The Badger Pause

Volume 12, Issue 5 | *The Things We Love Issue* | February 2017

Top ten coziest winter things

by Julia Losasso, BP Staff Editor

10: Scarves. Big, cozy, and soft, scarves are perfect because wearing one is like being wrapped in a blanket while also looking cute and stylish.

9:Candles. They smell good and are petty much like having a little fire on the table next to you. What's not to like?

8:Fireplaces. A crackling fire and the resulting warmth… Enough said.

7:Fuzzy socks. The most common quick and easy fix for when the winter just isn't quite cozy enough.

6:Blankets. This list wouldn't be complete without the one thing that is essential to (almost) all of these things.

5:Soup. Mmmm… Whether it be broccoli cheddar or chicken noodle, soup is the ultimate food for a winter day.

4:Books. Right next to Netflix, curling up with a book, a blanket, and some tea is quite possible one of the best things to do in the wintertime.

3:Netflix. Though great in any season, a snow day, or any winter day for that matter, wouldn't be quite as cozy without some good comfortable Netflix streaming.

2:Hot cocoa/tea/coffee. Right after actually cuddling with someone, cuddling up with a nice warm drink is as cozy as it gets on a cold winter's day.

1:Cuddles. Whether it be with your dog, your cat, or your significant other, cuddling up somewhere warm while watching the snow fall is definitely the number one coziest thing about winter.



by Lexi Caponi, BP Asst Editor

The world needs to start showing more love and care in order to combat all the derogatory and negative comments that have been passed around recently. Especially since it's that time in the school year where everyone has hit their slump (if you haven't already been in it since the third week of school), we need to band together to start spreading some positivity.

No one likes a Negative Nelly, so here are some ways that people at Berkshire like to spread the kindness. Junior Asya Martin said that she tries "to compliment three people a day." She said that not only does it make other people smile, but it makes her happy to know that she helped make someone's day better. Our very own Analysis, Calculus, and Probability and Statistics teacher Mr. Lester said that he "offers food" to show his kindness and appreciation. Since he loves to cook, it's something enjoyable he can do for people that he cares for in his life.

Another way to show generosity includes listening fully to someone. Don't split your attention between your phone and someone you're talking to. Showing someone, with your actions, that they have your full, undivided attention makes them feel like they're important and worth listening to.

And I know that not everyone can be positive and encouraging every second of every day. Some people just have bad days, so remember that if your friend gets snappy or seems standoffish towards you that they

probably aren't feeling 100%. Getting mad at them is just a waste of energy. Being understanding and sympathetic is just another way to show compassion. You can show someone you care by offering support, whether that's just listening to their problems or offering to help them in a class that's stressing them out.

Emily Heaphy, assistant professor of Organizational Behavior at Boston University, conducted an experiment that showed that employees and students were most productive with a 3:1 ratio of praise-to-criticism and a 5:1 ratio of positive-to-negative interactions. So not only does being positive and giving compliments raise someone's spirits, but it will also raise their productivity while working. Just another reason to spread the love.

So no matter if the act is big or small, affects one person or many, just know that anyway you can spread positivity will impact someone's life. Sometimes all someone needs to brighten their mood or get back on the right track is a compliment.

Snuggles: The secret to happiness

by Isaac Bryant, BP Staff Writer

February, though it is the shortest month, is the most love-filled one. According to commercial advertising, Valentine's day is the day for the generic Hallmark couples of the world but do you know what the single ladies and gents can do that they can't? They can cuddle with whomever they want.

Introduce the cuddle buddy. Cuddling is not reserved for just the cringey couples because any and everyone can do it. It eliminates the feeling of loneliness except you don't have to have any obligation to the other person if you choose not to. I know this is starting to sound like something forbidden, but it's a lot more innocent I promise.

Having a cuddle buddy could be one the best friends you could ever have, or cuddling can just happen on accident like during a crowded road trip. Try cuddling when it's crowded; it makes the lack of space a lot more comfortable.

Ever feel bad or just not having the best day? That cuddle session can change your entire perspective on your week. It's important to be able to have something that just comforts you and that's really the main appeal of cuddling because you're finding relaxation, comfortable, and a safe place be vulnerable with someone. The best part is that you don't have to be in a serious, or even romantic relationship, to benefit from the comfort of a snuggle. It is the perfect exercise of trust.

Imagine if everyone everyone had their own cuddle buddy(s). The could be a much more open place where you'd never feel alone.



photo courtesy of http://www.suggestedpost.eu

Magical Misadventures

by Sam Martinjako, BP Staff Writer

Throughout the years, I have always found myself to be interested in the unnatural, in one way or another. However, the unreal thing that has always fascinated me the most is magic. There truly is something captivating about having powers beyond normal human control. Magic appears in so many different artforms that it is truly hard to ignore. Many of the stories I experienced when I was a young child revolved around magic, or at least included it in some way.

My favorite video game series when I was younger was *Spyro the Dragon*, which, as the name would imply, involves a lot of magic. The original trilogy of games, which are also the best in the series in my opinion, revolved around the titular purple dragon, Spyro, collecting various objects and taking down monsters in order to *save the world*. The games were packed to the brim with magical items, supernatural abilities, extraordinary worlds, and mythical beasts, like the yeti and the kangaroo. I always loved to turn on my Playstation and become immersed in the super high definition 32 bit graphics and explore mystical worlds as a small, sassy dragon.

Though each game had its own set of baddies for you to defeat, there was really only one villain who was truly evil and antagonized you throughout your journey. If you played the games, you already know who I'm talking about. First appearing in the second game, it's that darn bear in a suit, Moneybags, who decides that saving the world can wait until you pay him a few hundred gems that you found lying around on the floor. He locks doors, he holds potential allies captive, he prevents you from using bridges, and he even buys the last tickets to that hockey game you were planning on watching. Truly, one of the best moments in the games is watching that bear get what's coming to him. Though I have much more to say about *Spyro*, this article is about magic, and so we must move on.

