



Northern Light



Dreams Do Come True: MLK III Visits NMS

By Taji Wilson



For 16 minutes on August 28th, 1963, one of the most iconic speeches in history was given by one of the most prominent leaders in the civil rights movements. That speaker was none other than Martin Luther King Jr. and that was his now infamous "I have a dream" speech. Just four years later he would visit this very town of Great Neck and inspire the students and staff at South High School.

Fast forward 58 years and this very same town was privileged to have his son, Martin Luther King III, visit our school district. We were able to listen to a man speak on matters that he learned from his great father and from his own life's experiences. MLK III's speech spoke to me in many ways that I hadn't really thought about. The main message that I received was that anything is possible as long as we have faith and strongly believe in a cause that drives a person. He also taught us that we are a great generation that will persevere through hardship and that we will be the future.

It was important to have Mr. King come to Great Neck North Middle School because it reminded us all of the past and of his father's legacy. Just like his Dad, he inspired the students and staff with his strong message of equality, justice, and hope for our future.

I had the immense honor of being able to represent our entire school by presenting Mr. King with a certificate of commendation and I gave him a bag of GNNMS swag. It was truly something that I will always remember. Not only was he such a strong speaker like his father, but he also had a very strong and confident handshake. My personal take away from this experience is that "Dreams do come true!"

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Cast Member Interviews:

The Lightning Thief

By Karin Norber

Recently, I've experienced being part of the musical cast for *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* as an ensemble member. In the musical, it's like having close friends that feel like family while performing. In this article, you will be part of interviews of a few cast and crew members and their experience in the musical!

Athena Jin, a 6th grader, played Chiron (the guy who said his father ate his children). Here's what she said: "When you are in the musical, you're never lonely after school. The cast and crew are like family to me, and everybody feels like family. It could be pretty serious sometimes, but we can always find time for fun. During our Tuesday in school rehearsal, while waiting for lunch, we all played quackadilioso and had lots of fun."

Oshrie Salman, another 6th grader, was an ensemble member. She said, "I felt excited and nervous while doing the musical. The cast and crew were like family to me."



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The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical Cast Member Experience

By Lily Weinberg

On March 19 and 20, *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* was performed at North Middle School.

As a cast member, I'm sure these days will always be something I will remember: making handshakes with friends backstage, or doing each other's makeup, starting in November and looking over lines, and doing dances. These are the times in my life that I won't forget.

Getting the role I got didn't matter to me very much. All I cared about was being on stage. Making new friends of all grades made my middle school experience so much better. Waving to my cast members in the hallways is something that makes me smile and makes my day better. Being a sixth grader, I know that I will be doing the play next year.

I hope that everyone who came to see it loved it. I just hope that the people who watched the play see the family that we became and join the play for 2026. I highly recommend doing the play because people of all ages come together to make a show. You make a family that would have never happened if you didn't join the play.

When I signed up for the play, I knew nothing about Percy Jackson, but I still joined because I wanted a sixth grade school year that I would remember. The play was really amazing. Having pizza parties, singing the songs at the bus platform, making friends from all grades and having Sunday rehearsals—the whole experience was amazing. It might seem like a lot of work, and it is, but it goes by fast. It might seem like a pain doing Sunday rehearsals, but it's so fun to speed your Sundays with some of the most amazing people. So as I've been saying, you should join the play next year because you make a family that you would have never have had without the play.



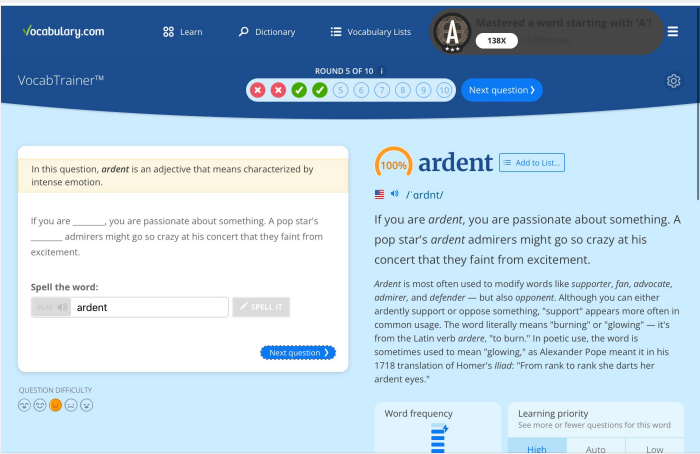
Vocabulary.com

By Eric Lu

This year, many teachers at NMS decided to add a new exciting program, called vocabulary.com! Vocab.com is a vocabulary website that allows its students to answer personalized questions to improve their understanding of vocabulary words, from easier words like “trauma” to challenging words like “callithump”! Teachers can assign lists for students to work on, or students can use their own time to practice on their own. From what I have done on vocabulary.com, I can comfortably say that my vocabulary set has greatly improved. To see your progress, vocabulary.com sets a score, called your “proficiency,” which improves as you master vocabulary words.



