



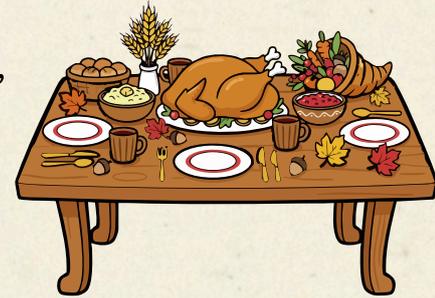
dressed in costumes and went door to door for food or money, kind of like the Halloween that we celebrate today. This meaning came from Europe. The people of Europe celebrated this because it marked the last day of harvest and the first day of winter for Celtic farmers. Halloween in Europe was originally called Samhain.



The Hispanic Halloween roots come from the rituals of Indigenous peoples of Mexico, where skulls were crafted in spectacular ways to honor deceased relatives. The main way they honor the dead is by leaving delicious treats on their altars or the Hispanic term las ofrendas. They call it Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. However, Día de los Muertos is actually a celebration of life rather than death. Rather than death ending life, it was believed that new life came from death. The holiday is an opportunity to remember and celebrate the lives of departed loved ones. It's not supposed to be scary. Halloween is celebrated on October 31st, and people usually celebrate Día de los Muertos on November 1st and 2nd.

Thanksgiving

What we call Thanksgiving was first known as a harvest day. During the autumn of 1621, at least 90 Wampanoag joined 52 English people at what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts, to mark a successful harvest. Wampanoag are people of the first light. It is remembered today as the "First Thanksgiving," although no one back then used that term. The concept of an annual day of thanks later spread. By 1863, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln officially proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day to be held each November. Today, the holiday is a day for Americans to gather and express gratitude. Thanksgiving is currently celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November.



Labor Day

Labor Day is rooted in the late nineteenth century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the many contributions workers have made to America's strength, prosperity, and well-being. The first Labor Day parade was held on September 5, 1882, in New York City, organized by the Central Labor Union. Following the deaths of several workers during the Pullman Strike in 1894, the U.S. Congress unanimously passed legislation making Labor Day a national legal holiday. President Grover Cleveland signed it into law six days later. The holiday is typically celebrated with parades, parties, and public recognition of the American labor movement. Labor Day is currently celebrated on the first Monday of September.



Indigenous Peoples' Day

Indigenous People's Day was first proposed by Indigenous people at a 1977 United Nations conference to counteract anti-Indigenous discrimination, as well as the inaccurate narrative that Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas, which had been inhabited for millennia by over 600 Indigenous nations. The holiday is meant to celebrate and honor the past, present, and future of Native American people. Berkeley, California, was the first city to officially rename the holiday in 1992. Since then, many states, cities, and universities across the U.S. have formally adopted the holiday. Indigenous Peoples' Day is currently celebrated on the second Monday of October.



Veterans' Day

The first celebration using the term Veterans Day occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947. Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran who enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942 and served with distinction throughout World War II, organized "National Veterans Day," which included a parade and other festivities, to honor all veterans. The event was held on November 11, then designated Armistice Day to commemorate the end of World War I. Armistice Day was first observed in 1919 and became a legal holiday in the U.S. in 1938. In 1954, Congress changed the name from Armistice Day to Veterans Day to recognize American veterans of all wars. Veterans Day is currently celebrated on November 11th.



THE ORIGINS OF THE BELOVED CORN MAZE

BY AVA KLINE

Mazes have been around the world for centuries, being staples in some parts of the world as a sign of wealth or status. Corn mazes, however, have not been around for nearly as long, only a mere 30 years or so. The first ever corn maze built in the United States was built in 1993 by Don Fratz and Adrian Fisher. Don Fratz was a producer and director who did events like Broadway shows and Super Bowl Halftime shows. The idea for a corn maze came to Don Fratz while he was looking down on the contours of farmlands on a flight.



The maze was built and shaped at Lebanon Valley in Annville, Pennsylvania. It was dubbed “The Amazing Maize Maze,” and the maze itself was cut into the shape of a dinosaur named “Cornelius the Corbasaurus.” The maze attracted people from all over and soon gained so much traction that other farms began catching on and making their own mazes. Nowadays, corn mazes are a staple of the Fall season, and there are more than 500 corn mazes a year. Aren’t corn mazes just a-maize-ingly fun to do?

Fun Fact: The first ever corn maze used a grid-system to plot the design of the corn maze, and all the stalks were pulled by hand to make the design. Some cornmazes now still use that grid system today, but many take a more high-tech approach and use computer-generated designs and GPS-guided mowers that cut the shapes into the field.

Corn Mazes Near Rising Sun:

- The Lavender Place Corn Maze
- Milburn Orchard Corn Maze
- Brad’s Farm Market Corn Maze
- Beachmont Corn Maze



ARTS IN CECIL AND BEYOND

BY ELLIOTT JETER

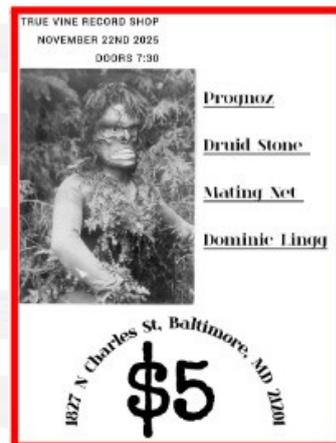
In Cecil County, Maryland, things for musical and visual artists can seem bleak; there is a noticeable lack of radical individuals and art. Also the simple fact that Cecil County’s population is smaller than, for example, Baltimore’s, where there is a thriving “arts scene.” In Cecil County, there are mainly physical art institutions. In Rising Sun, there is the Art Den where the activities range from painting to spinning clay. There is also the Elkton Station Gallery. There are just a few music stores in Cecil County, notably the Rising Sun Music Emporium in Rising Sun which functions as a music store as well as a recording studio. In addition, Cecil College offers courses in art and design where topics can focus from art history to digital arts to graphic design. Cecil College also has performing arts degrees which can range from music performance to audio technology.

ARTISTS IN CECIL COUNTY

Finding information on specific artists is tricky in small, rural Cecil County. There is the Cecil County Art Council, which has a webpage dedicated to members. Some of the artists mentioned are Abigail McBride, a painter; Donna Steck-McMahon, who specializes in painting and mixed media; and Kristina Goverts, who has her mediums of Fabric & Painted Installations.

There are two musical acts that come to mind first. I’m sure there are more, but one of the most documented is David Hastings’ band Tidewater Adams. David Hastings is the Program Coordinator of Fine Arts at CCPS, and Tidewater Adams plays alternative rock and covers.

Secondly is Prognoz. Prognoz™ is a noise rock/art punk outfit with members that are current and past Rising Sun High School students – Logan Perry and Elliott Jeter, as well as August Payne who goes to Solanco High School in Pennsylvania. Prognoz is technically based in Cecil County but performs mostly in Baltimore. Prognoz has a show November 22nd, 2025, at The True Vine Record Store. They will be joined by Druid Stone from Herndon, Virginia, as well as Baltimore natives Mating Net and free improvisation specialist Dominic Lingg. My mission with Prognoz is to bring radical music to Cecil County.