If you never experienced *Spyro* before, there's a good chance you'll have at least some knowledge of this next topic. Indeed, how can you have an article about magic and not include *Harry Potter*? This is another series that I, and no doubt quite a few of you as well, grew up on. I was a huge fan of the movies and even played some of the games, but the books couldn't hold my attention after the third one (sorry!). My personal favorite was the third movie. Not only did it have lovely actors and a great plot, but also some ridiculous magic as well.

The movie starts off with Harry blowing up his aunt like a balloon and watching her float away. If that doesn't catch your attention and at least warrant a giggle from you, then I don't know what will. Harry then proceeds to run away from home because he's an angsty teenager with an unloving family and he wants to do magic. After a bit of time and a crazy magic bus ride, he arrives at the pub known as The Leaky Cauldron where there is a wizard we pay no attention to performing magic without a wand and also reading *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking, and also the Minister of Magic is there. Harry then returns to school after being attacked on the train ride there and the movie goes from there. Aside from its strong beginning, this movie is also my favorite because it involves magical creatures such as a werewolf and a hippogriff, and it ends with some time travel shenanigans, if my memory serves me correctly. We also get to see our recurring antagonist, Draco Malfoy, get punched in his smug little face. The other movies are all great as well, but this one sticks out to me the most. The recent *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* was also, well, fantastic. I found myself to be a fan of the setting, the plot, most of the main characters, and also a lot of the creatures that were shown. However, I must deduct points for the misleading title, for I only remember learning where one of the beasts was even from, and I didn't see any Thunderbirds when I was recently in Arizona.

In the realm of cartoons, there is a lot of different choices for magic. Disney and Dreamworks both make a lot of films involving it, and the majority of them are amazing. Some titles that stick out from these companies are *Shrek*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Moana*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Aladdin*, *Hercules*, and *Frozen*, though obviously this list could go on. My personal favorite from this list in particular is *Shrek*. My most preferred film from the series is *Shrek 2*, though the first movie is very close. The last two movies, while I concede were definitely not as good as the first two, were still enjoyable to me, even if I wasn't really a fan of the direction the series was taking. I used to fall asleep practically every night to *Shrek 2* when I was younger, and I never got sick of it. I even own the the video game adaptation of the movie, and while I never beat it, I at least remember enjoying my time with it. On a sidenote, I recently found and played through *Shrek Treasure Hunt* for the Playstation, and the game was mentally scarring to the point where I can't even remember if I beat it or not.



Photo courtesy of pinterest.com

The chillest guy in all of the dragon realms, and also my childhood.

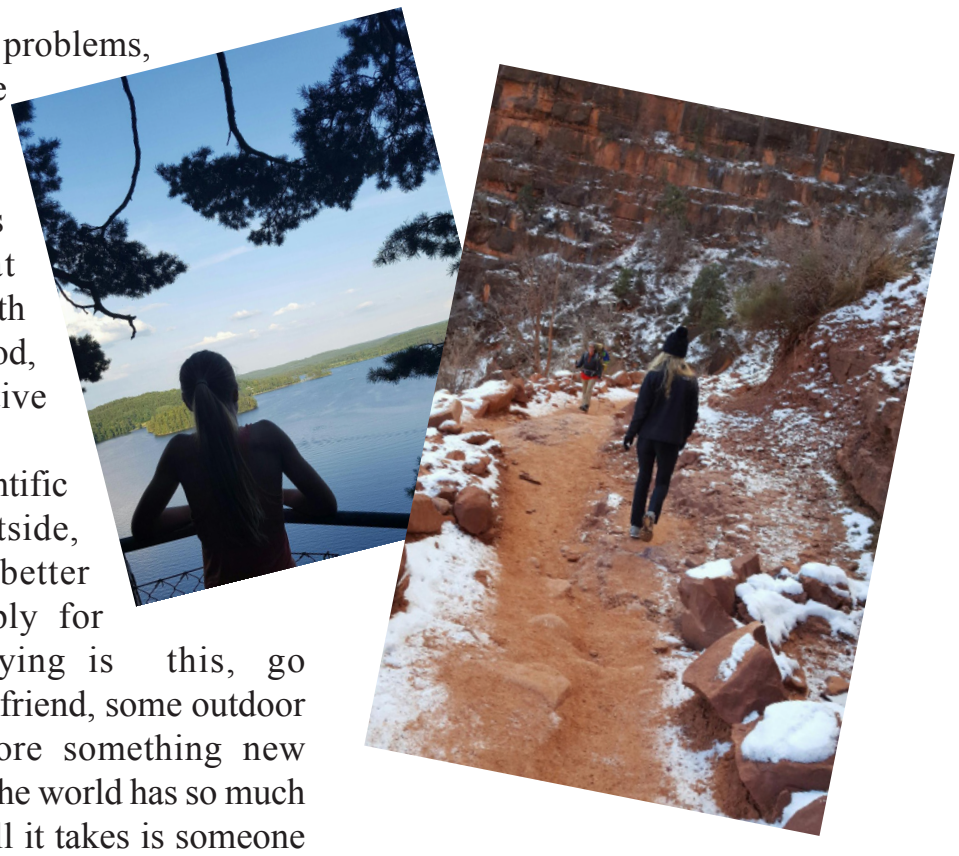
For TV shows, the most obvious one that needs to be mentioned is *The Fairly OddParents*, though I do not believe its quality has held up through the years. Personally, my go-to cartoons for magic are *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time*. While both of these shows have a younger audience in mind, which can be pretty off-putting at times, they still have something to offer a person of any age group. They both blend fantasy and sci-fi together for a mix of both magic and technology. I am a fan of many of the elements of both shows, which keeps me watching, though it is understandable if it is harder for new viewers to continue on. But if you can make it through the first few episodes of both, you'll find yourself in wacky situations with angry space rocks, ridiculous card games, an insane ice wizard who just wants friends, and those annoying songs that you keep seeing on every social media you have (I'm looking at you, bacon pancakes song).