An example of a proficiency score



Mastering a word

Another great feature of Vocabulary.com is that it allows teachers, schools, and students to compete against other people and schools in the country through a contest called the “Vocabulary Bowl” which happens every few months. In this contest, schools, teachers, and students compete to master and learn the most vocabulary words! NMS is among one of the schools to enter this bowl. NMS is actually in 6th in the U.S. and Canada with over 27,000 words mastered! High scoring teachers and schools get honored!

In NMS, whether you know her or not, Ms. Sephton, a 7th grade English teacher, got a special plaque for being high-ranked (8th out of all teachers in the U.S. and Canada) in the Vocab Bowl. When I asked Ms. Sephton how she felt about getting the plaque, she told me that she “...felt very proud and honored to receive the plaque, as it serves as a dedication to my students’ learning, and as a representation of their hard work.”

Game Night

By Sophia Kwon

Game Night! Have you ever wondered what Game Night is? Game Night is a special event, which can be at school or anywhere. At North Middle School, Game Night was held on February 5 at 7 p.m.

Did you go to Game Night? I did! It was a very fun experience where you watched or went up on the stage to do fun games like answering questions with kids vs teachers or a scavenger hunt. They even did a raffle! Raffles are when you sign up for a prize like a Xbox, Nintendo Switch, or even gift cards. This raffle also didn’t cost any money, so when you got there, they gave you a ticket and all you had to do was write down your name and hope to get picked. I signed up for a ticket, but sadly I didn’t get picked.

Even though I didn’t win the raffle, I still had a very fun experience. Everybody was cheering and screaming for the kids to win. I was the one who was just taking photos and videos of the Game Night like a photographer instead of shouting and yelling like the other people were: “KIDS KIDS KIDS KIDS KIDS! KIDS ARE BETTER THAN TEACHERS! VOTE FOR KIDS!” My ear was bursting. It was like there were 10,000 speakers in front of me.

During one of the events, the host said, “THE NEXT ROUND IS... WHOEVER MAKES THE MOST PAPER BALLS AND THROWS THEM IN THE BASKET WINS!” Although my ear hurt, instead of taking videos and pictures I actually watched this round of the game because it was kind of like art, and I really like art.

I had to leave early since it was 9 p.m. already and the Game Night started at 7 p.m., so I left and went home without seeing who won the raffle. The next day at school during 9th period, I heard the announcement about who won the raffle.

Clearly, this was an extraordinary experience of Game Night. I had so much fun.

Advice from Miss Know-It-All

Dear Miss Know-It-All,

I LOVE the theater! I've seen twenty-six Broadway shows, and I've been in seven musicals since age eight. I decided to do the musical at school this year, but when I was about to go on stage, I was feeling kinda nervous. I was so scared about the whole show! I feel like I could've enjoyed the experience on stage more if I could've calmed my anxiety. What should I do when I start to feel nervous?

Sincerely, Stage-Frightened

Dear Stage-Frightened,

Well, I get nervous all the time. Don't worry, it's completely normal. What I tend to do when I get scared is imagine the worst possible scenario that could happen on stage and think to myself, *How would I deal with this situation?* Then, when I figure that out, I breathe in and out, and I relax. So if I was scared that people might make fun of me, I would explain to the person that it's hard to have the confidence to go on stage and act, sing and dance! But at least I'm putting myself out there instead of watching from the audience. Always remind yourself why you do theater, and that this is something fun that you WANT to do. Everyone in that audience wants you to succeed! Best of luck and break a leg! :)