FLASH TO THE PAST: *RISING SUN HIGH SCHOOL*

BY AMBER KENNEDY AND CHLOE KLINE

IN 1931, RISING SUN HIGH SCHOOL OPENED ON PEARL STREET. IN 1991, IT MOVED TO THE BUILDING WE ALL KNOW TODAY ON TIGER DRIVE IN NORTH EAST. WE WANTED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL'S PAST BY INTERVIEWING TEACHERS WHO HAVE BEEN HERE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME LIKE PERSONAL FINANCE TEACHER, MR. OPP!

Q: WHEN DID YOU START TEACHING HERE?

A: SEPTEMBER 1991, WHEN THE BUILDING OPENED.

Q: HOW HAS THE BUILDING CHANGED SINCE THEN?

A: PORTABLES WERE ADDED, A NEW TURF FIELD, CONNECTED TO CALVERT PARK/CECIL ARENA, AND THE PRACTICE FOOTBALL FIELD IS NOW A PARKING LOT.

Q: WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS DID THE SCHOOL HAVE WHEN IT FIRST OPENED?

A: MOST SPORTS ARE THE SAME, BUT COROLLARY SPORTS AND SWIMMING WERE ADDED IN THE 2000S.

Q: HOW HAS THE CURRICULUM CHANGED?

A: MORE STATE TESTING, AND COUNTY TESTS REPLACED TEACHER-CREATED TESTS.

Q: HOW HAS STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE CHANGED?

A: I FEEL STUDENTS' GOOD BEHAVIOR HAS STAYED CONSISTENT. IN FACT, MY SENIORS ARE VERY POLITE!

Q: WHEN DID EACH SPORT START IF REMEMBERED?

A: FOOTBALL IN CECIL COUNTY STARTED IN THE MID-1970S.



RSHS THEN & NOW



Q: ANY CRAZY STORIES OR MEMORIES?

A: TEACHING AND COACHING WONDERFUL STUDENTS AND STUDENT ATHLETES FOR 40 YEARS, AND SEEING THEM IN SOCIETY AS PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS.

Bugs: To Squish or To Save?

By Nora Snyder

To squish or to save? That is the question!! If you see a bug, your first instinct might be to squish it, or if you are like me, you catch it and put it outside. It should be known that insects are a fundamental part of the ecosystem, but sometimes the right thing to do when you see a bug is to squish it! (As much as it saddens me...) Which bugs should you squish and which should you save? Hopefully after reading this article, you will be able to make the right decision!



The most common bug that you get told to squish is the nefarious Spotted Lanternfly! Even though they have pretty red patterns, these guys are extremely invasive to Maryland! Indigenous to parts of China and Vietnam, they were accidentally introduced into South Korea and have spread to Japan and the United States. They often attack trees such as apple trees, pine trees, and many trees that produce sap. If you see one of these, the right thing to do is certainly to squish.

You might see these shiny beetles around flowers such as roses and think that they're doing their job like other insects around flowers, but don't be fooled. The Japanese beetle is a type of scarab beetle native to Japan, and they harm many plants such as roses, grapes, and birch trees by skeletonizing their leaves! (eating only the material between the leaf's veins). When it comes to these beetles, you should squish.



When you see a wasp, you might be compelled to squish it due to the fear of being stung, but wait! The Blue-Winged wasp is native to the US and it is very important to the environment by taking care of pests such as June Beetles and the Japanese Beetles by eating their larvae! It fights against invasive pests and helps pollinate, so you should do your best to save it!

Mantids may be a scary sight for some people, with their long grabby arms and large size, but don't be afraid! The Carolina mantis is native to the US and is completely harmless to humans. They also take care of pests and are very helpful in the garden! When it comes to a Carolina mantis, please consider saving it!



Stay Literate: Analyzing Love in The Great Gatsby

By Amelia Koehler



Every time I go on the internet I am constantly bombarded with terrible takes about *The Great Gatsby* and the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. While I think people are entitled to their own opinion, I will always stick by my own opinion that Gatsby never truly loved Daisy. First, I would like to establish my credibility for my Gatsby knowledge, as I have read the book three times, watched the 2013 movie twice, written about 7 pages of Gatsby-related analysis/original work, and done a 43-note annotation about *The Great Gatsby*. Light work for a casual fan like me. Now onto the topic at hand, does Gatsby truly love Daisy? The short answer is no, and the long answer is kind of.

The first thing to think about is how Gatsby thinks of Daisy, and I will go in chronological order for how his feelings change over time. The first impression we get of his feelings is that they have not met in a long time, and the last time that they met was when Gatsby was stationed near Daisy's home in the South. They had a brief yet passionate fling, but inevitably they could not be together due to Gatsby having to move stations and also being too poor to support Daisy in marriage. Soon after he moved to East Egg and bought his mansion across the bay from Daisy (who has a green light on her dock that Gatsby constantly stares at), who has now been married to the brutish Tom Buchanan from Chicago. Gatsby throws parties constantly, hoping Daisy will show up, but he never sees any kind of sign from her until a domino effect allows them to meet again. Soon after Tom and Gatsby get into a skirmish and Daisy chooses to stay with Tom. So Gatsby went from meeting Daisy many years ago to then being reunited with someone who has grown in many ways since their last meeting. Even their first meeting is incredibly emotionally charged as Daisy cries, and Nick (the narrator) notes that "Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one." This is incredibly telling as when the fateful meeting between Gatsby and Daisy occurs, it's not picture perfect, so when this distant image of the green light comes up close, it shatters this view that Gatsby builds up of her.

The problem with the supposed love that Gatsby holds for Daisy is that the version of Daisy that Gatsby loves is from a long time ago. She is no longer the same person that she was when they had first met, and his attempts to regain that kind of 'pure love' he reaches for are shown when he says, "And she doesn't understand," he said despairingly. "She used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours—...I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before," he said, nodding determinedly. "She'll see." This is some of the most convincing evidence of Gatsby's objectification of her, that if he only tries harder then he will convince her to love him the same way again with no thought about how she might feel about the situation. Especially the fact that he says that she used to understand, but that she now doesn't, reveals that while Daisy matured and is now seeking stability for herself and her child (in spite of Gatsby's dirty money), Gatsby still clings on to his big dreams of having her as his wife to complete his childhood dream of beating poverty. He puts Daisy on a pedestal, but they could never be together because of their starting class, Daisy will always be old money and choose wealth, while Gatsby clings onto what she represents because he will always be from poverty and attempting to escape from that.

To conclude, *The Great Gatsby* is a complicated piece of literature with very multi-layered characters that shouldn't just be interpreted from the surface level. Always consider stories from various perspectives, and form your own opinion (even if I don't agree with it). Hopefully, you will be encouraged to read *The Great Gatsby* from a new perspective or for the first time, and remember to always stay literate.

