The Badger Pause

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Fake Plastic Trees

By Hannah Keough, BP Asst. Editor



I don't know about you, but whenever I'm feeling worn out during the holiday season, the best thing to lift my spirits is coming home to a festive house: The stockings are on the mantle, "Seasons Greetings" and "Happy Holidays" signs are hung about the walls, and the Christmas tree, with its fresh pine smell, is adorned in sparkling little lights and ornamental relics. That is, if it's a real tree.

But now, in our fake plastic Earth, artificial Christmas trees are just as prevalent as Fraser Firs. One can see the benefits of such a creation. For instance, the purchasing process becomes simpler, as families no longer have to wander through a maze of various breeds and sizes, but can simply walk down one store aisle, or even remain in the comfort of their own homes with a computer, and find a sufficient tree. Additionally, the reusability of the artificial Christmas tree is a sound option for families' financial securities. And, "[s]ince it can be taken down and stored, there is an easy and reliable tree just waiting for us every year, instead of going out to get one and freezing in the process," claims senior Peter Formica, whose family switched to the 'artificial life' when their dogs mistook its smell for that of the outdoors, and began to abandon certain aspects of house etiquette.

With oodles of present shopping, cookie baking, and gift wrapping to complete, many families also appreciate the fake tree for its simplicity in maintenance and setup. No one has to toil to put a seven-foot tree into a stand and end up with sticky hands that won't, with any amount of soap and boiling water, come clean. The fake tree is also much better at keeping hold of its needles than a real one is. With a real tree, one must be sure to consistently vacuum or sweep around its base, lest he ends up with needles piercing his foot, or lodged in his green and red pair of fluffy Christmas socks.

And because it looks like the real thing, very few practical arguments exist against this imposter. However, the plastic pine deserves only the most supreme denouncement for its objection of authenticity. The fake plastic tree, while deplorable for its theft of the spirit of Christmas, proves also to be a symbol of the problems plaguing our society.

The fake Christmas tree exists purely to ease the responsibilities of families decorating for Christmas, serving no other arguably important purpose than to satisfy humanity's sloth. Sure, some might argue that supporting the using the same fake tree year after year, one is saving the Earth's plantlife and atmosphere. But simply because one is not uprooting an innocent tree to display in his or her home does not mean he or she is not a massacrer of our oxygen-producing wildlife. For the plastic of the fake plastic tree must be fabricated in a pollution-producing factory. Thus, through supporting the domination of fake trees, one is killing the very life he or she claims to be saving. And according to freshman Gennah Brown, the purchasing of a fake tree is "honestly just disrespectful to the trees purposely grown for [Christmas]". Why should we neglect these trees their obligation in life? Who are we to deprive them of their destiny?

The only thing more disappointing than the deprivation of fate, is the complete expulsion of truth and classicality, which is again a trait to tribute to the tantalizing tree. It may look like the real thing; it may even taste like the real thing, but the fake Christmas tree is as much a liar as Donald Trump, leaving one only to hope that the next puff of smoke our president blows sends every plastic pine to crumble and burn. And when we succeed in the expulsion of fabrication - in the White house, in the media, and in our holiday homes - credence and the pure smell of evergreen may remain, all the time.




courtesy of getyougo.com

Society and the modern man

by Robert O'Conke, BP Staff Writer


courtesy of Latimes.com

Men die from suicide 3.5 times more often than women in the U.S. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention states that in 2015, 7 out of 10 suicides were middle-age white males. But why do more men die from suicide when women are statistically more likely to be depressed and suffer from mental illness? The organization named "Samaritans," an organization in the U.K with the goal to help drop suicide rates, believes that multiple factors such as socioeconomic status, long-time life decisions and a generational identity crisis increase the chance of male suicide.

Men of lower socioeconomic status have a 10% higher chance of committing suicide than that of men with considerable wealth. One factor, the organization says, is the "feminisation" of the workplace. Feminisation is simply the term that means a shift towards a service-based industry, which may cause some men to feel as though they don't have room in the professional workplace. Middle-age also comes with stressful long-time decisions which, "can come with a big cost, both financially and personally/socially doing so could lead to job loss, financial uncertainty, or on the personal front, a breakdown in marriage. Feeling boxed in could seriously compromise well-being," Forbes contributor Alice G. Walton states. Middle-age men begin to feel an increase in stress and pressure as not only are these decisions more costly in the effects they have on the man's life but choices are limited with the lean toward a service control industry.

One of the most important factors is that of a generational identity crisis. Middle-age men were born between, as Samaritans states, "the pre-war 'silent' and the post-war 'me' generation." Men born between these generations are caught between "the traditional silent, strong, austere masculinity of their fathers and the more progressive, open and individualistic generation of their sons." These men are forced into a traditionalism vs modernism position, which can cause distress for them.

Marriage also plays a massive part in the suicide rate of middle-age white men. While taxing on both partners, men tend to benefit more, both emotionally and physically health-wise, than women do during a marriage. Men often struggle and fail to portray the classic strong husband stereotype. The basic stereotype is very unrealistic, and "There is a large and unbridgeable gap between the culturally authorised idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' and the reality of everyday survival for men in crisis," writes Samaritan. One of the ways that men feel they can "take-back" their pride is to commit suicide. Men going through a divorce lose more than just emotional and physical health, as losing children during a custody battle can have a serious effect as well.

Aside from suicide, men suffer when it comes to a factor that leads to it: custody and the law. As was stated men derive more health benefits from a marriage than a woman does and that can lead to suicide. Though legislation was passed that prohibited gender bias in many states, often that bias remains within the courts, such as a case in Indiana. Tom James, a practicing attorney in family law, summarizes that, "A study conducted in 2004 found that although the tender years doctrine had been abolished some time ago, a majority of Indiana family court judges still supported it and decided cases coming before them consistently with it." James also found that in Leigh Stamps' Maternal Preference in Child Custody Decisions,"a survey of judges in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee found a clear preference among judges for maternal custody in general." In some cases, women rule the court in custody cases over men even when the man is the main income and provider of the family, even though this is not always true in the cases of joint-income and the women being the solo provider.

An area severely lacking in equality is the judicial system. Professor Sonja Starr, in her paper Estimating Gender Disparities in Federal Criminal Cases states, "men receive 63% longer sentences on average than women do," and "women are…twice as likely to avoid incarceration if convicted." Professor Starr also found that this gap is larger than that of the racial gap, which shows that black males serve an average of 20% longer sentencing. But why are women favored in court decisions? Well, no solid evidence has been found on that point, though many theories have been proposed. Professor Starr leaves the question of how to fix this injustice to policymakers. She does, however, believe that the problem may lie with the decision-making criteria when it comes to male cases.

Now, the biggest problem is with societal stereotypes. Every race, gender, culture, and religion deal with stereotypes and standards. For women one of the most often is the idiotic cliche of the "damsel in distress." The problem stems from an older way of thinking. But men are often stereotyped without any consequence or backlash.

