Tiger Prints

February 2025

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Vol. 2

Groundhog Day

by: Lily

On February 2nd, millions of people around the country tuned in to watch Punxsutawney Phil, “the Seer of Seers, the Prognosticator of Prognosticators,” (sound familiar?) rise from his burrow after a long hibernation and predict either an early spring or six more weeks of winter. If you’re wondering about the history of this phenomenon and why exactly a groundhog predicts the weather, then you’ve come to the right place!



The History of Groundhog Day

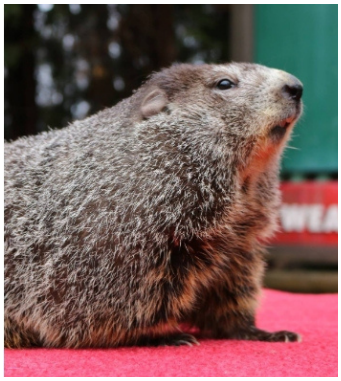
Believe it or not, the origins of Groundhog Day can be traced back to ancient times in the area of present-day Germany. Every February 1st, Celtic tribes across Europe celebrated Imbolc, a pagan festival marking the changing of the seasons from winter to spring. They believed that on this day, the Celtic goddess of winter came outside to collect her firewood. If the weather was nice, it meant that she was stocking piling firewood for the winter to last longer, while if the weather was ugly, she slept in, and would end the season early. Bears and badgers followed her lead, emerging from their dens or staying inside depending on the forecast. Because the weather affected the farming popular in the area, the Celts closely watched the behavior of the animals to determine the outcome of the seasons.

This all changed once Christianity was introduced to the area. In an attempt to spur a conversion to their religion among the Celts, the church tried to replace the festival with Candlemas on February 2nd, a day which recognized the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ. For the holiday, Christians went to church with candles to be blessed. Over time, the two celebrations combined, and the rodent forecasters remained! You might recognize this scenario as similar to the creation of Halloween, where the Celtic autumnal festival of Samhain and the Christian All Saints Day came together to create our beloved day of trick or treating. In the 1700s, German immigrants to Pennsylvania brought the tradition with them, using groundhogs native to the area instead since badgers weren’t found in the new land. In 1887, the first Groundhog Day celebration was held in Gobbler’s Knob of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Today, the city is known as the Groundhog Day capital of the world!



The History of Groundhog Day

Every February 2nd, Punxsutawney Phil of Gobbler’s Knob, Pennsylvania, emerges from his burrow and looks for his shadow. If he sees it, it’s a sign that winter will last for another six weeks. If he doesn't, an early spring is on the way. Even though groundhogs only live around 14 years in captivity, Phil, allegedly 138 years old, has supposedly been predicting the weather every February 2nd since the original 1887 celebration. For the rest of the year, our famous groundhog forecaster, his wife Phyliss, and their two kits Sunny and Shadow live at the Punxsutawney Memorial Library, where they are cared for in a climate-controlled habitat. Phil drinks a special elixir of life that gives him seven extra years of longevity with every sip.



Living Beyond Limits: The Overconsumption Crisis

by: Samantha



In today's world, we are made to believe that we need to keep up with consumerism and continue to buy things we don't need. This idea is spread by the concepts of "trends" and social media. While buying things that you don't necessarily need could be a part of life, where do we draw the line? And has overconsumption become so normalized that we don't even notice it happening in our everyday lives?

Overconsumption has been rebranded to aesthetic restocks and keeping up with the trends, and this is all due to social media. Influencers will buy items or be sent items through PR to gain views and likes for each video. To viewers, this is seen as satisfying, and sometimes inspiring to get your life together. While these videos provide temporary satisfaction, the excessive purchases from influencers creates an idea that this level of consumption is normal and okay. An example of this could be all of the water bottle fads occurring. It was Hydro Flasks in 2019-2020, Stanleys in 2023, and now Owalas. Each bottle offers something different, bright, colorful, or a unique design. These are called micro trends, and we are all falling victim to them (including myself). Some will buy a new water bottle to keep up with trends when their old one is working perfectly, and this can cause huge problems in the production line. Our resources on earth are limited, and we are creating more problems by encouraging the overbuying of products.

Between 1970 and 2021, consumer spending has gone up by 400%, and this level of consumption means detrimental effects on the environment. The release of toxic chemicals into the atmosphere and the excessive use of nonrenewable resources, such as copper, creates huge environmental issues. The issue of overconsumption has not been helped by the fact that humans are rapidly approaching our carrying capacity on Earth, leading to further depletion of resources.

