Volume 10, Issue 2

A Student Publication

Fox Tales

Quarterly



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An Ensemble of Acheivements

Eight Fox Chapel Area High School students were chosen to participate in the 2024 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 1 Honors String Orchestra Festival. The students are senior Anna Delale-O'Connor (violin); juniors Xing Carlough (viola), Michael Costello (bass), Charles Hahl (cello), and Eloise Johnson (violin); sophomores Hayden Trac (violin) and Leonidas Vandapel (cello); and freshman Henry Sun (violin). Approximately 250 students from across the greater Pittsburgh area auditioned for the PMEA District 1 Honors String Orchestra and only 90 were chosen to participate. The students rehearsed November 15 and 16 and the festival culminated with a concert on November 16 at Upper St. Clair High School. The orchestra was conducted by Dr. Timothy Dixon, professor of music at Messiah University.

Ten Fox Chapel Area High School students participated in the second annual Allegheny County Chorus Festival: seniors Madeleine Jones and Alaina OKunewick; juniors Alana Calig, Lincoln Rowley, Benjamin Shuttleworth, and Robert Svenson; and sophomores Cascie Banachoski, Maisie Hays, Sofia Melani, and Emily Wright. Approximately 200 students were selected by their directors to perform with the chorus. The festival was held October 15, 2024, at Gateway High School, and the students were directed by four area choir directors.

Fox Chapel Area High School seniors Lindsay Gould (alto saxophone) and Patton Johnson (drum set) were selected by audition to perform with the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 1 Honors Jazz Ensemble. District 1 encompasses school districts from Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties. The PMEA District 1 Honors Jazz Ensemble performed at Franklin Regional High School December 14, 2024, under the direction of Dr. Matthew Pivec, the director of jazz studies at Butler University in Indianapolis.

Five Fox Chapel Area High School students were selected by audition to perform with the 2024 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 1 Honors Band. The students are senior Marina Dunham (bassoon); juniors Elliott Broyles (trombone), Jack Murray-Krezan (percussion), and Joshua Shah (flute); and sophomore Nadre Digbohou (clarinet). The band was comprised of 120 of the best student-musicians from Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. The PMEA District 1 Honors Band concert was held November 24 at North Hills Middle School and was conducted by Dr. Tonya Mitchell-Spradlin, director of wind band studies and assistant professor of music at Penn State University.



Students chosen for the PMEA District 1 Honors String Orchestra were, from left to right, Hayden Trac, Charles Hahl, Michael Costello, Xing Carlough, Henry Sun, Eloise Johnson, Anna Delale-O'Connor, and Leonidas Vandapel.



Students who performed with the Allegheny County Chorus are (front row, left to right) Alaina OKunewick, Maisie Hays, Cascie Banachoski, and Alana Calig; (middle row, left to right) Emily Wright, Lincoln Rowley, and Madeleine Jones; and (back row, left to right) Benjamin Shuttleworth, Sofia Melani, and Robert Svenson.



Seniors Patton Johnson (left) and Lindsay Gould were selected to perform with the PMEA District 1 Honors Jazz Band.



Student-musicians (from left to right) Joshua Shah, Nadre Digbohou, Marina Dunham, Elliott Broyles, and Jack Murray-Krezan were selected by audition to perform with the 2024 PMEA District 1 Honors Band.

Telethon Raises Over $90,000

By Prachi Behal

During the month of December, many festivities occurred for the telethon. Kicking it all off was "Minute to Win It" on Monday, December 3rd. This event had activities such as a free throw competition, hungry hungry hippos, toilet paper roll up, and football hoop toss. To continue the fun, the next week was followed by activities, competitions, sales and more! There was a QRT Spirit week competition throughout the week. It consisted of PJ day, Penguin/ Black and Gold Day, Holiday Spirit Day, Winter Wonderland White Out, and Candy Cane/ Red plus White Day. Not only was this happening during the week, but there were multiple sales happening too! On Monday, the German Club was selling Spaghetti Ei's. Tuesday consisted of a boba tea sale by the Asian Culture Club; on Wednesday there was a hot chocolate sale by the Writing Club, Thursday had a candy gram, hot chocolate, and chocolate covered strawberry sale, and lastly on Friday, there was a mango lassi sale. There was also a dodgeball and pickleball tournament taking place during this week as well.



Fox Chapel Area School district's telethon raised $90,000 for Backpack for Hunger over the month of December.

The fun continued on for the rest of the month with multiple activities and fun occurring throughout the school by different clubs! Starting at the beginning of December and continuing all the way till Tuesday, December 17th was a QRT Door competition, where QRTs would decorate their door and have it posted on an Instagram account to receive feedback from the student body. The door with the most likes would get a prize for their QRT. Mr. Norberg's door won the category for "Most Outlandish," Ms. Sperdute's won for "Funniest," Ms. Cooper's won "Most Artistic," and lastly the most liked door was Ms. Miller's. The telethon festivities did not conclude until the last day before break, Friday, December 20th. On this day there were multiple different activities happening throughout the school day that cost two dollars each; students could be excused from class to attend. For first period, the modern holiday classic "Elf" was playing. During second period, the dodgeball tournament finals were occurring. The finals were against the team Orange Krush and the teacher team consisting of Mr. Poellnitz, Mr. Miller, Mr. Bursik, Ms. Dolan, Ms. Meder, Mr. Murray, Ms. Green, and others."

While there was not a big event happening during third period, there were many events occurring in the commons during all lunches including Fox Tales's popcorn sale, the Best Buddies egg race, Wellness Council's "tape Dr. McGee to the wall," FLC-sponsored photos with Santa, TSA's slushie and cotton candy sale, a yearbook photo booth, and Art Club's caricature drawings. Lastly, during fourth period, the Busking Club performed their annual Fox Fest concert. There were many talented performers from Fox Chapel Area High School students and faculty including Wyatt Muller, Robert Svenson, Grace Gowens, James Manges, Mrs. O, Mr. Battista, Mr. Barle, and many more outstanding members of our learning community. All of these events saw immense attendance by students and all of the money raised was all donated to Backpack for Hunger. A whopping total of $90,000 was raised for this charity! Undoubtedly, telethon month was a great success and raised a lot of money for a great cause. Way to go FC!

About Backpack for Hunger

In early 2015, the Backpack for Hunger program was launched by a group of compassionate women in response to a startling statistic about the Fox Chapel Area School District's socio-economic diversity. Although considered a wealthy district, around 800 children depended on the free and reduced-price lunch program, leaving them without meals on weekends. With the support of generous donors, the program started at three schools and expanded to cover the entire district by December 2015. By February 2016, all students from Kindergarten to 12th grade in the Fox Chapel School District were offered participation, ensuring no child faced a weekend without food. The program's commitment extended into the summer, providing food bags to children in various programs, addressing hunger year-round. Since its inception, B4H has given out over 85,000 bags of food since 2015. Learn more at https://backpackforhunger.org/

Dodge Ball Tournament



Lunchtime Telethon Day Fun!



Decking the Doors for Annual Contest Brings Holiday Spirit to the Hallways

Compiled by Sienna Siegel

The Psychology Club's annual door decorating contest was in full swing this year! QRTs each came up with their own unique designs. Here are all of them, including the first place winner for most likes, Mrs. Miller's QRT!



"Bruh Tree"
Rios (168)



"How the Grinch Stole Biology"
Papariello (221)



"Holiday Lights!"
Oberst (184)



"Peace & Goodwill"
Elder (189)



"Merry Christmas"
Studt & Abraham (192)



"Reflection & Joy"
Modlin (186)



"I'm Dreaming of
a Beach Christmas"
Butkovic (Cafeteria)



"Seasons Greetings"
Gibson (168)



"Spongebob"
Hetu (182)



"Wicked Christmas"
Sperdute (222)



"Rudolph and Friends"
Cooper (Orchestra)



"Charlie Brown and
Friends!"
Miller (212)



"Rock Around the Christmas Tree"
Norberg (181)



"Gingerbread, Spice & Everything is Nice"
Marangoni (163)



"Snowman"
Murray (Choir)



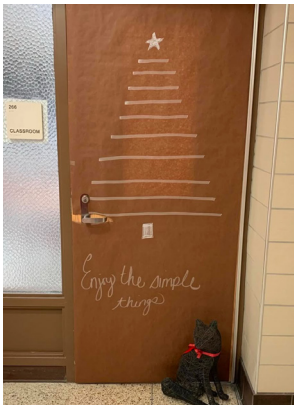
"Peppermint Holidays"
Hopper (237)



"Welcome to Whoville"
Bandurski (183)



"Let it Snow"
Henry (238)



"Enjoy the Simple Things"
Klein (266)



"*Friends* Christmas"
Polesiak (117)



"*Tinsel Toes* vs. *Red One*"
Wentling (246)



"Snow Village"
Coffield (187)



"Candy Land"
Rumble (164) &
Wickman (165)



"Believe"
Skillen (219)



"Light the Night"
Karavlan (268)



"Cozy Up With a Good Book"
Dr. Ward and Mrs. Ryan (Library)



Dropping College Acceptance Rates

By Rachel Pegher

It's that time of year again, and I am not talking about the winter holiday season. College decision release season: marked by either elated or sorrowful seniors. So are these acceptance rates and chances of disappointment the same as it was for our parents? Did they have the pressure and required college application to get into the same colleges? Is it fair to be so hard on ourselves when we occasionally get a letter from a random admissions officer who only knows us by a 12-page application? Simply put, the answer to all of these questions is no.

From the 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act (commonly known as the GI Bill), Pell Grants (federally subsidized payments for college), a cultural shift towards prioritizing higher education, and the CommonApp, the entire process and appeal of applying to colleges has soared in popularity. Especially with a growing global population and the prestige of certain colleges being known across the seas, there is also now the relevancy of international applications, further adding to the already tremendous annual load of applications that reach the tens of thousands. In addition, federally supported programs have helped those in less advantaged areas access a possible higher education. Of course, neither of these factors is inherently bad; they simply cause more students to compete against and, thus, a lower acceptance rate.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the GI Bill on June 22, 1944 which sill offers higher education benefits to veterans.

The Common Application allows students planning to matriculate to apply to multiple schools with ease.

