be added to a half up half down style. Colorful scrunchies or hair pins would make your hair a continuation of your tacky but cute sweater.

Fashion can be personalized to express yourself. Your outfit does not have to be a runway look as long it represents your personality. This even includes a tacky holiday sweater. If you like a sophisticated look or a crazy fun look there are options. Mix and match your footwear or hair to make your outfit truly yours.



WHEN DOES CHRISTMAS BEGIN?

By Peyton Ripley
Graphic by Phoebe Offenberg





“Jingle Bell Rock”
by Bobby Helms

“Hallelujah”
by Pentatonix



“Winter Wonderland”
by Michael Buble

“Rockin’ around the
Christmas Tree” by
Brenda Lee



“Santa Tell Me” by
Ariana Grande

Are you dreaming of a White Christmas?

By Hannah Robbins and Tatum Beckwith

The Friday of finals week seems to be the slowest day of them all. Students watch the clock tick second by second, waiting for the freedom of Christmas break. Are they escaping the cold weather of Hickory Flat for a hot vacation, or are they embracing the chill and enjoying a white Christmas?

If the winter wonderland is desired for the picturesque scenery, mountain top skiing, or spending some time in real snow, a colder destination would be the answer for some students and their families. If the blistering cold air is too much to handle, a hot haven would cure a case of cabin fever.

Junior Katie Sarkady prefers warm vacations during the holiday season, but she endures the northern winters when visiting family in Maryland.

“We go up north every year or two, and the holidays are designated for our family in Maryland, and we will sometimes tour around up north while we are there. I love Maryland [during Christmas], but we normally go to the beach and cruises on other vacations. I prefer going to the beach and going on a cruise though,” Sarkady said.

Maryland is a change of scenery compared to Hickory Flat, but Christmas on a cruise is ideal to Sarkady.

“Cruises are fun because they go to many different places, and it is warmer. I just love the beach and warm weather,” Sarkady said.

If a white Christmas does not sound

appealing, try Senior Alvina Mandzyuk’s approach. Mandzyuk prefers to escape the cold weather for a warmer climate.

“Every year, we go to North Port, Florida twice a year. We go to Florida because we have a lot of family there. When I go with family, me and my cousin have a tradition that we do every year on Christmas. We always go out and buy each other gifts and random things that both of us will not use,” Mandzyuk said.

The weather is not the only benefit of traveling to Florida for the holidays to Mandzyuk.

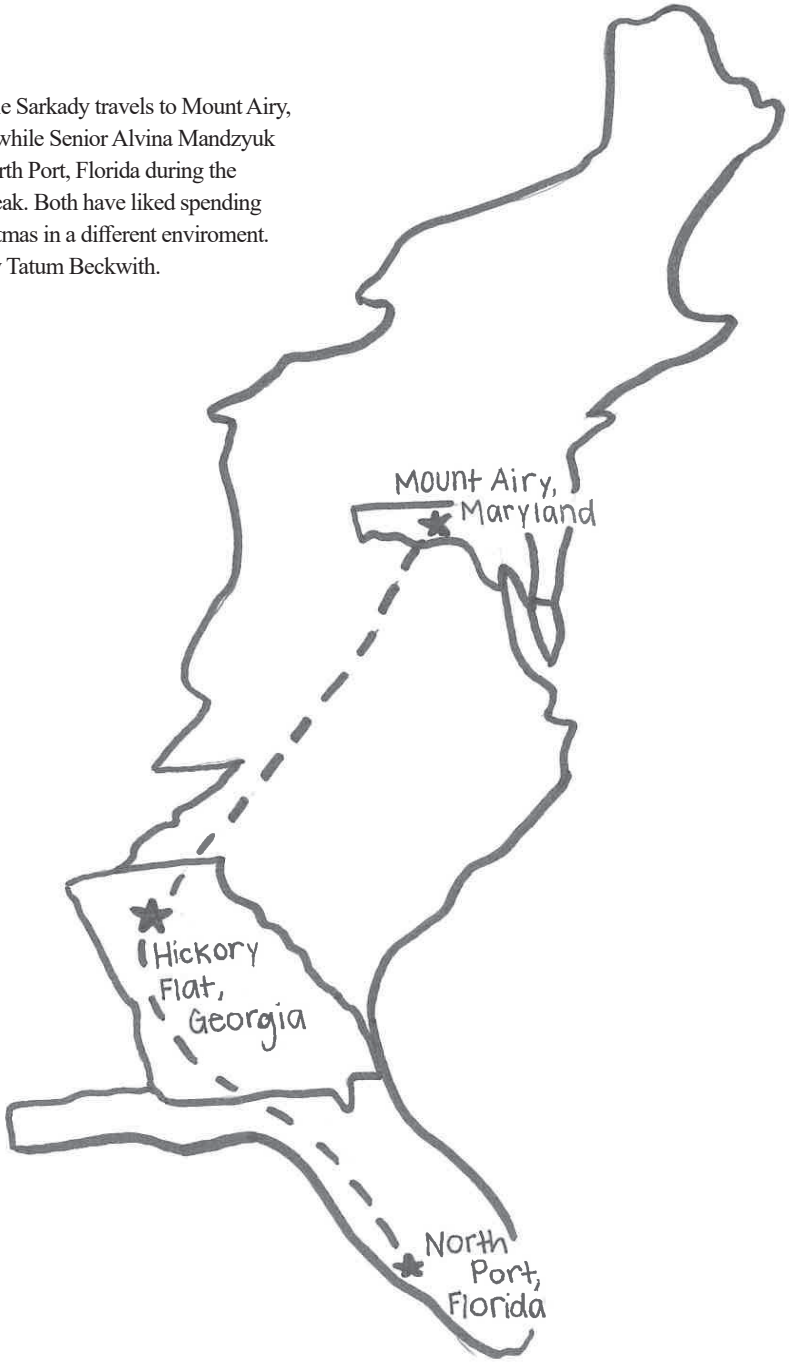
“I love being out in the cold, but we do not get a lot of family vacations, and the two times we go on a vacation, I would rather be at the beach. I think that a beach vacation is better because I get to spend it with my loving family that I only get to see twice a year,” Mandzyuk said.

Snow and cold weather do not make the holiday season. Traditions follow a family no matter where they are.

“Every year [when] we go to Florida on Christmas, we always watch the Grinch as a family and drink hot chocolate and make my mom’s famous fruit cake,” Mandzyuk said.

A cold Christmas brings snow and chilled noses, but a hot holiday brings tan lines and sunburns. Whatever holiday is celebrated on the time away from school, it does not always stay in Hickory Flat. Traditions, families, and memories follow each other no matter the climate.

Junior Katie Sarkady travels to Mount Airy, Maryland while Senior Alvina Mandzyuk goes to North Port, Florida during the holiday break. Both have liked spending their Christmas in a different enviroment. Graphic by Tatum Beckwith.