Sincerely, Miss Know-It-All



Dear Miss Know-It-All,

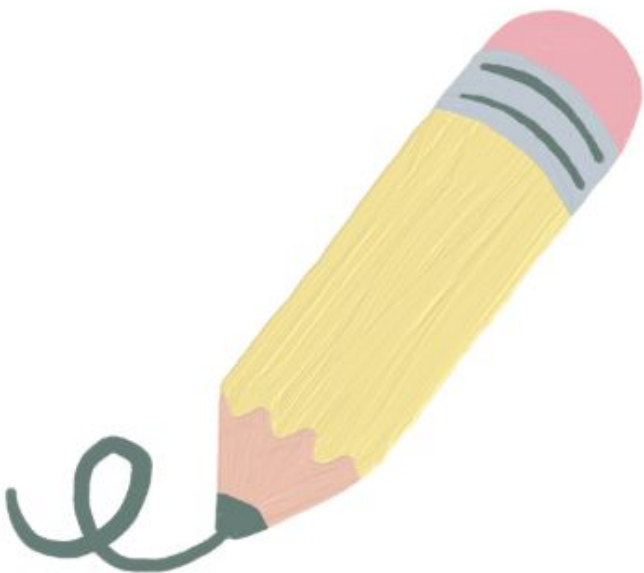
When I sit down at my desk at home to study for a test, I lose focus really quickly and never really get anything done. How can I be more productive when I study?

Sincerely, Distracted

Dear Distracted,

When I get really distracted, I can't re-focus, but when I turn off all of my devices and set a timer, I don't get distracted by my phone or my other devices. When I put on a timer, I give myself some breaks so I can relax and process everything that I learn to memorize it. If I need to memorize something front and back, I would usually make Quizlets, flash cards, Kahoots, go to extra help, study with friends, look over notes, or just repeat the specific thing right before I go to bed, when I wake up, and before the test. Always remember to relax because you shouldn't let your nerves get in the way.

Sincerely, Miss Know-It-All



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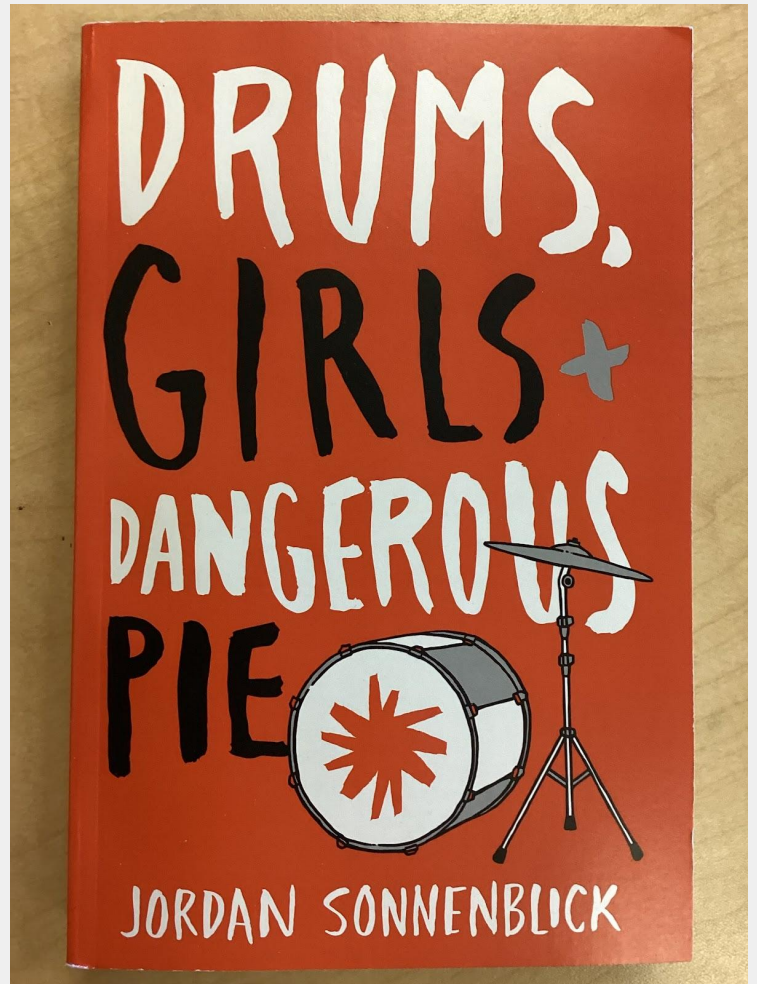
Reviews, Music, Food, and MORE

Book Review: *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*

By Dylan Chen

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie by Jordan Sonnenblick is about Steven Alper (also known as “the Peasant”), an eighth-grade boy who’s the drummer in the school band, and secretly has a crush on a girl named Renee. He is also bugged by his little brother Jeffrey. Later, his life spirals out of control when he finds out that Jeffrey is sick, and he will never be the same after that.