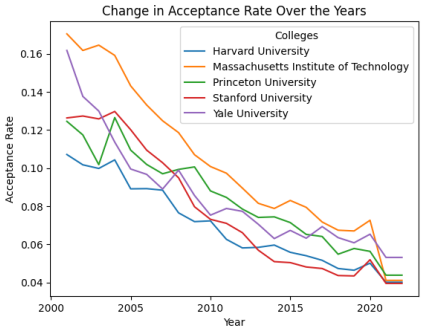
But even being born in the late 2000s instead of early-era America seemed to doom us all to exceptionally low acceptance rates. Most prestigious universities, such as a small liberal arts college in Massachusetts named Harvard, were designed to host a much smaller population of students, specifically white wealthy men. Although students are not subjected to sleeping in a bed from centuries ago, universities still need to move on from the past with how they address how many students they can take in.

Lastly, it could be the culture in which we have been raised. As Americans, we are surrounded by individualism. There is always the push to be the best, to do the most. In that, we strive for the best SAT scores and scorn ourselves for getting a 1550 instead of a 1600 or that we got second place instead of first. Regardless of whether this drive is internal or external, such pressure has created a successful yet cutthroat generation. So, when we see that Yale or (insert your dream school here) has the best education for whatever career we want to pursue, we hungrily chase its acceptance letter.

Thus, the vicious cycle continues. More stress is put on perfectionism and higher education for more students across the world, and the universities cannot keep up with us. For example, the University of Pennsylvania's (UPenn) acceptance rate has dropped from about 40% in the 1980s—likely your parents' generation—to only about 6% in 2024.

So, for those seniors out there who will be opening up college decision letters in the next few months, do not be too hard on yourself. It's easier said than done, but the entire purpose of this article is to inform you all about how comparing yourself to others, whether it be students, parents, or your expectation of yourself, truly is not fair to you. A 12-page application dumped into a pile of 40,000+ others does not determine who a person is, but merely tells the beginning of an exciting story.

UPenn is an example of a school who's acceptance rate has dropped significantly in the past few decades.



Graph demonstrating the trend in acceptance rates at some of the country's most prestigious institutions.



NASA Under the New Administration: 2025 and Beyond

By Ian Wellman

On January 20, 2025, the federal government will change administrations. Among the unorthodox, proposed nominations for administrative positions is the nomination of Jared Isaacman to be the new head of NASA. A political outsider, Mr. Isaacman is the founder of Draken International and the founder and CEO of Shift4 Payments. Despite his background as an entrepreneur, he completed the first private spacewalk as part of the Polaris Dawn mission and has been a vocal supporter of aviation and space exploration. Mr. Isaacman's background suggests the potential for some interesting developments at NASA in the future.

Jared Isaacman accepted Donald Trump's announcement of his intention to nominate him as the new NASA Administrator on December 5, 2024, saying, "Space holds unparalleled potential for breakthroughs in manufacturing, biotechnology, mining, and perhaps even pathways to new sources of energy. There will inevitably be a thriving space economy — one that will create opportunities for countless people to live and work in space. At NASA, we will passionately pursue these possibilities and usher in an era where humanity becomes a true spacefaring civilization… Americans will walk on the Moon and Mars and in doing so, we will make life better here on Earth." If Mr. Isaacman holds true to his word, NASA should be able to recommit itself to scientific research and move away from rocket design.



President-elect Donald Trump announced plans to nominate entrepreneur Jared Issacman as the new head of NASA.



Issacman completed the first private spacewalk last September.

Assuming Mr. Isaacman follows through on his comments on social media, it is likely he will discontinue the Space Launch System (SLS) due to the extreme costs of building and launching. The Government Accountability Office estimates the SLS costs $4 billion per launch. Mr. Isaacman said on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, "It is really just understanding the reality that the government is lousy at capital allocation & big prime contractors are incentivized to be economically inefficient and abusive. This is not specific to NASA, but priorities and budgets will change as the world changes. A program, like SLS, that was outrageously expensive but tolerable because, 'hey everyone wins', quickly becomes underfunded or cancelled during different times with a different administration." Discontinuing the SLS would have major ramifications for the Artemis program, which currently is relying on the SLS to get into space. However, if NASA or a private contractor can develop a more efficient launching system, the financial benefit of discontinuing the SLS cannot be understated. Funding the development of the SLS before the first Artemis launch has cost NASA over $50 billion. To put this in perspective, NASA's budget for fiscal year 2024 is just under $25 billion.

Cutting costs will likely not be Mr. Isaacman's only mission at NASA. In the spring of 2024, he offered to pay for a maintenance crew to go to the Hubble space telescope to repair its aging systems and re-boost it into a higher orbit, if NASA would approve the mission. This proposed mission would have cost him personally, and saved NASA hundreds of millions of dollars. His willingness to pay for such a mission suggests a strong commitment to the continuation of the orbital telescopes, which extends beyond Hubble to include Chandra.

If Mr. Isaacman gets approval from the Senate and becomes the NASA administrator; he will bring a paradigm shift with him on his first day. Given his background, he will attempt to run NASA more like a corporation and less like a traditional government agency. The benefits will certainly include a concerted effort to cut unnecessary expenses and a renewed passion to send astronauts to both the Moon and Mars. NASA will also likely move faster and face fewer bureaucratic hurdles in starting new missions and getting Senate approval. However, many of these cuts can increase safety risk. For instance, the dual contracts awarded to SpaceX and Blue Origin exist in part to make sure that there is at least one safe way for people to land on the Moon. Mr. Isaacman thinks this dual contract is redundant, and the loss of human life is a regrettable part of business for him. Referring to this dual contract, he said, "Budgets are not unlimited and unfortunate casualties happen."

It is certainly an interesting time for NASA, as no one could have predicted that any of this would have happened ten years ago. Mr. Isaacman will be inheriting NASA at an historic moment when the space race seems to be intensifying after a long break. When speaking about American competitiveness in space at the Spacepower Conference, he stated, "I know we can't be second."



Students Scrape Up PennDOT Plow Contest Regional Award

The plow painted by nine Fox Chapel Area High School students has been named the winner of the "Judges' Pick" award in the Pittsburgh region of PennDOT's Paint the Plow contest. The program involved high school students designing original artwork and painting it on a snowplow blade that showcased the 2024 theme, "Use Your Reason When It's Freezin'." The snowplow blades are then used on PennDOT trucks throughout the winter season as they clean the roads.

Fox Chapel Area High School's design was created by junior Caroline Grimsley. The other students who worked on the project were juniors Ava deBruyn, Raina Guzman, Nora Kelley, Shayna McDermott, Mira Owens, and Emilia Sutkowski; and sophomores Emily Kiro and Lillian Salva. The project was overseen by Fox Chapel Area High School art teacher Joan Marangoni.





Top: Members of the plow painting team included, from left to right, Emily Kiro, Ava deBruyn, Nora Kelley, Mira Owens, Shayna McDermott, Caroline Grimsley, Raina Guzman, and teacher Joan Marangoni
Bottom: Junior Caroline Grimsley poses with the completed plow design that she created.

The winner of the Judges' Pick award was determined through voting by PennDOT representatives and selected based on specific criteria, including the incorporation of the designated theme. The Fox Chapel Area High School students competed against students from across the Pittsburgh region, which includes Allegheny, Beaver, and Lawrence counties. Additionally, two Fox Chapel Area High School graduates, Scott Lewis (Class of 1992) and Steve Leas (Class of 2001), are driving the PennDOT truck featuring the Fox Chapel Area High School painted plow. The plow can be seen on their route which is on Route 28 between the 31st Street Bridge and RIDC Park in O'Hara Township, and on all the ramps in between that area.

The Paint the Plow Program was started in 2015 and includes students from most counties around the state. The statewide outreach program is a way for PennDOT and local communities to cultivate awareness as well as promote winter safe driving practices on state-maintained roadways.

Student Awarded AP International Diploma

Senior Hannah Parker was awarded an Advanced Placement International Diploma (APID). The APID is a globally recognized certificate awarded to students who display exceptional achievement across a variety of disciplines. The award is available to international students attending secondary schools outside the United States and to U.S. high school students applying to universities outside the country. The APID certifies outstanding academic excellence with a global perspective. Students receiving an APID must score a 3 or higher on 5 or more AP exams.



Student Wins International HOSA Award

Senior Rachel Pegher won an award as part of the 2024 HOSA International Leadership Conference (ILC). Rachel won a fifth place in the Cultural Diversity and Disparities in Health Care test category. Rachel competed against approximately 250 students who took the test.



More than 12,000 high school students attended the HOSA (Future Health Professionals) ILC that was held June 26-29 in Houston.

Seniors Reign Supreme in Powderpuff Game

By Zehra Ozkaya

Fox Chapel's annual powderpuff game, a flag football game between the junior and senior girls at the high school, took place on November 13th. Flag football is a version of gridiron football that does not include tackling. Instead, players wear belts around their waists that have two flags attached, one on each hip. The way that a play ends in flag football is if the opposing team can pull off one of the two flags on the person who has the ball. When this happens, the play is over and will move onto the next down. The play will also end if there is a fumble—when the person with the ball drops it and it ends up on the ground.

Often, the seniors, with their two years of experience, will take the win over the juniors, a feat that wound up occurring this year as well. The seniors (black) beat the juniors (red) 21 to 0. Within the first minute of the game, Meg Delaney intercepted a pass from the juniors' starting quarterback and ran it in for a touchdown, giving all momentum to the seniors which they took and used to their advantage. Meg was one of the seniors' two quarterbacks and later in the game scored another touchdown, contributing to 12 of the seniors' 21 points. The other six came from a touchdown by Maria Stiger and three extra points from the seniors' kicker Paige Solomon, who also had three kickoffs after each of the seniors' touchdowns. The juniors tried everything with running backs Summer Hill and Lily McLaughlin receiving the ball almost 90% of the time. Lily had a very long run which would have put the juniors 20 yards away from the end zone, however a flag was down which killed the juniors' much needed advancement. The first half ended 14 to 0 as both teams headed into the locker room for halftime.



The Junior Team (all from left to right)
Coaches: David DiGregory, Owen Wilson, Nathan Johnson, Aiden Elwood, Harran Zureikat
Front Row: Adele Greenawalt, Brooke Thiele, Hope Pekarcik, Summer Hill, Caroline Grimsley, Katie Siddons, Lily McLaughlin, Priscila Hayetian
Second Row: Emma Kurtz, Trista Jackson, Bailey Mack, Summer Burkhart, Greta Erdner, Claire Conti, Sophie Jacobs, Zehra Ozkaya, Caroline Leland, Emilia Sutkowski, Laila Golla

The second half was a chance for the juniors to fight back and take the game for themselves. Although they did not end up scoring any points, they held the seniors to almost no points for a bulk of the second half until the seniors pulled through and made it to 21 with one more touchdown. The juniors' fate was sealed after this last touchdown, diminishing all hope they had to become only the second junior team to beat the seniors in Fox Chapel history. They could not pull through. The seniors' celebrated their win over the juniors this year after their tragic loss in last year's powderpuff game. Time will tell if the juniors can take after the seniors and make up for this year's loss with a win in 2025.