A Sweet Cure to Cabin Fever

By Rhyan Connolly

Are the holidays really the holidays if they aren’t blown in with a blizzard of your favorite desserts? Whether you and your family make the traditional trip to your local bakery or you spend hours in the kitchen perfecting recipes that have been passed down for years, no one can say their winter wonderland would be complete without

Peppermint Bark Brownies

Serves about 16

Ingredients

- Your favorite brownie recipe/brownie mix
- 1 1/2 cups white chocolate chips
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 6 regular sized candy canes crushed

Instructions

1. Bake brownies as instructed in your recipe/ on box mix and set aside to cool in pan
2. Crush candy canes into very small pieces and set aside for later
3. Place white chocolate chips and coconut oil in a medium microwave safe bowl. Microwave for 30 seconds, stir, microwave for 30 seconds more, and stir again until smooth (microwave for 10 more seconds if needed, but watch carefully as white chocolate burns easily)
4. Pour melted chips onto cooled brownies
5. Sprinkle crushed candy canes on top
6. Place in a refrigerator to set for about 30 minutes
7. Serve immediately. Store in airtight container for three days at room temperature, or store for up to one week in a refrigerator

Santa Hat Mini Cheesecakes

Serves about 25

Ingredients

- 18 Oreos
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 1/2 tsp butter, melted (keep butters divided)
- 2 (8 oz) pkgs cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup + 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/3 cups white chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/3 cup heavy cream (keep heavy creams separate)
- 25 small, fresh strawberries
- 2 tbsp powdered sugar

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees
2. Finely crush Oreos
3. Line an 8 by 8-inch baking dish with two large sheets of tinfoil (one going horizontally and one over the top of the other vertically.) foil should overhang over the edges and be pressed into the pan
4. Brush foil with 1/2 tbsp melted butter.
5. In a small to medium sized mixing bowl, use a fork blend together crushed Oreos and 2 tbsp melted butter until mixture is evenly combined and thoroughly moistened
6. Press mixture firmly into the bottom of the prepared baking dish using the bottom of a flat measuring cup or glass cup, then set aside
7. In a large mixing bowl, use an electric hand mixer set on medium-low speed to blend cream cheese and granulated sugar until mixture is smooth
8. Add in eggs and vanilla extract- mix until well blended

some sweets. The classic sugar cookies topped with dollops of icing and handfuls of sprinkles and the perfect pumpkin pie will never disappoint, but if you and your family are looking for something new this season to brighten up the dessert table, here are some super simple recipes that will send your taste buds on a sleighride of flavor.



9. In a microwave safe bowl, heat white chocolate chips with 1/3 cup heavy cream in 30 second intervals, stirring after each interval until melted and smooth (watch carefully as white chocolate burn easily)
10. Pour melted white chocolate mixture into cream cheese mixture and blend on low speed until well combined
11. Tap bowl against countertop about 30 times to release some of the air bubbles
12. Then pour mixture over Oreo crust in baking dish.
13. Bake in an oven for 40 minutes
14. Turn oven off and let the cheesecake sit in the warm oven for 15 minutes
15. Remove from oven and let it sit at room temperature for 30 minutes
16. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze for 3 hours or refrigerate for 6 hours
17. Once cheesecake has chilled and set, remove it from freezer or refrigerator and lift it out of pan by grabbing the overhanging foil
18. Cut cheesecake into squares that are slightly larger than your strawberries
19. In a mixing bowl, use an electric hand mixer set on high speed to whip the remaining 1/2 cup of heavy cream until soft peaks form
20. Add powdered sugar and mix until stiff peaks form
21. Cut a flat top off of each strawberry and lay flat side down over top of cheesecake
22. Fill a pastry bag (or Ziploc bag and cut a small tip of corner) with sweetened whipped cream and line the bottom of the strawberry and then put a dot on top of the strawberry

10 Entertainment 2019 all wrapped up

By Rhyan Connolly

31,536,000 seconds—each of which have the power to shape the whole year. Collectively, these seconds will not only turn into a year, but they will also turn into memories. Every second really counts, especially in a year such as 2019, when we start to realize that the start of 2020 will mark the end of an era, the era we all grew up in.

The last 10 years were the ones where we discovered our passions, met some of our best friends, learned new things, and grew up. But, 2019 most definitely stands out from the rest.

2019 was filled with every emotion imaginable, from laughing in our beds at the funniest, most relatable Tik Toks we have ever seen, to drowning in tears at the movie theater as we watched “Avengers: End Game” for the first time (and the second time, and the third time...). When we look back on these 31,536,000 seconds, which will stand apart from the rest? Which of these memories will become the definition for 2019 in the years to come?

In just the last few months, the relevance of Tik Tok has increased greatly. These days, it is hard to find someone who was not up late the night before watching video after video, and homework starts to seem less and less important. What a lot of users seem to forget is that Tik Tok has been around much longer than just the past few months. I am not referring to Musical.ly, which some of us hate to admit was the peak of our middle school comedy. I am talking about Tik Tok’s official release in 2018 and its unexpected rise to fame. Tik Tok’s fame has only gone up since its mark of one billion downloads worldwide, which took place in February 2019.

The reality of the end of an era was even clearer on April 22 as the last Avengers movie came to theaters. Masses of people were flooding theaters to see this highly anticipated movie. Bringing in nearly \$60 million on only it is opening

night, “Avengers: End Game” was raved about by critics everywhere. Rotten Tomatoes claimed it to be “exciting, entertaining, and emotionally impactful,” and gave it a score of 94 percent.

From their appearances in the Disney Channel original movies “Camp Rock” and “Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam,” to Nick Jonas’ release of his single “Jealous,” the Jonas Brothers sang their way into our hearts. Because of this, it came to no surprise when fans were devastated when the announcement of the bands breakup came sooner than expected. While Nick Jonas’ singles were hits, fans were missing Kevin and Joe, that is until their long overdue reunion. After years apart, the three brothers had fans screaming when they decided to get back together and set out on their “Happiness Begins” tour which began on August 7.

What started off as a joke posted on Facebook continued to turn into a popular meme, and eventually turned into a potential government issue; the Area 51 raid was without a doubt a special moment of 2019. The post stating, “Storm Area 51, They Can’t Stop All of Us,” got many people thinking, and in no time at all, the raid of Area 51 was scheduled for September 20. The excitement of raiding Area 51 settled down weeks before the raid causing only a mere 150 people to show up at the gates. Although no aliens were really discovered, the thought of raiding Area 51 will not be forgotten.

YouTube and makeup have both been key components of society, especially in the last few years as makeup artists have developed and maintained their careers through posting videos on their channels. However, as this career becomes more and more popular, professionals have been coming up with new and exciting ways to keep their audiences interested. Two very influential Youtubers, Shane Dawson and Jeffree Star, have done just that as they collaborated in the release

of their Conspiracy Collection. With the release of this collection on November 1, Dawson and Star have been uploading videos related to the collection, which includes the reveal, “Secrets of the Beauty World,” a video explaining the ups and downs of the process, and so much more. The release of this palette and videos have contributed greatly to the YouTube industry. In the next few weeks that followed, due to Star’s and Dawson’s creation, the amount of time, effort, and quality level in other Youtubers’ approach on their careers have continued to change for the better. New up and coming artists have been inspired to become better producers, as well as realizing that the business side involved in makeup is not something completely out of their reach.