Think. What is the "perfect" woman? Just typing that is wrong and any sane person can tell you that the concept of perfect is subjective. But media, such as books and movies, have no problem with portraying men as the classic knight in shining armor. Now, what's the problem? It seems like a flattering image doesn't it? The problem begins when men don't meet that unrealistic standard of the "manly-man".

Turning on a T.V, pawing through a magazine or even just reading a book exposes the public to the stereotypical man. This man is brave and adventurous, muscular, and six-foot and above. Sound familiar? It's the same type of moronic imagery that plagues certain media driven toward women. But unlike women, seldom does one see a commercial about how a man should feel confident or handsome in the way he looks. As Sam Femiano, founder of American Men's Studies Association, and Mark Nickerson, a social worker in private psychotherapy practice, in their article How do Media Images of Men Affect Our Lives? put it, "males are discouraged from pursuing many positive traits that are perceived as unmanly. These include the ability to feel a range of emotions, including fear, hurt, confusion or despair. Even talking about these feelings is considered unmanly....These narrow masculine standards can lead to discrimination against those who deviate from them. But they can also prevent men themselves from living up to their full potential as human beings." Many times have men felt as though they were worthless because of these depictions.

Not only has the media wrongly depicted both men and women, preying on our flaws in order to sell more Muscle Milk or whatever fake garbage made to help you placebo your way into an ice cream relapse. Media also depicts men as being generally misogynistic, racist, and other bad words that end in -ist and -ic. An easy example is found simply by scrolling through a typical Buzzfeed page or Youtube channel. One of their most controversial videos is 36 Questions Women Have For Men. This video asks the hard questions such as, "Why do you hate romcoms?" and "Why do you assume you won't like a movie because it stars a female lead?" Firstly, men don't like the typical romantic comedy because of how it depicts men, just like how women hate overly sexualized women in any type of media. Men in romcoms are willing to give up everything just to make the woman happy. This includes jobs, friends, happiness, and even their life. Men don't like romantic comedies because they aren't romantic to us. They are just another standard for how we have to act just to be able to be in a relationship.

Secondly, every man I have talked to, including myself, enjoys female leads in any forms of media or entertainment. Wonder Woman and Lara Croft are both excellent examples right off the top of my head, and both of these characters were well received and enjoyable. Lara Croft is an amazing adventurer with incredible survivalist skills and strong character. Wonder Woman is an equally interesting character parallel to Superman.

The real question is, "What am I trying to achieve here?" Whine about life's transgressions? Cry at injustice? Say that men have worse problems than women? No, not at all. My goal is to bring up a simple fact… everyone has problems. Whether man or woman, black or white, asian or european, we as humans deal with difficulty everyday in our society. But through speaking out against these problems we as a people can come together and figure out a solution. Whether discrimination in the workplace, or racism in our towns, bringing attention to topics not talked about, such as those of men, we can effectively strike them from the long bucket list that is the world's problem.

Cavs bounce back

by Rachel Breckenridge, BP Staff Writer

The 2016 NBA Champions, Cleveland Cavaliers, suffered a rocky start to the 2017-2018 season. This was a bit of a surprise to most, but Cavs fans remained positive and knew that the struggles wouldn't last long. The Cavs have an entirely new look on the offensive end without Kyrie Irving. The Cavs were missing Irving's playmaking abilities not only for himself, but for his teammates. Former four-time MVP and 15 year veteran, LeBron James, quickly realized that he has a bigger load to carry this season than the past three seasons spent with Irving. LeBron not only has been leading the team with his scoring, passing, rebounding, and leadership, but he is (once again) putting up MVP stats night in and night out. James is averaging 28.0 points, 8.2 rebounds, and 8.5 assists per game.

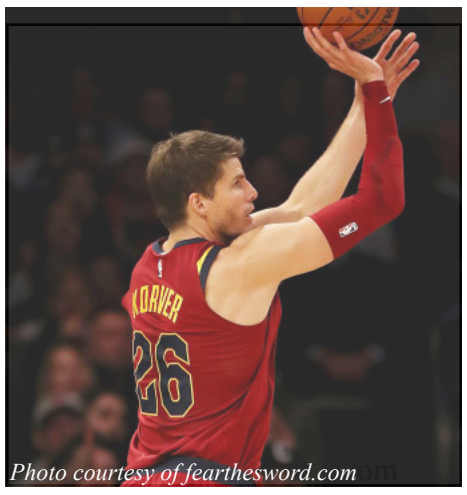


Photo courtesy of fearthesword.com
The Cavs' Kyle Korver shoots his shot.

The Cavs started the season 3-7, some questions and concerns began to arise about how the team would react, and what the win column would look like later in the season. Having such a valuable asset on offense for the past three years leave, disrupted the flow for the team. As the Cavs patiently await for playmaker and all-star point guard, Isaiah Thomas, to return, they are missing that one piece to make them a championship team. Cavs fans and players believe that Thomas is the asset that will put them on top.

While Thomas is still recovering, the Cavs have looked to backup Derrick Rose to regain his MVP caliber capabilities on both ends of the floor. Within the first few games, Rose did just that. Although he was playing well, his Achilles heel of injures came back to haunt him. Rose suffered two different injuries in a 23 game span of this young season. Injuries take a significant mental toll on an athlete, and Rose has been down that road and has come back multiple times in his career. But as he ages, he is realizing that the game may be too much for his body at this point in his career. Rose is taking some allotted time away from the team to weigh his options and contemplate retirement, or giving this season another shot.

Another new face to the Cavaliers and NBA superstar, Dwyane Wade, was another player who had a difficult start to the season. He was struggling finding his rhythm with the starting lineup, and his statistics demonstrated his struggle. The Cavs like to get off to a good start by passing and scoring early in the game.

Wade is an isolation player, like James, and two isolation players on the floor at the same time took away from the fast paced start the Cavs seek. When Wade arrived in Cleveland, Cavs head coach, Tyronn Lue, told the previous two-year starter and three point specialist, J.R. Smith, that he would be coming off the bench. Smith was frustrated with this news and used it as motivation to play well coming off the bench. When Wade was removed from the starting lineup, Smith regained his spot back. With the addition of Smith back in the starting lineup, the Cavs were able to get off to a faster start, with Smith on the floor.

Tristan Thompson, the Cavs rebounding and defensive specialist, suffered a calf injury in game six against the Indiana Pacers. This injury has kept Thompson out for a month, but the Cavs are expecting a healthy return within the next few weeks. Jae Crowder has been playing very well in Thompson's absence. His hustle, defense and rebounding has provided much needed energy while Thompson is out. Crowder is also scoring and shooting the ball very well, he's averaging 8.5 points with 3.4 rebounds a game.

