

M.I.L.K.

MUSTANGS, ISSUES, LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE

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Painting by **Thomas Bayman**.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS?

BY CAILA PRESTIDGE

Though we are past the holiday season, take a minute to reflect on what it meant to you and to your family. 2020 hit the world hard, and there has been a lot of darkness, loss, pain, and disappointment. The Mill Springs community has been a bright light in my hard moments, and we hope that it has been the same for you. On pages 5 and 6 you will find what some of our staff and student body have identified as the meaning of Christmas -- may they encourage you and remind you of the good.

COACH WILSON IS THE SPARK NEEDED TO BRING THE MILL SPRINGS' BASKETBALL TEAMS TOGETHER.

With several games under their belts each, the Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball teams have hit the ground running.

BY SARAH PALMER

More than once, **Coach Wilson** reminded his players of the importance of hard work, shouting, "The biggest thing y'all can do is learn."

Though both teams are playing the same sport, **Wilson** views the girls and boys teams as two separate entities. Junior and seasoned player **Emily Suarez** solidified her team's underdog position, sharing their season goal being, "Just to win one game." On the other hand, the boy's mission is an entirely different beast.

Wilson acknowledged his male player's lofty goals and was honest about the challenges the team faced, pointing out that, "The boys are different because they gotta learn to play together." While from the sidelines it appears the boys have a fair amount of technical skill, it became obvious their butting heads and inability to work closer as a team is the greatest obstacle in their path. Though the boys take their game seriously, **Coach Wilson** pointed out an inability to follow simple directions.

Conversely, the girl's team answered his requests each time with a chorus of, "Yes Coach," and immediately gravitated towards him, which he then demonstrated several times, sending the girls away to only have them return a second later. He was proud to show off their ability to listen and respond cohesively as a group.

The girl's team is humble and sweet, content enough to simply play and work on their game. During practice, they move as a group, taking the time to instruct the newer players and communicate. The guys are rougher with each other, not taking much time to explain the nuances of the game to newer players.



Left: Senior **Madison Taylor** setting up to throw to junior **Emily Suarez**.

Below: MSA Boys Basketball team plays aggressive defense.

Coach Wilson has loads of plans. In an honest manner, he describes his strategy. He first conferences with the girls at the end of practice. Captain **Madison Taylor** voices the general opinion of the team, confirming that, "If we rebound more, we can actually win. We're doing a good job of communicating and figuring out who needs to be aware." Satisfied, the girls are dismissed.

Now, it's onto the bigger challenge: the boys. With the boys, his speech is rougher. Unafraid to challenge his players, **Wilson** commands the court, calling out to each of them, "If you don't want to be here don't come." It is clear he is not here to baby his team, informing them that if they want to quit, he can find players who want to be there. One thing **Coach Wilson** has no time for on his court is attitude.

More than once he shared that "there is no I in team" and "If you got attitude in basketball, you got attitude in other sports." **Wilson** can work with novice players who have never played the game before, but he will not coddle the attitude of a teammate who refuses to share the ball.

It feels almost as if **Wilson** is constantly repeating himself, as he acknowledges. "If they don't start using each other as teammates, we're not going to win." But don't let his hard exterior fool you. Coach **Kevin Wilson** cares for his team and pushes them because he knows they can achieve greatness. After taking his time to talk to the boys, he gestures to one of the banners in the gym, saying that 2020 will have a championship to put up there too. Despite the butting of heads, each player wants to succeed, and **Wilson** is just the coach to pull it out of them.



WAS THE BRAVES 2020 SEASON A SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

An opinionated reflection on the failure of America's Team in 2020.

BY J. MACLEAN TADLOCK

Though the Atlanta Braves won their third straight National League (NL) East Division Title and got farther than any other Braves team in the past 19 seasons, there were still many failures by the Navy and Scarlet.