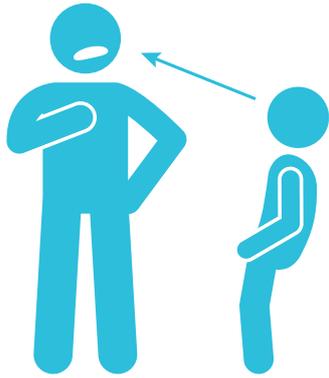


Study Smart Through Psych

By Laine Schatzer

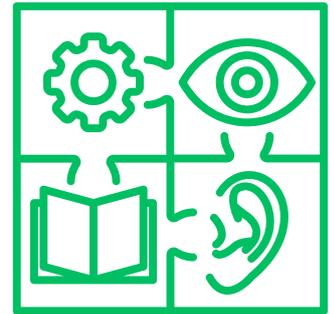


Leaves are falling, pumpkin spice is infiltrating yet again, and the wind brings the classic autumnal chill. The school year is well underway, and with it comes tests and due dates and GPAs. Studying is an essential skill in keeping up with the workload. But what even is studying? For many, studying is a concept, an idea of what you're supposed to do. However, there is a reason for the rhyme. Here are a few tips—supported by psychology— that can help boost your grade and keep it high.



Before we even begin studying, we must first have an understanding of the material. There is no point trying to pull an all-nighter, cramming weeks of information, when you didn't pay attention to the lecture in the first place. Unfortunately, that's easier said than done. How do you focus when your teacher is droning on and on, and your best friend sits next to you ... so why don't you use the time to talk? That thought process will screw you over in the future. As much as it sucks, to set yourself up for success, pay attention in class. Be an active listener. Make eye contact and take notes on the key topics.

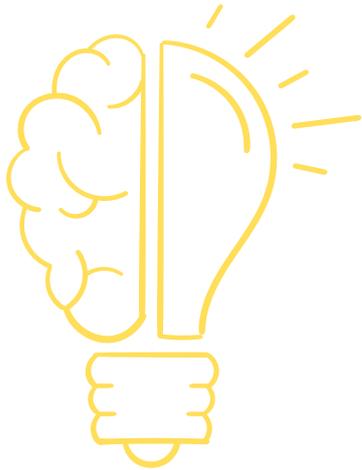
It is also extremely important to know your learning style. Every person is different; we learn and retain knowledge differently. There are four main types of learning—visual, auditory, verbal, and action. Would you rather read an article or listen to a lecture? Do you learn better talking through the concept with someone or doing the experiment in person? Understanding how you learn will help you utilize the proper techniques.



Many classes assign readings or textbook chapters as a way of furthering information and studying before a test. Textbooks and readings can be ominous, thick, and filled with facts. So how do we filter through and actually retain what we are reading? One of the best methods is called SQ3R.

- Survey – Look over the headings and tables to get a basic grasp on what you are covering.
- Question – What questions do you come up with simply based off of your skim?
- Read – As you go through, take notes on important concepts and ideas.
- Recite – Talk to yourself. It sounds crazy, but repeating what you have read helps to further process what you read.
- Recall – When you've finished the entire chapter, take a couple minutes to test what you remember. Flashcards, Quizlet, and online tests are a great way to make sure you fully understand.

Okay, so you've listened to the lecture and taken notes. What next? You start studying. Such a simple statement comes with its flaw—procrastination. Personally, I don't know many who actually enjoy studying. Learning, yes. But studying? There are so many other interesting things to do, right? Unfortunately, you just have to power through. If you procrastinate, say that you'll do it later in the night, then tomorrow morning and so forth, you're going to end up cramming. Find your personal motivation. Maybe it's getting that A, or impressing your parents, or getting into a good college. Whatever it is, the only person who can figure it out is you.



When studying, memorization isn't key. To truly guarantee success on conceptual and applied questions, you have to fully understand the material. What's the difference? Memorization is more like "spitting back facts." If you're asked to explain a concept or compare one thing to another, are you able to? Or are you only able to recite the definition? Good methods of studying that improve understanding are rewriting notes, using flashcards, taking practice tests, watching YouTube videos that discuss concepts, and explaining the topic to someone else. Studying doesn't have to just be sitting at your desk into the late hours of the night, reading a textbook. If anything, that's not what you want to go for. Instead, understand your learning style and choose a technique that works best. Studying isn't copy and paste. It is entirely dependent on you.

Finally, studying is the most effective when it's spread out. Don't wait till the day before your unit test to begin rewriting notes. Give yourself adequate time to study and take care of yourself. Sleep is principle. Food is principle. Doing things to take care of yourself—going to bed at a decent time, eating breakfast, going for a walk—will help boost your grade. Spacing your study times out helps for better processing. Study for an hour and then go outside to hit the volleyball or walk your dog. Take breaks for dinner, for snacks, for messing with your siblings, or closing your eyes for a little bit. Spacing out studying not only helps the information integrate into your long-term memory, but it also ensures you're taking care of you.



So yes, stress is high, tests are piling up as we near the holiday season. Studying will boost your grade and make you feel more confident in yourself. Find what your learning style is and tailor your methods to it. Take breaks and most importantly—take care of yourself. Seriously.

Love vs. INFATUATION

By Kara (Quinn)
Dumolo

Have you ever been dating someone for about a week or a month, and you thought they were cute and you loved them ... then after a month of dating them you kinda think to yourself, "Man I kinda don't really like him/her anymore." That wasn't love but infatuation; trust me, I have been there more times than I'd like to admit.

For anyone wondering what's the difference between love and infatuation, love is when you have feelings of affection, care, trust, passion, and commitment. With love you can see your partner's flaws but love them anyway, while infatuation is typically an obsessive feeling, usually at the beginning of a relationship. You can't see their flaws or even imagine them having any.

Being infatuated with someone causes emotional excitement that can feel like a drug because it floods the brain with chemicals like dopamine and adrenaline. Infatuation may (falsely) feel stronger than love, due to focus on superficial qualities and idealized fantasies.

Love vs. Infatuation in the Movies: *Romeo and Juliet* vs. *The Notebook*

My favorite example of infatuation is *Romeo and Juliet*. Everyone thought they were in love, but the truth is you think more irrationally when you're infatuated with someone. Such as *Romeo and Juliet* who went to wild extremes to be with each other. They were infatuated with each other because they knew their families didn't get along, and teenagers are rebellious and like the thought of disobeying their parents.

Compared to someone in love such as Noah Calhoun and Allie Hamilton from *The Notebook*. At first Allie rejected Noah; she thought he wasn't good enough and wasn't worth her time. Noah didn't give up, though. He knew she was special, and he couldn't stop thinking about her. He finally got that date with her; they fought a lot and their love wasn't perfect, but it was real. It wasn't fake or obsession; it was raw love. They saw a future with one another, so Noah made it happen and waited for her as long as he needed to wait for Allie when she moved away. Noah wrote Allie a letter every day for a year. He waited for her for 10 years, then finally she came back. When she came back, they both were still in love with each other. That is what true love is.