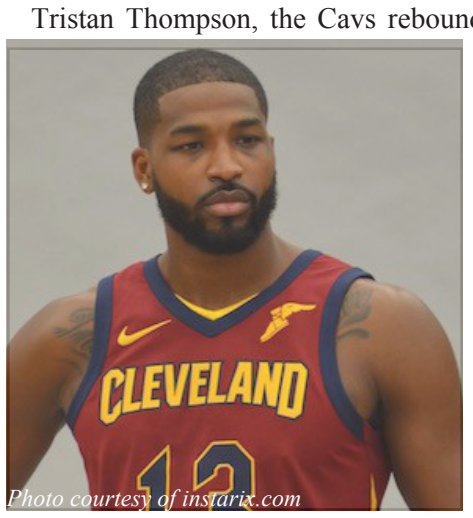


Photo courtesy of instarix.com
The Cavs' Tristan Thompson.

Kyle Korver continues to do what he does best year in and year out, and that is shooting the three ball. Korver is shooting 41% from the three point line and averaging 10.5 points per game. The Cavs have been known over the past few years to have had a frankly nonexistent bench, that has not provided energy or scoring. This season the bench has done the exact opposite of what it has done in previous years. The bench is led by NBA veterans: Jeff Green, Channing Frye, Dwyane Wade, and Kyle Korver. When the starting lineup is not performing well, the bench comes in and provides better focus, cohesion, and energy. The bench has really been key for the Cavs this season.

By having a strong bench, the Cavs significantly will significantly improve in the playoffs, which is what they have always needed. The Cavs are now beginning to pull themselves together and are now working together and playing well. After the 3-7 start, the Cavs have won 13 games straight. Although the Cavs had a rough start, they proved that there is nothing to fear for this team and this season. The Cavs are once again, front runners for the NBA title.

Berkshire's IT guy

By Jacob Wichert, BP Assistant Editor



The IT department at Berkshire High School has long been the subject of speculation amongst students. It would appear as though this branch of an otherwise familiar staff has kept to the shadows during its existence and consequently, ideas centered around malicious conspiracies have begun to take root, and perhaps for good reason. What exactly goes on in that dark little room, tucked away in the farthest corner of the school? That's the question that I, Jacob Wichert P.I. intend to answer today, as I have been called onto the case to unearth the secrets of Berkshire's mysterious IT department.

Nov 29, 2017,10:50 A.M.

Case file 1: Finding Torrey

I set up my base of operation in the corner of the library, hidden in plain sight, where I would hopefully be able to see anybody coming and going from the IT room. It was here that my long endeavor to unearth the secrets of the IT department took its first unfortunate turn. Ms. Hull, the grand overseer of the technology and media center approached me with troubling news: No members of the IT department were scheduled to work that day. Disappointed, but not deterred, I resolved to continue my investigation the following day.

As it would turn out, however, somebody did in fact enter the room mere moments later. I convinced myself that he was only visiting, perhaps for additional tech training for the staff. Still, something deep down told me otherwise, and my instincts proved themselves competent, as per usual. Time slowed down as the mysterious figure made his way immediately towards the IT room in the back of the library.

I shot Ms. Hull a glance, only to witness a look of confusion equal to mine. Still, I couldn't allow my bewilderment to let this opportunity pass me by, and I approached the man in his natural habitat. All I could retrieve was a name: Torrey, before hitting rock bottom in terms of information. It seemed that this Torrey was hiding something.

If it were impossible to acquire any information from Torrey directly, I would have to utilize the only other resources that was available to me--the shadows. Fortunately, I'd spent some time training in the mountains in order to master the art of stealth, making me more than adequately prepared to handle this situation. I waited for Torrey to emerge from his lair, and followed him into the vast hallways of Berkshire.

That was my initial plan, but as fate would have it, and perhaps by the will Torrey himself, the man disappeared from my sight moments later. I was utterly baffled. Even with the aid of my co-investigator, Sam Martinjako, Torrey's location remained unknown. We ended our search with what little evidence we had uncovered, and began to discuss our hypotheses.

As though to taunt us, midway through our discussion, Torrey made another grand entrance into the library, shooting us a glance followed by a sly look of triumph. He knew what we had been doing, but still, the question remains: "How?" Unfortunately, Torrey's presence at Berkshire has been fleeting as of late. Perhaps this indicates that we're on the right track in our investigation, or maybe he's plotting to sabotage our progress. There's no way to be sure, so l'll have to constantly check over my shoulder for the time being, just to be safe.

Though we were unable to retrieve information in regards to the other members of the IT department, our newfound (though admittedly limited) knowledge will prove invaluable in future investigations. After consulting with my higher-ups, it has been decided upon that it would be beneficial to leave the reader of this case file, whomever that may be, with a declassified subject profile of Torrey. I can't allow the potential sabotage of this investigation to come to fruition, and the best way to combat this possibility is to mass-distribute our findings. Some of the enclosed information has been withheld, as seen fit by the Chief Director of the BPPD. With that, I temporarily withdraw from this case until future developments occur. Stay safe, folks.

The following is a declassified subject profile, composed by the Badger Pause Investigative Services, an elite branch of the BPPD. Please note that this document has been modified for public viewing.

Subject A

Designation - Torrey

Description - Typically seen wearing a dark red flannel with slicked back hair.

Threat Level - REDACTED..

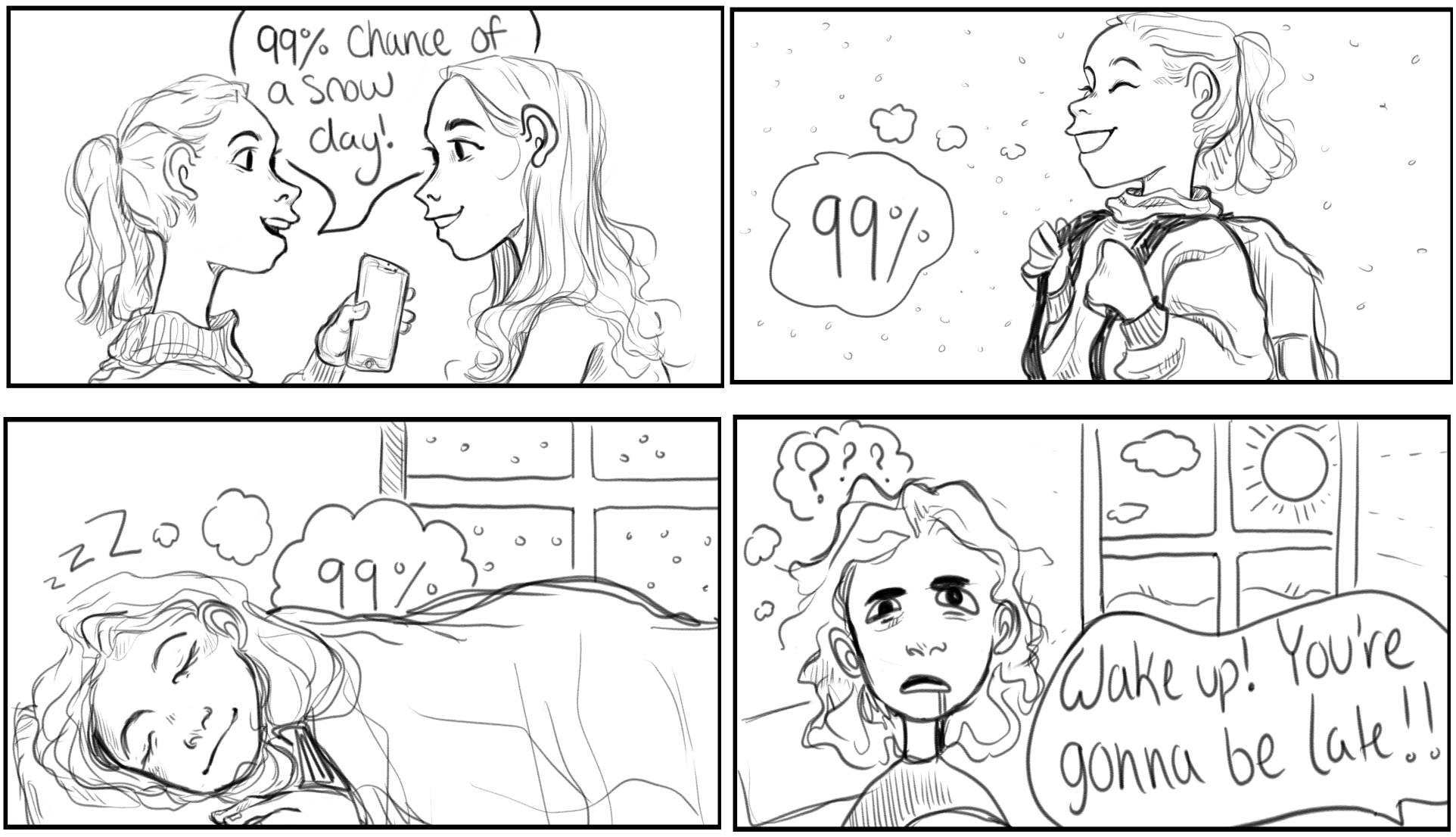
At the time of the making of this report, we have discovered that that Torrey, who will henceforth be referred to as "Subject A" is capable of moving at inhuman speeds, and can disappear into walls at will. He has also been found slipping away into the boiler room on multiple occasions, only to reappear moments later in the library. Due to these behaviors, it is also hypothesized that Subject A is capable of telepoREDACTEDtation as well, though this cannot be confirmed at this time.