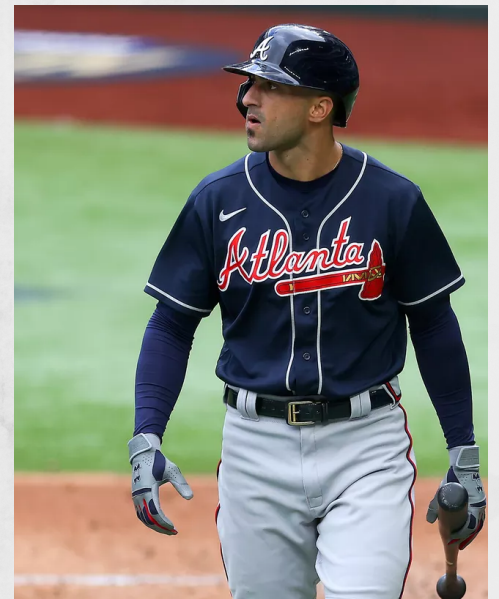
On Friday, April 9, 2021, the Atlanta Braves will take the field at Truist Park as the Back-to-Back-to-Back NL East Champions against the Philadelphia Phillies. This will be the first time that this will have happened since they won 10 straight divisional titles from 1995 to 2005. Mill Springs senior, **Jacob Beck** has the belief that the Braves had a successful season overall. Junior, **Aaron Breithkopf** reiterates **Beck's** sentiment with the following statement: "The season was not a failure because this team made it to the NLCS for the first time in almost 20 years."

The Braves were originally established in 1871 as the Boston Red Stockings. Sadly, the Braves lost the 2020 National League Championship Series (NLCS) because of poor game management in Game 2 and problematic base running in Games 5 and 7. All seven games took place in Arlington, Texas.

There is hope for the Braves, however, and fans can hang their hat on the fact that they are close to seeing them win all of October. "I think they had a great season this year, even though it was [...] truncated. I think if they continue to play and develop as a unit [...] they've got a pretty good chance," agreed Braves fan **Gary Tadlock**. Though there is hope for the future, this season was a failure overall.

The Braves 2020 season was a failure because after winning the NL East for the third consecutive year and many people expected that they would win the World Series. However, it must be acknowledged that there was some success this year for America's Team because they made it to the NLCS for the first time since 2001. The reason for this failure is because prior to the NLCS Los Bravos had given up just five runs in as many games. Throughout the seven games in the NLCS, however, they gave up 39 runs, and 15 in Game 3 alone. Overall, the main course of the shortened 2020 season was a failure with a side of success.

The Team of the 90s won their division for the third time. However, it was not the season that they should have hoped for. With the resources that they have, they should be not only winning their division but also making it to the Fall Classic consistently. If this does not happen in the near future, serious questions should be asked.



Frustrated outfielder **Nick Markakis** after striking out.

PHONES: SHOULD WE ALLOW THEIR USAGE IN SCHOOL?

Phones are a part of most of our lives: we should be able to use them in school.

BY JADEN LONGLEY

Phones have lots of uses: communication, entertainment, etc... These reasons alone could warrant the use of phones in school.

If something were to happen, say a storm or blizzard, we could call our parents or guardians to let them know we are okay. If we are bored outside of class, we should be able to watch Netflix or play a game to pass the time.

Phones should be allowed in MSA. If we allow phone usage, this school could be more fun and less stressful. Phones also give us a means of staying safe. They can even be used in class for educational purposes and to class more interactive. In the case of emergencies, the closest phone could be right in our back pocket.

Of course, the use of phones could have its limitations and drawbacks. We shouldn't text in class or things like that, or use the phone in class without permission.

No student should do illegal things on their phone, etc. As always, students should also respect other's privacy and never take pictures without permission.

We should allow phones in school. Phones can help keep us safe and protected. Phones can help us learn better. Phones can also keep us entertained, with limitations. We should allow the use of phones at MSA.

THE DEATH OF CABLE

Cable television is a titan of entertainment, yet it is in decline.

BY MATTHEW KUHN

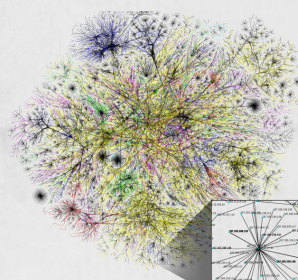
In the 1950s a new form of entertainment took the US by storm: television. Companies could beam entertainment directly into a household, and though radio existed, for the first time people could actually watch moving pictures from the comfort of their homes. In modern-day, however, it seems that the internet is starting to take its place. Streaming services have taken the scene with it, increasing in popularity over the past several years.

In 2007 Netflix launched its streaming service and Hulu followed a year after. These services changed the way we watched TV as we entered the 2010s. Gradually over time, these services began to house their own original content, and have seen a rise in popularity that is unprecedented. "Cable will be dead and streaming services will rule the TV business," says Mill Springs senior **Maclean Tadlock**.

The internet is also a reason why cable is dying. It began in the 90s with the experimental dial-up system. Before the internet, people either read newspapers or got it on news channels. Now that the internet is faster and more accessible, everyone just uses it to get news and information. This killed newspapers and hurt cable, but was not the sole killer of cable news.