While this problem arises from many issues, it can be easily fixed if we all recognize how we have to do better. This starts with you. Each individual must do their part to help stop this problem, and you are most likely a part of it. One easy thing you can do to avoid your own overconsumption is to follow the 24-hour rule. Sometimes impulse buys are inevitable when you are shopping in store, but when shopping online give yourself 24 hours before deciding to buy it- most times it is decided that it isn't needed, and this avoids the waste of whatever product was going to be bought. Another way to help slow down your own overconsumption is to donate your old clothes and shop second hand. Often there are many more sustainable ways to see if you like certain clothes, not to mention secondhand shopping puts things back into circulation, avoiding a greater ecological footprint.

Ultimately, overconsumption is a massive problem that is being encouraged by each and every one of us. Each individual has something they can do to help, so it's up to you- will you take that opportunity?

Stars of Tomorrow

by: Emma

The path ahead lies wide and clear,
Yet voices of the past still linger here.
A step I take but still recite
Past visions and moments so bright.

The past remains, solacing haunting
Yet the future looms, vast and daunting.
I'd chase the stars of the morrow,
But I still see shadows of past sorrow.

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Kirby Discovers Christmas!

by: Layla, Mackenzie, Remy

One cold and snowy night Kirby couldn't sleep because of flashing lights, and he was wondering what they were for. So Kirby decided to go find out. Kirby hopped out of bed and went out the door and jumped into one whole foot of snow… and then fell right through. He had snow all over himself and was freezing! Once he managed to get out of the freezing snow, he went to see what the pulsating lights were for. He realized that there were more than just lights--there were things on pine trees, giant blow up jolly guys, and deer with big horns. Kirby even saw one deer with a glowing red nose.

"Hmm, what is all this for?" Kirby said. Then Kirby saw a glowing thing that looked like a sparkly tree.
"It is so pretty," Kirby said in awe. He loved it. Then he was startled by the sound of loud singing. It sounded a little like this "jingle bells jingle bells jingle all the way oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!" He sang along once he got the beat. He liked all of this stuff- the lights, the trees, and that amazing music. But he wondered what it all was for.

Kirby went to the smartest person he knew to ask him what all this was. So he called up his bestie Bandana Waddle Dee! Kirby set off to go see him, sure that his bestie knew what all of this was about. When he arrived, he came into a house full of glowing decorations and music that he heard earlier. It was the most beautiful thing Kirby has ever seen, besides from the turkey leg he found the past month.

Why does everyone have all this stuff up? Even Banana Waddle Dee! He'll surely know what all this means, though.

"Hi bestie, I missed you. I just have one question: why does everyone have all these decorations and stuff? Did I miss something?"
"No Kirby, you didn't miss anything, you just don't remember!" said Bandana Waddle Dee.
"Remember what?" asked Kirby.
"Oh Kirby; you are so funny," says Bandana Waddle Dee.
"What! Well, yes, I am but remember what?" said Kirby getting a bit cross.
"Kirby, it's a holiday! Don't you remember?" asked Bandana Waddle Dee.
No… just tell me!" Kirby screams, angry now.
"IT'S CHRISTMAS!" Bandana Waddle Dee exclaims.
"Ohhhh…why didn't you tell me at first?" Kirby asks.
Banana Waddle Dee sighed. "Oh Kirby, I'm worried about you."
"I'm going to set up some decorations too." Kirby declares. "Wait… I don't have anything," he realized out loud
"Hey Kirby, why don't you go find a Christmas tree for your house?" says Bandana Waddle Dee
"Ok!" says Kirby.

Later...

"Now I need to find the perfect tree." Kirby said. "Ok this will be easy. Hmmmmmm-" he paused. "Ok maybe not. Where can I find the perfect tree… ugh!" A few minutes later, Kirby exclaimed, "I think I found the perfect tree!" The tree was about 10 ft tall. "It's perfect! I'll take it." Kirby then realized he had no idea how he would get this home.

One hour later...