I like this book because of the themes inside it, like how he decided to choose family over friends and how his attempts to hide Jeffrey’s sickness were futile. It also shows the importance of being aware of what’s actually going on. To summarize, it’s a very fantastic book that you should read.



Hot chocolate, with cheese on the side?

By Owen Zar

Hot chocolate and cheese? So many questions. What type of cheese? Should I top my cocoa with whipped cream? Do I put cheese in the drink? This isn’t really a combo, but more of a pairing. Take a swig of hot chocolate and finish it off with a slice of your favorite fresh cheese. Do you think it will be delicious, or disgusting?

A rich creamy pure hot chocolate without toppings. A single slice of extra sharp cheddar cheese square.

I think it was delicious. Slight saltiness from the cheese and creamy warmth from the hot chocolate. I noticed how the cold cheese counteracted with the warmth of the hot chocolate. I would recommend you try it, even if you are reluctant at first; you might be surprised.

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Reviews, Music, Food, and MORE (cont'd)

Book Recommendations

By Becky Aguirre

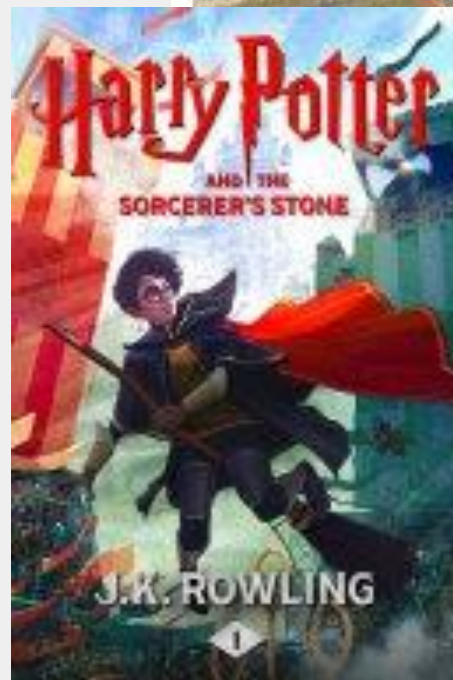
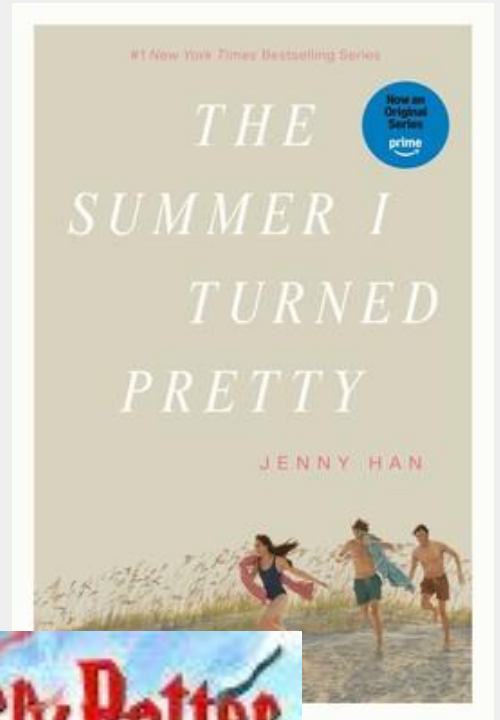
All of us have read books that we fell in love with, right? Because I know I did and these are some of my favorites. There are many genres of books, like fantasy, horror, romance, and others. Each of them is fascinating and interesting to read. But I have to warn you I love the genre “thriller.”

Let’s get on with the books I have read so far! First, one of my personal favorites is *The Summer I Turned Pretty* by Jenny Han. This is the book I have been obsessed with, and it’s the best because of the main character Belly. The book has the greatest characters. This is a great book to read at any time or especially the summertime! It also has a great lesson at the end. I’m not going to spoil it, so you should read it! The book’s author also has other books like *It’s Not a Summer Without You*, *We’ll Always Have Summer*, *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before*, *Always and Forever* *Lara Jean*, and *P.S. I Still Love You*. These are also good books. Jenny Han is a great author and she has a lot of good books.

