Tiger Prints

January 2024

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Vol. 2

Oh Christmas Tree!

by: Isra

The first snowfall, the first cup of hot cocoa, the fireplace, and the ornaments on the Christmas tree are always a big part of the holiday season for many families in America. But when you go to a farm and cut down a tree, do you think of the millions of people doing the same thing? Do you think about how that might be affecting the environment? No, I don't think you do. But now I think it's time we think about it and how we can still have that holiday thrill without the toll on the environment.



How do they affect the environment?

Can you believe that 33-36 million trees are cut down yearly for Christmastime? Real Christmas trees have an average carbon footprint of 3.5 kilograms of carbon dioxide if disposed of via a wood chipper or bonfire. However, if they end up in landfills, the carbon footprint increases four times, equivalent to 16 kg of carbon dioxide per tree.

Are real Christmas Trees better than fake ones?

Although fake trees release a massive amount of carbon through the manufacturing process, they last years longer than real trees. I have had a fake tree for eight years now. Real trees are better for the environment. However, when the average Christmas tree is cut, it releases 4 kgs of carbon dioxide. But the fake Christmas tree create 30 kgs of carbon dioxide. So if you have a fake tree for seven years or more, it will be much less detrimental to the environment.

Do more people buy fake or real trees?

For decades, people have been buying and cutting down real trees. But in 2023, 77% of Americans opt for an artificial tree. This can cause plenty of damage. So next holiday season, what do you choose? Artificial trees or real trees?

Dreamer of Justice: Martin Luther King Jr.

by: Emma



Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, to a family of Baptist ministers. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1948 and received his doctorate in theology from Boston University in 1955. He married Coretta Scott in 1953. They had four children together: Yolanda King, Martin Luther King III, Dexter King, and Bernice King.

King was a notable leader of the civil rights movement in the United States, which sought to eradicate racial discrimination and segregation. King adhered to Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence. He organized and led many protests, like the Montgomery bus boycott, the Birmingham campaign, and the March on Washington. He delivered many powerful speeches, such as "I Have a Dream," "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and "I've Been to the Mountaintop."

King also spoke out against poverty, war, and injustice. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his nonviolent campaign against racism. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, by James Earl Ray. Today, he is honored with a national holiday, a memorial in Washington, D.C., and numerous awards and monuments. MLK Day is observed on the third Monday of January each year. His legacy continues to inspire millions of people to strive for a more peaceful society.

January 2024

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Tiger Prints

Vol. 2

Setting Goals for the New Year: Understanding Resolutions

by: Samantha

"New year, new me!" That is what everyone tells themselves when the new year sets in, but how often does that happen? Well, studies show that only 9% of those who set New Year's resolutions complete them. Additionally, 43% of people quit their resolutions by the end of January! So, in this article, we will explore some of the most common mistakes people make when setting resolutions and strategies to keep up with them.

When setting resolutions, the most common mistake is overestimating yourself. You may make resolutions to accomplish activities you don't often or never do. Attempting to finish resolutions with little to no experience can cause you to worry daily. To illustrate, let's say you set a resolution saying you will run on your treadmill for 30 minutes daily to improve yourself. That's great, but have you ever run before besides racing your friends to the lunch line? If the answer is no, then maybe set a more realistic goal- since the average mile time for a middle schooler is around 8 minutes, you would be attempting to run over 3 miles when you have no prior experience running long distances. Then you quit, realizing that this resolution is not achievable at all. This scenario may seem like a far reach, but this is why 1 out of 5 people quit their resolution after the first week.

While there are numerous and enjoyable ways to keep your resolutions, there are a few that stand out. One strategy to help you through the year is visualizing your year in quarters. Let's rewind back to the running resolution from earlier; you want to work your way up. So, in January through March, you could try to run for 8 minutes, and in April through June, you could run for 15 minutes. The idea of this method is to work your way up until you attain your goal. Another quick and easy way to keep up with your resolutions is to tell your friends and family. Telling someone close to you what you are looking to achieve in the new year creates more motivation and gives you someone to hold you accountable. Finally, keeping track of your resolutions can help you complete them more successfully. This can mean in a journal, an app, or the back of your math notebook. Periodically check in with yourself and monitor your progress. Try to celebrate the small victories so that you can eventually celebrate a big one. New Year's resolutions can be hard to stick with, but with these strategies, you will be ready to conquer them!