If you are wondering if you're in love with someone, consider the following questions:

- Do you feel happy with them?
- Do you feel truly fulfilled, or just less lonely?
- Can you be yourself with them?
- Do you miss their presence when you're apart?
- Have you been with this person long enough to see the "real" them?
- Can you imagine a future with them?
- Do you feel safe with them?

If you answer most of these questions as no, then you're probably infatuated with him/her. If you do answer yes for most of these questions, then congratulations, you may be in love! It is also very possible to get into a relationship just because of infatuation, then later fall in love with them. This can happen when you spend more time with him/her, or you share experiences together. Before getting into a relationship, think "Do I actually like them or am I just infatuated with them?"

Sick: Parts 1 & 2

By Ragan Baker

Please enjoy Part 1 of the psychological thriller, Sick, an original story that will continue in our next issue.

Part 1

I see him, my best friend Frank, in the distance. He is unmoving, and staring at me with a blank expression. Why isn't he walking toward me? Why isn't he excited to see me? Why would he be acting this way? He is always outgoing, and excited for what is to come every day.

"Frank!" I yell, waving my hands back and forth.

He doesn't wave back. He doesn't speak. Why? What did I do wrong? I begin to walk towards him with purpose. He doesn't move. Is he even blinking, breathing, or moving? Why won't he notice me?

"Frank! What is going on? What did I do? I just want to talk to you, but you won't say anything. PLEASE! TALK TO ME!" I stomp my feet.

"You killed me," he answers, in a calm voice.

Killed him? What does that even mean? He's standing right in front of me. I didn't kill him, I couldn't have. He's my best friend, and I love him too much to hurt him. As I get closer to Frank, something seems to change, but I can't tell what that is yet. Is it his hair? Is it his face? No, there's nothing wrong. Right?

"What are you talking about?" I ask, inching closer to him.

"You killed me!" he yells.

No. No I didn't. He is a liar. I would never. I care too much about him. He's my best friend. No one would kill their best friend. I don't have anything against him. I'm not angry with him. We talk every day. We have almost every class together. So, why would I kill him? I didn't.

"You lie! You were always a liar, Frank. Ever since we were young, I could never fully trust you, no matter how much I wanted to. Why are you lying to me?" I plead.

"I don't lie, that was always your thing. I stood by your side for years, but now I can't, and even if I could I wouldn't. Not after what you did to me."

Frank falls face first, landing on the ground with a thud. I sprint towards him, but the room around me seems to change. It was no longer blinding white. It is now red, blood red. Blood pours into the room like a waterfall. Frank still lays there, lifeless.

I shake his body repeatedly, but he doesn't move. He's not waking up. As I turn Frank over, I can't make out his face. It's not there. His eyes are gone, his nose is gone, as well as his upper lip. He looked as though his face was torn off by a rabid animal, thirsty for human flesh.

I did not do this to him. Rip his face off? No. Never. I couldn't. The sight alone is making me sick. I want to look away, but I can't. My eyes are glued to his faceless body. His bloody, faceless body.

I scream myself awake. There is sweat pouring from every pore in my body, and it is still dripping down my face. I feel sick, like I am going to throw up. That sight, Frank's poor face, all gone. My stomach continues to twist and turn as I lean over the side of my bed and vomit everything that I had eaten throughout the day.

A couple of guards come barging into my room. All they see is half of my body dangling off of my bed, and vomit all over my bedroom floor. They all sigh. I guess they are used to me having nightmares.

"What was it this time?" Bob, the nicest guard asks me.

"M-my best friend. He was covered in blood. His face was gone," I explain, as I swing the upper half of my body back onto the bed.

Another one of the guards, Victor, looks at the mess on the floor, and huffs. He is obviously annoyed with me.

"I'm sorry," I say as I begin to cry, holding my face in the palms of my hands.

I feel like a child who has just wet the bed. I'm helpless, and full of guilt because someone else has to clean up the mess that I had made.

"It's okay, Gerard. It's not your fault," Bob says, resting his hand on my shoulder.

I look up at him, but he isn't staring back at me. Instead, he is giving Victor a dirty look, but Victor just shrugs and rolls his eyes. He marches out of the room.

"C'mon, Nurse Nancy will help you get cleaned up," Bob says, pulling me out of my bed.

Bob holds gently onto my wrist as we walk through the hallway. I know it's because he wants to be sure that I won't try to run. I wouldn't do that anyway. I have no reason to, and it is not like I'd be able to find a way out of this place. They have guards posted all around the hospital.

I get to the infirmary, and Bob whispers in Nancy's ear. She nods her head and gives me a big smile.

"Come this way," she says in a kind voice.

Nancy takes me to the showers and turns on the light. I can't help but squint. The lights in this place are so bright. I can't bear it. They need to get better ones that don't blind everyone. I swear, I'm not the only one that complains.

"I'll have fresh clean clothes waiting for you when you're done. Just call for me, and I'll come right away with them," she explains, and then smiles, trying to make me feel better.

"Thank you," I say quietly.

"You are absolutely welcome, Gerard."

Nancy walks away, and I get undressed. I turn the shower on, and wait for it to heat up before I dare step foot under it. Once the water is warm, I stand under the pressureless shower faucet, and close my eyes. The warmth is relaxing at first, but a memory flashes over my mind. The blood dripping down the walls in my nightmare.

"You ain't showering in water, boy," my good friend, Burt, says as he leans up against the wall of the showers.

I open my eyes and look in horror at the "water" I had been standing under. It was blood. Deep red blood. It was staining my skin. I need to get this blood off of me. I have to be clean. I have to wash off the nightmare of Frank.

"I have to try another shower," I say to Burt.

"Why are you telling me? Just do it you idiot!" he says in a harsh tone.

I turned on every last one of the showers in the bathing room, but to my horror, they are all filled with blood. I won't be able to get the stains off. That is how they will find me. I look unnatural. I will be the only one they see. They will take me away forever, and I'll never be seen again.

I sit in the fetal position on the floor. This can't be happening to me. This was the end. They are on their way. I can feel it. They'll take me, and eat my soul.

"This is a tough situation, little man," Bert chuckles.

"Tough is not the word I'd use right now, Bert," I reply.

"Hey! Don't you talk smart to me. I'll call the dogs on you. Don't think I won't do it!" He threatens me.

"No no no no no! They are already coming for me!" I yell.

"Heh, I guess that's worse than tough."

I look up, and Bert is gone. I am done for. They are getting closer. Every second that goes by makes me feel less alive.

"Gerard?" a familiar voice speaks to me.

I look up and see Dr. Bryar. She stands out of the way of the bloody showers with her arms folded, and a confused look on her face.

"Don't look at me!" I yell.

My skin is still stained. I will be like this for the rest of my life. I will never be clean. I will be taken.

"What happened?" Dr. Bryar asks me.

She is a very persistent woman. If I don't answer her question now, she will keep asking it until I do. It tends to take a long time, but I guess she doesn't mind.