On November 12, Disney released its very own streaming platform called Disney Plus, which

includes shows and movies from Disney Channel, Disney Classics, Marvel, Star Wars, National Geographic, and almost everything Disney related show or movie imaginable. Mixed opinions have been expressed even before its release making Disney Plus a common topic of conversation. The effects this new steaming platform will have on streaming platforms including Netflix and Hulu have not been determined yet, but Disney Plus is not a bad note to end 2019 on.

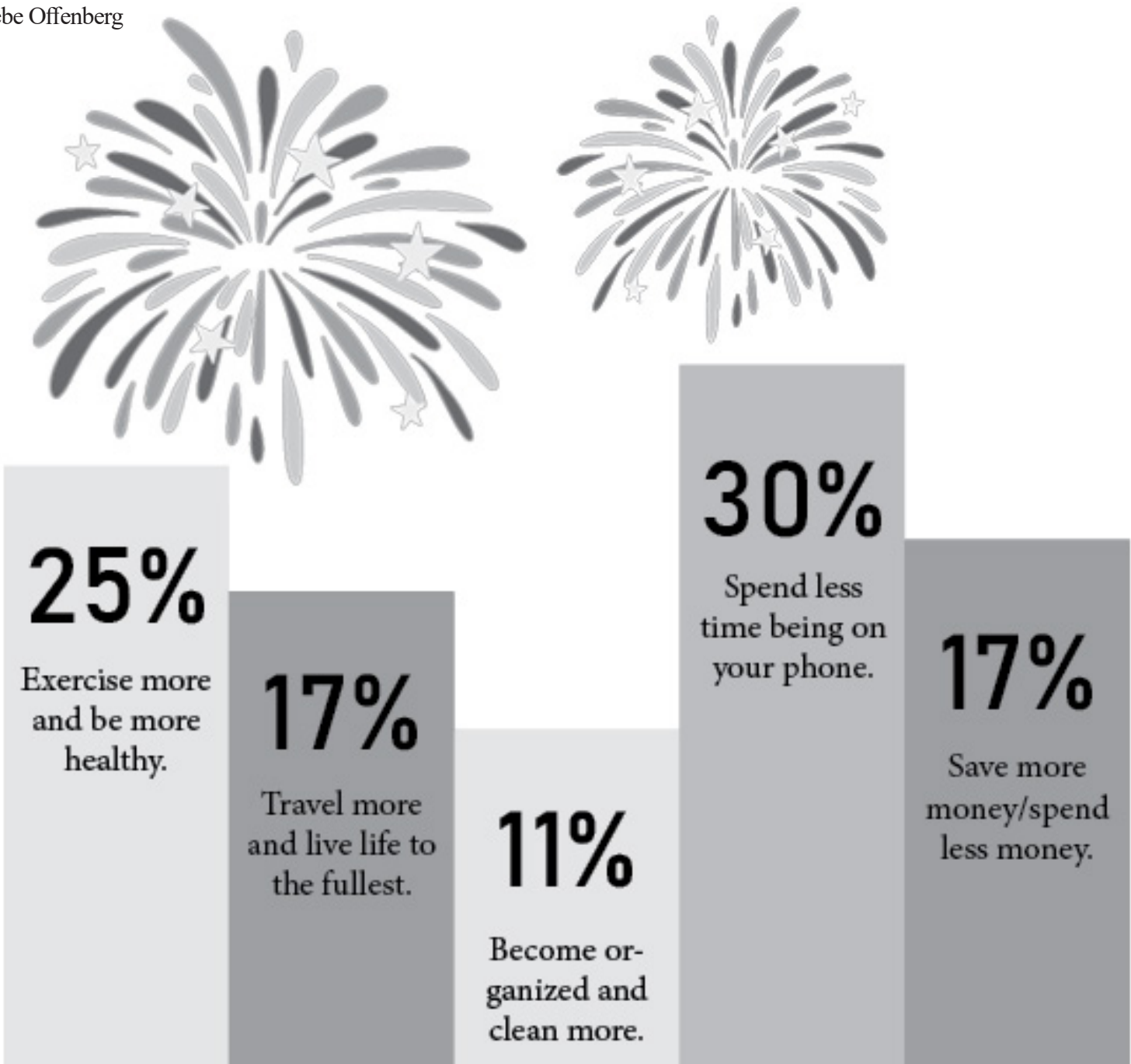
Whether or not your 2019 consisted of Jonas Brothers concerts or creating dozens of new makeup looks, there were still millions of moments just waiting for you to take advantage of them; the same goes for 2020. 2019 will be hard to top, but going into this new decade off the previous year’s highs will no doubt make for an even more eventful year.



What will your 2020 look like?

By Hannah Rogers

Graphic by Phoebe Offenberg



New Year, New Diet

By Tatum Beckwith

Seventy-one percent of Americans promise themselves they will spend the new year eating healthier and dieting. Those are good goals to have as long as people aim at becoming the healthiest version of themselves and not paying attention to the body staring back at them in the mirror. Clean eating and dieting do not promise a skinny body, but they do promise a happy, healthy lifestyle.

An easily hidden empty calorie is high fructose corn syrup. High fructose corn syrup is a sugar derived from corn syrup. The syrup is from corn which is mostly genetically modified in the United States.

High fructose corn syrup is an artificial sweetener that is often added into processed foods and soda drinks. According to the website Healthline.com, “The main reason why sugar-based sweeteners are unhealthy is because of the large amount of fructose they supply. The liver is the only organ that can metabolize fructose in significant amounts. When your liver gets overloaded, it turns the fructose into fat.” High fructose corn syrup is a prominent ingredient in many popular foods, but paying attention to this one thing will promote a better eating pattern.

A misconception about clean eating is that a salad is always healthy. Fruits and vegetables are beneficial to a healthy diet, but toppings can cancel out the benefits. Dressings sometimes add unnecessary calories to the salad with little benefits. A salad is always a good idea but adding excessive toppings like dressings, croutons, and bread on the side add the calories back that the salad attempts to take away.

Many people do not know the difference between natural and organic foods. Natural foods are assumed to be minimally processed and not contain any hormones, antibiotics, or artificial flavors. The FDA does not have rules for something to be labeled natural. This means a company can put the label “natural” on anything, even if it is heavily processed. Natural only covers what

happens during processing not how the food is produced.