I would like to give a shout out to all the live action films and shows that didn't fit under this category, notably *Wizards of Waverly Place*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and Alice in Wonderland. A stern thank you is in order for all of these films, games, and shows that I love, as they have ruined my reality forever knowing that magic doesn't exist and all I have to fill the empty void in my heart are lame internet memes.

Exploring

GET OUT(DOORS)!

By Julia Losasso, BP Staff Editor



This past year, 2016, marked the 100th anniversary of our nation's National Parks, prompting celebration and a renewed appreciation of all that nature has to offer. Here in Northeast Ohio, we are incredibly fortunate to be close to Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), as well as reservations, local parks, and our county park districts as well. Whether you are a nature lover at heart, or simply enjoy the occasional walk outside, the parks offer a great range of hikes, walks, or simply places to go look at the beauty that is nature. If not the parks, then go to your own backyard, or for a run or walk around your neighborhood.

The benefits the outdoors have on one's psyche and physical wellbeing are unparalleled. To start, many of us are low in vitamin D, usually present in foods like cod liver oil and various types of fish, but most commonly obtained through exposure to sunlight. Other research published in the Journal of Aging Health points towards the idea that the may help to suppress some of the negative effects aging has on the body. According to the Huffington Post, "Participants in the study who spent time outdoors every day at age 70 showed fewer complaints of aching bones or sleep problems, among other health-related problems, at age 77 than those who did not head outside each day." Additionally, it has been shown that getting in touch with nature can boost mood, mentality and positive mindset.

Despite all scientific reasons to get outside, there is nothing better than doing it simply for fun. What I'm saying is this, go adventuring. Grab a friend, some outdoor gear, and go explore something new you've never seen. The world has so much to offer, and often all it takes is someone eager and willing to look. As Ralph Waldo Emerson so aptly said in Nature, "To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again."

The joy of discovery and awe that comes with adventuring and exploring new places with people you are close to is unparalleled in its benefits. Taking time to de-stress, relax, and simply enjoy what is around one's self is a valuable practice not often done in the world ofwork, deadlines, and technology. However, perhaps next time you have a free day, rather than spending it on your phone or watching Netflix, though that is calming in and of itself, take a walk outside, go find a waterfall, or enjoy a scenic overlook; whatever you do, appreciate the moment you are in and the beauty of what is around you.

Top 10 weirdest foods

By Aiden Burkley, BP Staff Writer

What's the strangest thing you've ever eaten? Frog legs? Crocodile Tail? A fish with potentially deadly qualities that if not prepared with the utmost attention to detail completely and entirely could kill you? Well, whatever it is, there are some weird foods in this world and you've most likely not have ever known about them. So from 10 being the least and 1 being the strangest, here is a list of foods that some consider delicacies:



Spam

The mystery meat! It's actually just pork shoulder, if that makes you feel any better.



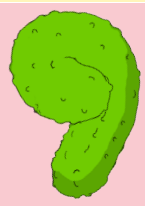
Fried Rattlesnake

Supposedly if a creature becomes a nuisance enough you can just eat it.



Century Egg

So, the egg isn't really a century old, but it's old enough to make it green and smelly. Another Chinese delicacy.



Koolickles

It's pickles dipped in Kool Aid. That's right. People eat this stuff.



Tuna Eyeball

Tuna Eyeball is served crazily cheap in Chinese markets. Probably because people get uncomfortable with their food staring back at them.



Balut

An egg. An egg with a baby bird still inside. Yum.



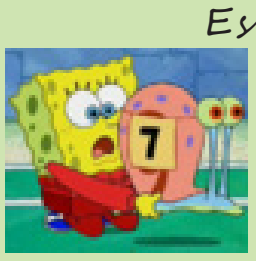
Chicken's Feet

It seems better just to stick to the chicken, honestly. The feet can't be all that great.

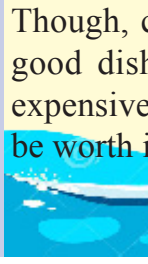


Bird's Nest Soup

This one seems normal but is actually a type of soup popular in China that consists of bird saliva. The bird uses its saliva to contrive its nest, and people actually eat it. Amazing.

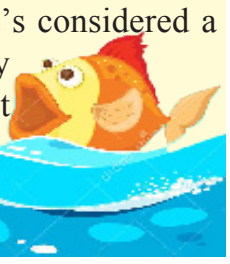


Escargots à la Bourguignonne: A dish popular in France. It's cooked snail served still in its shell. For once America isn't doing the weird thing.



Fugu

And, now, for the strangest thing you could possibly ever consume (actually you probably shouldn't): Fugu. A Pufferfish as we call it, a deadly poisonous fish to eat. Though, cooked just right it's considered a good dish. An outrageously expensive one even. It might be worth it if you don't die.



Feature

Sharknado: Best movie 2k17

by Jacob Wichert, BP Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of http://www.earwolf.com.

Have you ever watched a movie, and found yourself thinking: "If only this movie had less of a plot, more sharks, and deadly tornadoes"? If so, Anthony Ferrante, director of the *Sharknado* series has you covered. You've probably heard of Sharknado, an animal/disaster mashup frequently referred to as "The worst movie ever made", or "A complete joke." But I'm here to argue otherwise, as *Sharknado* is in fact one of the greatest movie series to ever grace its presence upon our tv screens.