"M-my dream. He was dead. He said I killed him, Dr. Bryar. Why would he say that?" I ask.

"I don't know, Gerard. Maybe it was just a nightmare, and nothing more," she responds.

"Maybe y-you're right, for once," I say with a sigh.

Dr. Bryar chuckles and offers me her hand to help me up off the floor.

"I don't want to get you dirty," I say, pulling my hand away.

"What do you mean?" she asks me.

"My skin. It's all stained, and no good. I am done for, I don't want you to be as well," I say, never breaking eye contact.

"You're fine, Gerard. There is nothing wrong with you. Take another look."

I look down at my skin again. The red stain was gone. They won't find me now. I have another chance. They aren't going to try and take my soul anymore. Was this possibly Bert's doing? Did he fight them all off by himself, to save me more time away from them?

"What are you thinking about?" Dr. Bryar asks me.

"The water, it was all red. I bathed in it, and it stained me. That meant They were coming for me. They've done it many times before. They have taken little portions of my soul away from me. This is why I am here," I say as fast as I can to make sure I don't lose any of my thoughts.

"Oh," Dr. Bryar says, followed by a sigh.

"What's wrong?" I ask.

"It's nothing. We need to get you back in bed. You have to get a good night's rest," she says with a slight smile.

I hadn't noticed it before, but she had the clean clothes under her right armpit. She hands them over to me and walks away to give me privacy while I dress.

I walk out of the bathing room, and find Dr. Bryar is waiting for me in the infirmary. She holds out a hand for me to take hold of. We walk back to my room, and she opens the door in an easy manner. I look around, checking every nook and cranny, but didn't find anything. They cleaned it so thoroughly.

"I want you to come to my office tomorrow. I need to talk to you," Dr. Bryar says as she leaves my room.

I roll my eyes and lay down on my bed, sprawled out. Why does she need to have a meeting with me? Aren't our Friday morning meetings enough for her? I have to have one on a Thursday morning now too? This isn't fair. I'm not the crazy one here. Just because I'm a little depressed, doesn't mean anything.

I force my eyes closed, and try to brush off my terrible night, and impending terrible morning. I slowly feel myself drift off into a deep sleep.

Part 2

I woke up the next morning at 7 AM. Dr. Bryar wants to talk to me at 7:30 sharp, no excuses. I still don't want to go to this meeting, but I can't get myself out of it unless I throw a tantrum or pull the fire alarm. I get out of bed and throw on a sweatshirt and jeans. This facility, Berryview, is very lenient on what we wear. We can wear sweats if we want to, or jeans, and t-shirts. They really don't care, just no formal attire.

I wish I could wear a suit, I feel as though I would look very official, and proper. Right now, I look like a bum who doesn't care what he looks like. I do, I always have. Maybe that is why I was bullied in high school. They just didn't get my style.

I walk out of my room and head to Bryar's office, which is right down the hall from me. I wish she wasn't so close. I feel as though I am always being watched by her. She has eyes and ears everywhere in this place. No one has privacy, not even in our rooms. I spotted several cameras in my room. She is watching me, and invading my privacy.

I walk through the door and she looks up from her computer, and gives me a smile.

"Hey there, Gerard," she says.

"Hi," I say plainly.

I sit down in the chair in front of her desk and put my feet up on the seat. She looks at my feet, then back up at me. She hates it when I do this, but I don't care. If I have to be here, then I can be as comfortable as I want.

"I want to talk about last night, about your dreams you've been having here recently," she begins "It has come to my attention by the staff that you have been screaming in terror through the night," she says.

She looks at me with eagerness. She wants me to answer her, and tell her everything. I don't want to. I don't feel like it. The only reason I told her about my dream last night was because it frightened me so much. It felt and looked so real. I don't like telling Dr. Bryar things. She makes me feel like she's judging me.

"I don't want to talk about it," I answer, pulling my knees closer to my chest.

"But you need to. If you don't tell me now, it will continue to eat you alive, and you'll spiral again. Don't you remember what happened the last time?"

I look at her, confused. What happened last time? What, when They were chasing after me? My skin was stained. I was a beam of light for them to find. I didn't spiral. I was found. I was almost taken.

"I'm not crazy!" I snap.

"Gerard, that's not what I said," she says.

"Actually, you did. What spiral? I didn't spiral. They were coming to get me. Don't you understand that?" I ask her, sitting up and alert.

"I understand that, but you have to—"

"NO!" I cut her off, "I'm not going to listen to you. All you do is lie! I don't trust you, and I never will!" I yell.

I get up from the chair, and march out of her office before Dr. Bryar can say anything else. She had no right talking to me the way she had. She made me feel like I was crazy. I'm not crazy. I'm the most sane person in this building.

I go back to my room and lay down on my bed, facing the wall. I don't want to see anyone right now. Tears stream down my face as I contemplate her betrayal. I can't trust anyone. I can't even trust the guards because they will repeat everything I say or do like I am some sort of criminal. Why is everyone like this? Why am I here?

I cried myself back to sleep this morning. As I sit up, dazed and confused, I look down at my pillow and feel my face. I had been laying in a puddle of my own saliva. How disgusting.

I get out of bed and walk out of my room and down the hall, wiping the spit off my face as I head to the cafeteria. I didn't bother to check the time, so I don't know if they're still serving breakfast. I hope they are; I'm starving.

As I enter the cafeteria one of the guys, Tod, gives me an excited wave. He thinks we're friends. I let him believe it because I don't want to hurt his feelings. He's a sensitive guy, and absolutely insane. He believes that Wendigos (creepy cannibalistic monsters) are coming to eat him. The story he came up with is very entertaining.

He was just sitting in his room when all of the sudden he heard knocking on his window. He got up to go see what was there, and when he moved the curtain, the Wendigo broke the window, grabbed him by the center of his shirt, and tore him through the shattered glass. He told me that he was taken through bushes and tree branches, and even taken to the monster's cave. While he was in the cave, the monster "nibbled at his fingers and toes." Now that I think about it, the story is ridiculous. Why wouldn't the monster just eat him when he captured him? It would have saved me a lot of time. I wouldn't have sat my entire breakfast last Friday listening to his lunacy.

"Hey, Gerard!" he yells.

I'm starting to get tired of hearing my name. No one has given me a nickname, or just called me "man". I hate that everyone says my name constantly, like it's the only thing they can call me. I want to be called Gee, but Dr. Bryar won't listen to me. She disregards my words.

"You don't have to call me Gerard," I begin, "I'm kinda getting tired of hearing it. Just call me Gee," I say with a fake smile.

"Oh, okay! So uh...Gee, can I sit with you today? None of the other guys seem to like

me, and I think some of them want to eat me" he pleads.

I look around the room. Buster and Tyler are sitting together, not paying attention to anyone around them. I then look at the bigger group behind me that consists of Marcus, Drake, Brandon, and Flynn. They don't seem to be doing anything out of the ordinary either. There are stragglers around the room, not doing much of anything. I assume that Tod made that up so I could feel bad for him and let him sit with me.