If spotted in the wild, Subject A should never be approached. Instead, contact an authority and wait for further action to be taken. Though there are no known fatalities that can be connected directly to Subject A, it is agreed upon that he is likely more than capable of of REDACTED to those who provoke him.

Recent developments hint at sinister intentions as numerous instances of ……..... REDACTED ……..... have been reported in his presence.

Snow Daze

by Aiden Burkley



Top 5 Christmas Movies

by Sam Roach, BP Staff Writer

Coming into the month of December, Christmas is approaching fast. The cold weather of this month means nothing but staying inside, drinking hot chocolate, and spending quality time with the family. While being stuck inside for the cold winter nights, families need something to do. What is better to do than watch classic Christmas movies? These are the top five Christmas movies for this season!



5. Krampus (2015)
Krampus, directed by Michael Dougherty, is a classic to scare kids into being especially good, because Santa's always watching. This movie is a mix of horror and comedy, even though it's not supposed to be a comedy. In this movie, Krampus is a horned devil that comes and punishes those who have lost the festive spirit. Krampus tells the story of a family that fights, which causes Max to lose his festive spirit. Because of the lack of spirit throughout the house, Krampus is called down to terrorize them.



4. The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)
Henry Selick, with the help of the legendary Tim Burton, made many films, such as Alice in Wonderland and Corpse Bride. In this movie, Jack Skellington becomes bored of his every year routine of being the face of Halloween. After wandering around, he stumbles across a magical place called Christmas-town. Jack eventually falls in love with the lights and the atmosphere of Christmas-town and plots an extravagant plan. Jack plots to kidnap Santa and take his place in Christmas-town so that he is in full control. Tim Burtons Christmas movies have always been a classic for this time of year.



3. Disney's A Christmas Carol (2009)
Directed by Robert Zemeckis, this movie portrays hat is truly the meaning of Christmas. Ebenezer Scrooge absolutely despises Christmas and the festivities come with it. Due to his hatred of Christmas, he is introduced to three spirits that will evidently change his life and his perspective of Christmas. This movie is perfect for the whole family and will for sure get your spirits up for Christmas.



2. A Christmas Story (1983)
This movie, directed by Bob Clark, is the definition of classic Christmas movie. This Drama/Comedy is perfect for that Christmas Eve, night with the whole family watching and spending time together. As Ralphie Parker dodges bullies and sometimes his own family, Christmas brings them all together. All Ralphie wants is a "Red Ryder air rifle" for Christmas but is frequently at odds with his dad. This movie is so well known that the Freeform channel runs a 24 hour loop of this movie.



1. Elf (2003)
Will Ferrell never seems to disappoint in any movie. Elf is the perfect Christmas movie to get in a good laugh. In this movie, Buddy, played by Will Ferrell, travels across the globe from the North Pole to New York City in order to find his long lost father. Before he leaves, he finds out that Walter Hobbs (his dad) is on the naughty list! Throughout the movie, he tries to spread Christmas cheer in order to get his family back into the Christmas spirit with a variety of bizarre methods.

Along with the top five, there are many opinions of people's favorite Christmas movies. Sophomore Katie McGee says that the Santa Clause movies with Tim Allen are by far her favorite. In Santa Clause, Scott Calvin is a divorced father who magically becomes the actual Santa after one night when he saw Santa Claus on his roof. Mrs. Ryks says, "The whole Hallmark channel is my favorite". Hallmark plays a variety of Christmas movies and shows ensuring that you get into the Christmas spirit. There are many movies that could have made the top five so, what are your favorites?

Life in the walls

by Catherine Lillibridge, BP Staff Writer

Recently, *The Badger Pause* went out in search of the truth. Are there people living in the walls of Berkshire High School? Now, you may be thinking, "Living in the walls? That's preposterous! Are you actually writing about that? Do you people in journalism do anything productive?" The answer to every one of those questions is simply- yes. Personally, I am a strong believer of people living in the walls; I've even seen them crawling in the vents. If you're lucky, you can catch a glimpse of them in the purple vents in the eighth grade hallway. For senior and fellow *Badger Pause* editor, Lexi Caponi, this is all too real.

Me: Do you believe that there are people living in the walls or under the stage at Berkshire?

Lexi: "Yes, of course. Look at how much space is available. It's just like, c'mon."

Me: Have you seen the wall people?

Lexi: "I don't want to come off sounding like a conspiracy theorist but between you and me, there's pretty good evidence that there are people living in the wall."

Me: Do you think former staff members are living in these walls?

Lexi: "Not naming any names, but there could be."

Next, I went on to asking my own sister and sophomore, Grace Lillibridge, who was in the middle of learning a lesson in her English class. Unlike Lexi, she didn't give me any strong responses. When asked if she believed if there were people in the walls, she responded with a strong-worded "What?". After the question registered in her mind, it was still difficult to get the truth out of her.

Me: Do you think that kids that used to go here are just disappearing and living in the walls at Berkshire?