Most notably, *Sharknado* is, without a doubt, relentlessly funny. Aside from the very concept itself being ridiculous, *Sharknado* is one of the most self-aware movies that I've ever watched. It never seems to take itself seriously, as evidenced by its seemingly endless cache of cheesy one-liners, pop-culture references, absurd plot ideas, and puns. You can almost feel the writers smirking at their own sense of humor. One of the most hilarious aspects of the movie lies within the tornado itself, as it "changes forms" multiples times throughout it. Starting out as a regular water spout, the Sharknado eventually crashes into and oilfield, becoming an oilnado, which then catches fire, becoming a firenado. The firenado then crashes into an electrical plant, becoming a lightningnado, and so on. It's absurd, unbelievable situations like these that make *Sharknado* such a unique experience.

Sharknado is also a movie that doesn't exactly provoke much thought, which depending on your opinions, can be either a good thing or a bad thing. One of the most common words I've heard used to describe the series is simply "dumb", to which I respond: Yes, yes it is. If you're looking for a well thought out and masterfully executed movie, Sharknado is probably the last movie I'd recommend to you. However, if you're searching for a mindless and ridiculous story accompanied by a cliché, yet hilariously written set of characters, *Sharknado* might just be what you've been waiting for.

Top Ten animal-disaster mashups

by Jacob Wichert, BP Staff Writer

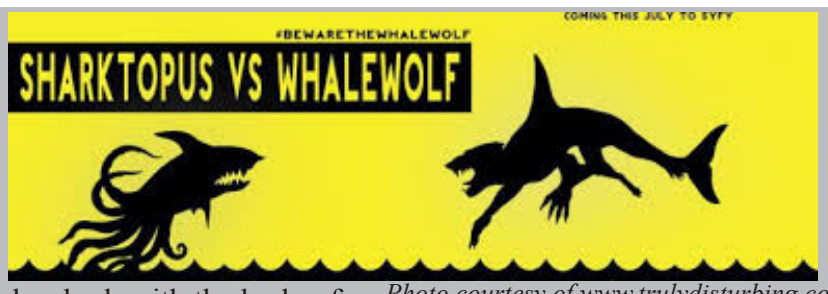


Photo courtesy of www.trulydisturbing.com

10- Quaardvarks

Although this would-be masterpiece of a movie was never actually made, the idea of combining the seemingly innocent nature of aardvarks with quicksand is too perfect to leave out of this list. Not to mention the "trailer" that was made for it is extremely reminiscent of Sharknado in terms of humor alone. If you don't believe me, look it up and see for yourself. You won't be disappointed.

9- Megashark vs mechashark

Although I never found this one too entertaining, I had to give it props for ambition alone. The idea of combatting a bloodthirsty megalodon with a mechanical replica is too absurd to ignore, especially once you stop to think of the other potential methods that could have been used to do so. The main issue with MvM is that, unlike *Sharknado*, it never pokes fun at itself to remind the audience that the creation of the movie was a joke.

8-Sand Sharks

Perhaps one of the reasons I enjoyed *Sand Sharks* was because it was reminiscent of the concept movie *Quaardvarks*, which I was particularly looking forward to. Even still, *Sand Sharks'* corny CGI and humor remained relatively entertaining throughout its runtime.

7- Avalanche Sharks

One of three sequels to *Sand Sharks*, *Avalanche Sharks* takes everything good (or bad) about about its predecessor, and improves upon it.

6-Mega Spider

As one of the very few animal disaster movies involving a non-aquatic animal, I had high hopes for *Mega Spider*; and while I wasn't disappointed by its performance, it lacked the hilarity of others like it, and made it a generally average experience.

5-Sharktopus

The first of a series of many Animal/Disaster movies, centered around a shark with the body of an octopus. The design of Sharktopus is creative yet ridiculous, similar to its humor.

4- Zombeavers

Zombeavers strays away from ocean-based disaster movies, and is set around a lake in the woods. There are plenty of things that this movie does right, such as its catchy name, absurd humor, and concept. Where *Zombeavers* really shines, however, is in its cast of characters, who are so hilariously generic that you can't help but laugh at their dialogue and interactions with one another.

3- Sharktopus vs Whalewolf

Sharktopus vs Whalewolf expands upon the previous movie by adding a rival for the deadly creature to duke it out with. Whalewolf's design is one of the strangest, yet oddly cool aspects of the movie. The movie's downfall however is in its somewhat lazy animation, which is more annoying than entertaining to watch.

2-Lavalantula

A largely unappreciated gem; *Lavalantula* is made by the same studio as the infamous Sharknado, and even includes a few cameos from the movie. It features similar humor, as well as improved animation and CGI.

1- Sharknado: the 4th Awakens

After giving it some thought, I absolutely had to give the number one spot in this list to the fourth installment in the *Sharknado* series. The 4th Awakens is by far the strongest movie in the series for a number of reasons, most notably its plot, which by far exceeds its predecessors in terms of sheer stupidity (in a good way). The storm itself "changes forms" multiple times throughout the movie, and gets crazier each time. I found myself at a loss for words when watching the movie as it grew more and more absurd throughout its runtime.

Top Ten chillest animals

by Stuart Horvath, BP Staff Writer

10. Salamanders- Salamanders are quick, sneaky little animals that live under rocks.

9. Komodo dragon- Komodo dragons are located one area on the earth, and it is perfect.

8. King cobra- Cobras have a certain venom that is chilling.

7. Tiger- Tigers are an animal that is so diverse.

6. Shark- The movie *Jaws* is great.

5. Lion- The lion is known as the King of the Jungle.

4. Killer whales- Orcas are able to withstand extreme pressure.

3. Elephant- Elephants have big ears and a trunk that can blow water.

2. Giraffes- Giraffes are the tallest mammal in the world.

1.Polar bears- Polar bears are able to be in "chill" temperatures.