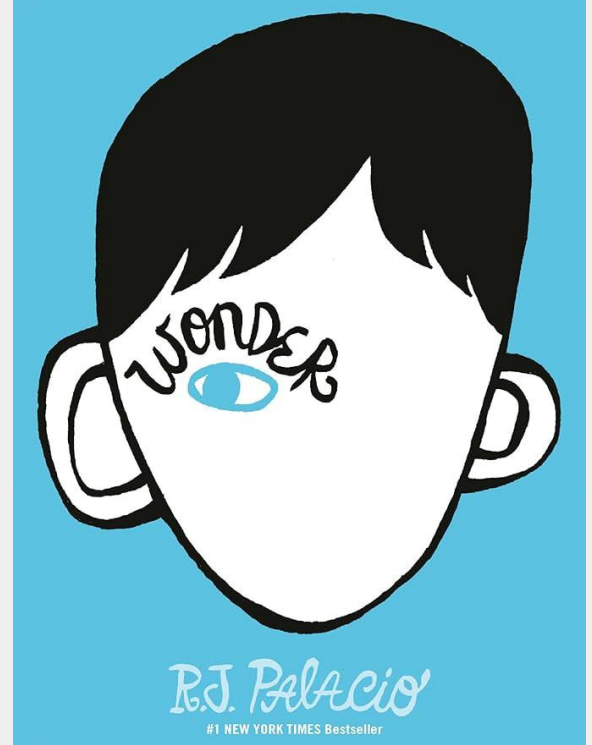
Another book that is one of my favorites is Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling. The whole series is the best, but my favorite is the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. It’s the best because when Professor Quirrell had that thing on the back of his head, it was cool but nasty at the same time. Also, if you watched the movie, it is even more nasty.

Finally, another book that is twice as good is *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. If you’ve never read it, you should! The main character Auggie has a face deformation, and when he first started 5th grade he was getting bullied because of the way he looked. After he made his first friend, his friend betrayed him, but then his friend realized that it was a mistake. This book is also based on a true story about a boy who had face deformation.

These are all the books that I would recommend you to read because they are all great books.



A beautiful, funny and sometimes soul-making story of quiet transformation."
—The Wall Street Journal



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Reviews, Music, Food, and MORE (cont'd)

Pancake Recipe

By Audree Chen

Pancakes are a delicious breakfast dish made from flour, eggs, and milk. Cooked on a frying pans, its batter transforms into soft, porous golden cakes. They're served warm, usually with maple syrup and butter.

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 2 eggs
- 3 g yeast
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 20 g melted butter



Procedure

1. Add the flour, sugar, melted butter, and yeast to a bowl. Crack the eggs, and add their yolks and whites. Microwave the milk for 30 seconds, and add that as well. Mix until smooth. If it's too dry, add more milk. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it sit overnight.
2. The next day, give it a slight mix, and pour it into a pan on a stove. Turn the stove on. When the pancake turns yellow and solid, flip it. When they are ready, serve onto plates. Add butter and/or maple syrup if desired.

2025 Album Release Dates

By Maya P. Halpert

Middle school can get very busy. With so many after school activities, studying, tests, and homework assignments, it can be hard to find any downtime. When those rare moments of peace come, like on the bus or over the weekend, it's important to have something you enjoy ready to go to make the most of that precious period of time. What better way to spend that time than listening to music? It can be your own little escape, and you can catch up on the best new tracks and artists. Personally, I always wait in anticipation for my favorite singer to release a new album. So, to save you the trouble of scouring the internet for release dates, I've compiled a list of some of the most anticipated albums of 2025, in order of release. Feel free to jump around the list for any titles that interest you.

***Parasomnia* by Dream Theater - February 7**

This is the sixteenth studio album of the progressive metal band Dream Theater. The album revolves around the idea of parasomnias, which are sleep disorders that involve abnormal behaviors or emotions when falling asleep or waking up. One of the most exciting things about this album for fans of the band is that it marks the first full-length studio album with the return of drummer Mike Portnoy. In September 2010, Portnoy announced his departure from the band after 25 years, then announced his return in October 2023. There are eight tracks on this album, some almost reaching the twenty minute mark. Tons of reviewers have loved the album, and interestingly enough say that it really picks up in the second half of the album. It's a bit conceptual, since the first track is solely electric guitar, hinting at the beginning of someone's nightmare, and the rest of the album describes the details of their long night. The album ends with a whispered "wake up" and the sound of an alarm clock, which signifies morning, and the end of the parasomnias.