Grace: "That sounds right, because there's a bunch of kids I used to see around that are not here anymore"

Me: Have you seen these people living in the walls?

Grace: "Yes" *she then proceeded to whisper something inaudible* "Yes. I'm telling you exactly what you want to hear."

Me: Do you think any former staff members are living in the walls?

At this point, senior George Fekete interrupted us with his view on the current Wall People situation.

Me: Do you think that there are people living in the walls here?

George: "Can you please elaborate?"

Me: Like people living in the walls here.

George: "Yes, I think there are people in the walls, because there's lots of noises in these walls and it's just so big, you know? George leaves and I am left alone with Grace once again.

Me: Do you believe that there are former staff members living in the walls?

Grace: "Living in the wall? Yes? Yes. Of course, 100% yes."

With my interview with Grace concluded, it was time to interview some doubters. I knew for a fact that the teachers in this building were hiding something from the students of Berkshire. I hunted down Mr. List, Berkshire's world history and psychology teacher.

Me: Do you believe that people are living in the walls of Berkshire?

Mr. List: "Well, I have never seen or heard of anything that would indicate that we have anything living in the walls here at Berkshire."

Me: You don't see them crawling around in the vents?

Mr. List: "Well, again, how would explain how people could possibly living in the-"

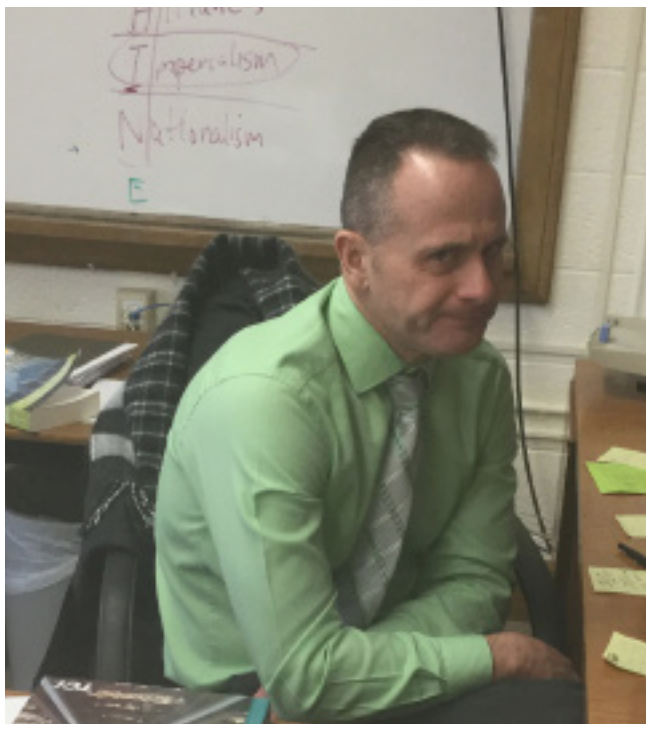
I cut him off, angrily, because we had a Doubting Thomas in this school.

Me: You know the purple vent in the eighth grade hallway?

Mr: List: "Yeah."

Me: That's how they get in.

Mr. List: "Okay. It's possible. That's possible. They could be in the boiler room, perhaps."



Mr. List ponders the existence of wall people.

Me: *now I am expert when it comes to Wall People* They can't, or people would find them. They're sensitive to light.

Mr. List: "Oh they're sensitive to light? Okay. So these people are comparable to the underground dwellers in the city streets of New York or other places, which those are true. But, uh, what would these people eat?"

Me: They eat the mice. We don't have a rodent problem.

That was the end of my discussion with Mr. List. Both he and I were getting quite agitated with each other's clashing ideas. But, in conclusion, I did convince him that there are former students and staff members living off of rats in the vents and walls of Berkshire High School.

It's been a consensus that most people of Berkshire are now skeptical that there are people living in the walls. Always keep your eyes peeled when traveling through the halls, in hopes you might catch one of these elusive creatures.

The crushing stress of college

by Alexis Caponi, BP Editor

In case the neverending pressure that your peers and family have been putting on you isn't enough, then this is your formal reminder: College is a semester and a half away. And I know college isn't for everyone, and that's fine, but if you do plan to attend college, I'd advise sticking around to hear some advice from classmates.

Probably one of the most basic, yet important things to consider first is what college you want to go to. First, some advice from senior Claire Milano: "Visit the campus… if your first impression is 'eh', don't go there… don't force it to work out." Visiting the college is a really important part of making your decision on where to apply. Sometimes the idea of a college is nice, but actually seeing a campus can really change your viewpoint.

The second step is actually applying to college. I'm sure you've heard it from everyone, but try to get through the application process as early on as you can. Senior Asya Martin says, "Don't stress out. It's not as bad as you make it out to be."

There are different ways to apply to colleges, be that directly through them or through the Common Application. If you plan to apply to more than two colleges, I'd suggest using the Common App. It allows you to fill out all your information and then turn that one form in to multiple colleges.

Scholarships are also a major part of the whole college thing. You can look online for them, like at niche.com or scholarships.com. The school has a list of scholarship opportunities too. I've been told that the LEAF lady who comes here on Tuesdays has this information. The thing about scholarships is that hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of scholarship money is left unclaimed each year. The key is applying for as many scholarships as you can.

Now that all the stressful, important business has been addressed, we can talk about less worrisome things, such as what you should get for your dorm room. If you're a coffee drinker, having a small Keurig can be a life saver if you take an early morning class. A mini fridge is also a good idea, so you can store all your midnight snacks, which you'll need for fuel when studying. Since there's not a lot of floor space in dorms, decorations will mostly be on your desk or wall. Don't forget to take some knickknacks from home to throw on your desk, or posters and tapestries for nice wall decorations. You could also hang fairy lights on your walls and put pictures up with them. You'll want to have some memories from your friends and family with you.

After speaking with some Berkshire alumni, like Megan Arnold and Alexis Johnson, I also gathered some inside intel. Both mentioned that when you get your class schedule, you should walk to each class to see how long it takes. No one wants to be seen running around like a seventh grader across campus. A lot of colleges also have bikes that you can rent out to get to classes faster. It was also advised to select your dorm according to what you find most important. If being close to your classes is important, then choose a dorm that is in the middle of your class buildings.

I know this is a stressful time, but we're all going through it together. Don't be afraid to ask for help, especially during the application process. And remember that no matter what college you plan to go to, it is a time to find yourself.

The Ghosts of Gaming Past

by Sam Martinjako, Professional Games Journalist

In the age of ultra-high-budget AAA games with graphics good enough to make one reconsider whether the "life is just a simulation" theory has some credit, sometimes you just have to go back and appreciate what gaming was like in the good old days. With fewer of us having been born in the time of the GameCube and original Xbox, people are losing the appreciation of pixels and polygons from the olden days. Sure, many people delight in newer titles that style themselves in a retro way, such as Shovel Knight and Stardew Valley, but there is always something unmistakably new about them. This isn't exactly a bad thing, as many older games tend to have more than just outdated graphics. They were clunkier back then, less refined than what we have now, laden with glitches and impossible secrets alike. It's not a bad thing that newer titles have moved away from this, but it is still important to be able to look back and appreciate older games for what they were and how they helped to change future installments in their franchises.