The Winning Senior Team (all from left to right)
Coaches: Luca Poli, Kristofer Bandurski, D'Angelo Hamilton, Victor Nernberg, Jayson Morado
Front Row :
Sienna Siegel, Ava Persichetti, Ava Gerasole, Ty'Anne Binion, Jillian Pelcher, Molly Delaney, Hannah Smith, Mare Frau, Paige Solomon, Brooke Fenton
Second Row:
Addy Bursick, Amanda Sokol, Natalie Patel, Kennedy Murton
Third Row:
Claire Feczko, Claire Auffenburg, Shay Pick, Lynda Perez, Sarah Michalak, Meg Delaney, Alex Vita, Maurena Cilenti, Maria Stiger, Bri Hnatow, Margaret Rusche

FCEA Food Drive Benefits Blawnox Food Pantry

The members of the Fox Chapel Educators Association (FCEA) held a fall drive to collect food and other items for the Blawnox Community Food Pantry. This was the FCEA's second year donating goods for the food pantry's Thanksgiving food drive and baskets.

The donations, collected from staff members from all six schools in the Fox Chapel Area School District, will assist families in the local community in need during the holiday season and throughout the winter. The pantry is located at the Blawnox Borough office building at 376 Freeport Road and directly serves families within the Fox Chapel Area School District.

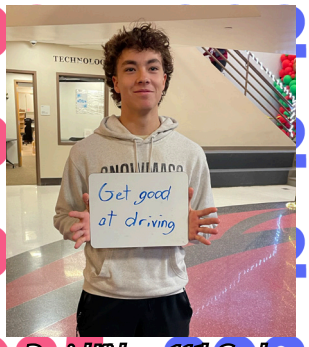


Dr. Ward loads food items into a car from the FCEA drive for the Blawnox Community Food Pantry.

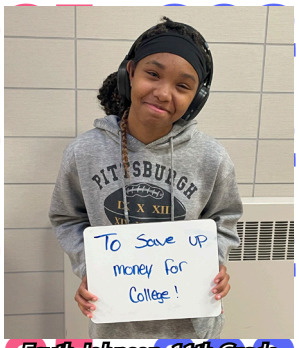


FC's New Year's Resolutions!

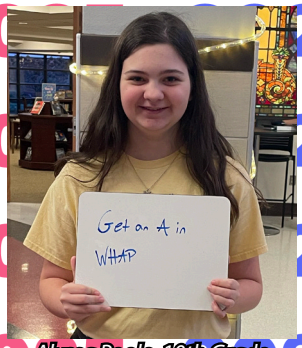
Compiled by Mateo Phelan-Vidal



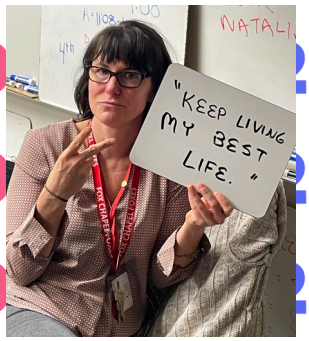
Daniel Kidane, 11th Grade



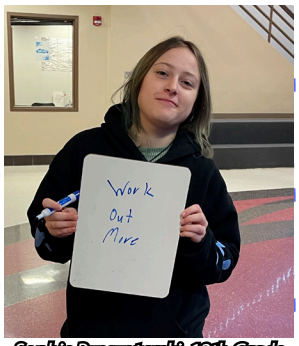
Fayth Johnson, 11th Grade



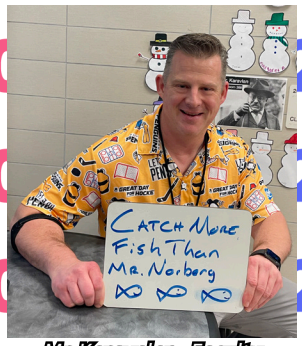
Alyssa Poole, 10th Grade



Mrs. Skillen, Faculty



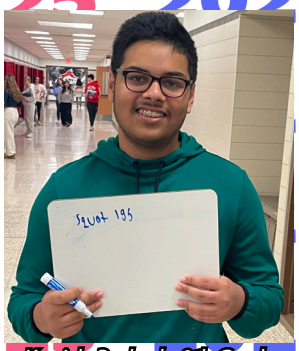
Sophie Rzeszotarski, 12th Grade



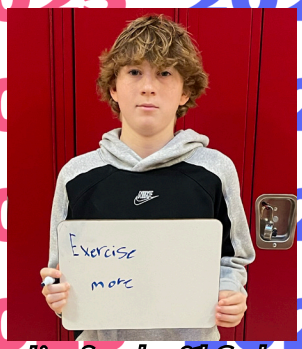
Mr. Karavalan, Faculty



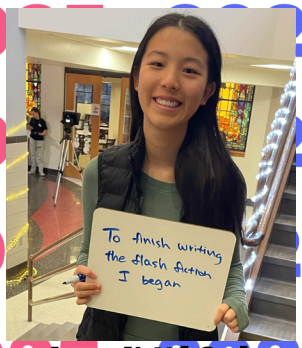
Paige Solomon, 12th Grade



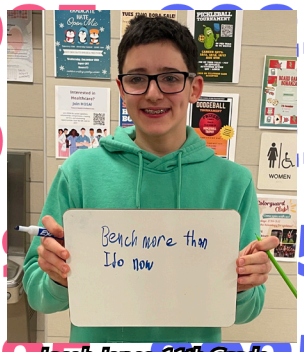
Kanisk Prakesh, 9th Grade



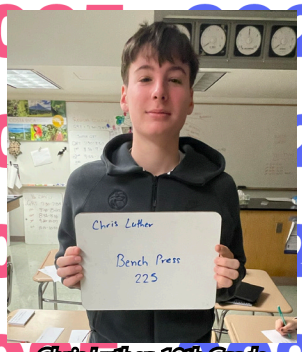
Liam Saunders, 9th Grade



Joanna Li, 11th Grade



Jacob Jones, 11th Grade



Chris Luther, 10th Grade

Jingle Bell Bash

By Maeve Beresford

On the 12th of December, the senior class hosted the Jingle Bell Bash, raising food donations and money to help Backpack for Hunger! The Jingle Bell Bash was a fun, winter event that brought the community together for this holiday season. It was free to attend but event goers were encouraged to donate for the charitable cause. In the cafeteria and commons area, student and teacher volunteers from the high school hosted exciting activities and games for kids and parents from the community to enjoy.

The Jingle Bell Bash was split into two parts, the activity room and the entertainment room. The commons area hosted the entertainment. Students from the orchestra performed beautiful pieces for attendees to enjoy while they grabbed treats and snapped some photos with Santa. It set a fun and joyful atmosphere for the whole night! Kids were also welcome to take photos with Santa, Mrs. Claus, and even one of Santa's elves! To pair with this holiday fun, there was hot chocolate and popcorn available.











Just outside of the commons, the cafeteria hosted plenty of winter-themed games and activities. Popular offerings at the Jingle Bell Bash included hair tinsel, bingo, and face painting. The hair tinsel included a huge variety of colors and left many little ones satisfied. The Bingo was located in the back of the room but still got tons of business. It was a huge hit! The kids received a candy cane for each bingo. The face painting booth had many winter designs for everyone. Other fun activities included coloring gingerbread houses, tinsel bracelets, board games, storytime, making cards for senior citizens, Christmas messages to Santa, winter coloring, and holiday crafts. Families could roam around the cafeteria as they pleased, enjoying all of these different options.

Located in the back of the cafeteria, an elf sat high on a ledge in the room. Every time a kid pointed out the elf, they received a winter treat! After lasting two enthralling hours, the Bash concluded. The Jingle Bell Bash was a great way to bring the community together this holiday season!

What Just Happened in Syria?

By Karsten Buchert

The Middle Eastern nation of Syria is making its rounds in the headlines. The country has essentially emerged from an over decade-long period of civil war. This conflict's catalyst was in 2011 when anti-government demonstrations, a part of the region-wide Arab Spring pro-democracy movements, were brutally suppressed by Syrian authorities leading to an armed uprising. After many tumultuous years, the war largely "froze" over the past four years, until last November. Insurgents took the country's largest city by population, Aleppo. Then on December 8th, rebel forces marched into the capital, Damascus without resistance and declared it liberated, effectively toppling the now resigned, self-exiled, and formerly aspiring ophthalmologist, president Bashar al-Assad's, regime. Emotions of happiness, relief, concern, and grief overwhelmed the population. While it was well-known that rule under Assad was harsh, seeing use of chemical weapons on civilians as well as systematic torture, new atrocities are being uncovered. With the liberation of Damascus, the country's infamous Saydnaya prison, a place so terrible that Amnesty International dubbed it a "human slaughterhouse" in a 2017 report, was taken by the opposition group. Families rifled through documents, looking for details on missing loved ones, and civil defense workers searched for rumored underground cells. Those freed reportedly hesitated to leave out of disbelief that they would ever be saved.



An oppostion fighter poses in a ripped poster of Bashar al-Assad, the now ousted president of Syria, during the fall of Aleppo on November 30th, 2024.

There are a number of reasons why the rebels were able to depose the tyrannical regime in the capital so efficiently. First, we have to look at the nation's economic situation leading up to this, because it was definitely a little goofy, to put it in layman's terms. Due to the costs of conflict, the economy essentially came to hang by one thread, and that thread was Captagon, an amphetamine popular in the Middle East and labelled a "poor man's cocaine." Countries in the region, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, had pinpointed Assad's Syria as the reason behind the influx in Captagon trafficking and use within their borders. They were certainly correct. Rebels and media outlets have discovered abandoned factories previously used for making items as innocent as potato chips that were converted to churn out the dangerous drug. In a CBS news report, Ahmed Abu Yakin, a member of prominent rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), gave a reporter a tour of one of these places and showcased how the pills would be hidden in fake industrial objects such as copper wire rolls and electrical boxes. Yakin also expressed that the rebels do not wish to let any activity involving the Captagon trade persist. This business proved extremely lucrative for the regime, especially with its high profit margin. However, it turns out having your already war-torn economy being reliant on an illicit drug is not a great decision for strengthening your political power. Syria's GDP saw a significant decline and despite its leaders becoming absurdly rich, the government became delegitimized as well as faced international efforts to combat the Captagon trade. Second and more instrumentally, al-Assad's military became quite weak. Middle Eastern studies expert Joshua Landis with the University of Oklahoma detailed to Al Jazeera how the Syrian troops were being ordered to fight on while exhausted, unpaid, and being unable to get sufficient support from key allies Russia and Hezbollah. Russia is obviously focusing resources on the war in Ukraine and Hezbollah has been hurt by offensives from Israel. Soldiers turned against Assad and either fled or backed an opposition group. Overall, the grim reality of Syria's situation became apparent to its citizens, whether they were fighting for the government or not, and opposition groups were able to take advantage of the window created by Assad's allies being stuck in their respective quagmires allowed so-called "Operation Deterrence of Aggression" occur quite quickly. The ability of the insurgent forces to rebuild and during the four-year period of regressed conflict is also a major factor to consider here.