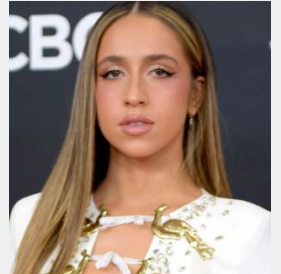


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Reviews, Music, Food, and MORE (cont'd)

***So Close To What* by Tate McRae - February 21**

Tate McRae recently exploded in popularity, climbing Billboard 100 to hit number 1 with her current album *So Close To What* (from peaking at number 13 in 2022 with her previous album *I Used To Think I Could Fly*). That being said, her fanbase is quite large now, so there was a lot of hype for this album. It has a very 2000s R&B sound, which deviates slightly from her previous albums. I listened through the album a few weeks ago, and I thought it was pretty good, but nothing really special in terms of modern pop music. However, if that is a genre you do like, and you're into singers like Sabrina Carpenter and Billie Eilish, then definitely give it a listen. Tate McRae is actually on her "Miss Possessive" tour right now, so if you enjoy the album, you might want to try to get tickets for the tour.



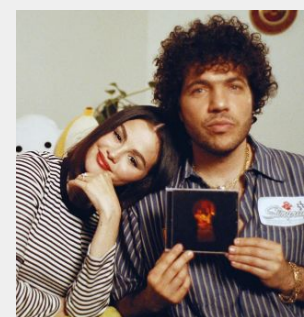
***MAYHEM* by Lady Gaga - March 7**

For Lady Gaga's new album, she made it seem as though she would finally return to her iconic dark-pop sound. It was to many listeners' surprise when the album dropped and tons of tracks, like "Killah" and "Zombieboy" were actually taking influence from a bunch of artists from the 80s and 90s, like Prince, Gwen Stefani, and Michael Jackson. Although, I can't say this disappointed many people, since there still is a healthy dose of her electro pop style featured prominently throughout the album on songs such as "Garden of Eden" and "Perfect Celebrity." Throughout this year and some of last year, she made many public appearances teasing songs and outfits that previewed the new album, which hyped up many fans. Some of the fan-favorites from this album that really capture its essence include "Vanish Into You," which made it to the top of many charts on streaming platforms like Apple Music and Spotify, and "How Bad Do U Want Me." In fact, Gaga actually considered taking "How Bad Do U Want Me" off the album, but her fiancé was sure the fans would love it, so she kept it. Gaga is going on her "Mayhem Ball" soon, so if you enjoy the album, you might want to try to get tickets for the tour.



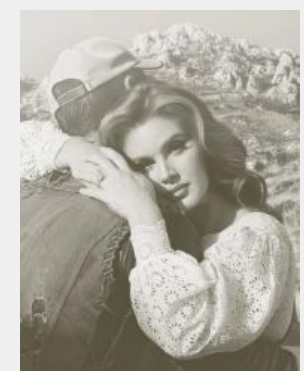
***I Said I Love You First* by Benny Blanco and Selena Gomez - March 21**

Newly engaged Benny Blanco and Selena Gomez are celebrating their engagement, which was announced December 11, 2024, with a collab album that features fourteen love songs. The album is mostly pop, but sounds more Latin pop on "I Can't Get Enough" and hyperpop on "Bluest Flame." In an interview, they said they one day want to "share it with their kids." The whole album just feels very cheerful, like Gomez and Blanco are really happy together. Many of Gomez's previous albums have been more downbeat, so many fans have been really excited to hear music from her that she wrote when she was actually happy. (In case you're curious, Gomez said "I love you" first.)



***The Right Person Will Stay* by Lana Del Rey - May 21**

On her past albums, Lana Del Rey has generally been firmly in the alternative genre, but for her tenth studio album, she will be going in a completely different direction. *The Right Person Will Stay* will feature a collection of sixteen original country songs, all produced by producer Jack Antonoff. Antonoff has produced music for several other popular artists such as Taylor Swift, Sia, and Carly Rae Jepsen, so I have faith that *The Right Person Will Stay* will be a big hit. Del Rey has teased a track, "Henry, Come On," and revealed the cover art for the song, but has yet to release it.