Again, I don't want him to, but I'm trying to be nice. I don't want to be put into confinement again. That place is scary, and will make someone crazy.

"Sure, Tod. You can sit with me if you want. Just don't start going on one of your crazy rants," I reply.

"I won't, I promise," he says.

That was a lie. He always goes on rants, but I just tune him out. That's better than listening to his theories on how most of the people in this hospital are Wendigos, and will eventually eat us all.

I don't oppose that thought. I wish it were true. Of course, it's not. I'm stuck here. I have to see these people every day, and encourage their idiocy. I don't belong here, but Dr. Bryar won't listen to me. She doesn't listen to anyone.

She is like God. There are rules you have to follow, and certain expectations she has for everyone. The crew follows her every demand, and so do the other patients here. They think highly of her. They practically bow down to her. She has them right where she wants them, but not me. I can see right through her. Thank God I'm the only one in their right mind, or I'd fall under her spell too.

I head over to the counter and grab a bowl of Cheerios, and go back to my table. Tod is sitting on the opposite side of the bench. Good thing he wasn't in my seat, or it would have gotten ugly.

I sit down and start eating my Cheerios, not looking up from my bowl so I don't make eye contact with Tod. I know he is going to talk regardless, but at least I won't have to keep my attention on him the whole time.

Tod rambled on about his theories for the remainder of breakfast. I don't know how someone can talk about one thing for that long, but he managed. We head out of the cafeteria, and to our mandatory group discussion. This is where we talk about our feelings, and how others make us feel in the group. It's ridiculous. I never talk, and Dr. Bryar doesn't make me talk either. That is the only thing I like about her.

I sit in a chair furthest from her, and slouch with my arms folded, giving her none of my attention. She doesn't deserve it. Tod, with no surprise on my part, sits to the left of me, and talks to me again, even though he knows I'm not going to respond or carry on the conversation.

"Alright everyone," Dr. Bryar begins, sending the room's chatter to a halting stop, "today we are going to talk about how someone in this room has affected the way our week went. Buster, let's just start with you and make our way around the circle."

Buster nods his head, and looks at each person in the circle. He stops on Tyler, and gives him a grin. I knew that was coming. They are like best friends, and always sit together at lunch ever since the first day they met.

"Tyler!" he says, excited.

"That's great. Now, can you tell me why he affected your week?" Dr. Bryar asks.

"H-he always listens to me when I talk at lunch, it makes me really happy," he says, looking over at Tyler again.

Tyler smiles back at him, and exchanges the "me too" symbol with his hand. Tyler doesn't talk much, but it's not because he doesn't want to, it's just the way he has always been. He has emotional problems, and instead of expressing them through words, he expresses them through rage. He tried to burn his house down when his dad told him he couldn't play on his Xbox. That's pretty insane.

The continuation around the circle rolled on, until they got to me. The conversation came to a halting stop. I didn't want to talk. I'm not going to talk.

"Gerard, can you at least say a few words?" Dr. Bryar asks me.

I roll my eyes and shake my head at her. She is not going to make me do it. I refuse.

I don't want to be here, so why should I be forced to say anything?

"Come on," she pleads, "just one thing?"

"NO!" I huff.

I startled everyone in the room. They all look at me, wide eyed and scared. Do I give that type of energy off? Is everyone scared of me?

"Now, there's no need to act that way," she responds.

Fury is building up inside of me. She is treating me like I am some sort of child that needs reprimanded for their actions. I am not a child. I will not stand for her treatment.

I stand up from my chair and stare into Dr. Bryar's eyes. I hope she can sense the hate I have for her.

"You can't force me to do anything!" I yell, clenching my fists. "I didn't want to come to this meeting in the first place. You know I don't like them, you know I don't want to speak, so why are you always pushing me? I'm not the crazy one here!" I scream at the top of my lungs.

"No one is saying you're crazy," she says in a soft tone.

She is always so calm about everything. I hate it. I want her to scream back at me. I don't want to always feel like the bad guy. I have every right to be upset.

"Yes you are! Why else would I have been sent here? You people must think I am!"

I storm out of the room, and never look back. I go to my room and grab my notebook and just write. I don't know what I was saying, but it felt right. When I finish, I don't bother and look at what I have created. I slam the book shut and throw it at the opposing wall.

I shove my face into my pillow and scream as loud as I can. I am done with today. I am done with Dr. Bryar. I will not show my face to them for the rest of the day. They deserve to worry, and they deserve to be ignored.

Be sure to check out Parts 3&4 of Sick in our next issue!





How to Help a Recovering Addict

By Kyndra Harris

Do you have someone you know that's trying to recover from an addiction of some sort? Addiction is never easy, but it can be helpful to have support from ones you love. Here are four ways that you can help a recovering addict adjust back to their everyday life.

1. Be accepting.

Somebody who's trying to sort their addiction doesn't need the extra stress of criticism. Instead, try to see their point of view to get a better understanding of where they are coming from.

2. Support them.

The unfortunate thing that people tend to forget when it comes to addiction is that addicts are people too, with actual feelings. If you were going through something difficult that was taking your life away from you slowly, wouldn't you want someone to comfort you and be supportive?

3. Don't enable.

As much as we want to help our friends and family succeed, enabling is not the way. Enabling causes an addict to adapt to a dependent routine, making them get used to an unhealthy lifestyle and lack independence.

4. Avoid triggers.

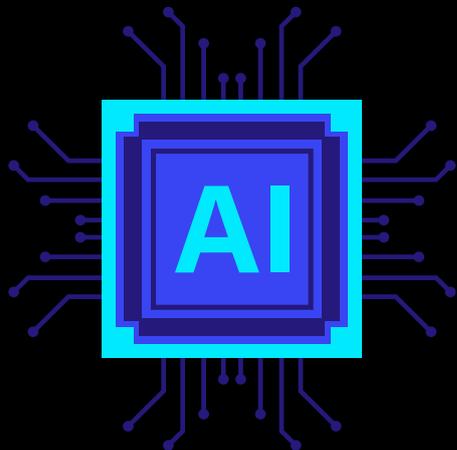
If you know that there is something your recovering addict is triggered by, simply just don't do it. This is something that happens far too often. Some triggers for addicts could be certain drug names, money spending, specific words/actions, etc. Avoiding this can lead to an easier route to success.

Try to help the ones you care about; be their motivation to keep going. If you feel alone in your journey and want help, the following phone numbers below are rehabs close-by. Don't ever hesitate to get the help you need.

Cecil Community Recover Center: (443) 258-9696

Elkton Nursing and Rehabilitation: (410) 398-6474

Haven House Inc. : (410) 398-9900



Artificial Intelligence & Why You Shouldn't Rely on It

By Jayden Barham, Sofia Solis Cascante, and Lily Stanley

Over the years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has developed exponentially, in ways we only ever dreamed of. Nowadays, people see it as a tool to facilitate their work and life, and while it can be extremely useful, there are many reasons why we should not rely solely on it.