After an hour of pulling to try to get the tree to move, Kirby started to worry how he would ever get it home. So, Kirby called up the strongest person he knew: Bowser.
"Hey Bowser, can you cut down a Christmas tree for me?" asked Kirby.
"Yeah, but what's in it for me?" asked Bowser
"You get to chop it really hard." said Kirby
"I do like chopping things" said Bowser, who agreed to chop the tree down and bring it to Kirby's house.
Once Kirby had put up the tree using crumpled up painted paper that was painted red and green and using popcorn on string to wrap around the tree, he went up to bed. He soon drifted off to sleep. He dreamed of eating turkey legs- his favorite food and what he considered 'the best food in the world'- and Thanksgiving dinner, his favorite meal of the year.

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Kirby Discovers Christmas! continued...

In The Morning

Kirby awoke and found that his socks that he threw on his dresser the night before were filled with candy! Kirby's cookies and milk he was saving out on the table were gone. And snow-white footprints were leading down to the chimney. But there was also one more peculiar thing. There were boxes- tons of them, under the tree, wrapped in red paper, tied up with green bows. Kirby didn't care what those things meant. He just put on this red hat with a white trim and pom-pom at the top, and he stuffed his face full of chocolate and started to open the presents. But then Kirby realized something: chocolate tasted even better than turkey legs! And as Kirby went to reach for another, he realized that he had eaten them all. "Oops, I guess I am going to have to get some more chocolate!"

Holiday Traditions

by: Emma

Everyone does something for the holidays. But everybody is unique. For example, I celebrate Christmas. And what I do is make cookies and watch "Home Alone" for the 50th time. These are some things other kids do for the holidays.

Jacob: "On Hanukkah, I usually stay home, but sometimes I go to my grandparents' house."
Marilyn: "Every year, my aunt comes over, and we make Christmas snacks, which is Chex Mix with butter and stuff."
Emmy: "We have matching pajamas, and we sleep in them the night before. And we slowly open presents, and then we play with them. We usually do family stuff the night before."
Claire: "I open up presents and set up the Christmas tree."
Avery: "I go to the city, go to a fancy restaurant, and go see the Rockettes and the Rockefeller center tree."
Amelia: "I like to bake cookies with my mom and they are usually covering every surface imaginable, so we usually give a lot away.
Audrey: "At Christmastime, All my Grandparents, Aunts, and Uncles come over and we unwrap presents."
Alanis: "I usually go far away to see some people from my family."
Mackenzie: "For Christmas, sometimes I travel out of the country to see my Grandparents."
Layla: "for Christmas, I go to my Grandparent's house, play with them, and have good family time."
Adelyn: "I usually throw a big dessert party. And on the morning of Christmas, I open presents."
Olivia: "At my house, we don't invite many people over, but we still bake and have a good time. We usually make things like cupcakes and cookies.

New Years in North Korea

by: Ally

After fighting against Japan during World War II, Kim Il Sung returned to North Korea as a hero. By 1948, he became an official supreme leader. In 1950, he had the idea to unify North and South Korea again, but not in a "yay, let's all be friends!" way. He wanted to take South Korea back by force. He wanted Korea to be one big dictatorship.

It's officially 2025 right? Well, in the USA that's right, but what about everywhere else? If you take a look at the North Korean calendar, you can see that it is only the year 114. Though as of October, they just changed to the Gregorian calendar. Their original one, the Juche calendar, all started on July 8th 1997, the third anniversary of Kim Il Sung's death, when the government decided to start the year at his birth.

After three years of nonstop war, both countries signed an agreement saying the country would remain divided. Just before he died, Kim Il Sung declared his son, Kim Jung Il, eternal leadership of the country, and the power was passed down for generations.

Why do we Procastinate?

by: Lily

You're sitting at your desk, frantically working to finish your paper before it's due tomorrow. You've had all week to work on it, but something has always distracted you–a snack, practice, or that cool new video game you were going to try. It's time to lock in–you're turning off notifications, putting that book away… and then you decide to check your email. Surely a few seconds can't hurt, right? You can work on the assignment right after.

Procrastination is that feeling when you push something off–at first it's just a few hours, then a day, then a week–which turns into lost time. In the end, procrastination makes us feel so much worse. ("Why did I just have to try that video game?") So why do we do it?

First, we have to start with what procrastination really is. The simple definition of procrastination is when you avoid a task you said you would do for no good reason, even though you know the consequences not doing it will cause. You would think your own brain would never do something that harms you in the end, but multiple studies have found that procrastination is actually one of your body's defense mechanisms. It's not exactly a lack of productivity, but just a hesitance to face emotional discomfort or stress that could be caused by doing something. By procrastinating, you're avoiding the negative emotions associated with a certain chore or task–specifically one we viewed as threatening.