So what is next for Syria? Well that is a good question with an, at the time of writing, indefinite answer. For starters, the aforementioned HTS, which is worth noting does have some past connection to Al-Qaeda and is currently labelled as a terrorist group by multiple nations including Syrian neighbor Turkiye, has put a "caretaker" prime minister in place, Mohammed al-Bashir who is planned to lead a transitional government until March. HTS's leader, Abu Mohammed al-Julani, hopes to bring Syria together. He has made promising claims of toleration of minorities and reformed government. It will be interesting to see where the country, full of diverse religious and ethnic groups as well as numerous historical sites worthy of attention, goes. However, on the less optimistic side, there is always the possibility that more fighting will arise, specifically regarding the country's unsettled territorial disputes and presence of ISIS within their borders.

Staying Warm This Winter

By William Kelly

Have you ever heard a parent yell, "wear a coat, or you will catch a cold?" Well, now is a great time to heed this advice, as winter has begun! With that comes the very cold average temperatures of about 30˚F in Western Pennsylvania, below freezing and nearly 70˚F lower than the internal body temperature of a human (98.6˚F). During this time, it is important to consider the risks of not staying warm. Health risks associated with cold temperatures include hypothermia, frostbite, and respiratory issues. While the cold temperatures are often not the cause of disease or sickness, these are prevalent during winter because the cold weakens your immune system, creating the perfect breeding ground for viruses and bacteria. This is why the flu thrives during December, January, and February; they are the coldest months of the year. Another concern would be pre-existing conditions, such as asthma. The cold can, just like it does for diseases and sickness not yet contracted, worsen pre-existing conditions or sickness.



Additionally, keep an eye out for your grandparents. The elderly are much more susceptible to illness than others, and the cold makes them even more vulnerable. Here are some tips for staying warm: wear multiple layers of clothing, no matter where you are, inside or outside. Maintain a nice and toasty temperature on your heating system; perhaps even consider buying a space heater. Drink warm beverages! Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and even specialty drinks can keep you both energized and cozy. Stay active as well; maintaining your blood flow generates body heat! Something else to consider would be eco-friendly practices. During the winter, people use their heating systems very often (obviously) and thus consume lots of energy. Consider switching to a cost-effective and sustainable heating method that lacks a major environmental impact.

DEI Council Ceiling Tile Event— A Truly Enriching Experience

By Marin Airik

On November 20th, straight after school until 4:00 pm, the Fox Chapel Area Diversity Council hosted its annual Ceiling Tile event, a fun activity in which clubs could enter to create a ceiling tile that represents their said club's purpose. There was an aspect of competition too with a cash prize of $100 on the table for the best tile, determined by the student body via a vote. The event organizers played music and also provided pizza and drinks for students helping out. Looking around, I was able to catch sight of the many original ideas that symbolized the different clubs.

I helped make the SWE (Society of Women Engineers) club's ceiling tile. Our purpose is to engage more girls in engineering through teaching lessons about the subject to younger elementary students. I was responsible for designing the tile alongside fellow club member, Maeve Beresford. It incorporates the official SWE logo complemented by scientific symbols and a funny emoji. Despite personally feeling a lack of artistic ability, the possession of such skills did not matter much in the creation of the ceiling tiles, as the event was focused more on engagement and working with others to produce a meaningful design. We had access to various vibrant colors of paint to create our tiles without limits. Not one of the clubs' tiles looked the same, showcasing the unique creativity of our school's students.



This tile created by the Society of Women Engineers club was one of many amazing designs painted at the event.

After the event concluded, clubs were still given the opportunity to finish their tiles on their own time if they so wished. Everyone else returned their ceiling tiles to the Diversity Den; the display of all the clubs' tiles was interesting as well as fun to walk around and observe. Soon, all of these beautifully designed tiles will be placed into sections of the high school's drop ceiling, so keep a lookout (or should I say, "look up") for your clubs' tile above you! All of last year's tiles are also still on the ceiling, so this year's new tiles will only add to the diverse collection. If you forgot to sign up or were unaware of the ceiling tile event, make sure to participate next year to bring more color to our school!

Opinion: The Rise of Ridiculous Sports Contracts

By Joe Yoshikawa

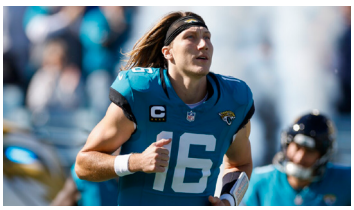
On December 8th, the New York Mets and star outfielder Juan Soto came to an agreement on a 15-year, $765 million contract. It will be the largest contract in professional sports history. As ludicrous as that amount of money sounds, Soto may pull his weight for the first few years. He has consistently been one of the best hitters in the Major League Baseball for years, leading in categories such as on base percentage and batting average. Just last year, he was a major player for the New York Yankees and led them to the World Series with other stars such as Aaron Judge and former Pirates player Gerrit Cole. At 26 years old with his best years still ahead of him, Soto stood out as the most valuable player available in the offseason. Thus, the Mets would bite and outbid every team for the superstar. The Yankees' rivals from Queens have seen their ups and downs in recent years as well. While they went on a Cinderella run to make it to the playoff semifinals (NLCS) this fall, they haven't won a World Series since 1986. With new billionaire, Steve Cohen, as their owner, they have been intent on acquiring star talent for their roster and pushing the team to new heights. In hindsight, the splurge for Juan Soto made sense.



Outfielder Juan Soto signed the largest ever professional sports contract in Decemeber making a 15 year, $756 million agreement.

However, there are still several holes in the logic of his contract. The first point that may come up when analyzing this absurdity is the length of the contract. In 2039, at 41 years old, he will be getting paid $51 million. Considering that generally, senior players in professional sports fall short of performing outstandingly, paying someone over 40 that much money is a bit ridiculous. Baseball may not be as demanding of a sport as football or basketball, but the mental determination and quick reactions needed to play the game at high speeds are simply not suited for middle-aged men. It stands to show that the length of the contract is an issue in itself, and the Mets will begin to lose large sums of money to less valuable players in the 2030s. Soto is also getting paid more than arguably one of the most famous baseball players of all time, Shohei Ohtani. Ohtani is a three time MVP who can both pitch and hit, something that hasn't been done since the 1920s with Babe Ruth. He signed a ten year, $700 million deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers in December 2023. He is idolized in his home country of Japan and advertised everywhere. Having a player like him brings hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue to the Dodgers, from the marketing companies in Japan to the fans around the world. Unfortunately, Soto does not have the same economical impact. His home country, the Dominican Republic, yields several MLB players a year, and he is not as popular there compared to Ohtani in Japan. While he does have a large fanbase and sponsorships, he will likely not bring enough money to make his contract worthwhile.

Baseball is not the only sport that seems to give out excessive amounts of money. In the NFL, quarterbacks have recently started to earn big bucks as well. Last year, Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow made $55 million dollars. Burrow has been a consensus top five quarterback for years, and even helped lead the Bengals to the Super Bowl in 2022. However, he only played in ten games in 2023 due to injury, and failed to guide his team to the playoffs. His price tag is justifiable with the success he had earlier in his career, but stands to show that Cincinnati unwillingly burned lots of cash last year. Another quarterback making $55 million dollars is Trevor Lawrence, though the same praise cannot be given to him. In the years he has led the Jacksonville Jaguars, they have only appeared in the playoffs once, and are a relatively insignificant team. While they have held a 9-8 record in the past two years, they have suddenly plummeted to new lows in the NFL, and Lawrence is partly to blame. He frequently fails to throw touchdowns in close games, and keeps putting his team in the losing column. Not to mention that he too only played ten games before a season-ending injury. Not only are the Jaguars losing over $50 million on one player this year, but they will be dead-last in the league, an embarrassment for Jacksonville fans.



Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Trevor Lawerence rakes in $55 million per year on his contract with the NFL team.

In the NBA, Gordon Hayward made $30 million last year, averaging 9.8 points per game. The average points per game in the NBA is around 11 points. With the average contract being valued at $9.7 million, that is a testament to showing how invaluable the money spent for him was. In my personal opinion, contracts have started to inflate wildly in all sports. Players are making generational money despite being average or even disadvantageous on their teams. Soon, just existing as a professional athlete may make them a billionaire.

Under Pressure? Here's Some Help

By Eliana Wellman

Have you ever been in a situation where your friends convinced you to do something that you did not want to do? Peer pressure is the pressure to do what others are doing as an attempt to belong to their group. Most people experience peer pressure, but they do not recognize it. There are many different types of peer pressure such as indirect, direct, positive, and negative. If you are in a situation where you are being peer pressured, it is important to identify it immediately because oftentimes, peer pressure can be dangerous.



Direct peer pressure is the type of peer pressure that most people usually recognize. It happens when someone directly sways someone else, usually verbally, into doing something. For example, a person is at the mall with their friends at their favorite store. One of their friends tries to convince them to shoplift. This example would be direct peer pressure; the friends are directly influencing the person's actions and decisions. Direct peer pressure has positive and negative effects, depending on how it is used. The same can be said about indirect peer pressure, but indirect peer pressure is harder to spot.

Indirect peer pressure is usually nonverbal and subtle. It occurs when a general group of people convince someone to do something through their actions. If a person goes to a party where everyone is drinking, said person might be pressured to drink because everyone else is, even though nobody directly told them to drink. Spotting indirect peer pressure is more difficult than spotting direct peer pressure. If you notice that you act differently in different crowds or environments, you are most likely being peer pressured to behave differently. Indirect peer pressure, just like direct peer pressure, has positive and negative effects. It can encourage a person to do better in school, have more self confidence, and participate more in activities. On the other hand, it can encourage a person to steal or distance themself from other people. It is key to know all of the downsides and dangers of peer pressure so that you can try to stand up to it.