THE DYNAMIC DUO: JIM AND DWIGHT

by Abby Carlson, BP Staff Editor

Love comes in many forms, but none resound in our hearts quite like the side splitting, knee slapping, laugh-out-loud relationship between Jim Halpert and Dwight Schrute. If you don't know who these comic gods are, do yourself a favor and put this paper down, grab some popcorn, plop down on your couch, and educate yourself on the wondrous world of The Office.

Jim and Dwight, who are the definition of "relationship goals," can brighten anyone's day with their arguments, practical pranks, and their perfect frenemy ways. Jim, a sarcastic and hilarious Dunder Mifflin employee nicely balances Dwight's serious yet odd demeanor, creating a match made in heaven. Most everything Dwight does or says, Jim turns into a joke, inciting anger in Dwight and laughter from the viewers. Although Jim and Dwight are friends, as proven by Jim's advice about Angela and Dwight's willingness to protect Jim from an angry Roy, their need to humiliate and belittle one another is comedic and witty, never leaving a moment serious or boring.



Jim Halpert and Dwight Schrute, the official frenenmeis of The Office.

> If ever in a bad, sad, or depressed mood, *The Office* is your go to gal for laughs and humor.

Not only is The Office a comedic relief, is probably the largest base for pranks on the face of the Earth. Let's review, shall we? There was Jim's signature and most well known prank of putting Dwight's office supplies in jello. When Jim acted like a competing computer and messed with Dwight, resulting in a total breakdown of the poor guy. Or maybe when Jim acted like he was part of the CIA, and was sending top secret messages to Dwight, corresponding with him as a potential secret agent (he ends up on top of the roof waiting for a helicopter…). Basically, if you're ever in need of a hilarious prank, you can always fall back on good old Jim and Dwight, superstars in the joke department. Shoutout to The Office, for always being there for, well, everyone.

Top 10 reasons to buy a boat

by Sam Martinjako, BP Staff Writer

1. You get a motivation to go outside. Normally prefer the great indoors? Well, now you have a boat to sit on while you mess around with your phone anyway. Don't forget the sunscreen.

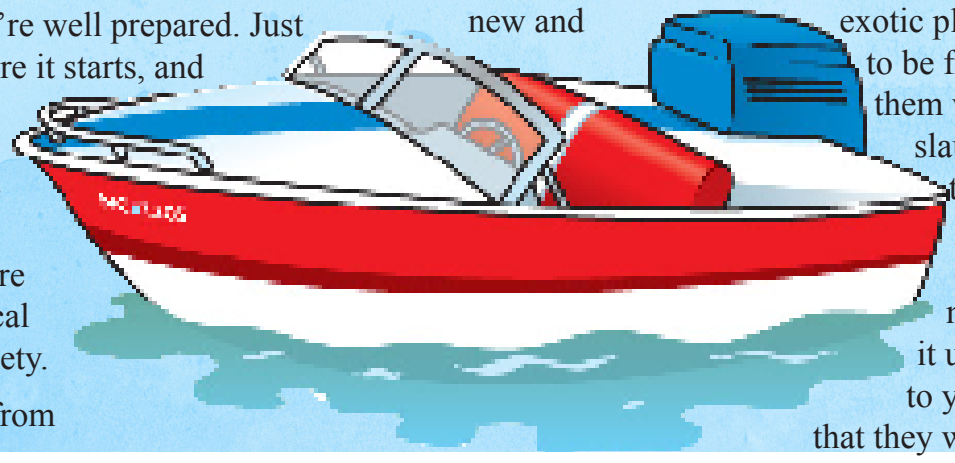
2. You could throw a sick party. Granted, it'll probably have to be a small one since we're just talking about a normal boat. Unless you get yacht, in which case, remember to invite me.

3. You can make it look like a pirate ship. If people think that you're juvenile because you do this, just plunder their riches and make them walk the plank. Dead men tell no tales.

4. You could do a number of aquatic sports. You know that you've always wanted to try water skiing, so why not? I personally recommend inner tubing. For extra fun, stack three or more people on the tube at the same time. Make sure you trust the others on the tube, because you may end up clinging to each other for dear life as you realize that everyone is slipping and the end is coming quickly.

5. You can sail back to your homeland. Have you secretly been hiding here under the guise of a normal American student when actually you miss your distant home country very dearly? Well, now you can return to the family you went missing from over a decade ago by sailing and praying to your deity of choice as you run out of gas in the middle of the ocean and wonder if your shoe would really taste that bad.

6. If the world ends in a flood, you're well prepared. Just make sure you get on your boat before it starts, and pray to your deity of choice as you wonder whatever happened to that friend you had in high school awhile back that disappeared after claiming that they were going home. Make sure that the people you save have practical skills in case you need to restart society.



7. You can re-enact that one scene from Titanic. You know, the one where Rose is all like, "I'm flying, Jack!" That one. With any luck though, you won't be hitting any sorts of icebergs, much less ones that could sink your ship. If you do wind up in a similar situation though, just remember that two people definitely could have fit on that piece of debris and that Jack and Rose are just kind of silly.

8. You can go fishing. This probably sounds lame to some and nice to others, but there's always a way to spice things up. Such as, if you don't have a Rose or a Jack for the Titanic scene, just go fishing for boyfriend or girlfriend! I'm not suggesting to use a fishing rod to hook and drag them to you (unless that's what it takes), but rather showing off your new boat to attract a mate. You may end up with someone who only wants you for your boat and the money you might not actually have, but at least you can feel like you're in that movie that you claim to be one of your favorites when in reality you would probably never watch it again by choice.