In this situation, our brain acts how it does when faced with anything stressful. Stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol flood the prefrontal cortex–in charge of memory, recall, and decision making. In a second, we can go from relaxed to panicked. In an effort to avoid the threat that is causing you pressure, you opt for something easier, like folding those clothes instead of writing your essay. It makes us feel safer, as if that essay is just a problem for future-us to deal with. Procrastination provides temporary relief–making us feel slightly better in the short-term. However, constant procrastination can lead the body to use it as an excessive habit to cope with any kind of stress.

Because we procrastinate to avoid putting off tasks that make us feel scared, incompetent, unintelligent, unskilled, or confused, people who struggle to control their emotions or with low self-esteem might be more susceptible to procrastination than others. A common misconception is that people who constantly procrastinate are lazy, and that the way to correct this condition is by practicing better time-management and discipline. However, scientists have recently found that getting to the root of the stress that causes you to procrastinate can be more effective in eliminating the habit. By tending to the worries that make us procrastinate, we can better take on tasks and reduce the amount of wasted time.

Some methods of coping with procrastination include writing about why a certain task stresses you out, or separating and managing that challenging task in smaller parts. Try placing screens, games, and other distractions that can throw you off course away, to keep your mind concentrated on the work at hand.

Overall, not beating yourself up for procrastinating and instead focusing on how you can improve for next time is the most important thing you can do. So how about that report now?

Aritanya

by: Adelyn & Emilia

"Theo Mills! Go help your Papa this instant."

I wake with a start, pull on my overalls, and race downstairs. "Ma! What's wrong?! Where's Papa, what does he need?!" I yell.

"Calm yourself! Papa's fine." She says, the concern flooding onto her face. "Are you aight? It's 9:00, you were supposed to be out with Papa an hour 'n a half ago. But I reckon it'd be best if you lie down. You've never been late, 'fact you're usually early and now 'stead o' that…"

It's my turn to stare "Ma, I'm fine, just slept in a bit." I shrug a goofy smile on my mouth.

"Theo, You're 15! I know my son don't sleep in." She leans in close to my face.

I sigh and turn away. "I'm fine, Ma, thanks for looking after me." The last part's just a whisper but she hears it.

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Dad Jokes

by: Jacob

Q: I'm afraid of the calendar.
A: Its days are numbered.
Q: My wife said I should do lunges to stay in shape.
A: That would be a big step forward.
Q: Singing in the shower is fun until you get soap in your mouth.
A: Then it's a soap opera.
Q: What do a tick and the Eiffel Tower have in common?
A:They're both Paris sites.
Q: What do you call a fish wearing a bowtie?
A: Sofishticated.
Q: How do you follow Will Smith in the snow?
A: You follow the fresh prints.
Q: If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?
A: Pilgrims.
Q: I thought the dryer was shrinking my clothes.
A: Turns out it was the refrigerator all along.
Q: How does dry skin affect you at work?
A: You don't have any elbow grease to put into it.
Q: What do you call a factory that makes okay products?
A: A satisfactory.
Punchline:Dear Math, grow up and solve your own problems.
Q: What did the janitor say when he jumped out of the closet?
A: Supplies!
Q: Have you heard about the chocolate record player?
A: It sounds pretty sweet.
Q: What did the ocean say to the beach?
A: Nothing, it just waved.
Q: Why do seagulls fly over the ocean?
A:Because if they flew over the bay, we'd call them bagels.
Q: I only know 25 letters of the alphabet.
A: I don't know y.
Q: How does the moon cut his hair?
A: Eclipse it.

Aritanya

continued...



She smiles and gives me a side hug and kisses my head. "I love ya, kid, but just remember: no secrets. We're family and if ya take the day off, I'm still suspicious."

I nod but my words are lost as I head upstairs.

You see, when I was 13, I had a crush on this girl Lila and we got together. I never told Ma and Papa. But 4 months ago she went and moved. I haven't heard from her since. Tears fill my eyes.

"Get a grip, Theo; you're a man—you don't cry." I slam my fist on my bedside table and flop on the bed and the tears leak out. I heard the sound of the door and whispered conversations. Finally, I hear Papa's loud feet coming. I scramble to get in bed and look sick.

"Hey son, I heard you are sick." He gives me a look and sits on the edge of my bed.