What to Expect in 2024: A Year of Change and Challenge

by: Emma

The US presidential election: President Joe Biden will face his predecessor Donald Trump, who is seeking a second, nonconsecutive term. This will be the first presidential rematch since 1956 and the first one after the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Summer Olympics and Paralympics: Paris will host the Summer Olympics and Paralympics for the third time, featuring new sports such as breakdancing, skateboarding, surfing, and sport climbing. The Olympic Games will run from July 26 to August 11, 2024, followed by the Paralympic Games from August 28 to September 8, 2024.

The asteroid flyby: A near-Earth asteroid named 99942 Apophis will pass by the Earth at a distance of about 31,000 kilometers, closer than some of the artificial satellites. The asteroid, about 370 meters in diameter, will provide a rare opportunity for scientists to study its features and orbit.

Solar eclipse: A total solar eclipse will occur on April 8, 2024, visible from parts of North and South America. The path of totality will cross cities such as Dallas, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Montreal. The eclipse will last for about four minutes and 28 seconds at its maximum point and will be the first to cross the US from coast to coast since 1918, 106 years ago.

The leap second: A leap second will be added to the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) on December 31, 2024, meaning that the last minute of the year will have 61 seconds. The reason for this adjustment is to keep the UTC in sync with the Earth's rotation, which is gradually slowing down.

These are just some of the highlights of what 2024 has in store for us. Of course, there will be more surprises and challenges throughout the year, and we'll have to be ready for them.

January 2024

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Tiger Prints

Vol. 2

Winter Holidays Around the World

by: Lily



You're tucked in bed anticipating the sound of Santa's reindeer sleighing up your roof to deliver gifts. The two most common ways Americans celebrate Christmas, among many others, are by laying gifts under the ornament-adorned tree and hanging stockings over the fireplace. But where did these traditions originate, and how are they observed globally?

Embark on a worldwide journey to discover how three distinct countries observe the winter holidays!

Iceland: According to old legends, the Thirteen Yule Lads are the Icelandic version of Santa Claus. They are the children of Gryla, the fearsome ogress who eats any naughty child. Their pet cat, Jólakötturinn (also spelled Jólaköttur), will also eat anyone without new clothes by Christmas. Because of this, families in Iceland give each other warm clothes to ensure no one gets eaten. Thirteen days before Christmas, the Yule Lads will visit towns to scout out naughty children. On Christmas Eve, children will leave shoes at the foot of their bed in hopes of getting presents if they were good during the year. By morning, naughty children will discover a rotting potato in their sneakers!

Japan: Since it's so difficult to find a turkey in Japan for a special Christmas meal, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) took advantage of the situation in 1974 to promote its brand. Every holiday season, about 3.6 million people eat chicken from KFC for Christmas yearly. In addition, the country also celebrates January 1st as Shōgatsu or Oshōgatsu, the Japanese New Year. This holiday used to occur on the first day of the lunar calendar but changed once Japan switched to the Gregorian Calendar in 1873.

Italy: January 6th is the Christian holiday commemorating the Three Wise Men's visit to newborn Jesus. Legend has it that on this day, a witch named La Befana makes house calls with children. The story goes that La Befana was sweeping the floor for her job as a housekeeper when she saw the star marking baby Jesus' birthplace. The Three Wise Men visited her shortly after and asked for directions to the stable in Bethlehem, where Jesus had just been born. They offered for her to join them, but La Befana didn't want to leave her work unfinished. Later, she reconsidered and ran after the Wise Men with a basket of small gifts for the blessed child and her broom. To this day, La Befana has yet to find them. Instead, she visits children in Italy during Epiphany Eve, flying on her broom and giving gifts for good children and coal for bad ones in their stockings and shoes.