9. You can re-enact Life of Pi. You can have a super cool ride with a tiger in the middle of the ocean and have all sorts of other wacky things happen to you. But after the ride is over, you end up being interrogated and as it turns out, all of the animals and experiences you had were all actually-- Whoops, no spoilers!

10. You can discover new lands. Just ready your ship and invite some of your friends who also have ships and set sail to explore new and exotic places! Once you land, make sure to be friendly with the natives and treat them with respect before just outright slaughtering them and converting the ones that live to your religion. But you're an explorer, a conqueror! It's what you do, so naturally you just have to keep at it until they're all dead or praying to your deity of choice and wishing that they were.

Top ten words

by Lexi Caponi, BP Asst. Editor

Audacity: willingness to take bold risks
Nomenclature: the choosing of names for things
Pretentious: attempting to impress by affecting greater importance than actually possessed
Vexing: to cause distress or annoyance
Abominable: causing moral revulsion
Bamboozled: to fool or cheat
Onomatopoeia: formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named
Frivolous: not having any serious purpose or value
Serenity: the state of being calm and at ease
Flabbergasted: to surprise someone greatly



Luna loving

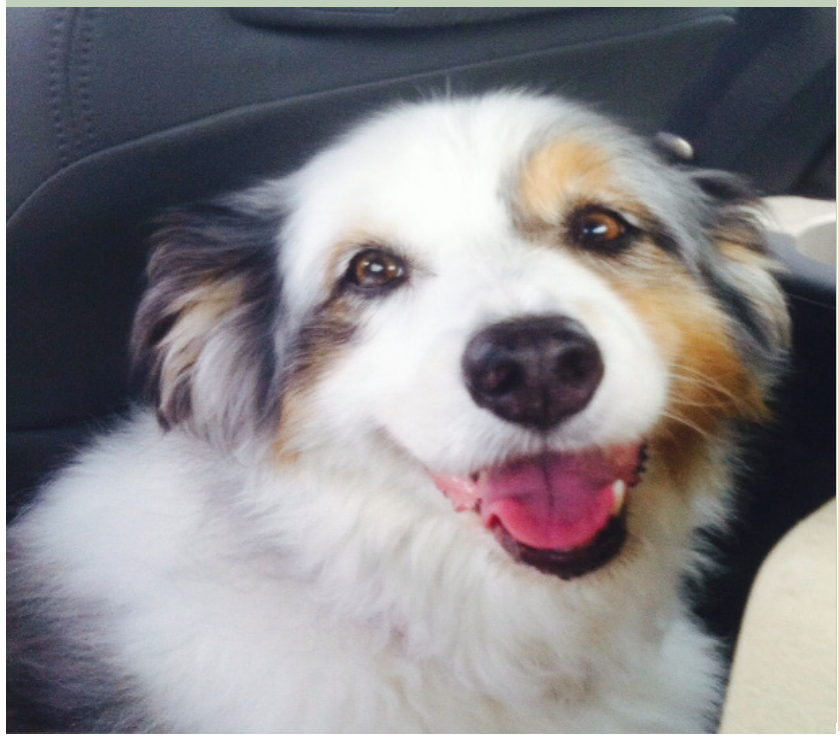
by Claire Milano. BP Staff Asst. Editor

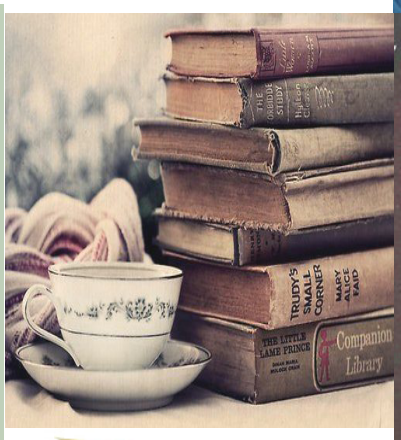
There are a few things in life that I truly love. Of those things my family, friends, pets and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" are the top contenders. My aussie, Luna, is very precious to me. When I was five years old, we took her in because no one could contain the awesomeness that was Luna. She had been staying with my uncle for a few weeks, and he suggested to my mom that we adopt her. So, mom gathered all of us into the chunky, navy minivan and we drove to meet her. We walked through the garage into the backyard just in time to see a grey-and-white blur zoom past us. She was running in huge circles around my uncle's yard. Since she was only a year old, she still had that "puppy-temperament" everyone loves.

Here comes the sad part: Luna's original owners kept her locked in a cage 24/7 because they had nowhere to put her. So, my uncle took her in temporarily with his other dog Clyde. Clyde and Luna were very close in age, and therefore became fast friends.