Some of the potential dangers of peer pressure include performing risky activities such as drinking alcohol and doing drugs. Additionally, it can damage a person's self esteem as the person will be wondering why they feel differently from the people pressuring them. Peer pressure is a natural way to try to belong, but over time, it can have the opposite effect. This effect can lead to serious issues like anxiety and depression. Noticing peer pressure before the consequences and side effects become too severe is extremely important. If someone is able to recognize peer pressure, then they are one step closer to preventing it.

To summarize, peer pressure is a way to seek approval from other people. It has both positive and negative side effects and, in some cases, can be dangerous. It is important to notice peer pressure so that you can stand up to it for yourself and for others. If you are being peer pressured, or struggling with other issues, there are an abundance of resources to help you. You can talk to the guidance counselors, or reach out to one of the hotlines listed in the graphic above.

RESOURCES YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

because they are all free and available through our school/community!

Pitt Maximizing All Potentials

Maximizing All Potentials (MAPS) supports student mental health and provides drug & alcohol programming. Talking to a trusted adult at school is the first step.

HSAO hsao.org

Human Services Administration Organization (HSAO) works with children, adolescents, and adults struggling with behavioral, mental health and substance use disorders. HSAO's programs were created to meet the complex and specific needs of the individuals enrolled in each of these programs.

care solace Calming the Chaos of Mental Health Care. www.caresolace.org

Care Solace helps individuals find mental health care providers and substance use treatment centers. Its team is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and 365 days per year.

FOX CHAPEL AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program helps Fox Chapel Area High School students to overcome non-academic barriers to learning, such as mental health issues and drug and alcohol concerns. Speak to your school counselor or a trusted adult if you feel you need this service. We are all here to help you!

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE (QUICK DIAL)

We can all help prevent suicide. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

Crisis Text Hotline Text HOME to 741741 Free, 24/7 support, just a text away

Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

THE TREVOR PROJECT For Young LGBTQ Lives 866-488-7386 thetrevorproject.org

You deserve a welcoming, loving world. And so do the people you care about. Here you can reach out to a counselor if you're struggling, find answers and information, and get the tools you need to help someone else.

upstreet

UpStreet is a teen mental health service that offers free counseling to anyone from ages 12-22. UpStreet has a live chat and therapists who get what it's like to be a young adult in the world today. Not necessarily looking for therapy, but want to explore wellness activities? UpStreet has groups that you can join for free! upstreetpgh.org

SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

Caring Connections for YOUth

A community-led initiative that provides access to supports and services to ANY YOUTH, up to age 18, living in Allegheny County as a diversion to the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems. cc4youth.org

resolve CRISIS SERVICES resolve is a partnership between Allegheny County and UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. UPMC WESTERN PSYCHIATRIC

Resolve Crisis Services provides round-the-clock, mental health crisis intervention & stabilization services for residents of Allegheny County. You can contact resolve Crisis Services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call before a crisis becomes a crisis – any day any time, any reason. 1-888-796-8226

NEDA Feeding hope. National Eating Disorders Association

NEDA supports individuals & families affected by eating disorders, serves as a catalyst for prevention, cures & access to quality care. Hope starts here. nationaleatingdisorders.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline 800.656.HOPE online.rainn.org Free. Confidential. 24/7 **RAINN**

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

FOX CHAPEL WELLNESS

The mission of the FCAHS Wellness Council is to help students achieve and maintain physical and mental well-being.

Semiconductors and the Global Economy: A Key Issue in 2024

By Arman Alborzi

Semiconductors, which are little but powerful, form the foundation of almost everything we use today. These chips power everything from laptops and smartphones to automobiles and game consoles. They are essentially the brains behind contemporary electronics. Devices that we depend on, such as electric cars or medical equipment would not function without them. Because of their importance to international trade, national security, and job development, semiconductors have recently made headlines. The United States led the world in producing these chips decades ago. However, a large portion of production now takes place elsewhere, with South Korea and Taiwan setting the standard. While American companies like NVIDIA concentrate on design, companies like TSMC control the production of chips.



Under the Biden adminstration, there has been a push to increase the manufacturing of semiconductor chips within U.S. borders.

Outsourcing something this significant has the drawback of introducing vulnerabilities. Global shortages of chips caused industry disruptions during the COVID-19 epidemic, slowing the production of electronics, automobiles, and other items. The United States is currently attempting to bring semiconductor manufacturing into the domestic market in order to remedy this. During President Biden's administration, laws like the CHIPS Act were passed with the intention of funding new factories and generating thousands of new employment opportunities. Republicans and Democrats disagree about how best to carry out this project, but they both recognize its significance. Tensions with China, meanwhile, create another level of difficulty. China cannot access advanced chip technologies due to U.S. limitations, which have been justified as necessary for national security. China has been stepping up attempts to manufacture its own cutting-edge semiconductors in response.

Bringing chip production back to the U.S. is easier said than done. Building factories costs billions of dollars, and finding skilled workers remains a challenge. Some politicians suggest investing in STEM education and vocational training to bridge this gap. On the bright side, semiconductors present enormous opportunities. Emerging technologies, like artificial intelligence and self-driving vehicles, rely on advanced chips. Countries and companies that master this technology will lead in these fields. Even if tech or politics aren't your thing, semiconductors still affect you. They influence the cost of everyday items, the availability of new cars, and even the speed of your Wi-Fi. That's why keeping an eye on how leaders address this issue matters. Decisions made today will shape the technological landscape and job market in the future.

Sources:
https://www.semiconductors.org
https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-chips-act

Making Use of Public Transport

By Kent Baker

Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT), formerly the Port Authority of Allegheny County, is the city of Pittsburgh's public transit service, consisting of buses, light rail (Silver Line, Red Line, Blue Line), inclines (Mon and Duquesne incline), and ACCESS paratransit. The fleet of over 700 buses can take you almost anywhere in the Pittsburgh region. Riding public transit is a great way to efficiently get around the city and reduce your carbon footprint. You can even pay fares with your phone using PRT's Ready2Ride app or purchase a PRT ConnectCard on which you can store fare passes and cash. It even allows you up to three hours of unlimited free transfers between buses with one tap! For more information, visit https://www.rideprt.org/.



Fall Play Showcases Thespian Talent

By Emilia Sutkowski



Every fall, the drama club dedicates hours of hard work to rehearse, design sets, and perfect the annual play. For this year, the chosen production was *Harvey,* a comedy about a man and his six-foot-tall rabbit companion. The show involved several sets, all designed by students here at Fox Chapel. The production was a success with a hefty audience laughing at the different comedic skits. They put on three nights of the show (November 7-9). Not only did the actors reflect extreme talent, all the behind-the-scenes work including the lights, curtain timing, and numerous little details appeared to have been mastered expertly by the stage crew over the course of the show.



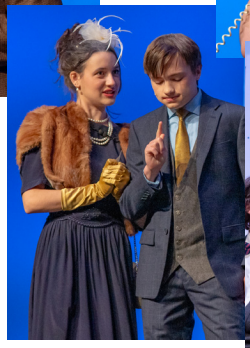
"Being the stage manager for *Harvey* felt like being a part of a fun and crazy family. I'm so proud of our cast and crew involved that made the show a huge success!" - Lily Cannon













Lily, a junior and the stage manager for *Harvey*, is one example of a student spending hours of their fall semester staying after school and working hard to bring the best show to the audience. They made the hard work look easy and fun, forming new friendships along the way.

Personally, after watching the production, I felt moved by how much effort went into the show itself to achieve such a great result. Despite a smaller-sized cast, they managed to fit each role perfectly, displaying each student's talents in a unique way. The actors formed a great representation of Fox Chapel's drama department and certainly serve as a great example for years to come.

Although every spring another larger and more extravagant production is held, the spring musical, these students bring life to the theater department year round. They showcase the talent within the district and make us all FC proud!

FOXES HOCKEY CONTINUES TO DOMINATE

BY ELI OLIFSON



The high school hockey season stretches from early October to late February, making it by far the longest season for a high school sport. With 20 games spanning 143 days, the players can't sit back and watch. With under half of the games played at the time of writing, it is hard to predict the outcome of a season, but all signs are pointing towards an incredibly successful year for the Fox Chapel Foxes. Only nine games into a 20 game season, the Foxes hold a 7-2 record, and were only a few key moments away from having that be 8-0.

The first loss the Foxes faced came against a talented Canon-McMillon team, but the loss was preventable. Fox Chapel pounced on the Big Macs early, taking a 3-1 lead. It initially appeared as if Fox Chapel was on its way to yet another victory, then the momentum shifted. Canon Mac started climbing back into the game. Regulation time ended and the game was knotted up in a 5-5 tie. Heading into the shootout, the Big Macs had the momentum, and managed to score, but the Foxes were unable to return the favor. Fox Chapel headed home with their first loss of the season weighing on their minds. A week later, the Foxes ventured an hour and a half to face the Bishop McCort Crushers. The Foxes' unfortunate streak extended to two games, as the team narrowly lost to the Crushers by a score of 3-2. After dropping two winnable games in a row, many teams would roll over and die. Momentum is down, morale is lower than ever, and the record that could easily be 5-0 is 3-2. But instead of letting this two-game run ruin the remaining 15 games, Fox Chapel used it to grow.

The sixth game of the season was between the underdog Foxes and the extremely talented Penn Trafford Warriors at the Foxes' home rink, Alpha Ice. Getting back in the win column would be no easy feat, especially against a team with as much raw talent as the Warriors, who were 7-1 entering the matchup. It was a scoreless affair until 13:32 into the first period, when Penn Trafford took a 1-0 lead. The first period came to a close and the Foxes trailed by a mere one goal. The Warriors' hot start ended abruptly, however, when Tucker Cullen scored 35 seconds into the second period. Cullen followed up on this goal with another one 15:17 into the period. His red hot performance didn't end there, as he scored his third and final goal of the night one minute and 28 seconds into the final period. In case 3-1 halfway through the 3rd period wasn't enough, Pierce Osterholm sealed the deal with his first goal of the night, securing a Fox Chapel come-from-behind 4-1 win to snap their losing streak.