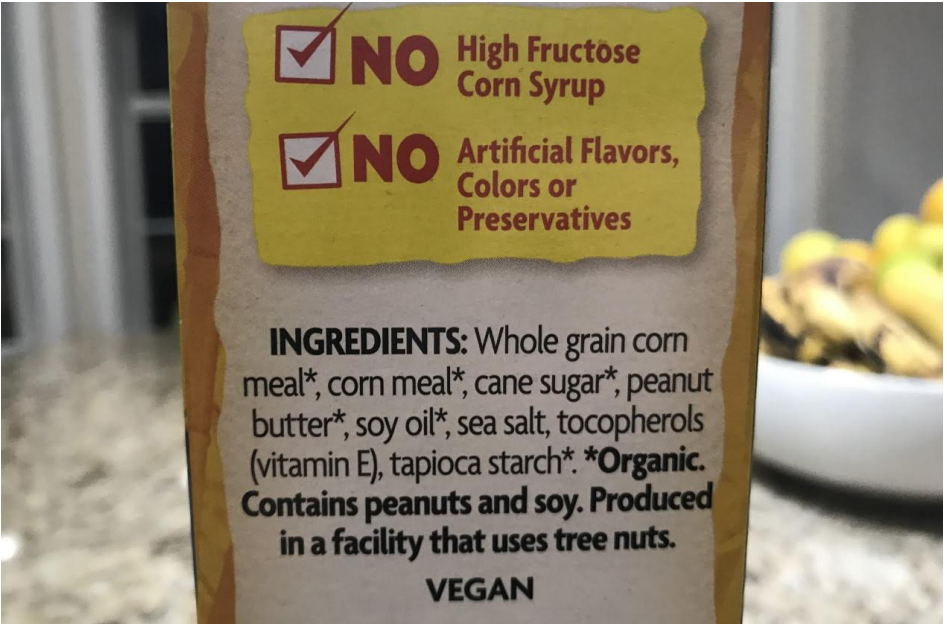
Organic foods are required to have no toxic pesticides, toxic herbicides, chemical fertilizers, animal growth hormones, or antibiotics. Producers also must pass multiple unannounced inspections to make sure they are following the rules and regulations. Organic covers how it is produced and how it is processed. Making the extra step to purchase organic foods will take out unnecessary chemicals and toxins that add no nutritional value to a meal.

The nutrition facts label can be confusing and easy to ignore, but it can provide so much valuable information about the contents. First off, an important part is the sugars, but more specifically how much of it is added. The grams of sugar listed are the total number of grams of sugar but under that is how many grams of added sugar is included.

Added sugars, like high fructose corn syrup, are added on top of natural sugars. The body needs natural sugar for energy, but added sugar is not a necessity. Sugars do not need to be cut out completely but limiting the amount of added sugars in a diet is an easier switch than one might think.

Another important part of the nutrition label is the ingredients list. The rule is the higher the ingredient is on the list the more there is, so if sugar is the first ingredient, then it is the most abundant ingredient. Something else to pay attention to is words you cannot pronounce. Research different ingredients when first starting but after researching if the ingredient is not recognizable than it is most likely a preservative or used for artificial flavoring.

Switching to a cleaner diet is easier than most people think. Start with small changes because a dramatic shift is harder to maintain when training a body to adapt to a new eating lifestyle. Being more cautious about where and how food is produced and processed makes a big impact on a diet.



The ingredients list is a very important aspect of the nutrition label. The list is labeled with the most abundant ingredient first in the list. Photo by Tatum Beckwith.



Look for the organic label to make sure food is truly fresh. Non-organic food is processed and could have grown with toxic pesticides. Photo by Tatum Beckwith.

A guide to organization in the new year

By Hannah Robbins

Everyone’s ideal start to a new year is a clean slate, which begins with cleanliness. Many people tend to lose motivation during the end of the year because of the energy they put into school and the holidays. With a lack of focus on their surroundings, clothes begin to pile up in the corner of their room, and it becomes difficult to find the difference between the clean and dirty.

Most people do not make their beds even though it is the largest part of their room. If the bed appears clean and looks put together, then the rest of the room will flow with that feeling. According to Psychology Today, a study led by Nicole R. Keith, Ph.D., found that people with a cleaner space are healthier than those with a messier space. The first step to keeping the mind uncluttered is keeping the space uncluttered.

Making the space appear clean is a way to feel clean. That means the bed in everyone’s bedroom must be made. After this step is taken, there is more space to place laundry and begin to identify which is clean and which needs to be carried to the washer and dryer immediately. This is necessary since the room probably smells like moldy cheese due to the t-shirt that has not been washed since summer.

Attempting to organize a closet may bring tears to many people’s eyes, but it is not as scary as most believe. The first step in tackling the closet that appears as though a tornado ran through it is going through what clothes are consistently worn. If a shirt in the closet

hasn’t been worn since eighth grade, it is time to donate it. If a pair of jeans are a size zero and have not fit since first grade, it is time to trash them.

After these clothes are removed, and there is space to hang clean clothes, a load of laundry or two will be long overdue. A tip to helping decide if the clothes get worn or not is to begin the year with all hangers backwards and, every time the clothes are worn, turn the hanger around and place the clean clothes back up. After checking what has been worn and what has not, it will be shocking to find that half of the closet is sitting there unused for the look of a full closet. If the feeling of a full closet has left and been replaced with an empty feeling, old clothes can be sold or taken to a consignment shop in order to make extra cash to buy new clothes.

Once the closet looks spotless, the appearance of the room may be outdated. For example, the One Direction poster from 2013 may need to be taken down. Having a uniform and organized room will help many feel mentally organized. Staying on top of the mess before it becomes a full-blown disaster will keep from spending many hours over the weekend cleaning up from the week before.

Organization and cleanliness begin with the mindset of becoming clean and organized? The next time the thought of leaving clean clothes on the desk instead of placing them back into the closet comes to mind, think about how relieving it is to start fresh. A healthy environment leads to a healthy mindset.

Before



After



Blatchford’s game leads the way to her fame

By Cameron Keehley

She laces up her black Nikes and adjusts her headband as she gets introduced for the starting lineups. The student section chants “she’s a freshman” as her name is announced, and it brings a tiny smirk to her face. Before the game starts, that tiny smirk turns into a vicious glare, and she is ready to attack her opponents.

Freshman Elle Blatchford has always had a love for the sport of basketball. She started playing recreational basketball in second grade after her mom brought it up to her. After a few years of hard work and experience, recreation basketball led to travel ball, and since then, Blatchford has always dreamed of competing at the highest level.

“I always knew I would play basketball, but it really became my dream when I played AAU in 6th grade,” Blatchford said. “That is when I met the two greatest coaches that taught me what it takes to be an elite player. My dream college would be to play for UCONN, and I would love to move on to the WNBA.”

Blatchford values team effort and aggression over individual stats, and she realizes if the team can work together, they will have a better chance at being victorious.

“I bring my knowledge and competitiveness to the game and believe we should always win as a team,” Blatchford said. “My goal [this year] is to just be the best I can be for my teammates.”

