



The Silhouette



September 6, 2022 | August Edition

In This Month's Edition...

1. Back to School

- Dear Class of 2023 (Cassidy McNew)
- My Trip to Paris (Kendall Deshong)
- Voice of Democracy Scholarship Contest (Sydney Christner)
- People You Meet On Vacation, Volume II (Jennie Brady)

2. Pop Culture

- Three Names, One Meaning, Vecna and His Significance (Aurora Contreras-Piñera)
- Music in Movies & TV (Alessandra Inners)

3. Science

- What's Up with the James Webb Telescope? (Kaitlyn Frey)
- Why Has It Been So Hot? (Kaitlyn Frey)

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Back to School

Dear Class of 2023

Cassidy McNew

Dear Class of 2023,

It is said that we spend 1,460 days in school, but only 740 of those are spent in high school. Since the first day of kindergarten, the idea of graduating seemed far-fetched and so far away. We asked why '23' was the first two numbers of our ID number. Yet when told that it is the year that we graduate, we all just scoffed in disbelief at the fact that it was a whole twelve years away. It almost seemed unachievable, but I am proud to say that we all are just one step closer to achieving the impossible dream of that small little kindergartener twelve years ago.

Myself and a few other classmates had the privilege of being freshman mentors this year. While we stood in the boiling auditorium, Dr. Bowman gave the same speech as he did four years ago. As I looked out at the group of freshmen before me, I couldn't help but feel a bit nostalgic. We sat in those seats, and we knew exactly what they were feeling. It is so crazy and mind boggling to think how fast four years can really fly by. When Dr. Bowman was talking to us about how highschool would fly by and how we should make our high school experience what we want it to be, I don't think that many of us, if any of us, believed him. Four years is a long time, and when we were freshmen I bet we all were just itching to get out and be done with school. I mean, we already had eight years under our belts at that time, so why do we need to sit through four more? Eventually that number dwindled down from four, to three, to two, and finally to one. We are living that last one now, so why not make it the best year that we have had?

I think it is safe to say that when told to make it our 'best year yet', it isn't that impossible to do. Since we barely had a decent high school experience, we have little to build upon or compare it to. Our freshman year was cut short, sophomore year took place online half the time and we lost our taco and pasta bar, and just last year we constantly went back and forth with the masking policy, but at least we got the taco and pasta bar back.

So how are we supposed to make it our best year yet, when none of the previous three years had any redeeming qualities to beat out senior year for that top spot? I say that is the exact reason why this will be our best year. We are coming back from probably the worst three years of our lives, and have one final chance to make high school really ours. So go to homecoming, prom, any other school events, and we better take the spirit stick at some point. In short, this is it. We have one final year to make this our year. So do what you must so that when graduation comes, we don't sit and think of the 'what ifs.' Instead we think of what we've done. So go out there and make it yours. Ultimately, this year comes down to what you make of it for yourself.

My Trip to Paris

Kendall Deshong

This summer, I traveled with a group of students and teachers to France. We spent the majority of our time in the city of Paris, but we also went to Versailles and Giverny. The transportation we used was a large coach bus that traveled on the small narrow streets. We also used two different metros that took our group to our hotel. Personally, I did not prefer either of these transportation options because when I was not stressing about whether or not the coach was actually going to fit on the roads, I was worrying about not getting shut behind the automatic doors when getting on and off of the metro. Our trip was structured in a way where we spent around fifty percent of our time with the entire group and the other half was free time where we were able to explore the different towns and cities on our own. During our trip we visited many monuments, parks, and gardens. We were able to climb and view monuments like the Eiffel Tour, Sacre Coeur, and the Arc de Triomphe. As well as walk through museums like the Louvre, Musee d'Orsay, Victor Hugo and Claude Monet's homes. I walked through Marie Antoinette's gardens at the Palace of Versailles and was able to see beautiful statues, fountains, and greenery.

We went to many more places while we had our week in France but I think these were the most memorable to me. Besides the different locations we saw in France there was also a very different feeling while being in the cities and towns.

The most interesting and challenging part was having to be a lot more self aware. Pickpockets and scammers are a very big problem throughout Europe, especially in Paris. This created a lot of stress for me because I'm not used to having to hold on to my belongings so tightly. Also, having to watch for people on the streets, to make sure no one would steal anything from me, scared me. I sometimes even caught myself not really enjoying certain places because of how scared I was. It was just something extremely new for me that I was definitely not used to. People probably did not have the same reaction that I did while we were there. Overall I think if I had the opportunity to go again or if I was recommending someone else to go on a trip to France or any other European country, I would say to go. But also be aware of your surroundings and try to adjust the best you can because it is definitely very different from our little town of New Oxford.