The Penn Trafford game marked a turning point for the Foxes, as they showed their resilience and their lust for winning. FC has since won every game, beating Cathedral Prep, Hempfield, and taking an astonishing 16-1 win against the Norwin Knights. This avalanche of goals from the foxes consisted of the following: five goals from Dominic Casile, three each from Tucker Cullen and Trip Goehring, one each from Gus Passerrello, Parker Hanley, Spencer

Goehring, Hayden Ferra, and Liam Foley. Senior Trip Goehring believes the team's early success will translate into the rest of the season "if we (the team) keep up our fast play and continue to build chemistry". The Foxes' recent hot streak carries them into the midway point of the season when they are set to play their tenth game of the season on December 23rd against Greater Latrobe. Looking towards the rest of the season for FC, don't be surprised if the Foxes come close to winning out and finish with a record of something in the ballpark of 17-3. The hockey team is arguably the strongest it's been in years, thanks greatly to a strong group of underclassmen.

The varsity roster this year hosts five sophomores (Tucker Cullen, Ian Berdik, Keita Komatsu, Hayden Ferra, and Cavan Patrick) and two freshmen (Crosby Wukotich and Parker Hanley). Each of these players has a significant impact on their position and team, and without them the Foxes wouldn't be as strong. A large reason the team is able to shine is because of how the middle school program prepares them for a competitive high school career. Goehring says, "I feel that the middle school team moving up to the top division a few years ago has helped prepare the younger players for varsity hockey". It would be hard to refute this evidence, seeing as in the years since the move, Fox Chapel has been at an all time high, with this year's team being the epitome of FC's success on the ice. When asked what he sees in the underclassmen this year, Trip Goehring answered, "a pair of sophomores that are natural born leaders and want to win". While Goehring doesn't name these sophomores by name, a quick look at team stats could key you into who he is referencing, but it would also reveal that the underclassmen have a lot more to offer than just two players.

In addition to housing some of the best players in the WPIALs and building one of the strongest teams we've seen in years, the Fox Chapel hockey program teaches players valuable life lessons that they can apply in life and games alike. Goehring says that the most impactful lesson he has learned in his high school career is, "It's not about what you're capable of, it's what you're willing to do." The Foxes have certainly personified this notion, showing how much success can come from giving every game their all. From blowout wins to heartbreaking losses and underdog victories, the FC hockey season has had it all, and we aren't even halfway to the finish line. If the first nine games have shown us anything about the Foxes, it's that their resilience and dedication is capable of taking them far this year.

WINTER ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS

BY LAILA GOLLA

Fox Tales' Laila Golla interviewed athletes, mostly seniors, participating in winter high school athletics and asked questions regarding their growth in the sport they play and advice they would give to future teammates. She asked each athlete the same four questions:

1. What has been your most memorable moment with the team so far?

2. What inspired you to get involved in the sport?

3. What life-applicable lessons and skills has the sport taught you?

4. What advice would you give to new athletes starting to do your sport?

Here are their responses.

IKE MOSER - BOYS BASKETBALL



1. My most memorable moment was winning a state playoff game in Erie last year.

2. Growing up, my parents always brought me to UPitt's basketball games. Those games really sparked an interest within me and I'm forever grateful that they brought me to these games.

3. Basketball has taught me discipline and the value of hard work. Success only comes from consistent work. Basketball has also shown me what it means to be a part of something bigger than myself.

4. Find joy in the process, stay coachable, and always be willing to learn.

WINTER ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS CONTINUED

SHAY PICK - GIRLS BASKETBALL



1. I think my most memorable moment with the basketball team was our media day from this season, everyone was laughing and getting along and I talked to so many of the younger players who are now very close friends.

2. To be completely honest, nothing in particular inspired me per se; my family is a basketball family and my mom put me in recreational basketball when I was in 6th grade. I actually planned on only playing recreational for fun but then my coach emailed my current coach, Marty Matvey, and said he should invite me to an open gym. The rest is history!

3. Definitely teamwork and respect. Being on a sports team has taught me so much about working together as a collective unit which is something that will be very valuable when I go to college and eventually to a work environment. I learned a lot about respect as well. When on a team, even though you might not necessarily like everyone, you still have to give them respect because you are allies when you're on the court. It can be difficult but, I feel being on a sports team has taught me a lot about respect which I will be able to take into adulthood.

4. Just come to everything as early as you can! We have so many middle schoolers who play during the off season with us high schoolers and they are getting so much better. It has taught me the importance of going to these events just by watching these kids showing up and growing in the past two or three years, it will be much easier for them to make the change from middle school level basketball to the intensity of the high school level.

NATALIA SCHAFFER - GIRLS BASKETBALL

1. My most memorable moment with the team so far was when we beat Armstrong on their home court my sophomore year. Going into overtime with a shot from a buzzer beater and ending the game strong brought so much excitement and joy from the team!

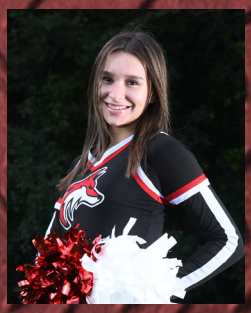
2. Around the same time I started basketball, I was also involved with soccer. I knew a lot of my friends playing basketball and I wanted to give it a try. After going back and forth with soccer, I decided I wanted to try something new and started playing basketball!



3. Basketball has taught me the importance of having confidence in oneself. Whether it's a game winning shot or a pass to go into overtime, you have to believe that you are able to make that next big play!

4. My advice would be to work hard at getting better each day. When playing basketball or any other sport, you'll never be able to pick up on something the first day. The more work you put into something, the greater the outcome will be!

MARY ANN FRAUENHOLZ - CHEERLEADING



1. My most memorable moment with the cheer team so far was when it was announced that we had earned our bid to nationals. This year, the standards to earn this were very high and thus hard to achieve. It was an amazing experience to see we had done so!

2. I was inspired to get involved with cheer in middle school simply because it was something I had never tried before; I wanted to find out whether it was for me or not. It turned out to be perfect for me!

3. Cheer has taught me responsibility. As a captain especially, you have a very important responsibility, and that is to support your team, teach them what you know, and help all you can.

4. To anyone who is starting their cheer experience, the advice I give you is to learn all you can and listen to all advice given. Never give up. Every cheerleader tried cheerleading for the first time, and everyone takes time and practice to improve.

WINTER ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS CONTINUED

GRETCHEN SHELESTAK - CHEERLEADING



1. Getting our bid to nationals with the new team was a big accomplishment and really exciting. But honestly the practices in general are always a good time filled with a lot of memorable and funny moments.

2. I started cheering when I was around eight years old because my mom put me in it. She had always wanted to be a cheerleader and thought it would be cute if I was one. I've loved it ever since. The performing, the stunting, and the team are just some of the reasons why I keep doing it every year. It's the best sport in my opinion.

3. Honestly, you learn a lot without realizing it. Personally, the biggest thing it has taught me is how to be more confident. If you want to achieve something you have to believe in yourself first. Along with that you learn discipline, dedication, leadership, communication, and so much more.

4. To new athletes starting to cheer, I would say be willing and open to try new things. You have to put in hard work and time to obtain skills; you won't improve in a day. Also don't get overwhelmed when things don't work. Lastly, you'll create close bonds with your team, so just have fun and enjoy the time you have because it goes by fast.

STELLA MINTURN - FENCING



1. Our three-day camping trip in the spring for a fencing tournament.

2. I was inspired to get into the sport because of how little I knew about it. I had no clue what it was or how it worked but I wanted to learn more.

3. Fencing has taught me valuable lessons in discipline, focus, quick decision-making, translating that to problem-solving, and adaptability in daily life.

4. Stick with it because it gets easier. Do as much as you can, ask as many questions as you can, and fence as many people as you can. The most helpful thing is putting yourself out there and trying new skills.

TIMOTHY YE - FENCING



1. My most memorable moment was when we got third in championships during my sophomore year. It was our first time getting so close to winning and made me motivated to win by senior year.

2. I was inspired by my upperclassman mentor, Lawrence Liu, who was the captain of the team at the time, and influenced me to join the team in my freshman year.

3. Through the sport, I became better at being adaptable on the spot. Every opponent is different when fencing with different styles, So, I needed to be more observant of their habits to allow me to get a point.

4. To all new athletes starting the sport, my advice is: don't let a loss or mistake you made get to you. Move forward every time you make a mistake and think about how you can improve the next time instead of dwelling on it.

RILEY HOURVITZ - GYMNASTICS



1. My most memorable moment with the team has to be all of our meets. I love cheering for the girls as they compete.

2. I started gymnastics at a young age, around four, so I've loved the sport for as long as I can remember and always knew I'd join the highschool team.

3. Gymnastics taught me the importance of supporting others. Although it's considered an individual sport, every girl is always rooting for each other.

WINTER ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS CONTINUED

4. My advice for new athletes is to remember to have fun and that persistence is key, especially in gymnastics.

LILAH BLYTH - GYMNASTICS



1. My most memorable moment is learning the pieces of everyone's floor routines throughout the years.

2. My best friend was a gymnast and I wanted to do the sport with her.

3. If you work hard enough, you can get to where you want to be.

4. Have fun, the point of this team is to have a great time and not put stress on you!

PIERCE OSTERHOLM - ICE HOCKEY



1. The most memorable moment for me this season was beating first place Penn-Trafford in our new alternate jerseys this November.

2. I was inspired to play hockey by my childhood hero Porter Hill.

3. Hockey has taught me how to work through adversity and come together as a team and family.

4. I would advise new players to work hard and focus on what they can control. The rest will figure itself out.

LIAM WISEMAN- ICE HOCKEY



1. My most memorable moment on the Fox Chapel Hockey team would be defeating Norwin in the Pens Cup Semi-Final during my sophomore year after losing to them in the semi-final the year before.

2. One of my older sisters played ice hockey and I wanted to do the same. I was three at the time and she was five. I joined a team the following year.
3. Hockey has taught me to work hard for what I want in order to get results.

4. Get on the ice as much as possible. The more you skate, the better the player you will be.

SARAH PASQUELLA - SWIMMING



1. So far, it has been experiencing the energy that the Foxes bring to every single meet. From dual meets to states, the support is always there.

2. I was inspired to start swimming after watching my older sister who was having a lot of fun with the sport. Then, I decided to join her in elementary school. It was the best decision I have ever made!

3. Swimming has taught me work ethic, time management skills, teamwork, and what it takes to reach your goals.

4. My advice to new athletes in any sport would be to embrace competition, be a good teammate, and to have fun!

JACKSON HAGLER - DIVING



1. Definitely getting to swim an event! Even though I am a diver, I loved getting the support from the swim team.

2. I started off just messing around at the swimming pool and someone took interest in me.

3. I started off just messing around at the swimming pool and someone took interest in me.

4. Have fun but also work hard and enjoy it while it lasts.

WINTER ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS CONTINUED

AINSLEY ANDERSON - DIVING



1. The most memorable moment with my team so far was the first meet of the season during my junior year. All the girls had really good meets to start the season, and we were all so excited for each other!