Varsity basketball head coach Christopher Yarbrough has been impressed with what Blatchford has brought to the team so far and knows if she is coached the right way, her skills can create more opportunities for other

players.

“I have been impressed with the way Elle has grasped our offense,” Yarbrough said. “She has a great sense of spacing, and it is going to force teams to respect her skills which in turn should create open shots for the team. Elle’s on-court IQ is really good, and she just makes her teammates better. By starting Elle at the point, it allows our other guards more freedom to space the floor and shoot the ball. By opening up our spacing, it creates more open shots. If teams take away our shooters, then it will open up the driving lanes for Elle.”

Coach Yarbrough has seen many freshman players throughout his coaching career, but Blatchford might be the most unique he has ever witnessed.

“I’ve coached many talented players before, and Elle might be the most skilled freshman that I’ve ever coached,” said Yarbrough. “It’s a real luxury to have someone like her, because it just makes everyone better around her. Elle is extremely coachable and works really hard. She’s always asking questions to make sure she is in the correct spot. She is consistently working on her game, which just sets her apart from many other players.”

Blatchford and her father created a social media account in 2016 to display her basketball highlights and workouts during the season and throughout the offseason. Since then, the Instagram account has reached nearly 30,000 followers.

“My social media account never gets me distracted,” Blatchford said. “I do it so others can see how hard I have to work. It lets others know if they work hard, they can see how great they can be.”



Freshman Elle Blatchford drives to the lane looking to score during the scrimmage game against Lovett. Blatchford started playing basketball in the second grade. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

Jacksen Greco leaves his legacy

By TJ Murphy

As he plans to wrap up his high school career and season, senior Jacksen Greco has left his statistical mark on the basketball program. Despite being a player who has scored over 1000 points in his four years as a Chief, Greco has influenced those around him.

Coach Allen Carden, the head coach of the boy’s varsity basketball team, and Greco’s coach throughout his entire high school career, is excited to see what awaits Greco in the future. He is certainly proud of Greco’s accomplishments on the court.

“He’s going to have over 1500 points or so, and he’s going to be revered here for the rest of his life; some day, he may even have his jersey retired,” Carden said.

As his coach, Carden certainly admires Greco’s playstyle and his personality. He is impressed with his contributions as a teammate, as well as his work ethic.

“I’ve had the pleasure of coaching him for four years now, and the biggest thing that I’ve seen is that as good of a basketball player he is, he’s a great person,” Carden said. “I always see him being encouraging at practice, he works extremely hard, and he’s the first one to really get a clap going and the first one to be very vocal and everything.”

Because of his hard work and hours spent in the gym, Greco was given the chance to play at the next level. Despite receiving multiple other offers, he decided to further his career at Mercer University.

“I had six offers officially, [but] I felt like Mercer was the best fit for me,” Greco said. “They were my very first offer, and I wanted to go where I felt believed in.”

For his life after high school, his coaches expect nothing but positive things. Greco is sure to fit in well at Mercer according to Carden.

“I think he’s going to have a tremendous college career because when he gets to college everyone isn’t going to have drawn defenses for him,” Carden said. “They’re not going to be covering him up quite as much because they’ve got other people to [worry about], so I’m excited about seeing his college career unfold.”

Along with Carden, Greco has impressed his teammates as well. Senior Donovan Shipp, Greco’s teammate of nearly six years, certainly has high praise for him.

“He’s the best shooter I know,” Shipp said. “His offense is deadly.”

Due to his abilities as a player, Shipp believes that Greco will have great success throughout his time as a basketball player. He is certainly excited to follow Greco’s career.

“He has the potential to make it really far,” Shipp said. “I can’t wait for him to make it all the way.”

Greco does not lack the ability to identify his playstyle. His ability to shoot the ball was not attained on accident. It was polished through hard work and effort.

“I’m in the gym a lot, especially by myself,” Greco said. “I work on shooting and handles mostly.”

Before he can focus on the beginning of his collegiate career, however, Greco must focus

on wrapping up his senior season. After that, he will look to the future.

“I hope to finish high school ball on a high note, play in college, and try to go further,” Greco said.

Greco, who is admired by his coach and teammates for his work ethic and playstyle, has left a mark on the basketball program. He is finishing his senior season out strong while being excited for what is to come in the next season of his basketball career.



Senior Jacksen Greco drives towards the rim. Greco became one of Sequoyah’s all-time leading scorers last year. Photo by Grayson Belanger.



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Basketball cheerleaders impact the basketball teams’ success

By Keira Schroter

At Sequoyah, the atmosphere during basketball season is often made brighter with the spirit of the cheerleaders. Year after year, they rally the basketball teams on to success.

Most sideline cheerleaders either cheer for the football team or the basketball team. Freshman Emma Gilderubio started cheering for both teams earlier this season.

“This will be my first season [cheering on the] basketball sideline,” Gilderubio said.

Cheering for the various sports can be very different for some cheerleaders. Some prefer football cheer over basketball cheer.

“I would [say] just the atmosphere of the games [are different],” Gilderubio said.

The cheerleaders are on the sidelines at all home games and travel alongside the team to all away games. These traveling opportunities are used to build lasting relationships among the cheerleaders.

Junior Tolulope Ogundele has cheered for the basketball team since her sophomore year and has built many strong relationships.

“They are like my family,” Ogundele said. “We spend so much time together and we just grow closer together.”

The basketball cheerleading can bring a ton of spirit to each game. Even on away games, the cheerleading team needs to cheer with enthusiasm.



The cheerleaders motivate the crowd during the Woodstock basketball game. The team attended every home and away game. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

“[For every game we must have] a good attitude with tons of spirit ready to hype up the crowd [along with] the players,” Ogundele said.

As for Coach Hannah Braswell, she has high expectations for the girls this year. She believes the team can get the crowd more involved with the games by creating new stunts and different cues for the girls to learn.

“A goal for the varsity basketball cheerleaders this season is to incorporate new signs and [to improve the] stunts to promote the crowd’s involvement at basketball games,” Braswell said.

After coaching Dean Rusk basketball cheer for several years, this is her second year as the head coach here. Along with last year’s team, Braswell thinks this year’s team will bring everything they have.

“We have new uniforms, and we are taking squad stunt classes this year. We have [fifteen] girls who enjoy cheering on the basketball teams and are going to bring the spirit,” Braswell said.

With a lot of basketball competition this year, the cheerleaders are excited to support the teams. They are looking forward to getting the crowd pumped and cheering the teams onto success.

The volleyball team plays in a picture perfect game

By Katie Brown All photos by Grayson Belanger



After a 41-1 season, the Lady Chiefs Volleyball team clenched a spot in the 6A State Championship after beating Pope in the War Lodge for the semi-finals. The Chiefs traveled to Marietta High School on Nov. 2, along with a spirit bus full of students, in hopes of beating the Allatoona Buccaneers. Freshman libero Skylar Martin was able to experience playing in a state championship during her first year playing high school volleyball. “I was feeling excited to be playing in my first state championship match as a freshman, but I was also focused knowing that this was going to be the last game of the season,” Martin said.