Entertainment Pages

Reviews, Music, Food, and MORE (cont'd)

Something Beautiful by Miley Cyrus - May 30

Miley Cyrus, a former child star famous for the *Hannah Montana* franchise before branching into pop with hits like “Party in the U.S.A.,” is coming back with a brand new album. Little is known about Cyrus’ new album except its release date, and that it is inspired by Pink Floyd’s *The Wall*. The album will also supposedly feature alt-rock style tracks, which varies from her previous album, *Endless Summer Vacation*. The trailer for the movie, which will be released in June, and album cover recently came out, so definitely look that up if you’re interested in the album. The album will feature thirteen original tracks, and will be produced by Cyrus herself, Shawn Everett, Michael Pollack, Jonathan Rado, and Maxx Morando. It will also feature Brittany Howard in some way.



. (*PERIOD*) by Kesha - July 4

Finally, after a long legal dispute with her former producer Dr. Luke, Kesha is back with her sixth studio album. The album, which is titled *PERIOD*, stylized with the “.” icon, will be released with Kesha Records, her new record label. This is a huge deal because she had wanted to split with her original label, RCA Records, after her legal dispute with Dr. Luke, but was signed to a certain number of albums with them. After releasing her final album with RCA Records, *Gag Order*, she was finally free to release her own music away from her strained past. Kesha has already released three singles from the album: “JOYRIDE”, the first song ever released with Kesha Records, “YIPPEE-KI-YAY”, which sounds almost country, and “DELUSIONAL”, which is a synth ballad about self empowerment. In promotion of the album, Kesha has added a huge pink dot onto all of her album covers, which can also be seen on the album cover for . (*PERIOD*).



Hopefully, some of these albums sparked your interest! As you may have noticed, most of these albums only span across the first half of the year, so be sure to keep an eye out wherever you stream music for new albums the rest of the year. Happy listening!

Rain by Haley Seta



Rise in Bird Flu Cases

By Scarlet Zhang

This spring there are several of your friends who are out absent. The people who are absent from school have the flu. The flu has been around for almost forever, but this year it has spread around the people more! Even further, our chickens have been exposed to the flu as well. The eggs most of them lay have the flu too which makes it difficult to sell them. The prices of the eggs have risen and are scarce. Get your chicken eggs before they are all gone!



Human/Animal Genetic Mutations

By Jacob Brown

Do you ever know about diseases that affect people's everyday lives? Do you know what causes them in the first place? Do you know what their genetic code is? Well, this article will tell you all about it. I will talk about a human mutation and an animal mutation. A mutation is a nucleotide(s) of RNA added to a DNA molecule that doesn't comply with the complementary strand and adds an extra nucleotide, removes one, or adds the wrong match. Each one has its own unique and dangerous/helpful effects. I hope you feel like you have a better understanding of mutations after this. Enjoy reading this article!

Familial Dysautonomia(FD)

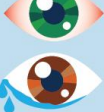
Familial dysautonomia is a rare condition that is inherited and it affects your nervous system. It affects body actions such as breathing, digesting, forming tears, regulating your blood pressure and body temperature. And salivating. That suggests that providers diagnose FD with specific genetic testing. Additionally, it affects your sensory nervous system which includes the ability to taste and sensitivity to pain and temperature. That suggests that you would benefit from medication and surgery. Overall, it is passed down from your parents and affects your whole body dangerously with the changing of nerve cells.

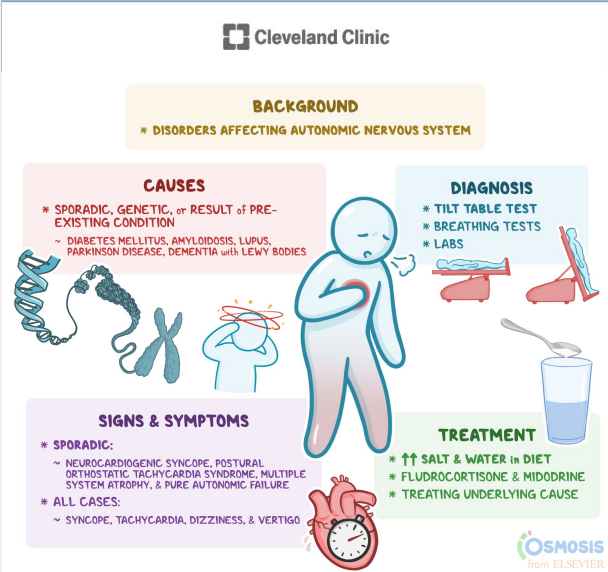
Familial dysautonomia affects people mainly from Ashkenazi Jewish heritage. For example, 1 in 10,000 of them have it in the US and 1 out of 3,600 have it in Israel at birth. Additionally, both parents must carry a mutation in a gene ELP 1 that makes a protein to help your nervous system develop. That suggests that if the gene has a mutation, problems in your nervous system are bound to occur. Also, systems begin when the affected person is in infancy. Early symptoms include difficulty feeding, dysphasia, body temperature maintaining, lack of tears, poor growth, hypotonia. That suggests that as a child ages, they hold their breath for extended periods of time until there are 6. Some systems that slowly get added to your agenda are arrhythmia, scoliosis, GERD, strabismus, lung infections, osteoporosis, seizures, and vomiting. Finally, 40 percent of people with FD have autonomic crises.