2. I decided to get involved in this sport because my gymnastics coach had been a diver. She knew I was struggling to continue with gymnastics, and encouraged me to try a diving camp one summer. I also knew it would be easy to translate my gymnastics skills to the pool, so I decided to give it a try.

3. This sport has taught me that fear does nothing but hold you back. The best way to attack something new is to fake it until you make it; if you pretend you feel confident, your actions and results will reflect that.

4. I would tell new athletes to just go for it! This sport takes a lot of mental toughness and smacking is inevitable, so just send it and know you tried your best, no matter what happens.

ADDY BURSICK - UNIFIED BOCCE



1. My most memorable moment from bocce is dancing with Marin to ABBA songs before matches.

2. Dr. Dojonovic had mentioned bocce at a Best Buddies event and I thought it sounded interesting so I asked how to get involved. I have now been a part of the team for two years.

3. Bocce has taught me to not be afraid to try new things. I had never seen or played bocce before I joined the team; it is very different from any other sport I have played.

4. I would tell new athletes to not be afraid to try new things. Although the beginning may be a bit nerve wracking, the outcome is always rewarding.

TAYLOR ROLES - UNIFIED BOCCE



1. I really like making friends like Nick, JJ, and everyone on the team. I also have enjoyed building relationships with people that help me get through things.

2. My big brother Ryan inspired me to get involved in the sport because he and I always played together.

3. I've learned about doing the best that you can at all times and having fun with your friends. Try to stay on topic for what you are doing, and if not, don't forget to ask for help with people on your team.

4. I would tell new athletes to do the best that you can and that you can definitely handle whatever you're facing, just try the hardest that you can.

WILLIAM GHAZNAVI - BOYS WRESTLING



1. The most memorable moment with the wrestling team so far for me is competing in the West Virginia tournament.

2. What inspired me to get into wrestling was wanting to test my strength, and Mr. Baxter.

3. Wrestling has taught me discipline, respect, and the ability to set a goal then work towards achieving it.

4. Some advice I would give new wrestlers is to enjoy it because it does go by fast. Don't get discouraged, and practice with people better than you.

WINTER ATHLETE SPOTLIGHTS CONTINUED

YOUSSEF ABDELSALAM - BOYS WRESTLING



1. My most memorable moment with the team was beating Plum for the section title.

2. I was inspired to join the wrestling team when my buddy kept hitting wrestling moves on me, sending me flying around. I thought it was the coolest thing.

3. Wrestling has taught me a lot about discipline and mental toughness from having to always eat healthy to consistently having to work out as hard as I can.

4. The number one piece of advice that I would give new athletes starting to wrestle would be to make sure to have fun in the process and get close to your team since you will spend a lot of time with them.

ANDREA WANG - GIRLS WRESTLING



1. That would be the time where I got food poisoning during a tournament. I think I ate something that just wasn't sitting right, and I felt everything in my stomach ache. Despite that I won two matches. I still remember being in pain but kinda proud of myself all at once.

2. Seeing my friend Yuqi on the mat, and seeing how awesome she looks. It made me want to join the team. So I joined, and have now been on the team for three years.

3. Perseverance. Sometimes your situation looks really crappy, but with a little bit of wiggling and just pushing through you might be alright.

4. Patience. Whenever you're learning anything new, it takes time to get better, so don't stress yourself out if you don't do as well as someone else. Just take your time and you will improve on your own time.

Beating the Winter Blues

By Paige Solomon

As the days get shorter and the temperature drops, it may become increasingly difficult to stay focused and motivated. The lack of sunlight can make us feel sluggish or isolated. However, there are many ways to embrace the season and nurture both your mental and physical well-being during the winter months. You can enjoy the daylight by going for a walk, building a snowman, or even shoveling driveways to earn some extra cash. Perhaps consider trying winter sports like ice skating, skiing, or sledding. These activities can boost your mood and help alleviate being constantly cooped indoors. No matter how cozy your living room is, it is still enjoyable to get outside!



Winter can bring about increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and even loneliness. The colder temperatures often mean less socializing and more time spent indoors, which can lead to feelings of isolation. It's important to recognize that these feelings are completely normal and part of the human experience. Feeling anxious about school, friendships, or future plans shows you care deeply about your well-being and success. However, stress can also weaken your immune system, making you more susceptible to colds, the flu, and other illnesses.

Also, take time to let the important people in your life know that you appreciate them. A handwritten note, heartfelt text, or even quick phone call can make someone else's day—and it will certainly lift your spirits too. Gratitude has been proven to reduce stress and increase happiness, helping you maintain a more positive outlook on life. While winter may have its challenges, there's also a unique beauty in this season. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's, or just enjoy the winter season, take time to enjoy the small moments. Decorate your space with cozy lights, bake your favorite treats, or take part in community events.

(Spooky) Spring Musical Announcment

By Alex Navas

Fox Chapel Area High School announces its 2025 Spring musical, *The Addams Family*! Tickets are $13 each, and will go on sale January 31 at 7am; they can be purchased through the website fcahsmusicdepartment.ludus.com. Tickets may also be sold at the door, pending availability. Please note that tickets are nonrefundable and cannot be exchanged for other performances. The musical will run from March 13–16th, with evening performances on March 13th, 14th, and 15th at 7pm, and a matinee on March 16 at 2pm in the Fox Chapel Area High School auditorium.



*Fox Chapel Area High School's spring musical will be **The Addams Family**.*

This year's production follows the story of Wednesday Addams, played by Evangeline Serrano, as she falls in love with Lucas Beineke, portrayed by Luca Zgurzynski. This unlikely romance causes hilarious and heartfelt conflict between the delightfully spooky Addams Family and the more traditional Beineke family.

More notable members of the cast include Nathan Johnson as Gomez Addams and Alex Navas as Morticia Addams. Other starring roles include Gavin Lynch as Lurch, Collette Walter as Grandmother, and Robert Svenson as Uncle Fester. Mr. and Mrs. Beineke will be played by Ava Condron and Ben Shuttleworth. Stasie Hays will take on the role of Pugsley Addams.

Behind the scenes, Madeline Jones, the senior stage manager, has been instrumental in bringing the production together. This year's musical promises to be a spectacular event filled with laughter, drama, and unforgettable performances.

The entire cast and crew are ecstatic to bring *The Addams Family* to life and can't wait to see everyone in the audience. Mark your calendars and don't miss out on this exciting production!

Best Buddies Offers Fun for All

By Paige Solomon

The Fox Chapel Best Buddies athletes took to the field on November 21. They played against other Best Buddies groups and their teammates from surrounding school districts. It was an amazing experience and they won five out of the eight games! Our athletes had a great time competing against the other schools and showing off their skills. Some standout players were Marin Cusano, Mark Farrah, and Maya Torres. Best Buddies has been hosting many other events like Friendsgiving a few days before the flag football games and the Pumpkin Party where they decorated pumpkins and got ready for the Boo Bash. These events are so much fun and inclusive for everyone; there really is something for everyone at Best Buddies events. In the winter there is a Unified Bocce team that practices and competes after school. Bocce is a new and upcoming sport that is easy to learn and exceedingly fun to play.



There will be a Lunar New Year Celebration on January 29th and a Breakfast Social in the cafeteria during QRT on February 3rd. They are also hosting a dance in February but, as of writing this, a date for that has yet to be finalized. In years past, the dance has featured games, music, and tons more.

Other upcoming events in February are the Valentine's Day party on February 13th and the Polar Plunge on the 21st. The Polar Plunge is an incredible opportunity to support our Best Buddies program and Special Olympics programs in our area. It's also a great way to show off school spirit and take a day off of school! The more money we raise and the more people plunging the better! This spring will be full of events as well! Plus, the Unified Track and Field Team competes during that time! They practice once a week and have five or six meets throughout the spring. Last year our team managed to make it to the podium!

The Suburbs: An American Nightmare

By Karsten Buchert

Suburbia has become synonymous with modern American society. Following the return of soldiers from World War Two and the subsequent "baby boom," the demand for housing increased immensely and people became less interested in living in cities. The 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act, more commonly referred to as the GI Bill, provided healthcare, housing, and education benefits to veterans of the world war as well as the subsequent proxy conflicts of the Cold War. The middle-class became more defined than ever. You could easily pick them out by their possessions and adherence to a growing homogenous culture. Despite tumultuous current events throughout the Atomic Age (a term for the period marked by the detonation of the first nuclear bomb in 1945 to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991), there was an undeniable optimism associated with the aesthetic and accelerated innovation. However, despite the cultural impact and improved lifestyle, is this suburban sprawl that is still the norm for the development of land outside major urban areas actually well-designed? The short answer is no. Let's take a deeper look at the history, planning elements, and sensibility of the suburbs.

Communities that were essentially suburbs in the sense that they were dense yet outside of an urban center did exist prior to WW2, however it wasn't until after the war with the onset of the infamous baby boom that the term for and scope of them became prominent. Developers like William and Bill Levitt pioneered the idea of cookie cutter homes arranged in sprawling plans. Starting with the Levitt's original community in Nassau County on Long Island in the state of New York; these so-called "Levittowns" sprung up outside major cities across the country. Now, it is no secret in today's age that these havens of the American Dream were systematically racist. The original Levittown's house deeds contained a contract clause that stated "The tenant agrees not to permit the premises to be used or occupied by any person other than members of the Caucasian race. But the employment and maintenance of other than Caucasian domestic servants shall be permitted." They weren't even trying to hide anything with that one. Discriminatory housing practices such as redlining, a practice where banks deny financial services to people in certain areas based on their race or ethnicity, the lack of walkability (often African-Americans could not afford a car), and hostility from whites kept the majority African-Americans in the deflated urban real estate market. This phenomenon of caucasian migration is known as "white flight." A whole other article could be written covering those topics but I'd like to focus on the downsides pertaining to the more concrete (pun not intended) aspects of suburban planning.