So why quit cable? Well for one it's a waste of money. According to Decision data.org, "The average household cable package is now \$217.42 per month." In other words, you're paying 200 dollars per month to watch only a handful of channels. You would be better off with a Netflix subscription. Another reason is that cable has an unreasonable amount of ads. This would have been positive in the old days back when you would use this time to go to the restroom, but that's not really the case anymore as you can simply pause on streaming services.

Cable tv is a relic of entertainment being phased out by superior alternatives. It is rightfully being tossed out of most households today, though it might still have a place at bars. Will it be dead by 2030? Some say no: "I see TV continuing to expand upon their services, directly from the networks. We have already seen an increase in Networks having their own apps/service which you must pay for individually. This is a direct response to consumers 'cutting' the cable cord. This has already caused many cable cutters to have to choose their services that they want to pay for. We could see some go back to cable to avoid paying for multiple services," states Upper School Economics teacher **Brad Smallwood**. Only time will tell if cable adapts or meets the fate of Block Buster.



Visualization of the internet as a series of tubes. Wikipedia.org

ABLEISM: PERVASIVE AND ENTRENCHED IN BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTINGS

Why a "one-size-fits-all" education style is harmful and ineffective to students

BY SARAH PALMER

The Oxford Dictionaries Online defines ableism as "discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities and/or people who are perceived to have disabilities."

Mill Springs' Academy has defined itself from the school's inception as an inclusive standout from its traditional classroom competitors. From the wise words of school founder Tweetie L. Moore, the school's mission has always remained that "...if a student can't learn the way we teach ... we should teach the way a student can learn." Most students across America do not have the ability to go to a school so upfront about its mission towards inclusivity.

A large number of students fall under the spectrum of being diagnosed with either learning disabilities, serious emotional disturbances (mental illness), or low-incidence disabilities (visual/ hearing impairment). "In 2018-19, the number of students ages 3-21 who received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7.1 million, or 14 percent of all public school students. Among students receiving special education services, 33 percent had specific learning disabilities." In terms of Mill Springs', all students receive support for learning disabilities. Despite high percentages of students receiving support for different struggles, most people regard disabilities as uncomfortable topics to be spoken about as little as possible.

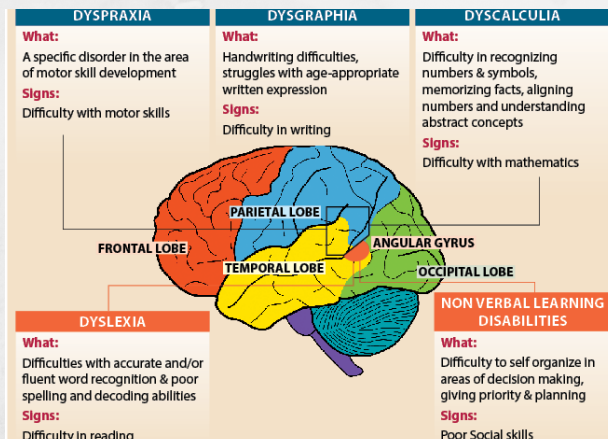
At times, it seems the community of MSA remains an outlier from its public school counterparts. For a large part of the student population, things they take for granted every day remain a part of the foundations of ableism steeped in school culture. These barriers can fall everywhere from physical obstacles such as limited access to ramps/ elevators, emphasis on hand-writing in class, or lack of access to accommodations in gym class. Attitudinal barriers include the use of inappropriate/ outdated language, expectations of students to perform tasks without modifications (writing assignments, strict due dates), stereotypes/ lack of awareness/ perpetuating stigma towards disabilities, or penalties from being absent from class.

An important note to follow is the reminder that, “Accessibility should be built-in, not tacked on,” as expressed in Rasmussen College’s “What is Ableism?” article. Sign Language interpreter and instructor **Roberto Santiago** notes that “When you plan a lesson or activity you must plan to make it accessible from the beginning. Waiting until someone with a disability shows up and then haphazardly retrofitting your lessons or materials to accommodate that person will almost always fall short. This means they will not get the same educational benefit as their peers.”

In Mill Springs’ classrooms, standard lesson plans include built-in accommodations. Every student at MSA receives mindfully scheduled classes built around offering purposeful breaks. When lessons are created with the goal of helping students learn more efficiently, the stigma of “extra help” is chipped away.