First Year PVC Experience

by: Amanda

Hi reader. My name is Amanda. I'm currently in 5th grade. At the time that I'm writing this, it's almost halfway through my first year at PVC. In this article, I will share what coming into 5th grade was like and how it is now.

Coming into 5th grade, I was both excited and nervous at the same time. I was excited about the new changes that would make me feel like an older person. I was anxious since in addition to moving schools, I would not be seeing my friends in younger grades until they were at PVC. I was also nervous because there were now multiple classes and homework. I was worried it would be hard to keep up with everything.

Throughout these first months, I've learned a lot. And I discovered it's not as difficult as I thought! The lunch is also much better than CET. There are also clubs after school, like the Newspaper Club. And for band, strings, and chorus, there's not just one concert, but two! The spring concert and winter concerts are both super fun!

I adore PVC and all of the very supportive teachers! I'm excited to see what comes next! And I hope all of you have found similar success and joy here at PVC!

January 2024

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Tiger Prints

Vol. 2

The Oddities of Everyday Life

When Cuteness Becomes Too Much: The Phenomenon of Cute Aggression

by: Grace



This cute creature has some of the characteristics explained in the study of the Baby schema.

We know what makes things cute and how they have an effect on us, but why does it have this hold on us? One theory is that it makes us want to take care of them. Since human babies are powerless when alone, researchers think that because they are so cute, they cause us to want to nurture and spend time with them more often.

You watch as the puppy leaps around and stares at you with its intent little eyes. You slowly pet it, which wags its tail adorably. But suddenly, you have the urge to squeeze and crush its furry body! If this has happened to you before, you're not alone; this curiosity is called cute aggression. What is the cause of this phenomenon? This is the second of a series of articles investigating the oddities of everyday life. So, let us uncover why we want to crush, squeeze, punch, or even stuff cute things in your mouth.

What makes things cute to begin with? In 1943, Ethologist Konrad Lorenz made a baby schema identifying features associated with cuteness: plump cheeks, a small nose, and short limbs. These characteristics also affect our behavior. In 2009, a study showed that people playing the game Operation were better at the game when previously shown cute images.

You might be wondering now, "Okay, so I know what makes things cute and how it sort of controls us, but I still don't know why that leads to aggression!". Well, cuteness is not related to wanting to hurt something- it's just that your brain is very overwhelmed, which is why you start wanting to crush the adorable thing. So, it fires some rather aggressive thoughts to balance and control these extreme feelings so you don't stuff them in your mouth.

So next time you're at the store and see a squishmallow, think about why you might want to squish it or gobble it up. Stay tuned for the Tiger Prints article!

Winter's Embrace

by: Emma

In the quiet of winter's embrace,
Snowflakes fall with delicate grace.
My heart feels heavy with fear,
Alone and cold at this time of year.

In this season of joy and cheer,
I find solace in quiet tears.
The holidays, once merry and bright,
Now echo with cries of silent night.

And so I sit by the window's frosty pane,
Watching the snowfall, feeling the strain.
The saddest songs play on repeat,
As I navigate this holiday's bittersweet.

So raise a glass to memories past,
To the happiness that never lasts.
May the stars above, with their distant glow,
Provide you with warmth, as cold winds blow.

Remember the Holidays

A Fictional Story

by: Alice & Ally

BONK! There was a loud thump on the roof.

"What was that?" asked my five-year-old sister, Jasmine.

"Can you find out what it is Alex? You know I'm not allowed to go outside without a parent." I smiled and walked out to our front porch. A large cylinder-shaped object sat on the base of our porch. It was unclear what it was. A beeping noise started coming from it.

"Run! It's a bomb!" I yelled. I ran, but my mom and sister didn't hear me. It seemed like it happened all so quickly. It exploded. I ran for miles with tears in my eyes. When I finally reached the spot where I was safe, I hid and didn't look back.