Junior Paige Powers received the first serve of match one. The Chiefs had a strong start to the game. Sequoyah defeated Allatoona in the first set with a 25-21 win which provided the team with motivation and pumped up the crowd.



Entering the third set, the score was 1-1. Both teams had won a match, and this set would be a huge motivator for the game. From the beginning of the set, the score was back-and-forth between the Chiefs and the Buccaneers. Sophomore Kora Hansen had a diving dig to keep the point alive. After a long-fought battle, Sequoyah lost the third match 27-29.

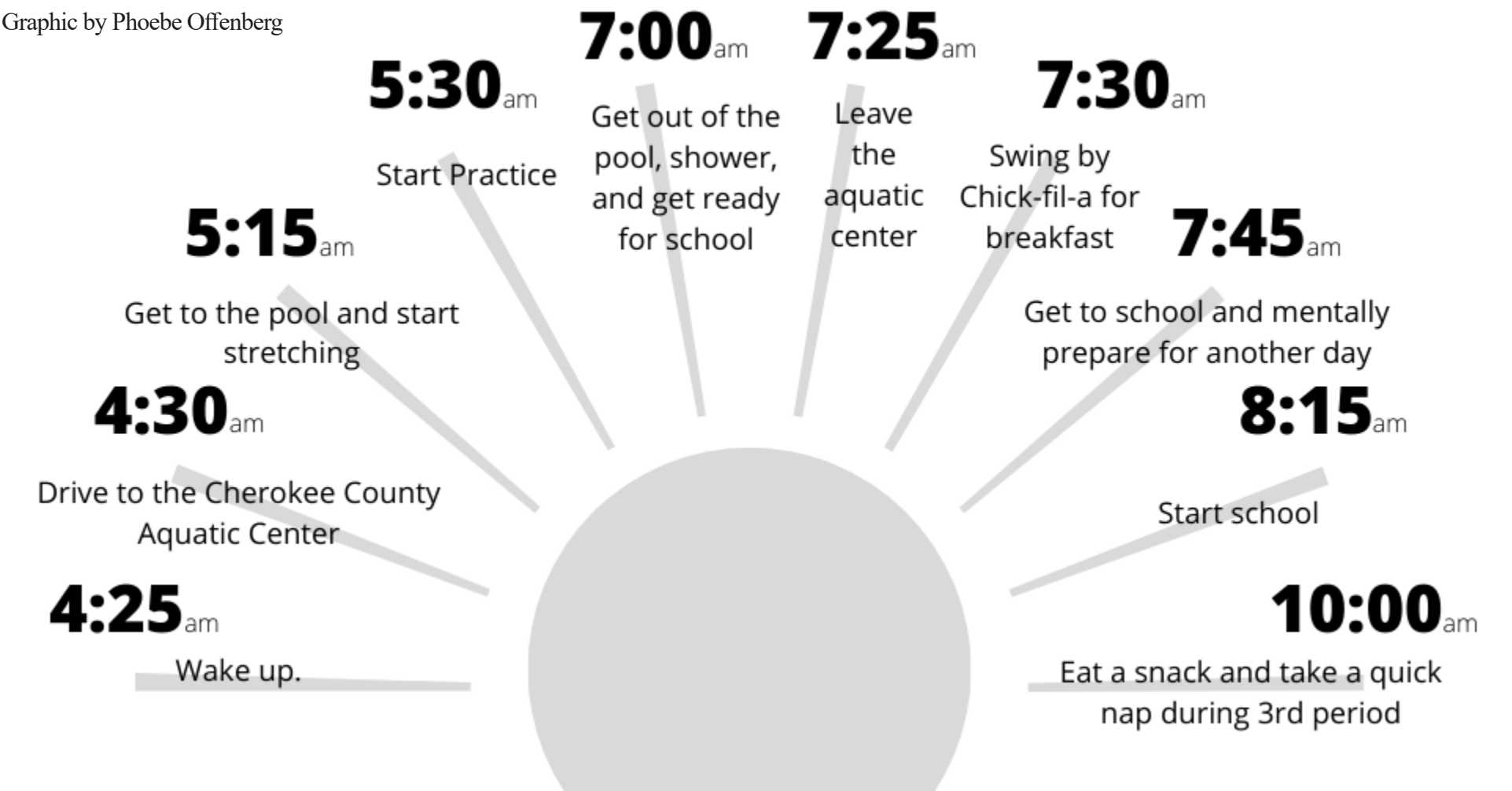


Both the Chiefs and the Buccaneers were determined to win the final set. “Going into the fifth set, we knew we had the potential to win, but it was going to be a hard-fought battle because both teams were going to put everything they had into that set,” Martin said. After a slow start, the Chiefs began to score near the end of the set. Unfortunately, because the final set only goes to 15 points, Sequoyah lost the fifth and final match 12-15. “[Our] goal is to hopefully win a state championship next year,” Martin said.

A day in the life of a swimmer

By Grant Davis

Graphic by Phoebe Offenberg



Q: Why is it important to practice? A: “Without practice, your performance is not up to par. You have to practice. You have to practice technique. You have to practice to build endurance. You have to practice to get faster.
- Swim & Dive Coach Miriam Greene

Behind the sponsors at Sequoyah

By Grant Davis

Week after week, hundreds of students pile into different sports complexes to watch that week’s sporting events. Whether you are at Skip Pope watching a football game or in the War Lodge watching basketball, you are bound to look up at some point and see a familiar company plastered on the wall or fence. Do you ever look at those signs and wonder what those sponsors actually do for our school? Is it just for looks or do those Nike signs slapped around our sporting facilities actually help our school?

Mr. Peter Vajda, the new athletic director, is a key player when it comes to securing and keeping relationships alive with sponsors. “We have got a couple of big partners,” Vajda said. “One is Northside Sports Medicine, and then the other is BSN or Nike.”

Once I figured out our biggest sponsors, I decided to dig a little deeper into what they provide and do for athletics. With Nike and Northside Sports Medicine playing major roles as sponsors, I asked Vajda what they actually do.

“Besides the monetary financial impact, it’s the services [that Northside Sports Medicine] provides,” Vajda said. “The trainers that we have for every sport—we have two [athletic] trainers here every day from two o’clock

until the last sporting event, and [Northside Sports Medicine] pays for that, so that’s not a cost to the school,” Vajda said

Nike also plays a vital role in our athletic programs. Nike and BSN Sports work together to help high school athletics throughout the country, and our school is no exception to that.

“All of our team gear comes from Nike, and a portion of [the money spent on that gear] comes back to the school so coaches and programs can utilize the money to [pay for more coaches and equipment,]” Vajda said.

During my time talking with Mr. Vajda, I also learned about things they do besides providing services and uniforms. Nike is a big one who recently helped the school out by changing its appearance.