"Yessir." I say. "Look at me, son—you're 15, you gotta pull yourself together, it's your turn to help."

TO BE CONTINUED

The Music Industry: Part 1

by: Amanda

THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT, otherwise known as TTPD, was released on April 19th, 2024 by American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift, and is her 11th studio album. The main album has 16 songs in it, however a big plot twist occurred. The album was released at 12AM EST, and at 2AM EST, 2 hours after its release, the singer announced that the album is a double album, with the sequel being titled THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT: THE ANTHOLOG. The second version of TTPD added an additional 15 songs, lengthening the album to 31 tracks. The singles were "Fortnight", which features singer Post Malone, which was released the day of the album release, and "I Can Do It With A Broken Heart", which came as a single on July 2, 2024. The album was added to the setlist of Swift's recently ended Eras Tour, which includes songs, mainly more popular singles or fan favorites, from each of her studio albums, with the exception of her debut self-titled album, which was not added to the setlist. The first surprise of the new set was performed at a Paris show on May 9, 2024. Swift also had Florence Welch from the band "Florence + The Machine" perform "Florida!!!"

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Asking a Teacher a Question

by: Aidan

"Read a book a month.
Write a children's book
Build on my fitness and health goals from 2024."

Mr. Plotkin - Principal of PVC Middle School

What are your goals for 2025?

"I plan to keep learning and "growing" in 2025 (I plan to expand my garden even more and grow a lot of new plants this year!)."

Ms. Rescigno - 6th Grade Math Teacher

"Start planning and saving money for my next big trip!"

Mrs. Bartley - Split Team English Teacher

THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT

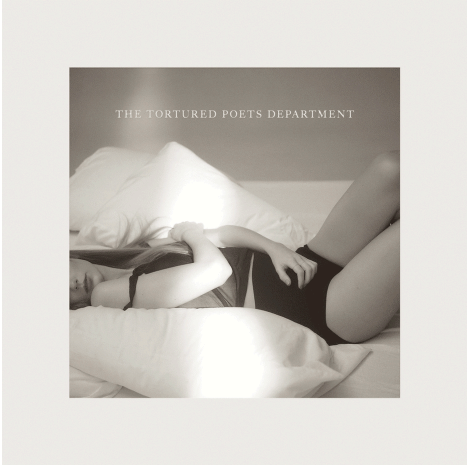
The Music Industry: Part 1 continued...

TTPD
TAYLOR SWIFT

on the set at a London show and a Miami show. The album was recently announced to have 6 nominations at the 67th Grammy Awards, which will be in early 2025. The Grammy nominations include Album Of The Year and Pop Vocal Album for full album nominations, and Song Of The Year, Record Of The Year, Best Music Video, and Best Pop Duo Performance all for Fortnight (feat. Post Malone). The album broke countless records, including most streams in a single week and the first album to win 1 billion streams in a week on Spotify. The album sold 2.474 million units within the first half of 2024. Additionally, on Black Friday of 2024, Swift released an official Eras Tour book and a vinyl of The Anthology, which had not had a vinyl or CD.

My rating: 10/10, I love the lyrics and the vocals! I'll always love a Taylor album.

1. The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived
2. So Long, London
3. Guilty As Sin?
4. I Can Do It With A Broken Heart
5. But Daddy I Love Him





Happy New Year!