Voice of Democracy Scholarship Contest

Sydney Christner

For many of us high school students, contest and scholarship opportunities are intriguing as we look to build our resumes and prepare for what comes after we graduate. I understand that countless options makes the search for worthwhile scholarship contests a bit overwhelming. As we approach the peak time of reopening for many annual contests, now is the time to look into the variety of opportunities. If you are searching for one of these opportunities, I highly recommend looking into the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy speech competition.

For this competition, students in 9th-12th grade are to write a 3-5 minute speech providing a well-developed answer to a topic surrounding American patriotism. Topics encourage students to explore their opinions and dive deep into the meaning of being an American citizen. This year's topic is: "Why is the veteran important?" After crafting your speech, you must record a reading of your speech and submit the audio for judging by October 31. The judging starts at the post level in which veterans at our local post (VFW Post 8896 East Berlin) will judge entries from New Oxford High School and another local high school based on three categories: originality, content, and delivery. Winners at the post level will move onto districts, district winners to states, and eventually state winners to nationals. Each level has its own monetary scholarships that are handed out based on your placing, the biggest one being \$30,000 given to the first place winner at nationals. Along with scholarships are opportunities to meet new people, travel, and be recognized for your skills in writing and speaking.

Personally, I was given the privilege and honor to compete at all levels of this competition last year, as I was chosen to represent Pennsylvania at the national level. I can say first-hand that by participating in VOD I have had unique experiences that allowed me to create life-long friendships with people from around the country (even the world), taught me to express my voice as a young American citizen, and further developed my writing and speaking skills. Now, I am a member of the Post 8896 Auxiliary and serve as the assistant to the youth events coordinator, in which my role is to promote VOD for the amazing contest that it is. I encourage everyone to consider entering this competition. Don't miss the opportunity to show off your skills and earn scholarships!

For more information on the contest and the entry form:

<https://vfworgcdn.azureedge.net/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Community/Youth-and-Education/Voice-of-Democracy-Entry-Form-Fillable.pdf?v=1&d=20220408T154506Z&la=en>

People You Meet On Vacation, Volume II

Jennie Brady

Every summer, my family prepares for a week-long road trip throughout multiple states. This year, we visited the southwestern part of the country. Despite being very different (culturally and geographically) from Pennsylvania, there was no shortage of good people. This trip, once again, reminded me that kind and awesome people exist everywhere.

Traveling the way my family does allows me to meet many people who found the job they are meant to do. While in Seligman, AZ, we went to Delgadillo's Snow Cap Drive-In, which is home to amazing milkshakes and a cast of workers that are sure to make you laugh. They were quick with jokes during the entirety of our visit. An environment was created that left us laughing as we went to sit outside. A couple days later, we were at the visitor center of Winslow, AZ, where we got to talk to a highly knowledgeable worker about the history of Harvey Houses, as Winslow has the only one left that's still used as a hotel. We were also told about Fremont Street, the original Las Vegas Strip, which we ended up visiting a couple days later. Both of these interactions were incredibly positive because the workers liked what they were doing.

At Zion National Park, we had to take two shuttles to get out of the park and get back to our car. On the second shuttle, the driver made it very clear that the shuttle was going out of Zion. Despite this, a family had to get off at the first stop and take a shuttle back to the park. Right behind us, a father started quoting *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*, a movie my family watches together every year. This led to us, and the other family, quoting the movie and talking briefly. Hearing a stranger, in a different state, quote a movie I love reminded me how small the world really is. We all tend to lose sight of what we all share. Traveling brings me back to the reality that we all have shared interests, no matter where we are.

In the middle of our trip, we stayed in a smaller town in Utah. We ended up driving about 20 minutes away for dinner and experienced one of the funniest restaurant experiences. Very shortly after arriving, while waiting to be seated, we saw the host come to the waiting area. This seemed like a regular dining experience, until we quickly realized our host was about 10-12 years old. From the moment he seated us to the very end of our experience, we could not stop laughing. He told us to create a "choo choo train" to pass our silverware down and told us our waitress' name and that "she's a cutie." Later, he came back and pretended to be scared by us and my mom apologized for being scary, going along with the bit. What he said next had my family laughing for minutes. He said "no you're not scary, but they are" and looked, while pointing, right at me and my dad. The last time he walked back by our table he said they kicked him out. Not only did we get a great dinner, we got a show too. A random restaurant choice turned into one of the funniest experiences my family has ever had.