Nowadays it is fairly easy to get true retro experiences. Nintendo especially is very good about letting consumers play their past creations. One of the best features of the Wii and the Wii U is the "virtual console" marketplace that Nintendo installed in them. This allowed gamers to buy digital copies of classic games that could be played on your "new" console. Want to play The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time so that you get what all the fuss is about? There you go! How about the original Super Mario Bros. since you liked the newest versions so much? Bam! There it is! Want to replay that Pokeémon game that you loved so much as a child but could never find the cartridge for? Well that sucks, fam, it's not on the virtual console, but there are plenty of other ones that might catch your interest! Aside from this very nice, convenient way to get old games, you could also buy one of Nintendo's highly inconvenient but aesthetically pleasing micro consoles. You know, the NES Classic or the SNES Classic that were in stock for like five minutes. They look like the original consoles they're based on, which is pretty neat, and they hold 20 classic games. Only 20 though. No more. Granted, they are pretty great games from Mario, Kirby, Mega Man, Metroid, and other series, and it is cheaper than buying them all individually.



Released in Japan in 1996, the only way for Americans to play this classic is through emulation.

Playstation and Xbox fans can also enjoy classics in a number of ways. Of course, many older games are now getting HD remasters, so there's less of a reason to go back. That's not to say that Nintendo doesn't do that, because they do, but I digress. At any rate, one way of playing classics is to play their remakes. A fan favorite Playstation One game, Crash Bandicoot, (somewhat) recently got a remake, along with its two sequels. The game was praised for being a faithful yet improved re-release, meaning that if you own it, there's little reason to play the original versions. The game was also both praised and criticized for its classically hard difficulty, leading some journalists to even compare it to the poster-child of hard games, Dark Souls. However, in my humble opinion, there's a good possibility that the people who wrote such reviews were simply bad at the game. I don't remember the last time I saw a bandicoot praising the sun and downing estus flasks. Back on topic, remasters are a valid way to play old games even if they lack the retro aesthetics. However, if you need to play them ASAP, the Xbox 360 is cheap and can play original Xbox games and the PS3 and PS Vita together can play many PSP, PS2, and PSOne games.

But what about the games that aren't available to buy anymore? Well, there are certainly ways, my friend. First, you could buy a copy of whatever game you want second-hand, though this may get expensive. Otherwise, you can download software to your computer to emulate them. This has benefits and downsides, such as being able to play in higher resolutions at the cost of extra glitches, and also may be not the most morally correct thing to do. Sometimes though, you are left with little other choice than to download the games and an emulator. After all, what if you want to play a game that was never on sale in the first place? I was hit with this conundrum this summer when I decided I wanted to play the fourth game in the Fire Emblem series. It took me a few months to beat it, playing off and on, but it was a game that I thoroughly enjoyed. It's sad that I had no other way to obtain the game besides downloading it, but it was worth it in the end. When it comes to playing the classics, it is worth it to download the harder to obtain ones so that you can experience the glorious parts of gaming past.

If you're looking for a neat gift this Christmas for yourself or someone else who loves classic video games, try to snag a SNES Classic before they go out of stock again. It is a worthwhile, though admittedly inconvenient, method of enjoying what the good old days had to offer.

Animal Crossing Pocket Camp

by Aiden Burkley, BP Staff Writer

A new Nintendo app arises with the latest installment of the beloved game series, Animal Crossing. Fans of the series have most likely followed it since its beginning, as a video game for Nintendo's Gamecube. You play as a villager in the game with packs of talking animals settling in as your neighbors. It's the object of the game to build up the town, clean, and harvest from the environment all the while building and decorating your own home. There have been several succeeding games such as Animal Crossing: Wild World, City Folk, and New Leaf. Each game presenting new opportunities while pertaining to the same concept. Now, In their first app, you play as a villager hosting a campsite to animal visitors. It still has that nostalgic Animal Crossing vibe to it, but introduces new goals alongside the familiar faces of the characters from older games.

Luckily, it's free to play! Though, like many other games, Pocket Camp will prompt you to spend your cash on Leaf Tickets: a kind of currency in the game that's difficult to earn but allows you to purchase the rare items in it. There seems to be a lot of potential in the app provided the player has enough patience to wait building times and not try to spend so much Leaf Tickets to speed them up. It also seems that the more you wait your times, check them often, and keep building with your new earnings, your campsite will profit with time.

To host those adorable animal neighbors at your campsite you have to, of course, please them. That could mean fishing for an hour just to find the exact fish they want or waiting a couple more to build that very, very necessary end-table. All the more animals you host, the better you feel about being surrounded by your favorite animals.

In addition, there are undoubtedly plenty of more updates to come, this game brings exciting expectations that surely will be met. Anyone who enjoyed the older games will be pleased to see the holiday themed furniture and settings that you can now get for a limited time. In this festive time of year, it makes it all the more exciting to return to the Animal Crossing games to receive the event bonuses and experiences that used to be celebrated with all the older games. Also, more animals are soon to be included in the app as well as new features regarding character customization and clothing.

Having friends who also play the app serves as a benefit to you as well. The more added friends on your list, the more likely you are to earn specific prizes that are, naturally, hard to come by. The game will randomly generate a new variety of players from around the world that you can visit and choose to befriend or not. Looking at their campsites for references and tips is always helpful too!

Among my own friends list (which is actually compiled completely of strangers who had cute campsites and happened to accept my requests) is someone who helps me out repeatedly in the game, and it's only fitting that I bring her opinion of the game to light. Natalia, who is new to the series, finds the app to be, "a fun little game to pass time on. I just enjoy not being constantly stressed out when playing something. And let's be honest, it's pretty cute." Her favorite parts include, "being bullied by my supposed 'friends' for not making them a couch. But really, overall, I mostly enjoy decorating everything in the way I want it to look." Natalia is able to show her own sense of creativity through the decorative options in the game and can display it for others to see. The app has a large assortment of furniture and options to perfectly let your personality show through.

So, the loveable nature of Animal Crossing successfully returns without the need to buy those pricey Nintendo consoles. There are a multitude of aspects of this game that are entirely new to Animal Crossing, while there are plenty of nostalgic aspects that will certainly please fans to see. You can download the game and easily see for yourself, whether you're new to the series or not!

The Debate on Thursdays: Are they going?

by Elizabeth Ward, BP Staff Writer

Imagine this: You wake up on a normal day, feeling groggy and not wanting to deal with school. Then you realize that it's Thursday, which means early dismissals, but you get an email from the school saying they have canceled Thursday schedule and have changed it back to the normal school schedule. What do you do?

The school has recently been thinking about canceling early release all together, instead giving us more off days, such as "teacher conferences". There was a survey emailed to all the parents to see if they agree with early release or if they believe it is not necessary.