“Nike added to the football stadium,” Vajda said. “If you see the new wrapping around the stadium, [Nike] did that for free as a part of the sponsorship package.”

Whether you are walking in The War Lodge or just around Skip Pope, you can now have a new perspective of what all the signs mean. These sponsorships do indeed help our school. With athletics being such a large financial investment, these sponsors give our school the ability to focus money elsewhere while still having stable athletic programs.



The board positioned in front of Skip Pope Stadium highlights some of the sponsors who help to fund the football program. Some of the sponsors include Nike, BSN Sports as well as local resturants and companies. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

It’s beginning to look a lot like letterman season

By Grant Davis

It’s 8:05 A.M., and students are walking through the halls trying to make it to class on time surrounded by a sea of black and gold jackets. What are they? Why do so many people have them? These jackets are a rich tradition across the whole country- they are letterman jackets.

Letterman jackets are, for most people, a symbol of academic and athletic achievement. Students can get a letter by participating in any varsity sport, some clubs, band, chorus, orchestra, and for outstanding academics.

As students walk through the hallway,

they can see a varying number of different letterman jackets. Some people have many of letters and patches while others have fewer accolades on their jackets. Many people have black jackets with yellow patches while others have very different jackets. Senior Alina Wargacki has one of those with a unique letterman.

“There is a major difference between my jacket and most other jackets,” Wargacki said. “My letterman isn’t completely black. It is a gold body with white sleeves, and I have the chief head on the back of the jacket.”

Other students like to take the more traditional route to letterman jackets while adding

their own twist to it. Senior Donovan Shipp has taken this route with his letterman.

“I have one letter in basketball,” Shipp said. “[My jacket], though, has a black chief instead of the white or yellow chief.”

However, some jackets do have the normal black and yellow color scheme but have a lot of patches to fill up the sleeves. There is no limit to the number of letters you can receive. Senior Annellyssa Destin has earned a variety of different letters during her high school years.

“I have four letters from track and field, competition cheer, sideline cheer, and orchestra,” Destin said.

Many students earn letters and patches but do not want to get a jacket. Destin decided to veer away from the traditional jacket.

“I have a shadow box with all of my old pairs of cheer shoes, track spikes, and track meet bibs,” Destin said. “The shadow box ties all of my accomplishments in a more sentimental way than a jacket would in my opinion.”

Whether it is the traditional Sequoyah letterman jacket or a new and uniquely designed one, there are bound to be letters and patches all around the school this winter.



Senior Alina Wargacki poses showing off the back of her letterman jacket. Wargacki decided to get a yellow lettermen jacket to stand out in the halls. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

Q: How many times a week do you practice? A: “We practice five days a week Monday through Friday. 3:30-5:30. Some days are shorter than others, but generally it’s two hours.”
-Wrestling coach Zach Jones

A: “A lot of it has to do with the experience of the kids. I’ve got a lot of experienced kids, so we may take some days off. After a game, the most important thing for these guys is to be rested and get ready to go.”
-Boys varsity basketball Allen Carden

A: “Track is a conditioning sport, so daily practices are needed. We don’t practice on weekends. Track also has 11 running events and 6 field events. In order to cover all the events, we need every day to practice.”
-Track and field coach Lorri Little

A behind-the-scenes look into a wrestler’s methods for cutting

By TJ Murphy

Throughout the fall and the winter, wrestlers are constantly attempting to maintain and, oftentimes, drastically reduce their weight in order to qualify for their assigned weight classes.

Junior Carson Throne, a member of the 120 pound weight class, has certainly experienced some major changes in his body’s structure throughout his wrestling career.

“I lost about 12 pounds in 2 days over the summer this past year,” Throne said. “In order to lose the weight so quickly, I sat in the sauna for hours both of those days.”

For Throne, this process is not one that his attitude responds particularly well to. Understandably so, while starving himself, Throne is not always in the greatest mood.

“I get very cranky and hungry when I am cutting weight,” Throne said. “It makes me want to quit but I have to suck it up.”

Unfortunately, he was about 14 pounds over his class this summer, meaning he had a lot to cut before the beginning of the season.

“I got up to 136 in the offseason, and I was expected to get down to 120 by early December,” Throne said.

Throne, however, is not the only wrestler that is constantly cutting weight. Senior Christian Small, Throne’s teammate, was also well above his weight class during the offseason.

“During the offseason, I weighed 145, and I am wrestling 138 this year,” Small said.

For Small, his methods for cutting weight are not abnormal. He just focuses on his eating habits and getting exercise.

“During the season, I mostly work out a lot which keeps my weight down,” Small said.

“My diet consists of everything. I just try to eat healthy proportions.”

Senior Riley Gutmann, a member of the wrestling team and the football team, does not stress about cutting weight during the fall and summer.

“I don’t really maintain my weight during football season,” Gutmann said. “I just worry about it when wrestling season comes around.”

For this reason, Gutmann, during the offseason, was well over his class in terms of weight.

“[The] highest weight I got up to this year during the offseason was around 165, and I was expected to get down to 152 within a few weeks of practice,” Gutmann said.

Gutmann’s methods for cutting weight, like many other wrestlers, consist of a clean, healthy diet. This includes avoiding unhealthy foods and drinks and sticking with a basic, low carb diet.

“To cut weight more efficiently, I eat healthier and eat fewer carbs,” Gutmann said. “My diet normally consists of light food such as lots of fruit and veggies and water. [I don’t drink] soda and sugary drinks.”

When it comes to cutting weight, Gutmann certainly feels its effects. Both physically and mentally, his body responds to his sudden loss in weight.

“It makes you feel a little weaker depending on how much you cut,” Gutmann said.

For wrestlers, the fall and the winter seasons are largely devoted to losing weight. While it may not always be enjoyable, they must sacrifice the easy-going, careless eating in order to qualify for their events.



Senior Trey Arrington attempts to pin his opponent at the Central Forsyth Meet. Wrestlers are monitored by coaches to make sure they do not lose too much weight. Photo by Grayson Belanger



Junior Carson Throne gains position on his opponent at the meet at Central Forsyth. Throne is wrestling in the 120lbs weight class. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

Jones wrestles with new head coaching position

By Cameron Keehley

Sports teams go through many changes throughout their seasons, but some can be more essential to the team’s success than others. This year, the wrestling team got a new head coach.

New Head Coach Zach Jones has had experience on previous wrestling coaching staffs but has never been labeled as the head coach until this year. Jones was the assistant coach for the last three years here at Sequoyah and knows that earning this position will bring more responsibility for him to take control of the team.

“There’s a lot more responsibility, and in years past, all I had to focus on was coaching the kids, [their] technique on the mat, and building relationships with the guys,” said Jones. “This year, there is a lot of paperwork and a lot of the coordination of the day to day is what falls on my shoulders. I have to coordinate schedules and practices and make sure that kids are on their weight descent plans and all that kind of stuff that I never had to worry about before.”