One night, near the end of our trip, we were watching *Shark Tank* in our hotel room when an episode about a restaurant called Fat Shack came on. We were watching, mildly in horror, as sandwiches were made with chicken tenders, mac and cheese bites, mozzarella sticks, etc. Basically their gimmick is combining a bunch of appetizers on top of a cheesesteak base. I was horrified watching this, but my family ended up finding a Fat Shack in Las Vegas, where we would travel days later. What I didn't know then was that this decision was going to bear one of the most incredible interactions I have ever had. We were practically the only customers in the restaurant when we went, which allowed my father to ask as many questions as he wanted. This got us into a long conversation with one

People You Meet On Vacation, Volume II (*continued*)

Jennie Brady

of the managers, Les, whose brother owns the restaurant. We talked about Fat Shack details and the time school was closed for four days because of snow flurries that didn't even stick to the ground. We talked and laughed almost the entire time our food was being made. Once we got our food, Les brought over all of their sauces for us to try. Later, Les came over and sat down to ask us how we liked the food and if we had any critiques. Being completely truthful, my whole family said there was nothing we could think of that needed improving, as we just had the most hospitable dining experience. My family left this restaurant completely blown away by what happened. Articulating this interaction is difficult, as Les has a personality that is difficult to describe. My brother kept saying that Les reminded him of someone, but it could've just been how warm and inviting Les was, making us feel like we knew him.

Les told us that Fat Shack prides themselves on creating a family environment between their workers. He demonstrates this perfectly with his warm and inviting presence that translates to their customers. Exploring new places always leads to completely unexpected interactions and Les from Fat Shack demonstrated the exact reason that I love traveling to new places.

A huge reason for my love of travel is the people I get to meet. There's always many kind and interesting people to interact with. The stories I just shared, among many others, are ones my family will share and talk about forever. This is exactly what makes traveling so special.



Pop Culture

Three Names, One Meaning, Vecna and His Significance

Aurora Contreras-Piñera

I, like many others around the world, anxiously waited for more than two years for the penultimate season of the acclaimed Netflix original series, *Stranger Things*. I do not know what other dedicated fans of the show did for those long and grueling years, but I... I cried about Alexie's unwarranted death from season 3 for probably the hundredth time; but more importantly, I was coming up with several theories on what beast or creature would attempt to terminate the people of Hawkins this time around. However, strangely enough (Ha! See what I did there?) the adversary in this season is nothing like a Demogorgon, Demodog, or Mind Flayer... in fact, this antagonist makes every other monster we have seen in the series seem like a cute puppy. While other seasons of the show followed a "slow burn" story line, the Duffer Brothers did not hesitate to terrorize viewers right off the bat in episode one with the blood-curling introduction to Vecna. With the same telekinetic abilities and inter-dimensional manipulation, Vecna is the true antithesis of our beloved main protagonist, Eleven. But why does his presence in these nine episodes make the season ten times more terrifying than anything else we have seen?

The key to answering this question is understanding that Vecna's motives are much more symbolic than that of the Demogorgon or even the Mind Flayer. From a young age, Henry Creel felt like he was being restrained from reaching his true potential as a supernatural entity because humanity had limited their minds to only accepting ideas or concepts that conformed to the boundaries of their own existence.

As a result of all this repression, Henry slowly became mankind's worst enemy, classifying himself as a "predator," but he is so much more than that. He is not a mindless killer, he specifically targets his victims and terrorizes them with their worst memories in their final moments of life. But I think the real reason why Vecna is so... different is because we, as the audience, can relate to him. You might be thinking, "Wait, what? You are crazy Aurora, how can we relate to a deformed, charred villain that doesn't even believe in time?" Just think about it, Vecna is trying to accomplish great things, sure some of those things include wiping out humanity, BUT nonetheless, he is ambitious. Taking multiple AP classes, making the varsity team, becoming the president of a club, being first chair in orchestra, all these things that we all might be experiencing are ambitious endeavors in a high school setting. However, what Vecna fails to acknowledge is that Eleven is just as, or even more ambitious than him. She must simultaneously defeat an enemy that is essentially more powerful than she is, save the whole world for the fourth time, and survive high school.

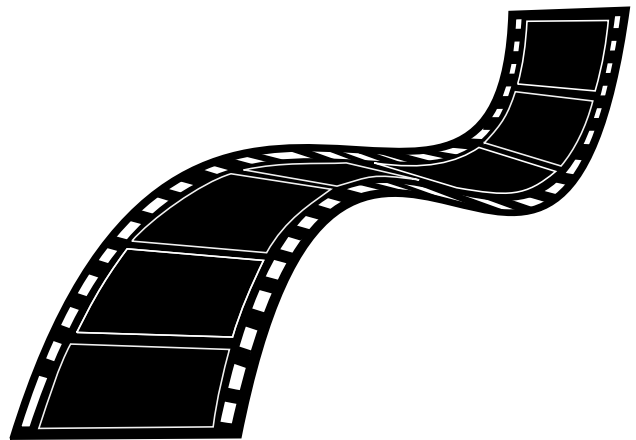
Unfortunately though, we are left with a bitter ending to season four; the image of the Upside Down pouring into Hawkins, and with another two years until season five is released, what are we supposed to do? I propose that we be ambitious individuals, let's reach for goals that may seem impossible, and strive to become the superhero that we are all destined to be.