Your healthcare provider asks about your systems and does a physical exam to diagnose you. For example, antibiotics, permanent pacemakers, CPAP, eye drops, IV fluids, medications, occupational therapy, physical therapy, surgery, and tube feeding are viable treatment options. Overall, researchers study for new treatments in clinical trials to help treat the disease. Though you can't reduce your risk of it, if you're an Ashkenazi Jewish person, you should get genetic counseling to see if you carry the ELP1 Gene. Finally, half the people with the condition live into their 30s which reduces age by half and need assistance in walking by 50. If you need to take care of yourself, avoid hot weather, limit stressful situations, have no long car rides, seek monitoring from your healthcare provider, and don't reduce bathroom activity

Dysautonomia

Symptoms can affect many body systems and may include:

 Dry or watery eyes.	 Swings in body or skin temperature.	 Vision problems.
 Chest pain.	 Shortness of breath.	 Trouble swallowing.
 Mood swings.	 Pinpoint or wide eye pupils.	 Dizziness.
 Fatigue.	 Sexual dysfunction.	 Migraines.



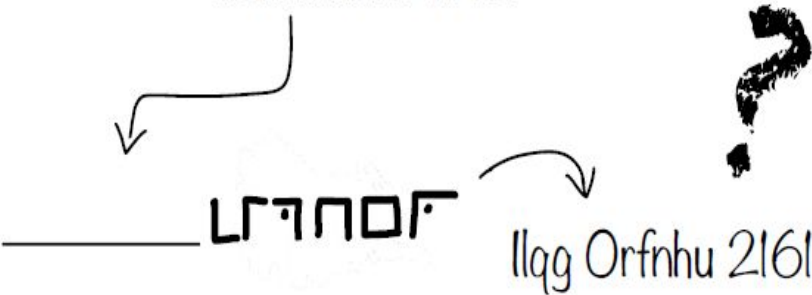
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24220-familial-dysautonomia#overview>

Creator's Corner

Puzzle

By Josh Shaul

What was the last name of the guy who led the Roman armies in the Gallic Wars and subsequently became dictator from 49 BC until his assassination in 44 BC?





Left

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

Right

The Students are having trouble finding where they sit. The teacher only said the following directions.

- Jeff is across from Rose
- Craig is on the top
- Lucy is in spot 4
- Dylan is somewhere to the right of Rose
- Craig is across from Jay
- Kai has one space between him and Craig
- Dylan is in a corner
- Jeff is not next to Jay
- Luke is on the bottom row

Please find the locations of Craig, Kai, Dylan, and Rose in that order.



Your goal is to find the hidden Post-it Note using this clue. 

Once found, put the secret code on the note on this announcement.

DO NOT REMOVE THE POST-IT

Good Luck!

DIFFICULTY: Hard

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Once lock is found, please follow these instructions.

1. CLOSE DOOR
2. PUT IN SAME CODE YOU USED TO ENTER
3. LOCK LOCKER
4. RESET TO 0000 PLEASE

PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS SO EVERYONE CAN HAVE FUN.

Spring

By Lily Weinberg

The flowers are blooming
You can smell the warm breeze
coming
People are hiding eggs and seder
plates are set
You can hear the birds chirping and
building their nests
The trees are growing back there
leaves
Everyone is feeling the warm spring
breeze
The sun is coming out
You can hear the kids laughter, plays
and shouts
The rain is starting to fall down
All the birds are going back to their
hometown
It's spring time now