by: Emma

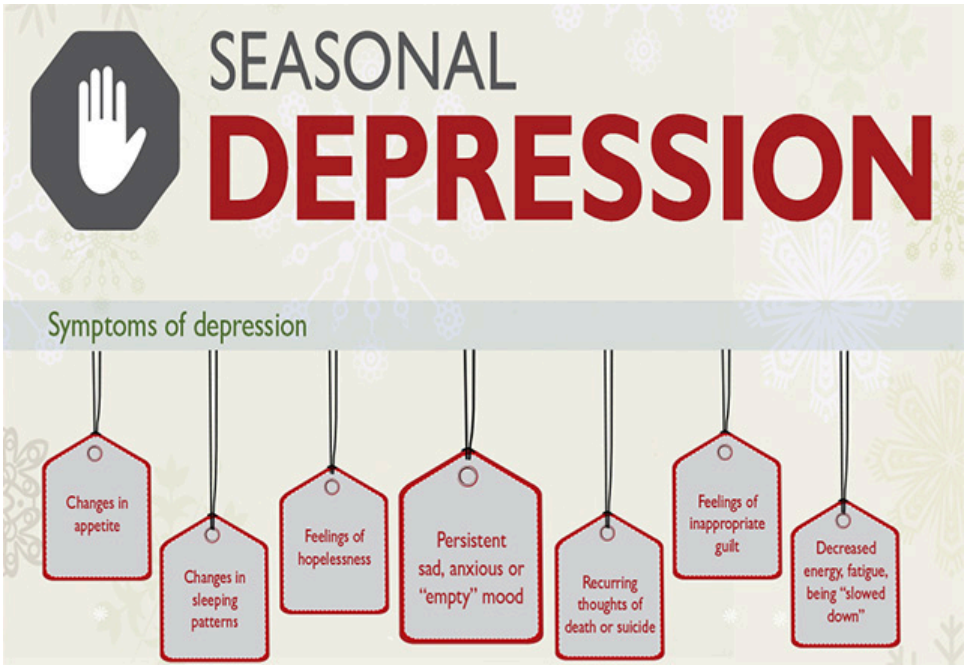


New Year's Day, celebrated on January 1st, marks the beginning of the Gregorian calendar year. It is a time for reflection, resolutions, and fresh starts. It is usually marked with fireworks, parties, and traditions aimed at bringing good luck and prosperity in the upcoming year.

Chinese New Year, or Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, is lunar-based and usually falls between late January and mid-February. Grounded in traditional rites, it is the country's most important celebration and much of Asia's. Lasting for 15 days, celebrations range from family reunions, dragon dances, and red packets (good fortune tokens), to a feast of symbolic foods. Each year has an animal in the zodiac with which it is identified, that dictates predictions and opinions for the forthcoming months. This year, Chinese New Year was celebrated from January 29 to February 13, 2025, and it is the year of the snake. People with this zodiac generally demonstrate intelligence, wisdom, and creativity.

While both mark a new start, Chinese New Year is all about family, tradition, and heritage, whereas the Western New Year is more individualistic in nature and about new possibilities. Both share one commonality—looking towards the future with hope and joy.

Editorial



Winter can be cold, dark, and dreary and some people's moods may take a similar turn. Winter is full of exciting things- sledding down freshly powdered hills, warm holiday mornings, and bright lights in windows. But the season's also a busy one. It can mean working late at night, walking home in the dark, or going through days feeling cold and bored and depressed. So why do people feel that way? How does this affect you and what can we do about it?

Seasonal depression (seasonal affective disorder, SAD) is a mood disorder that occurs during the same period yearly. According to the National Institutes of Health, "between 1.7% and 5.5% of 9-19 year old children may have seasonal affective disorder." Recently, modern society has seen influxes in anxiety and depression, especially in teens, and SAD has similar trends.

The above statistics, general weather, and ordinary teen concerns and emotions can all make this season hopeless. But winter has positives too- the holidays, school break, and time with family. It may not feel that way for everyone, but there's always things you can do to find more joy.

Family is a big part of the holidays. Coming together and spending quality time can build positive relationships that bring you joy, and give you figures you can trust and talk to when you need them. During the holidays and the new year, try to come together with family. Whether it's hosting a big gathering, or just calling someone, strengthening those relationships and memories can greatly benefit you and bring much more joy.

In addition, looking past the holidays, take a moment to come up with a new years resolutions. If you're feeling stuck, negative, or experiencing something similar to SAD, reflecting can help you identify your feelings and a solution. Find the things that make you feel worse- weather, relationships… whatever it is for you. And then brainstorm what can make you feel better. Maybe it's a morning run, meditation, drawing by your window, reading outside. Find things that make you feel relaxed and happy again. Your New Years resolutions can reflect those activities. Make this year the year you build beneficial habits and a positive environment for yourself. Stick with your resolutions to build a ladder of joy out of whatever hole you're stuck in.

Winter can be a hard season. Feelings can be a hard opponent. But even when it's hard to talk about or read about, if you're feeling trapped, it's not embarrassing to find a way to escape. The more joy you create in your life, the happier you'll be. The happier you are, the more free and ready you'll be for new opportunities and activities. From there, you'll accomplish new things, meet new people, and build your life exactly the way you want it. Just remember to always keep the joy in your life, no matter how busy you get- that way, whatever happens, you know how to find the light in darkness.

Editor Avery
All pieces edited by Avery & Emma
Newspaper designed by Emma