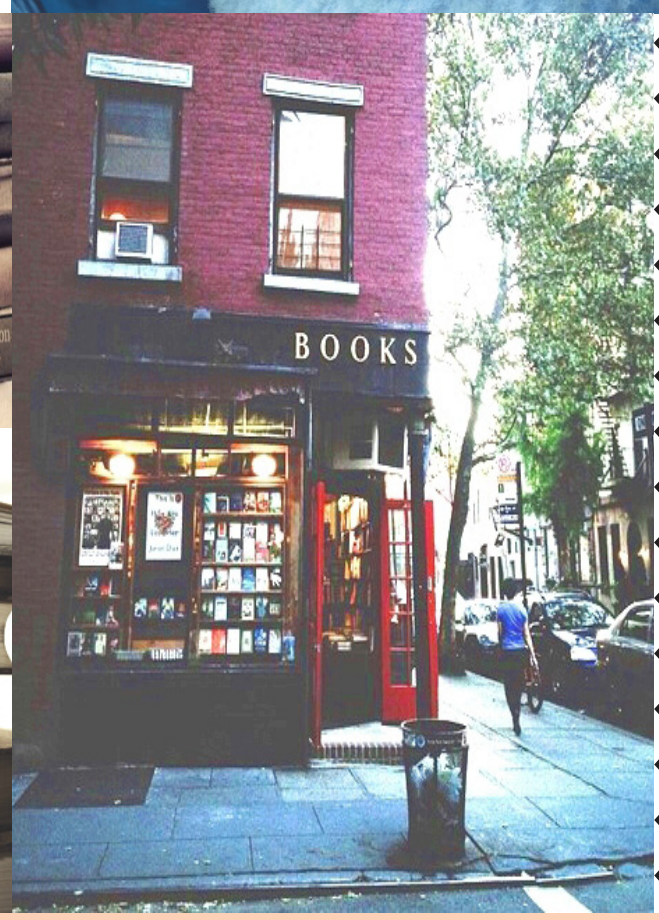
Back to my story, Luna was a little ball of energy. We all instantly fell in love with her cute multi-colored face. We knew that she would love our house, mainly because it's surrounded by woods and practically in the middle of nowhere. To this day, Luna has that spark of energy uncommon for a 13 year old. She goes on daily galivants and pretends she can't hear us when we call her home. She always finds a way to make those around her smile (mostly because of her little "nub-tail.")

Pets bring out the best in us. Luna certainly brings out my smile everyday. As true companions, pets will always be there for you and love you no matter what. I've grown up surrounded by animals and I can honestly say they've taught me how to be caring towards others. Take the time during this month to truly love your pets.









Novel mania

by Kody West, BP Staff Writer

From the beginnings of humanity there have been ideas and knowledge. However, for the vast majority of humanity those ideas have been passed down orally from generation to generation. Written language gave us a way to keep these ideas, stories, and histories indefinitely. Books, and all literature, are a direct result of the invention of written language. They are perhaps among the most important of human inventions. A book represents so much more than just a stack of papers bound together; it represents ideas and knowledge of the past, present, and future.

I love books. The reason books are great is because they hold ideas and memories and so much more. Just like snowflakes, everyone is unique and special. This uniqueness reflects in our works of literature through different ideas and stories.

Since its invention, written language and literature has changed the world and society we live in. From classics like *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Holy Bible* all the way to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, books have been fundamental in spreading ideas and ultimately changing the world.

With almost every major event in history, a book or work of literature can almost surely be linked to its cause. The Russian Revolution, for example, was directly inspired by Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. Another classic (and a very good read I might add), *On the Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection of the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, by Charles Darwin laid down a fundamental basis for the theory of evolution and how life came to be, as well as an explanation for our beginnings.

Everyone has their own favorite books and types of books. Our favorite book might reflect who we are as a person, but I might not, I don't know. Emily Dingman stated that her favorite book is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Now does this say anything about who we are as people? Who am I to say? All I can say is that people are like snowflakes, we're all special and beautiful.



Switch it up!



by Sam Martinjako, BP Staff Writer

Nintendo has recently announced that their new game console, the Switch, is coming out on March 3rd of this year. Rumors of games and technical specifications have been floating around the internet since 2015, so seeing the system in its full glory is rather exciting. Originally known as the NX, early rumors indicated that it would use cartridge-based storage like their handheld lines, and some went even further as to say the system would be a two-in-one portable and home console. Both of these somewhat controversial rumors have proven to be true. The main device is a tablet powered by a custom chipset from the well known graphics card making company Nvidia. The tablet itself has a six inch screen with a 720p resolution, making it Nintendo's first HD mobile device. It's a pretty standard looking tablet with no features that are extremely unique to it besides the slot for game cards and possibly the dual front-facing speakers. It can take Micro SD cards up to two terabytes, which aren't even a thing yet, and also uses USB-C to charge. On both of its shorter sides, there are rails specially designed for Nintendo's new Joycon controllers. Slightly reminiscent of the old Wii remotes, these small elliptical controller can be either attached to the tablet for a single person to use, or by themselves for up to two people to use. They feature analog sticks, shoulder buttons, and the rest of the things that you would expect a simple game controller to have.

To make this concept work better, Nintendo has chosen to change their directional pad into four separate buttons, like the c-buttons on the Nintendo 64 controller. A neat feature of these controllers is that they have HD rumbling. A tech demo involving counting marbles showed that it is possible for them to create the feeling of marbles hitting the side of a container using vibrations. According to NeoGAF user Alpha_eX, who has tried this demo, "The Joy-con can emulate this feeling incredibly well, I was able clearly feel three separate marbles rolling down the side of the Joy-con and then each hitting each other as they got to the bottom".

If you are not a fan of handheld gaming, then luckily for you, the switch comes with a docking station that connects to your TV. You simply place the tablet on its dock and you can play all of your games in 1080p as you normally would on the tablet. This resolution bump comes from the device having more power available to it, as well as not being limited to the screen technology of the tablet. A base for the joycons is included so you can have them both anchored onto a more normal controller. If you prefer downloading games, you might want to buy a very large SD card beforehand, as the console only has 32 gigabytes of storage built into it, which could potentially be about the same if not less than your iPhone (depending on the model). Fortunately, the trade off for the low storage is that you don't have to install the games you buys physical copies for, like with the Xbox One and Playstation 4.