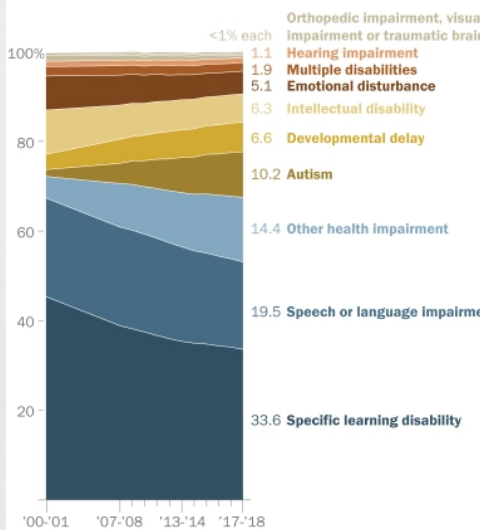
Disability has been assigned an uncomfortable connotation in the classroom. Lack of disability education in school systems across America have served against the best interest of millions of students. Whether dealing with mental, physical, or emotional challenges (or a combination of the three), any amount of discussion around the topic can help.

Brainfeed magazine, a “monthly educational initiative”, educates parents and caregivers on the often invisible nature of learning disabilities. Signs of common disabilities can be seen on the infographic.



About a third of disabled U.S. students have a 'specific learning disability,' such as dyslexia

% of students served in the 2017-18 school year under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) who have



The graphic from the Pew Research Center (left) highlights the percentage of disabilities as they make up pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. The most commonly seen disability occurs for 34% of students who have a specific learning disability.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS?

"Christmas is a time to remember the virgin birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the most important thing about Christmas. I do enjoy all the celebration with my family too." **Michael Thompson**

"To me, Christmas is the opportunity to connect with family. I love the holiday, the decorations, the traditions my family keeps up with every year." **Sarah Palmer**

"Christmas means to me by spending time with your family on Christmas and the holidays and everybody enjoying each other." **Cameron Keskonis**

"It mean peace and joy in the world. That you can spend the day with family and friends and having fun." **Anonymous**

"Christmas to me means to enjoy and have fun with your family and spending time with them as well." **Scott Owen**

"It means the day Christ our lord and savior was born into this world." **Zach Smith**

"Joy and Happiness." **Ridge George**

"Family!" **Brittany Emge**

THE CORPORATIZATION OF THE HOLIDAYS

Why the soul of the holidays is practically gone.

BY MATTHEW KUHN

It feels like Christmas is coming sooner every year. It was late October this year when Christmas decorations and candy started popping up left and right. It seems that next year companies will try this even sooner. Although other holidays in the US also have suffered a similar fate, Christmas has suffered the most from capitalism, which has commercialized this holiday to the point where Christmas themed anything begins to irritate me.

Holidays have become something corporate in nature, and it seems every year companies try harder and harder to force them upon you. From ear-wrenching carols to Santa Claus, no doubt at some point we just want to get it over with. That's not to say holidays are bad, as they certainly are important to our culture.

Every single person in America knows the big man in red, but where did he come from? His origins come from tales about a man named Saint Nicholas, who is most known for his generosity and gift-giving. His feast day is December 6th. The current portrayal of Santa Claus was created by a political cartoonist named Thomas Nast, quite the influential guy as he also created a cartoon which represented the democratic party as a donkey. Now, what does this have to do with capitalism? Well, we now see commercialized Santa Claus, everywhere. Movies, products, advertisements, (even cigarettes,) and music all feature the man in red. And it is tiring.

Christmas is a capitalistic holiday, and Easter has seen a similar effect with the Easter Bunny, though not to the same extent as Santa.

Where did this capitalistic attitude come from though? It seems to have started in the 1900s with advertisements, the most iconic originating in the 40s and 50s. The gift-giving aspect has its origins in the 1800s. A lot of the music has its origins in both of these time periods. While there has been Christmas music made since then, a GRAND majority of the overplayed ear-wrenching music that we've all come to love, or hate was probably made in the 1960s through the 1990s. It's not the fault of the artists, of course, it's the fact that the same dozen songs are played everywhere. The song Jingle Bells was published in 1857, but is still being played repeatedly. Hopefully, it will be replaced with something newer, and better as it is over a hundred years old.

No doubt companies will try their best to make Christmas come sooner. No, I don't want to buy red and green M&Ms, and no I am not spending over \$700 dollars on presents. Christmas movies seem to be a mixed bag, some like *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer* (1964), and *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, which isn't really a movie but for the sake of this paper we'll count it. Maybe it's just nostalgia talking, but I enjoy these movies. *Die Hard* is probably one of my favorite movies of all time and that's technically a Christmas movie.