Music in Movies & Shows

Alessandra Inners

With the recent release of *Stranger Things* Season 4, the song "Running Up That Hill" by Kate Bush has come back to life since its initial release in the '80s. Additionally, Metallica's song "Master of Puppets" has increased in popularity since it was used in an emotional scene during this season. The comeback of these songs made me think of some other great songs in movies and shows that are intertwined with emotional and powerful scenes. Below are some of those songs and their respective movie or show recommended by me and other students:

- "Extrait" by Canned Heat, *Napoleon Dynamite*
- "Don't You (Forget About Me)" by Simple Minds, *The Breakfast Club*
- "Tiny Dancer" by Elton John, *The Office*
- "How to Save a Life" by The Fray, *Grey's Anatomy*
- "Danger Zone" by Kenny Loggins, *Top Gun*
- "Fortunate Son" by Creedence Clearwater Revival, *Forrest Gump*
- "Dancing in the Dark" by Rihanna, *Home*



Science

What's Up with the James Webb Telescope?

Kaitlyn Frey



NASA

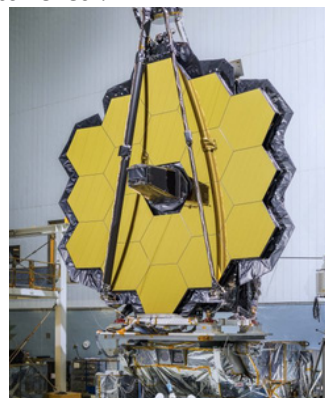
In early July, a newly released group of space photos began to trend on social media. While the high-definition images of stars look amazing, their hype stems from a much larger impact.

After nearly 20 years and over \$10 billion, the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) finally launched into space in December 2021. Equipped with gold-coated hexagonal mirrors, and over 250,000 microshutters, the revolutionary telescope collects six times more light than Hubble.

One major goal of the mission is to study the properties of exoplanets. Exoplanets are essentially planets that orbit other stars. Scientists have currently identified more than 4,000 exoplanets, and the JWST now allows them to observe the atmospheres of these planets and possibly identify gasses associated with life. This opens up a realm of possibilities through which to discover habitability beyond Earth.

The JWST can also capture images of the past. To understand this, first recall that the farther away an object lies, the longer it takes for its light to reach us. Therefore, when looking at distant objects—like galaxies, planets, or even the sunlight— we are looking at what they looked like in the past. The JWST is able to capture resolute images of distant galaxies aging up to 13.5 billion years old! With this advanced technology, scientists can better understand the origin of our universe.

So, now when you see those crazy images from NASA, get excited for future JWST discoveries, as well as the past that the JWST promises to reveal!



NASA/Chris Gunn

Why Has It Been So Hot?

Kaitlyn Frey

If you didn't already notice, this past summer has been extremely hot. This continues a trend of rising temperatures over the past five years. The average summer temperature in the United States during this period has increased 1.7 degrees compared to the average summer temperature from 1971 to 2000— a significant increase in a short period of time.

These extreme temperatures pose great threats to society, as we are faced with more droughts, wildfires, severe storms, flooding, and heat waves. Additionally, hot weather strains the nation's electric grid, threatening power outages all over the country.

The cause of these extreme temperatures is the shifting wind patterns and change in weather systems that make heat waves more frequent and intense. In particular, one major cause of heat waves is the presence of heat domes. As the temperature of the oceans increases, large areas of heat become trapped above their waters. Wind then moves this mass of hot air and it becomes trapped on the land, sinking to produce heat waves. Heat waves take a major toll on human health, evidenced by the near 200 deaths from a heat wave last year in Washington and Oregon.

In addition, "urban heat island effect" plays a major role in the extreme temperatures. The asphalt of cities absorbs drastic amounts of heat, causing a hot climate to be even hotter.

In the face of rising temperatures, scientists continue to explore solutions to this growing problem. One solution is more plants, especially trees, to help fight urban heat island effect through both evaporative cooling and increased shade. Cities can also emphasize green infrastructure systems and policies, such as reflective or white roofs, and encourage residents and business owners to use energy efficient equipment and appliances in their homes and businesses.

As global warming continues, we are only going to feel its effects more greatly. The environment is one thing we all share, so it is important to stay informed about current environmental issues so we can each do our part to combat this growing issue.

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