The more specific tech specs haven't been revealed, and perhaps Nintendo won't even release them. If you remain unsold on the system for now, perhaps some of the games coming out for it will change your mind. If you don't own a Wii U and missed out on its best titles, or if you did and want even more, then you'll be glad to know that a deluxe version of Mario Kart 8 and a sequel to Splatoon are both coming to the Switch. The new Legend of Zelda game, Breath of the Wild, is coming to both the Switch and Wii U, though the Switch version is likely to be much more impressive. A new Mario game has also been announced, and it seems to be a very unique and refreshing entry for the series while still sticking to its roots. Other games of interest include both Minecraft and Skyrim, which would be a lot more exciting if they weren't both about five years late. But hey, it's hard to complain about getting to play both of these great games on a capable mobile device. The console starts off at $300 and if you are truly interested in buying it, you may want to preorder it before it's too late.

9 best chess moves of all time

--Advice from an expert--

by Kody West, BP Staff Writer



Apocalypse Attack- with a name like that you know this opening means business.





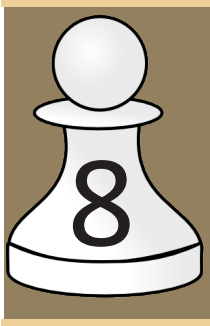
Halloween Gambit- This one can only be used on Halloween and is very spooky.





The Ruy Lopez- Ruy was such a good chess player, believe it!





Giuoco Piano- Piano is a musical instrument.





The Queen's Gambit- Queen Elizabeth made this one up when she was playing Joseph Stalin in 1974, it quickly became a staple.





Evans Gambit- Ruys younger brother Evan made this one up. He was pretty good at chess but not as good as Ruy.





Sicilian defense- number 2! This is the second best opener I promise.





Benko Gambit- Wowie, this one is really good!





King's Indian defense The best opener by far, this one is so good, trust me.



What's all the hype: Basketball

by Rachel Breckenridge, BP Staff Writer

Basketball is one of the most enjoyable sports to watch and play. The adrenaline of watching or playing in a big game, and the wait all day to watch or play in that big game that night. Basketball is a stress-reliever, when a game is on TV, all you have to do is sit back and watch and enjoy the game. In the month of December 2016, 61.1 million people tune in to watch basketball the night of an NBA game. By being a watcher of the game on TV, it makes you feel like you are actually there in the arena enjoying the excitement with the fans. The benefit of watching it from home is waiting all day to come home and watch with friends and family, in the comfort of your own home. The number of girls that participate in high school basketball is 429,504 in the U.S. The number of boys is 3,287,735 participants per year in the U.S. The satisfaction of getting to play and have a good time is always refreshing. After playing in a game you feel accomplished and look back and see what a great time you have had. For me, basketball has been a way for me to escape and to have fun. After a long day, going to the basketball court and shooting around clears my head and gets my mind off a long day. Playing on a team has to be the best part. Having fun and making friends with a group of teammates all wanting to accomplish the same goal is always an enjoyable activity. Going to or watching a game on the TV helps you appreciate the game in a different way and learn from other players. Either watching or playing basketball, it has always been my escape and my favorite things to do.



Top 10 layers in the NBA

by Rachel Breckenridge, BP Staff Writer

1. LeBron James- known to be the best player in the world.

2. Kevin Durant- newest member of the Golden State Warriors. Former scoring champ and MVP. This year, having one of his best seasons.

3. Stephen Curry- reigning 2 time MVP and single-season 3 point record holder.

4. Russell Westbrook- leading the league in points and triple doubles with 26.

5. James Harden- only player in the league to have two 50 point triple doubles. In the MVP race with Russell Westbrook.

6. Isaiah Thomas- leads the league in 4th quarter points with 10.7. Averaging just under 30 points a game.

7. Demarcus Cousins- having a career season in points and rebounds and field goal percentage. Once again, leading his team.

8. Kawhi Leonard- former defensive player of the year and finals MVP. Keeps improving as one of the best all-around players in the association.

9. Anthony Davis- struggled with injuries but continues to improve each year as one of the most dominant big men.

10. Paul George- hitting his peak after a devastating injury. Having one of his best seasons as a player and clutch performer.



Photo courtesy of www.thetoptens.com

Why I love Bleacher Creatures

by Stuart Horvath, BP Staff Writer

Berkshire High School has extremely enthusiastic fans. Most sporting events at Berkshire have a student-section. We are called "The Bleacher Creatures." We show nothing but spirit for our team. There has been a student-section for a very long time, but the class of 2007 takes credit for the name Bleacher Creatures. The class of 2007 was the first to start the roller coaster . Our current student-section leaders are Anthony Granny and Will Blechschmid. Our job is to pump up the players to get that W!

Berkshire's rivalry with Cardinal attracts a very large student section. That's when we are our loudest. Cardinal is a competitive school, and our games against them are intense. The Battle for the Kinsman Cup is a huge game for the Bleacher Creatures. This year Cardinal played Berkshire at our home field. Throughout the whole game, the Bleacher Creatures were active, loud, and full of spirit. After half-time, when our team was coming out of the locker room, everyone in our student section took a handful of baby powder. When the team was back on the field, we through it all in the air. The baby powder act got front page in *The Maple Leaf*. Berkshire fought hard in that game and came out victorious for the second year in a row.

A lot of the time when our student-section is chanting, the opposing school's student-section will chant back. This can lead to direct statements toward them, or even "the roller coaster." The roller coaster is a silent chant from our student-section. Everyone will sit down and imitate the leader, who is directing which way the coaster is going. This gets very extreme, and is one of the Bleacher Creatures' most famous chants. We do the roller coaster every time during Cardinal sporting events, or when we are beating a team by a large amount.

This year in basketball, Berkshire beat Cardinal and when we won, we finished the night off with "ABC!" three times (meaning "Always Beat Cardinal"). Berkshire's Bleacher Creatures will continue the spirit for future sporting events. Next year, the current student-section leaders shall be replaced with two new seniors. The Bleacher Creatures will continue to show much spirit and enthusiasm throughout the rest of the year and years to come.