That was when I woke up. The horrid memory of my family dying won't stop playing in my head. World War III started at the end of 2124, and who knows when it will end. Everyone who is officially a teenager is forced to fight, and I just turned 13. The only good part about being here is seeing my father, who also has to fight. Even if I rarely see him. It's good to know I have some family left. We have to get ready in 15 minutes, and they expect us to look perfect!

Continued on page VI

January 2024

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Tiger Prints

Vol. 2

Anonymously Asking a Teacher a Question

by: Aidan

"What was your first year of teaching like at PVC?

"I felt very welcomed by students and staff and was really excited to get started!"

Mrs. Lupfer: 5th & 6th Grade INDE Teacher & 7th Grade Art Teacher

"I started teaching at PVC as a leave replacement for Ms. Diamond in 2006. I was very young, and I was nervous, but also excited!"

Mrs. Birdsall: 7th Grade Science Teacher & 8th Grade Living Environment Teacher

"I started teaching at PVC 20 years ago. I was hired to teach sixth grade "Humanities." Before I came to PVC, 6th-grade students had a rotation among 5 teachers plus their special area teachers. The schedule was the same with 9 periods, but the students did not have any instructional blocks. They had reading, writing, math, science, and social studies each with a different teacher for 45 minutes. I was hired to work on the 6th grade team because I had taught in an interdisciplinary program before teaching in Croton and that was a strength, integrating curriculum, that I brought to Croton. I was hired to teach ELA and SS in an integrated curriculum. I worked with Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Sullivan to write the curriculum for Humanities. That first year we did an archaeology dig simulation, brought in an archaeologist as a guest speaker, designed pottery to represent different cultures, and visited The Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of those curriculum changes. It was very exciting. Another exciting part of that first year was the completion of the new wing of PVC. When I started at PVC, it was under construction. My first classroom was where Ms. Wellman teaches now. Once the construction was completed, Mr. Hendricks, had us move from the "old" wing to the "new" wing and set up our classrooms in the same place that the sixth grade is now. My students and I moved to room 104. The students carried their desks like a parade from upstairs across the school to our new rooms. Just like today, there was a room to eat lunch but the difference was that there was no food service or active kitchen. During my first year, all students were able to walk home or into town to eat their lunch. That changed in the years that followed when fifth grade joined our school building. Did I forget to tell you that when I started, PVC only had three grade levels of students here? The fifth graders still attended CET. Once the fifth grade joined us, it was decided that it was safer to have students eat in the school building. The food was brought in by different local restaurants. It was very well organized by the PTA. Each day of the week there was a different type of food. Chinese, Sub sandwiches, Italian, and of course pizza! And another interesting thing is that the substitute teacher named Mr. Wulfhop. He was teaching science full-time here. Other teachers who were here then include Mr. Katzman, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Fuerst, Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Fontana, Ms. Diamond, and Ms. Armstrong. There have been a lot of changes since I started here. Guess what - Ms. Fuerst went to school here when she was a kid."

Mrs. Herbert: 5th Grade ELA Teacher

My first year at PVC was the 2015-2016 school year. Dr. Barbara Olm was the principal and Mr. Plotkin was the assistant principal. I was teaching at CHHS in the morning and at PVC in the afternoons. I was told that I would be teaching on the third and fourth floors. This presented an obstacle for me, when I went to PVC as a student, there were only three floors. Where did the fourth floor come from? I knew that they didn't build another floor on top of the building. I quickly realized that when they added the new building, they created a new first floor. I was part of the 8th grade team as a special education teacher pushing into academic classes and I taught a small group math 8 class. It was a terrific experience. I read many new 8th grade novels and brushed up on my US History and Living Environment to be prepared for class. (It has been a long time since I was an 8th grader at PVC.) The next school year, I was asked to work full time at PVC and jumped at the opportunity. I worked with the 7th grade team for a few years, then back to the 8th grade team, until the creation of the Flexible Support Program in the fall of 2019. Now, I work with students from grades 5 through 8. This is the best part of the job because I meet so many interesting people! Additionally, I have been one of the PVC Yearbook Club advisors since 2015.