Christmas has lost its soul over the years but that does not mean you should not celebrate it. Spend time with your family, remind them that you love them. Don't spend too much money either. It's fine to buy gifts, but don't drain your wallet over it. Remember it's not worth fighting over a TV on Black Friday. Lastly, have a Merry Christmas and get lots of rest.



The big man himself featured in a smoking ad. Some things age bad; others age so bad it's funny.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS?

"To me, Christmas means spending time with family and thanking our LORD GOD for his son, Jesus." **Maclean Tadlock**

"One of the only two days of the year people gives me free money. Also, it is very cold at this time of year. I am not an avid celebrator of the holiday as I am irreligious, though I respect that aspect of it as my family is Christian." **Matthew Kuhn**

"Getting together with family and making good memories together." **Jody Cleveland**

"It means great food, family and of course presents." **Aaron Breitkopf**

"Christmas means joy, forgiveness, and peace to me." **Nicholas Bateson**

"Christmas means the awareness of Jesus Christ." **Calista Craig**

"It's a time to spend with family and friends." **Caroline Skinner**

"A time of spending time with family." **Jaden Longley**

"Family, laughter, giving, and food." **Holly Couch**

ARE SCHOOL BOOKS BORING?

Should we get better school books, or stick with what we know work with the curriculum?

BY JADEN LONGLEY

The literature books in Mill Springs Academy are not very engaging.

The books used in literature classes are usually boring and bland, with a few exceptions. Maybe MSA could get new books however, there could be trouble in that department. Not many entertaining books run with the curriculum.

This affects the students of MSA. The books used in our classes are just bland. The change of books could happen at any time. Most of the books in this school are boring and slow, and it may be more interesting to change to smaller books.

The books must have a regular, small amount of pages. Like high school American Literature teacher **Caila Prestidge** states, "My ideal length of a book for students at Mill Springs is around 100-150 pages."

Exciting books should be added to our bookshelves as MSA junior **Yash Kubde** states, "I think we would get more from a book that is entertaining because a book that is entertaining will keep you guessing about what's about to happen next." MSA students don't benefit from being bored in class, and they learn less if they nod off.

Any book would work better than a long novel. Poems, short novels, comics, even manga could work in order to keep students interested in class. Handing out activities depending on what type of book was chosen could suit the need for work in classes. Just get something that is not long and grueling like War And Peace.

The books in this school are boring. Smaller, or more exciting books would help students keep focused in class. The goal of reading literature is to practice and hone students reading and perception skills to the best they can be. Smaller books could help us hone student's skills faster due the ability to better focus and stay on task.

WHAT DID CHRISTMAS LOOK LIKE THIS YEAR?

In the midst of chaos, how has Mill Springs celebrated Christmas?

BY J. MACLEAN TADLOCK

Though the world is in a state that we have never seen in our lifetimes how has Mill Springs Academy celebrated Christmas?

2020 may look different this year but MSA is still doing their best to celebrate Christmas. When asked what the MSA staff are doing to celebrate this year, MSA Math Teacher **Jennie Donaldson** responded with, "I have set up a secret Santa for Upper School." Both Pre-Upper and Upper School had pizza parties for the students.

Newspaper advisor **Caila Prestidge**, along with the rest of the Newspaper Staff released a Google Form with the following Christmas related questions for students and staff to fill out:

1. Write about your favorite or most hilarious Christmas tradition or memory:

"My wife bought a 'Dad likes me best' sweatshirt and wrapped it to herself from her dad. When she opened it in front of her siblings she made a HUGE deal about it being from 'dad' and 'wondering what it was'.

Her sister was so mad that she didn't speak to my wife all day!" - **Matt Orred**

2. What is your favorite Christmas movie?

"Probably *Die Hard*. Although, *Elf* would be a close second. We watch *Elf* together as a family every year." - **Michael Adams**

3. What does Christmas mean to you?

"As a child, I grew up mostly in Europe without extended family, but we always saved up to make international or MARS calls back to the States at Christmas. So for me, Christmas is always a special time to focus on the blessings of family. Because I am Christian, it is the time to celebrate the birth of our Savior in the manger in Bethlehem and to remember that through His life, he taught us to love all and not to judge." - **Kate Maloney**

As we look back at 2020, it is important to remember that it was not the start of a new decade that we were hoping for, but a time to be thankful for what we do have.



Christmas drawing by 9th grader **Will Harvin**



Festival of Trees cross-stitch by Upper School teacher **Kate Maloney**