Jones sees very few differences in the way that he executes the team and the way that former coaches have executed the team, mainly because he is been around this environment and these wrestlers for the past couple of years.

“I don’t do a whole lot differently; and honestly, I don’t know how much I could tell you was different because I didn’t see the administrative side of what he did,” said Jones. “I think practices probably feel a little bit different. They are a little more technique intensive than the past three years. But in general, I think the atmosphere is very similar. I’ve been around these guys for three years, so it doesn’t necessarily feel new.”

Senior Christian Small was not surprised

with Jones’ adjustment to becoming the head coach and is grateful to have him by his side not only as a wrestling coach.

“Jones really stepped up,” Small said. “Last year, he was a great coach, so the change to head coach was not too difficult. He is handling all the paperwork and being there for the team too. He has always been there for me, [not just] as a wrestling coach but also a life coach.”

Jones is convinced that the team can go farther than last year and is counting on himself, the coaching staff, and the wrestlers to all invest in getting this team a region title.

“We have a lot of kids back from last year,” Jones said. “We only lost two senior starters out of the 14 starting in our lineup, so I think on paper we are better. I think we should be better this year. We do have some young talent [that] has come in and has been able to contribute early on, and when you add that with some of the experience coming back from last year, we’ve got two state finalists, a couple kids who were state qualifiers and a couple of state alternates, so we’ve got what should be a good team.”

Jones has high hopes for the season and expects his team to do very well this year.

“My expectations are very high for this team. My goal is to win the region this year and go back to state duals and put a bunch of kids on the podium. If we can come together, I think we can have a really good season. I think we can place in the state dual tournament, but it depends on how much the guys buy in and how well we, as a coaching staff, prepare the guys for the season. I think the sky is the limit.”



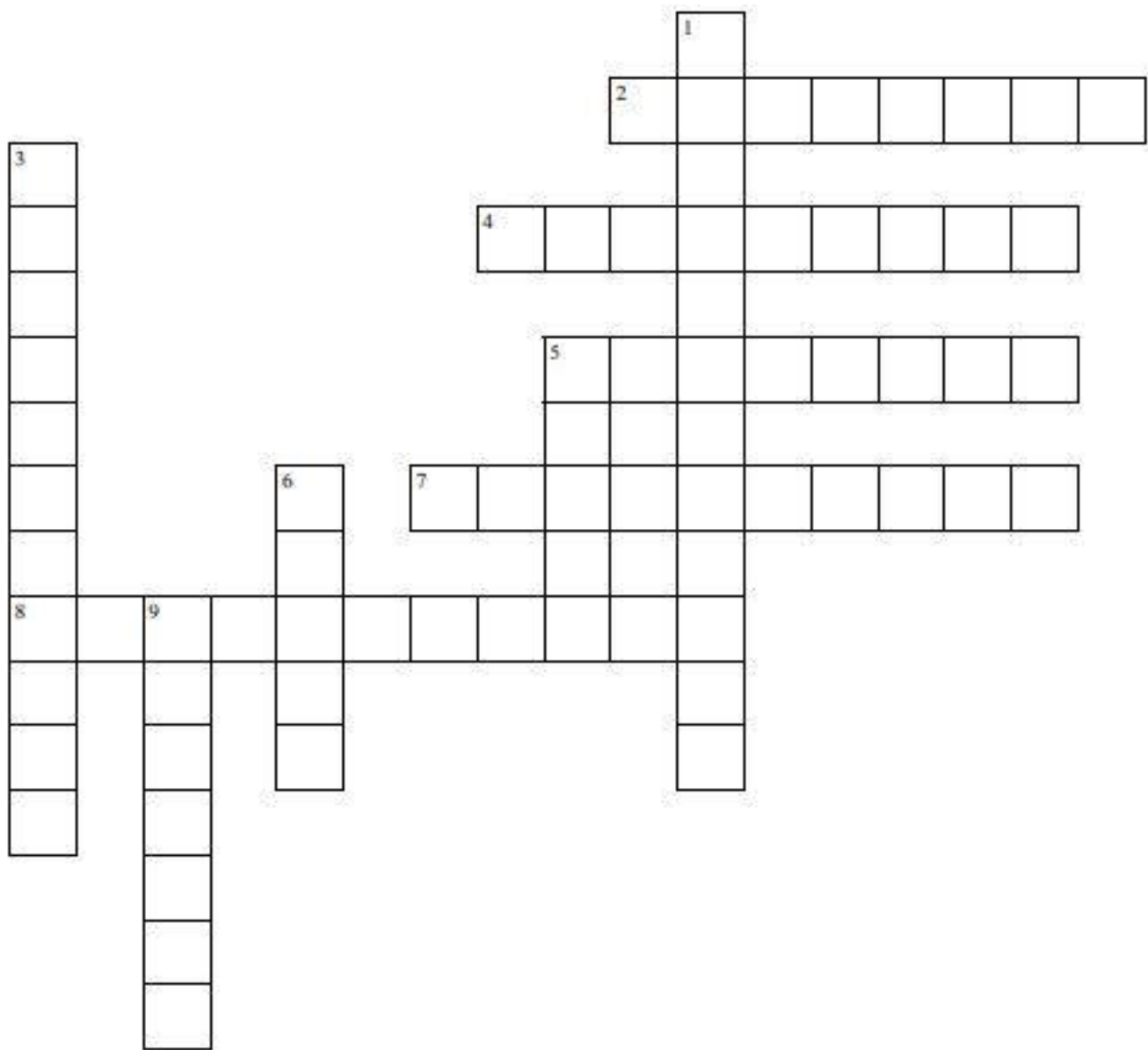
Wrestling coach Zach Jones talks with Junior Lal Um in between sets in his match at Central Forsyth. Jones was the assistant coach at Central Gwinnett High School for four years before coming to Sequoyah. Photo by Grayson Belanger.

A: “The track team practices every day 3:30-6:00 Monday [through] Friday.”
-Track and field coach Lorri Little

A: “There’s very few times where we don’t practice. Now obviously, we don’t practice on Sundays because for one, it’s district policy, and the other thing is I like to at least give them some days off.”
-Boys varsity basketball coach Allen Carden

Test your knowledge of current politics

By Valerie Ambriz



Across

- 2. Supreme Court case that legalized abortion
- 4. Bernie Sanders is referred to as a democratic _____
- 5. Vote required by the House of Representatives to impeach the president
- 7. Trump is the first sitting president to have gone to _____
- 8. Proposed amendment to the Constitution that guarantees the same rights to all citizens regardless of sex

Answers on shs.arrow.com

Down

- 1. Current prime minister of the United Kingdom
- 3. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
- 5. Georgia primaries will be in this month of 2020
- 6/ One Republican candidate who has entered the presidential race is Joe _____
- 9. Trump called this country's president, which initiated his impeachment inquiry



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By Phoebe Offenberg