Mrs. Lewis: 6,7,8 Grade Flex Teacher

V

Remember the Holidays continued...

by: Alice & Ally

“I can’t believe this happened,” cried Evera.
“Rory died!” wailed Evera.
Jazzyln walked over to Evera and put her hand on Evera’s shoulder.
“Evera, that happened two weeks ago. You are going to have to get over it,” said Jazzyln.
“But-” Evera starts.
Jazzlyn cuts her off. “Shut your mouth.”
“Please don’t fight with me!” Evera says.
“We only have nine more minutes to get ready,” I add.

These are my roommates, we live in one cramped room together. Jazzlyn has older brothers who make fun of her. She felt she had no control over her life, so she thought she could control ours. She can be nice, but is very bossy. She’s the leader of the group and the reason most of us are alive.

Evera is very emotional. She always was, but is much more now that her best friend died. They were pretty famous. Rory played the guitar and Evera sang. Rory died trying to save Evera from a bomb.
It’s time for breakfast. We have to wake up at 3:30 am every day. We have many boring classes. Then fighting…

I walked into the center of the battle, making my way past everyone. I was just about to head to my usual hiding place when a girl not much older than me stepped in front of me with a weapon. She said something in a language I didn’t know. Whatever she said, it sure didn’t mean “you can go” because she started chasing me. I ran across an empty field. At the end of the field was a steep hill. I climbed it. She brought her weapon up and fired it at me. I did the only thing I could think of, I jumped…

I heard the sound of children whispering. “...she’s awake….where’s…OK.” That was all I could make out. I couldn’t remember anything. I opened my eyes, and two children looked at me. One had long red hair in two pigtails, the other was a boy with red hair and freckles.

“Hi, I'm Olivia, and this is my twin, Oliver.”
“Hi!” Oliver says.
“What? Where am I?” I ask. “I don’t remember anything..”
I closed my eyes and tried to remember.
“I… I don't know.” I said. “My head is blank.”

Then a girl around my age came. She waved. She looked so familiar, but I couldn't think of a place where I saw her before. She sat next to me.
“She doesn't remember anything,” Olivia said grimly. The girl looked sad but didn’t say anything. She started to sing and suddenly I remembered everything.
“Evera!” I shouted happily.
We started walking because we knew we couldn’t be there forever. I learned that Olivia and Oliver ran away from the team I was against. Their Dad was the general and he was teaching them to fight early. There were only ten! We came to a village, which looked abandoned. It had Christmas lights that were out and a Hanukkiah (a candle holder with eight candles and an additional one for the helper candle called the shamash). They had no candles lit even though it was the sixth night. There were Kwanzaa candles that were gray instead of their usual colors.

That's when Oliver whispered, “It’s not abandoned.” He pointed to the house with unlighted Christmas lights on it. Inside there was a man in bed with a white beard.
“Santa!” Olivia yelled with pure joy. I thought she was joking, but as I turned around, I realized he wasn’t. My mouth fell open. I saw a burnt house with a skinny man who appeared as Santa in a burnt house with only a few walls and no roof.
“Oh my gosh! What happened to you?!” Olivia asked in fear as she barged in.

Santa tried to reply, but I could barely make out the few words his raspy voice could speak, “Chr-Christmas sp-sp-spirit g-gone.”
A woman who was sick sat on the bed near him. “It’s Christmas Eve, and everyone forgot. Santa, my husband, is sick, as well as me. The Christmas spirit is what keeps us alive.”
“What?!” Evera exclaimed, “How could I forget Christmas!? That's impossible, I’m the most cheerful person during the holidays.”
“Well, we can’t just sit around and weep. Even though it’s dangerous, we must do something.” I said.