Levittown, NY

First, to define that term "sprawl" as I have thrown it out there a couple times now. The Cambridge dictionary defines it in this context as "a large area of land covered with buildings, especially ones that have been added gradually over a period of time." Despite urban renewal initiatives, suburbs continue to grow in America. Basically, cities are still growing outward more than upward. The backbone of sprawl is roads. Unlike a lot of major urban areas, which have a grid plan with tighter roads, suburban areas have come to feature more complex arrangements with wider roads. Heavily traveled roads that connect commercial and residential areas are called arterial roads; they are the "arteries" of an area carrying the lifeblood of American civil planning designs, cars. It is typical of arterial roads to feature four or more lanes, the idea being to accommodate the high traffic demand. However, this often has the opposite effect, a concept known as "induced demand." That term has its roots in economics and is basically used to describe the phenomenon of an increase in supply creating an increase in consumption which in this case, pertains to the use of the road. When there are wider roads, more people will drive which leads to a chain reaction of more traffic and thus more widening. We can look at walkability scores for metropolitan areas as an example of this. Older cities such as those along the Northeastern coast that date back to colonial America tend to have much higher walkability scores compared to those that have experienced more recent development. For instance, let's compare the official Walk Score of the Boston metro to the Charlotte metro. Boston received an 83/100 rating while Charlotte got a 26/100. More cars means increased carbon emissions. In addition, wider roads are generally less walkable than smaller ones, especially when situated outside urban areas where drivers may not be as ready for pedestrians crossing. Obviously, pedestrians are also put in front of more cars.

As for other safety benefits of keeping roads compact, an investigation by the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health determined narrower roads do not lead to increased non-intersection accident risk but did find evidence that wider roads do. Going back to the traffic itself, 69% of the US population lives in areas considered to be suburban and of that 69%, many are families. This goes back to that post WW2 history with the suburbs becoming breeding grounds for "nuclear families," a married couple with non-adult

children. These families needed transport then and still need it now. For Americans, this has encouraged the buying of big cars. In the 1950s, perhaps it was the Chevrolet Bel Air. For larger families, you could purchase the more affordable four-door Biscayne model. These vehicles from Chevy and other American automakers averaged around eight to twelve miles per gallon and, with virtually no environmental regulations or requirements for a catalytic converter at the time, loaded up the atmosphere with all kinds of harmful emissions. As alluded to, despite having been through multiple energy crises and economic downturns, we still tend to prefer big cars compared to our European friends for example who would consider a Honda Pilot a truck. Out of the top ten on Car and Driver's list of the best-selling vehicles in the United States in 2024, eight were SUVs or pickup trucks. In fact, four were pickup trucks, which could be argued as symbolic of American identity with its ties to laborious applications (many of those pickup truck purchases likely come from fleet buyers or private contractors). Since I was discussing families, in case you're wondering about the stereotypical minivan, recent sales data has shown that it is actually fading more into a stereotypical three-row SUV. While general data and intuition says large cars are safer in accidents compared to small cars, when zooming in, we can see this isn't exactly the case.



This 1957 ad for Chevrolet highlights their cars' capabilities.

Their weight and height makes them more dangerous to smaller cars and pedestrians, they have bigger blindspots, and have been found to have a much higher risk of being involved in driveway incidents particularly with young children. The latter is one great reason why backup cameras being mandated is extremely important.

Now, where in the suburbs might you be traveling to in your half-ton of a vehicle? Well how about to go get food and more specifically, fast food. I don't think I need to go into further detail there; the downsides of fast food meals have been well emphasized for a couple decades now. Granted though, the quality of food offerings outside of just buying items from the supermarket and doing some home cooking in suburbs has gotten better as immigrants have moved out of cities and more non-fast food restaurants have been established. You may also travel to a shopping center, a mall perhaps. Malls came to be to the post-war era what the department store was to the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, Meccas of conspicuous consumerism. The first modern mall in Edina, Minnesota, was designed by Victor Gruen and was a hit with consumers after opening in 1956. Throughout the following decades, many more malls sprung up in the vicinity of suburbs. Local governments were typically in favor of them due to sales tax revenue. However, since the 1990s, appropriately corresponding with the growth of the internet, malls have been on the decline. Those local governments that had previously been for malls came to see them as havens for crime and burden on the community after the well-to-do customer base left and instead flocked to buying the same products online.


An example of a "dead mall" in Alexandria, VA which is nearly devoid of stores.

A phenomenon known as a "dead mall" occurs when retailers pull out of the mall yet despite being devoid of businesses, the mall remains open to the public, almost becoming some obscure form of suburban blight. A topic expert with Business Insider predicted that by 2032, there may only be 150 operating shopping malls left in the country. The same article noted the decline by highlighting that in 1980 there were over 2,500 malls but by 2022, that number fell to around 700.

Though there are many more issues I could highlight, I think I'll end with one that Fox Chapel Area should be able to recognize well given the relative affluence of our district: the growth of the "McMansion." It seems as though the original copy and paste conformist homes have evolved and are taking design elements from different architectural styles, and combining then compressing them into oversized yet equally conformist homes for America's snobbiest soccer moms. The colloquial name is a reference to the popular fast food chain, specifically the company's large portions and questionable food quality. These homes have sprung up in upscale suburban plans originating sometime in the 1980s mainly spawning from the Sunbelt states; throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, many Americans were moving to that region so that makes sense. Their front landscapes are often car-centric looking more like a parking lot that connects to the two, three, or even four car garage the home may boast. The interior floor plans often lack foresight as well. There is a great blog run by a college architecture student titled McMansion Hell which has numerous pages breaking down why McMansions are widely considered inept among experts in the subject.


A "McMansion"

While the suburbs have become integral to American life, culture, and even national identity, there is certainly reason to question what it has become. However, to quote a popular advert from Ronald Reagan's 1984 presidential campaign, "why would we ever want to return to where we were?" Are elements of life in the United States like the suburbs a contributor to the American Dream, or to an American nightmare?

Math Minute: A Quarterly Report About Numbers and Mathematics

Today's Topic: The Great Minds of Mathematics: Part I of III

By Rishi Krishnamurthy

In the fascinating realm of mathematics, you have probably heard of legendary mathematicians such as Euclid, Newton, Pythagoras, and Gauss who have largely contributed to today's algebra, geometry, and calculus. Other mathematicians you may not have heard of before, such as Turing, Germain, Hypatia, and Noether. These brilliant minds have contributed to shaping the mathematical landscape we navigate today. In this issue, we will delve into the lives of these remarkable mathematicians, uncovering the stories behind their groundbreaking achievements.

My name is Rishi Krishnamurthy, and I am an eighth grader at Dorseyville Middle School. Every quarter, I write a piece about numbers and mathematics. My plan is to continue this until I am a senior. So, make sure to check out A Math Minute every issue! In the last issue, I discussed the formidable topic of trigonometry. To recap, even though the word may terrorize so many of us, there are countless vital applications of the subject—even in our everyday lives—that make the concept very important. Unlike this and other previous reports of A Math Minute, today's topic will be split through a series of three issues. In this issue, I will examine the works of Euclid, Noether, and Gauss. In a future issue, I will look at Hypatia and Pythagoras, Lagrange, and Turing. In the final report of the series, I will discuss Newton, Euler, Ramanujan, and Germain. I hope that you are ready for this mathematical adventure that will span many centuries and continents!

Let's start with **Euclid**. While little definite knowledge of Euclid's life exists, he is believed to have lived during the fourth century B.C.E., though his exact birth and death dates remain unknown. Euclid's most renowned work is the textbook Elements, a comprehensive text in which he rigorously develops a wide range of mathematical concepts. Spanning thirteen volumes, Elements is reputed to be the most widely read textbook in history and serves as a foundation for modern mathematics. Of these volumes, nine focus on geometry, much of which is covered in today's standard geometry classes. One of Euclid's greatest passions was creating constructions, or drawings of geometric figures using only a straightedge and compass. These geometric constructions continue to influence mathematical education and understanding.

Emmy Noether (1882–1935) was a German mathematician whose contributions to abstract algebra and theoretical physics remain vital today. Noether faced significant gender-based prejudice that prevented her from getting academic jobs. Despite this, she developed the modern definition of a ring, which includes properties from familiar number systems such as integers and real numbers that can be applied to broader systems. Noether also created Noether's theorem, linking patterns in physics to conservation laws. Due to biases of her time, she often had to lecture under male colleagues' names, yet her brilliance was recognized by Albert Einstein, who called her a genius. Her work laid the foundation for algebraic topology and homological algebra.

Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855) was a German mathematician who made significant contributions to mathematics, physics, and astronomy. Remarkably, Gauss identified a mistake in his father's payroll calculations before the age of three. He is celebrated for proving the fundamental theorem of algebra and solving a problem that had puzzled Euclid at just nineteen. Gauss also developed the Gaussian distribution, a crucial concept in probability, characterized by its symmetrical, bell-shaped curve. His profound impact on mathematics earned him the nickname "Prince of Mathematicians," and his image, along with the Gaussian distribution, was featured on the 10 Deutsche Mark bill. Additionally, Gauss made contributions to number theory, geodesy, electromagnetism, and much more, making him one of history's greatest mathematicians.

While I will not be offering any book recommendations in this article, I encourage you to delve into the biographies of mathematicians in your mathematics textbooks. Understanding the lives and contributions of these remarkable individuals can help you gain appreciation of the evolution of the mathematics we use every day. As usual, I will end with a math joke. The joke for this week is about a mathematician who is terrified of negative numbers. He will stop at nothing (zero) to avoid them.

Fox Tales Quarterly: Meet The Staff

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Marin Airik
Writer



Arman Alborzi
Writer



Prachi Behal
Writer



Maeve Beresford
Writer



Karsten Buchert
Editor-in-Chief



Josie Gigure
Writer



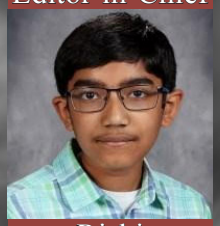
Laila Golla
Writer



Vesta Homayoun
Writer



William Kelly
Writer



Rishi Krishnamurthy
Math Minute



Alex Navas
Writer



Eli Olifson
Sports Writer



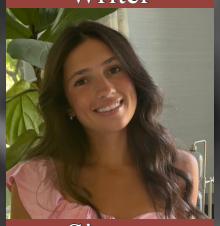
Zehra Ozkaya
Writer



Rachel Pegher
Writer



Mateo Phelan-Videl
Writer



Sienna Siegel
Writer



Paige Solomon
Writer



Emilia Sutkowski
Writer



Ian Wellman
Writer



Joe Yoshikawa
Sports Writer

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Fox Chapel Area High School
611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
www.fcasd.edu
(412) 967-2430

Dr. Michael Hower, Lead Principal
Dr. Michelle Young, Program Principal (A-L)
Dr. John McGee, Program Principal (M-Z)

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