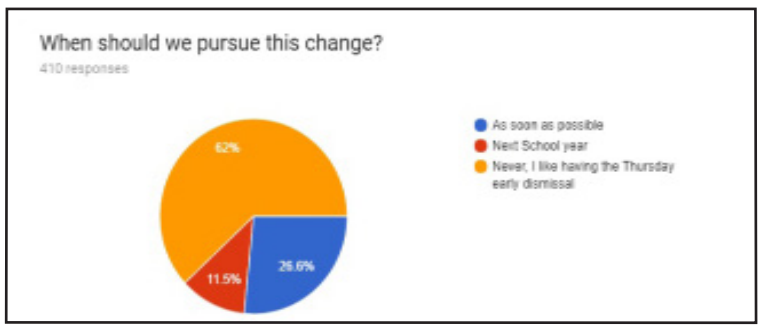
Deanna Ward, mother of two Berkshire High School students, was given this survey. She explains that, "It gives the students something to look forward to during a long school week." She describes how she also sees the other side of the argument: "I also understand some parents may not have adequate care for their children for that time." She sees how taking away the Thursday schedule would make students more unmotivated to go to school. She also sees that by taking away early release, it would give the parents a little more time to take care of their children.

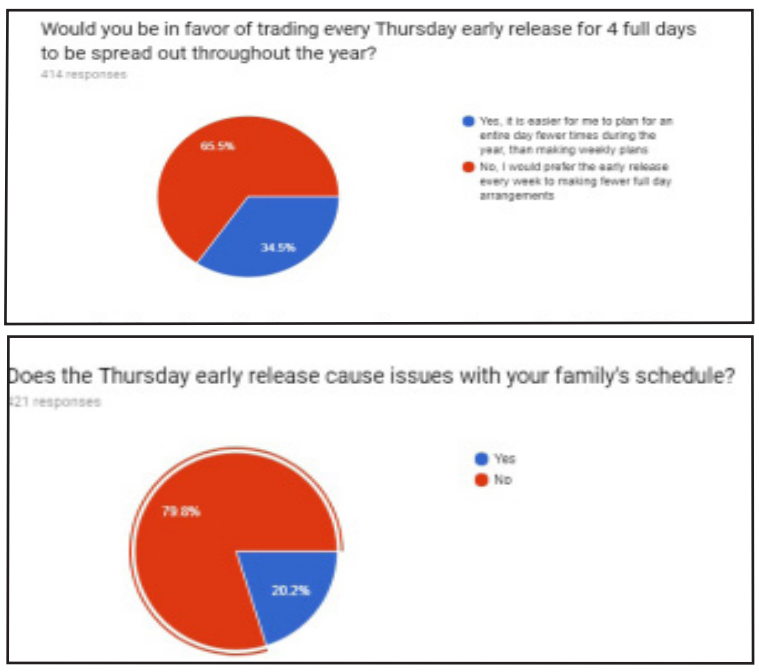
Kids can get overworked sometimes and need breaks. They can be piled up with work and have little time to finish it, especially if they have after-school activities or chores at home. If the school takes away the Thursday schedule, they would be taking away that extra hour or two to do their homework. Having those extra off-days, however, could could give students more time as well to finish homework and make those deadlines.

Taking away early dismissal could potentially lead to kids grades dropping, with them having less time to do homework. Early dismissal lets the students mind take a break for an extra hour. It gives them time to focus on their mental health and physical health, which is important to do.

If the school were to take away early release, students would feel overwhelmed with all the work they are presented with, in addition to having less time to finish that work.Getting rid of the Thursday schedule can inconvenience teachers as well. Early release let's teachers grade papers faster and get work done quicker. It also allows the teachers to grade papers more efficiently, and allow them more time to focus on other activities in their personal lives. Not having that extra time would lead to them having more stress and less time to focus on their personal lives, or on their other work.

The survey left us with one question, are they taking away the Thursday schedule, or are they going to keep it the same? John Stoddard, Superintendent of Berkshire Local Schools, reaches out to clear the fog. Stoddard describes that the reason he made the survey was because, "early release was one of the first topics that people [he] talked to wanted to know about." He adds that since coming in new, he didn't know how many people actually supported the Thursday schedule.Stoddard describes that he didn't have any expectations for the survey, just to get an understanding of the parents view of early release. Stoddard then gives the results from the survey. He states that, "80% of the parents surveyed stated that they supported the use of the early release time". In the end, the decision is to continue with the Thursday schedule.





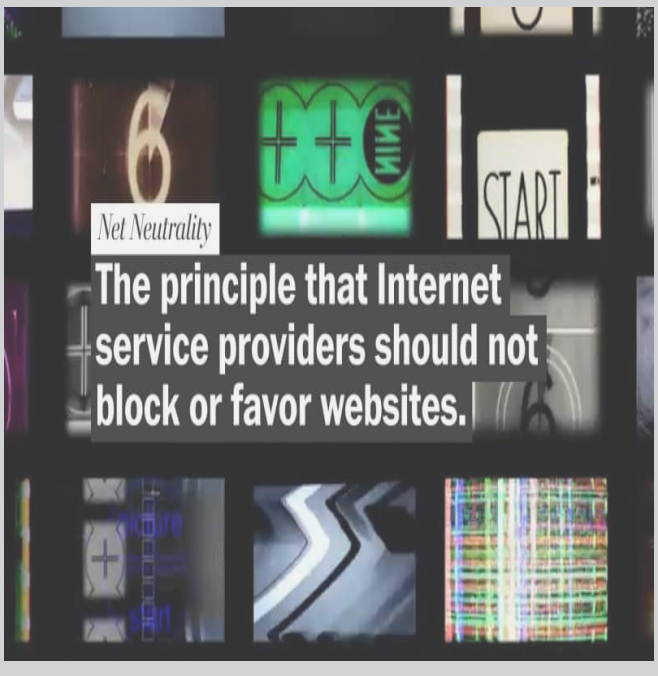
Neutralizing info about net neutrality

by Nick Misconin, BP Staff Writer

If you have taken a look at current events on the web, you will probably notice an important topic being discussed by many news outlets. Net neutrality may not seem like a big deal at first, but it could very well determine the fate of the internet itself. To put it simply, right now we pay a monthly amount for a set internet speed that lets us browse the web. This allows us to freely look up any site, information, or entertainment we want (legally, of course). The proposed change to the internet will shake this up completely.

What happened December 14, under Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman Ajit Pai, is that we will have to pay for access to services, websites, and apps, on top of our current internet fees. Yes; you heard me correctly; we have to pay extra for something that is currently free. This means that in order to use YouTube you would have to buy a package that carries a $4.99 monthly charge. Wanna use Netflix and Hulu? That'll be another $6.99. Social media like Instagram and Snapchat? $5.99 please and thank you.

With this transformation, companies such as Verizon and Comcast will make even bigger profits than they do now. Coincidentally, Ajit Pai was a former attorney for Verizon. Sounds sketchy doesn't it? That's because it is extremely sketchy. The Federal Communications Commission put out proof of support for the change with millions of emails. This proof however, was found to be fake. In reality, around 98.5% of messages sent to the FCC and Pai were against the proposed change, and in support of net neutrality. This means that not only is the FCC going against the majority of those that contacted them, but is also using fake information to justify their controversial actions.