I ran back to the battleground.
“Alex, wait!” Oliver yelled, following behind me. I ran into the middle of a big fight, and all the generals were there.
“Wait! Everybody!” I shout. The fighting suddenly stops, and everyone becomes quiet.
“I know it’s hard to remember, but it’s Christmas Eve, the 6th night of Hanukkah, and almost Kwanza. Nobody has a holiday spirit, and Santa is dying. Does anybody remember why we were ever fighting? No, so we should stop. Millions of people have died, and more are at the second. We need to stop hurting each other and enjoy the holidays while they are here.”
Everyone starts to look around and remember everything. People start apologizing and decorating what they have left. Holiday spirit has returned, and everybody is united.

Editorial

FACE SHIELDS. PAPER MASKS. CONSTANT FEAR.

New York 2.13

In the throes of a pandemic, the urgency to curb the spread of infections was palpable. On February 22, 2022, the New York State Department of Health introduced Rule 2.13. The rule granted authorities the power to enforce isolation measures, restrict movement, and safeguard the collective well-being.

Enacted under the state's emergency authorization powers, the 2.13 Quarantine statute in New York has sparked heated debates, legal disputes, and intense conversations about the delicate balance between public health and individual liberties.

Rule 2.13 has constantly been extended since its inception in February. After being ignored for so long, the latest proposal to make the rule permanent has brought it to light. "Olean Times Sherald" claims, "The regulation gives the state Department of Health and/or the local health authority the power to mandate isolation and quarantine orders for individuals with no proof they are sick or have been exposed to diseases listed in the regulation." In other words, anyone the government deems sick may be taken and placed in a quarantine area. The public health body issuing the order may designate any residential or temporary dwelling location, including a home, as an isolation area.

But if this law became permanent, the government could escalate the situation, sending people to random places without proof—is that okay?

"Involuntary detention is a severe deprivation of individual liberty, far more egregious than other health safety measures, such as requiring mask-wearing at certain venues," Ploetz wrote, according to the Times Union. "Involuntary quarantine may have far-reaching consequences such as loss of income (or employment) and isolation from family." MSN argues that this quarantine will result in fatal consequences and violates their right of individual liberty. Individual liberty refers to the freedom of individuals to exercise their rights without external restraint, which are generally accepted as being outside of governmental control.

Senator George M. Borrello has been vocal about urging Governor Hochul to refrain from re-issuing Rule 2.13. His stance highlights the delicate balance between public health and individual liberties. "Barring that, we are hopeful that the Court of Appeals will agree that there are profound issues at stake and agree to review this case." Like many others, he suggests that they swiftly repeal this law and oppose making it permanent. Borrello's position resonated with those who were concerned about government overreach.

The extent of power held by the government has always generated a great deal of controversy. Gallup reports that 54 percent of Americans believe the government has too much authority. Ever since our independence and establishment as a nation, the concept of governance has always been intimidating. As new laws are put into effect, concerns about our rights and privacy have grown over time.

However, New York 2.13 has its perks. We've all seen COVID-19 play out before our eyes. It's a terrible, threatening, and deadly virus. Giving the government the authority to treat the sick and contain pandemic outbreaks may sound sensible to those who have lived through the worst. Put another way, we're giving the government some privacy rights so that it can, hopefully, protect everyone's health and safety.

It looks like New York 2.13 is going too far, even with the best of intentions. LinkedIn explains, "The government now has legal authority to remove residents from their homes and force them into quarantine camps. There is no age restriction." Take a deeper look; imagine young children getting sent to a strange location because they're sick. So what do you think? Is 2.13 simply a government safety protocol? Or is it slightly concerning?

So, what lies ahead for Rule 2.13? Will it be rewritten, reinterpreted, or relegated to the archives? The answer remains elusive. As of now, we're still waiting to see if it will become permanent. Be sure to keep an eye on it as well. Then, either celebrate or spend the night debating the government's authority.

Editors Avery and Emma
Newspaper designed by Emma