AI is powered by electricity centers that consume water to cool and other resources like natural gas, coal, nuclear fission, and petroleum, to name a few. This all contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and water pollution, with residents who live next to data centers claiming they cannot drink the water that comes out of their sink.

AI in schools has become more common since the 2010s, both students and teachers have begun to rely on it. In schools, lots of private information about students and teachers are held in databases, which the use of AI can breach.

AI can be wrong, like a lot. Not only is the percent of AI being inaccurate at intricate tasks at approximately 70%, but also there have been multiple accounts of fabricating methods to be "correct." Imagine you're writing an important essay that's going to make or break your grade. You go on ChatGPT and form an essay on a topic like history of a president. You submit the essay and a few days later, you see you failed because the AI made up a NONEXISTENT WAR!

To address the problems with AI it's only fair to acknowledge the pros. It can be used to enhance your writing, get inspiration, and even help you organize a plan. It starts to get sticky when AI is left to make the entire project with the user having no former base. Using AI as an assistant instead of the leader of your work not only can lead to better grades, but also a healthy habit of looking over and improving your work.

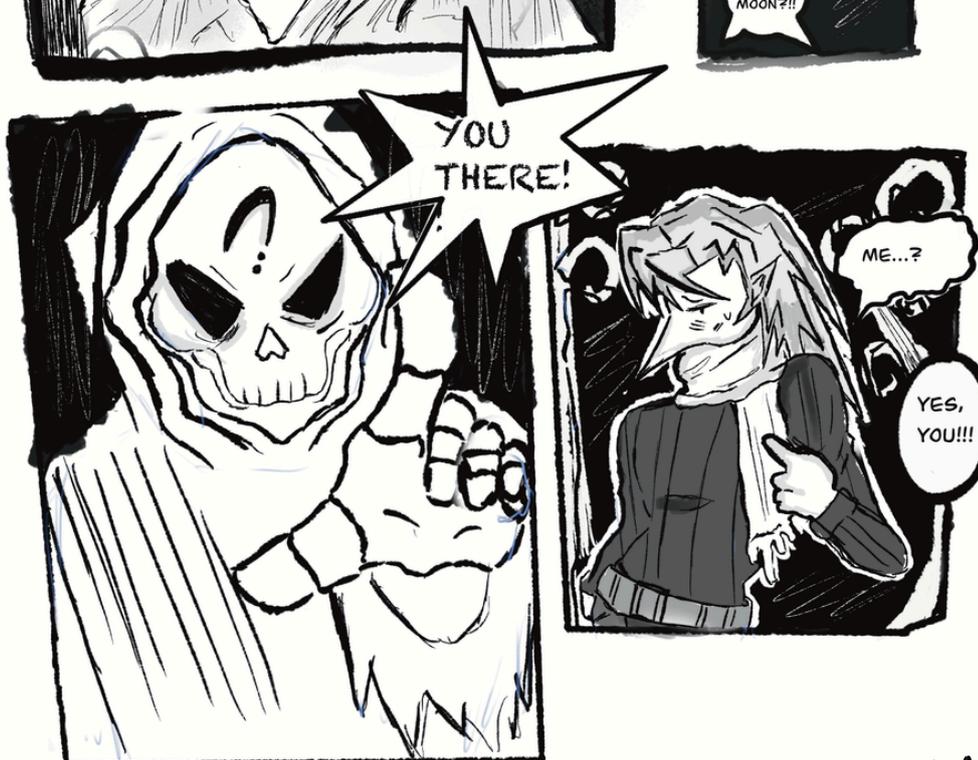
TLDR...

AI can be a helpful tool/assistant, but relying on it can lead to unexpected accidents.



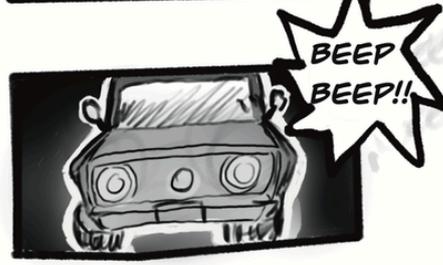
THE MAZE

CHAPTER 1: HOW TO BEAT DEATH 101

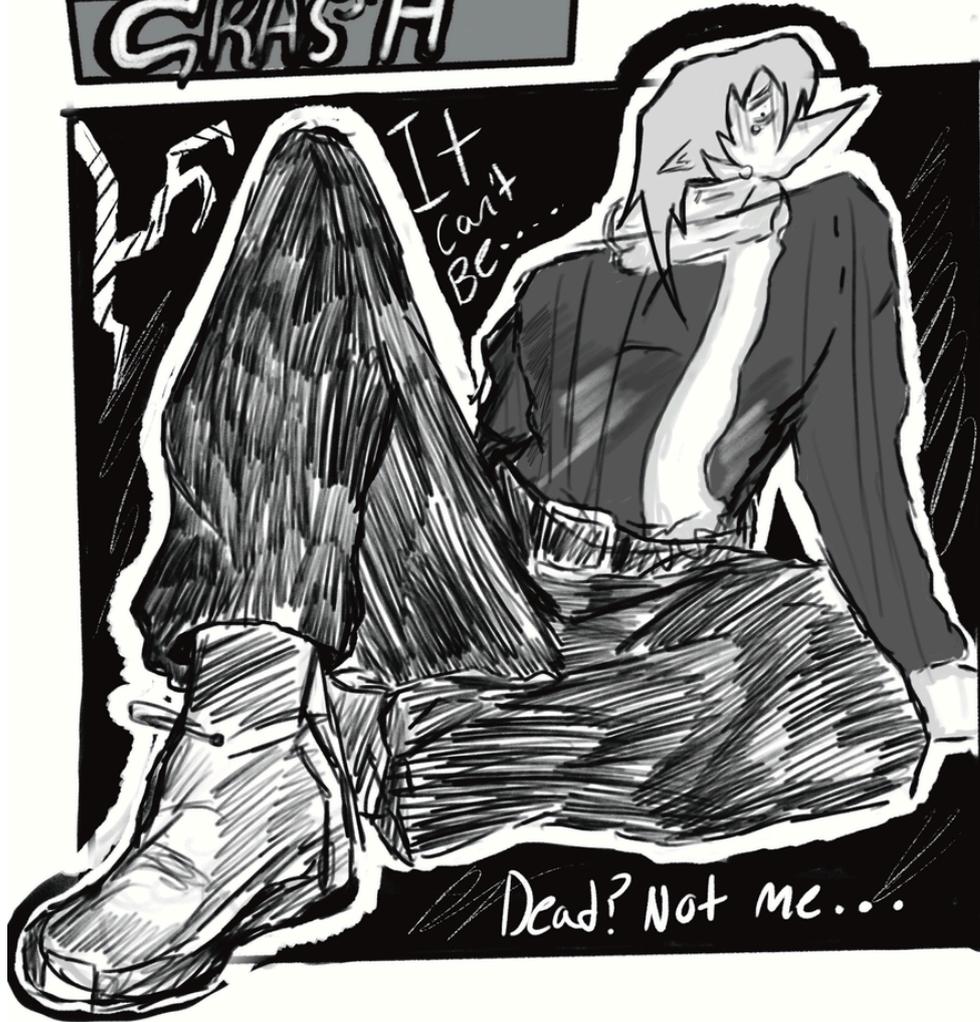


BY ANONYMOUS





CRASH









HUH??