Not only will it harm us web surfers, but it will also heavily affect smaller businesses and start-ups. This is because the internet will be in the hands of the corporations that can dictate what we can and cannot do. A small business will not be able to afford to have their website to be seen across the net.

Sophomore Caden Neumore states, "You should have the right to use any service that you want to use without paying extra". What Neumore means is that in order to use certain websites, we the customers would have to buy the packages provided by the internet providers,which is currently similar to how cable television works. The proposed "fast lanes" and "slow lanes" would also be the result of having Net Neutrality eliminated. Different websites like Netflix or YouTube could have priority in these fast lanes or slow lanes depending on the Internet Service Provider (ISP) package provided to the customer. If you buy said package, the website could operate faster than someone who doesn't pay for the package. This limits the customer's freedom, as having to relinquish their money to have his/her favorite website work correctly.

Luckily, tech giants such as Amazon, Google, Facebook, etc. are in support of keeping the Internet operating the way they are now. Just recently, another scandal was leaked that stated that around 1.3 million comments were faked. However, these fake comments use names of real people, alive and deceased. Sophomore Caleb Clem states "I'm for keeping Net Neutrality. The only benefit of getting rid of Net Neutrality would be for companies such as Netflix, because it would get rid of third party websites." Clem brings up how the big corporations would benefit from this change, but smaller businesses would have a hard time keeping up. Larger companies could be prioritized by paying ISPs more money. This would give them an unfair advantage over smaller, Mom and Pop type businesses because they would have to pay the ISPs large sums of money in order to stay online. All we can hope for now is a potential overturning of the proposed change on Net Neutrality, and if that doesn't happen then we'll just have to wait and see.

Withstanding winter

by Heather Papp, BP Staff Writer

In northeast Ohio, winter can get pretty crazy. One day it's sunny, the next it's gray and rainy, and the day after that there might be a blizzard. Whatever the weather seems to be, the days in December to May are usually pretty cold. Don't be discouraged, there are many ways to stay warm, even in the harsh winter of Burton.

One way to stay warm is to heat up your insides. You need to put hot foods and drinks in your system. Since the mouth is one of the most sensitive parts of the body, your brain tricks your body. Your brain knows the foods will be hot, so it releases signals to warm your body up when you eat or drink something hot. Ramen noodle soup is junior Shaelin DeLong's favorite hot food to eat because it's easy to afford and can be ready in less than five minutes. Drinking hot chocolate and coffee are also efficient ways to heat your body, and a favorite body-heating method of many students at Berkshire High School. There are many different ways to drink your hot chocolate or coffee. Hot drinks can be topped with whipped cream, marshmallows, or cinnamon. You can also get flavor-infused drinks if you don't want to go the extra mile to put additional ingredients on top of your hot drinks. One last method of heating your body from the inside out is to make cookies. Making cookies for the holidays is festive and fun, and if you put them in the microwave, they can be just as warm as your heart during the holiday season. Consuming warm foods and drinks can be an easy way to maintain heat inside your body.

There are plenty of ways to heat the outside of your body too. Sitting by a fireplace with your loved ones is a nice and happy way to keep cozy. Sophomore Tressa Urban says one of her favorite ways to warm herself up is to "sit in front of a heater and wear [her] favorite sweater." You can also cuddle with your dog or cat, or turtle if you really want to. If you're cold and there isn't a fireplace or any pets nearby, you can layer yourself with fuzzy clothes such as sweaters and socks. If you will be in the harsh outdoor weather, you can wear a jacket, gloves, a hat, a scarf, and earmuffs. You might get complimented if your fuzzy



George Fekete shows off his winter layers

articles of clothing are holiday themed. Sarah Conklin, a senior who plans on going to college for fashion, recommends layering to keep yourself cozy and fashionable. Conklin's "Dos" for layering include wearing shirts under sweaters, while her "Don'ts" consist of not having too many thick layers, so you won't look bulky. Conklin also adds, "accessories make or break outfits.

I like chunky necklaces and also layering bracelets." When asked what he does to stay warm, senior George Fekete boasts, "I'm gay, it keeps my blood warm. It's just in my DNA." You can also try turning the heat up to the maximum setting and layering multiple blankets on your body. When asked what he does when he gets cold, sophomore class president Tim Smith replies, "I don't get cold easily, but when I do, I get a blanket." Or, if you're into more interesting things, you could try a heated blanket. Junior Forrest Kuchling takes a hot shower when he is cold, but there are many other ways to avoid hypothermia this winter, so do what you think helps most keep you warm and comfortable in this cold season.

Whether you want to warm up your insides or outsides, there are many ways you can do so. Although hot chocolate and blankets are a favorite of Berkshire students. However you choose to stay warm this winter, it can be very easy to do.

Winter paintball: A mistake

by Claire Milano, BP Staff Editor

If you've played paintball before, you would understand the pain that comes hand in hand with it. If you're like me, you'd never experienced it before November 26. So, you think going at the end of fall/beginning of winter is a good idea, and part of your soul died when you realized that horrible mistake halfway through the first round.

Since it was 32 degrees outside, one was required to wear multiple layers. However, that extra padding did nothing to protect me from the excruciating pain of getting shot in the face by a paintball. TWICE… BY TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. So, this is going to be an explanation of why you should never take part in an initially painful activity during cold weather.

When the internal human body temperature starts to lower and match the external temperature of the surrounding area, your hypothalamus starts working. The natural internal human body temperature is 98.6 degrees fahrenheit. When your body temperature starts to get lower, this region in the brain, below the thalamus that coordinates the autonomic nervous system and maintains body heat, comes into play. You start to shiver; your muscles contract and the blood in your capillaries in the skin gets squeezed back into your body. Hence, chapped hands and exposed skin become the new you. So, when your skin is super sensitive and dry, having a plastic ball filled with an oobleck-like substance hit your skin feels pretty great (as you can imagine).

The average paintball can shoot 280 fps (feet per second), or 190 mph, with a full compressed-air tank. This is because of safety reasons. Normally, a paintball travelling at this speed can burst on contact and cause none or little bruises. At 30 degrees fahrenheit, the paintball plastic and paint or more rigid. Thus, when coming into contact with the skin, the paintball can shatter and dig into skin, causing severe welts and even the breakage of skin. Senior Lexi Caponi, who aspires to be a neurologist, adds her perspective on the subject: "The nerves in your body get more sensitive when it's cold outside because your veins constrict and blood runs less to your extremities and more to your internal organs. As a result, your skin is more rigid and so impact with a hardened object is more painful compared to when your skin has more blood flow and therefore is less sensitive." So, if you are ever faced with the possibility of going paintballing in 30 degree weather, take this newfound evidence and advice to make the right decision. Stay inside, drink hot cocoa, and laugh internally (and externally) at the stupidity of those who chose to partake in this painful event.



Claire Milano and the Congin's crew go paintballing.