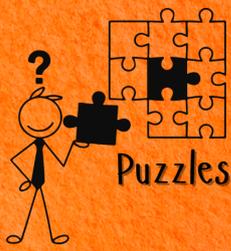






To Be Continued...

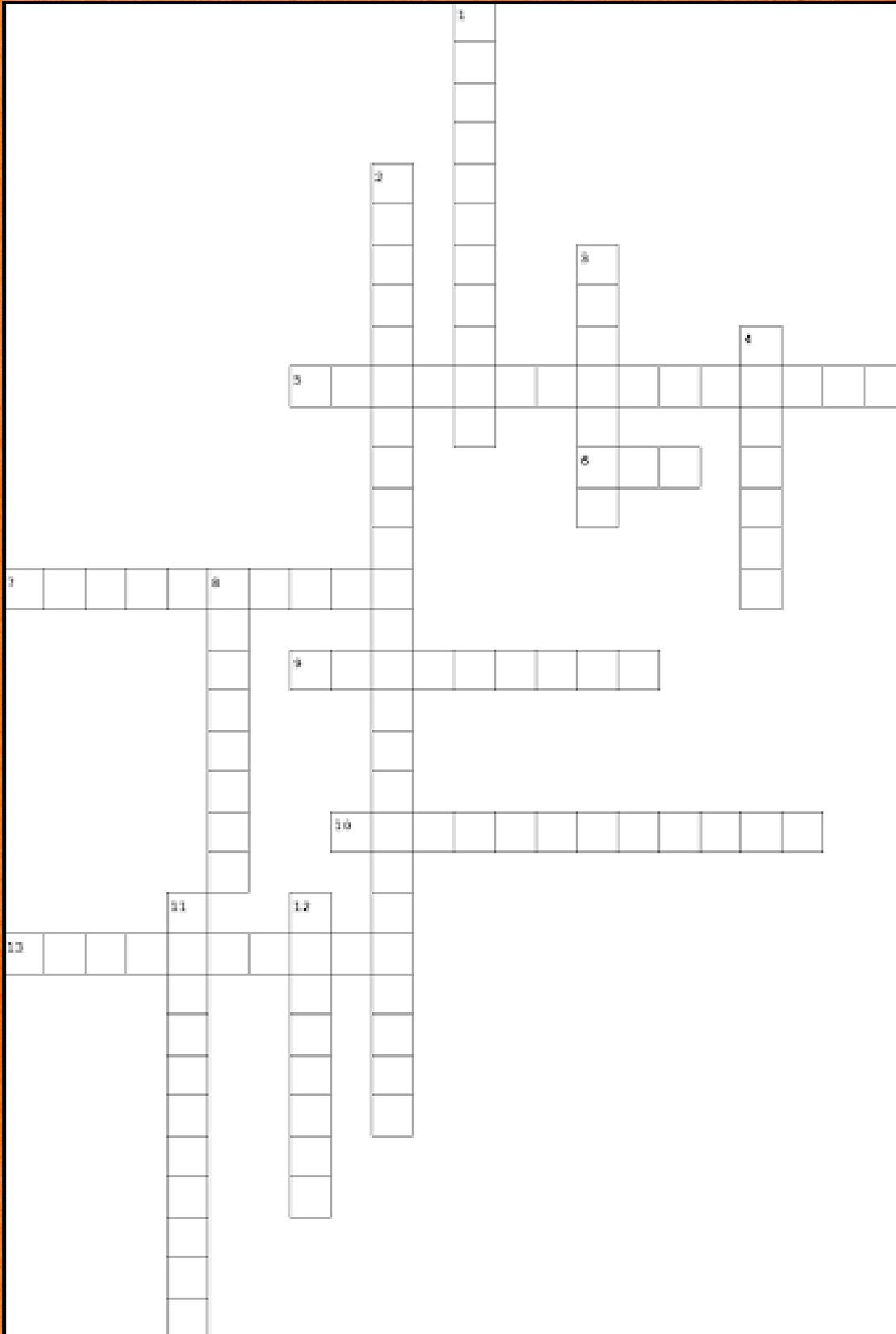




Solving Something with Sevel

Puzzles Created by Ella Shortall and Severin Abbey

Puzzle 1: HOCO 2025 Crossword



Across

5. Homecoming tradition every year since 1920.
6. What color does the Junior class wear for color day?
7. Rising Sun's homecoming football game opponent.
9. Junior class hallway theme.
10. Freshman class hallway theme.
13. Which class had the most spirit this spirit week?

Down

1. Sophomore class hallway theme.
2. Senior class hallway theme
3. Who won the 2025 Pep Rally?
4. Senior class tradition every spirit week
8. Pep rally game involving rope
11. This year's homecoming theme
12. Whose hallway won the 2025 hallway decorating contest?

Puzzle 2: Holiday Strands

Find words that fit the theme in this word search and uncover the spanagram, the main theme of the puzzle hidden somewhere in the grid.

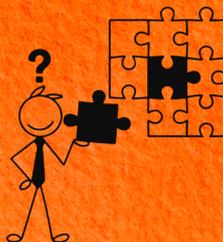
T	s	u	f	t	s	d
h	t	f	g	u	r	o
p	a	i	n	e	k	o
o	t	n	y	r	g	f
a	s	k	a	s	l	g
t	m	s	v	y	l	n
o	a	g	r	o	i	e
e	s	y	i	v	p	i

Time to set the table!

Puzzle 3: Chilly Connections

Find groups of four words that share a common thread to make four total word groups.

Bears	Ravens	Chill	Jack
Bats	Pump	Ghost	Harvest
Colts	Squirrels	Cardinals	Football
Frogs	Can	Lions	Geese



To see the answers to these puzzles, please click [HERE](#).

Schoolwide Scavenger Hunt

By Brody Rash & Logan Blakeley

We decided to spice up the school days with a scavenger hunt, so listen up! There is a series of riddles that will lead you to different rooms in the school. When you think you have found the object or room that is being described, ask the teacher/staff member in that room, and if you got it correct, they will give you the next riddle. There are four riddles in total. You need to have all of the riddle cards and the last card to get a prize.

The rules are simple: 1.) Solve the riddles 2.) Collect all the riddle cards, and don't share. It will lose the fun if you share the cards, and only the first 3 winners get the biggest prizes! 3.) Do not leave class to solve the riddles; you can solve them on your own time.

The prize for first, second and third place will be an Amazon Gift Certificate, and all other puzzle finishers will receive a Roar Buck.

Have Fun!

Here's your first riddle:

There is a street name
In the school

This is where I live;

As for wings, I have two,

With colors of black and blue.

When you think that you found me

You might want to think twice

You'll see a sink to the right

And life to the left.