

The Storm Report

OAKES TORNADOES UPDATES

December 5th, 2025



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Christmas Activites

By: Ava Thompson



We all get that feeling, being excited that Christmas break is here!! It's all fun but then after a couple days the boredom hits. If you are looking for some ideas that are simple but take away the boredom here are the Top 10!

1. **Bake-** Make delicious treats eveyone will enjoy. Such as cookies, fudge, chocolate covered pretzels.
2. **Have a movie Marathon-** Pick your favorite holiday movies and watch them with blankets and snacks.
3. **Drive around to see Christmas lights-** Enjoy all the bright decorations around town.
4. **Build Gingerbread Houses-** Get creative and make cool, funny and maybe even a candy house. (This could also be a contest against friends, cousins, or family members)
5. **Go Ice Skating-** Have fun gliding around the ice with family and friends but be careful not to fall!
6. **Play Board or Card Games-** Have a good game night and see who wins the most rounds. (spoons is a fun one)
7. **Hot Chocolate Bar-** Make hot cocoa and add toppings like marshmallows, candy canes or whipped cream. So yummy!
8. **Have a Pajama Day-** Stay cozy all day in your Pjs and watch some of your favorite holiday movies!
9. **Make DIY Crafts or Ornaments-** Create something cute you can hang on the tree or give as a gift.
10. **Spend time with friends and family-** Just enjoy being together during the holidays.

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Senior Spotlight



By: Kalyn Haafke

This senior is closing out her high school years with a big dream and an even bigger heart. She loves animals, values honest connections, and hopes to build a future helping pets as a Veterinary Technician in California. She talks about this dream with excitement, and you can tell she is ready for the next chapter of her life.

Her favorite memories are simple moments that became unexpectedly special. One of them is Senior Sunset, where classmates who barely talked to each other ended up laughing around a bonfire. She remembers how easy it felt to just be together on a calm night.

She openly shares that her biggest challenge has been her own mental health. She has learned that pushing through does not always mean being tough on yourself. Sometimes it means being patient, taking a breath, and trusting that things really can get better. She has learned to stand up for herself, to be careful with who she trusts, and to value her own peace. She is proud of how much mentally stronger she has become since freshman year. Her biggest accomplishment, she says, is simply making it this far.

If she could talk to her freshman self, she would tell her not to worry about being liked by everyone. Life feels a lot lighter when you stop giving your energy to people who do not value it.

When she thinks about the people who have helped shape her path, she talks about teachers who saw her as more than a student. Her EMT and AEMT instructor, Mrs. Wertz, stood out because she understood how hard it can be to balance school, life, and work. Instead of judgment, she offered patience, laughter, and real conversations. Feeling understood has meant everything to her, and it has encouraged her to keep trying even when things felt overwhelming.

Her teacher, Mrs. Wertz, wrote a heartfelt message for her senior year.

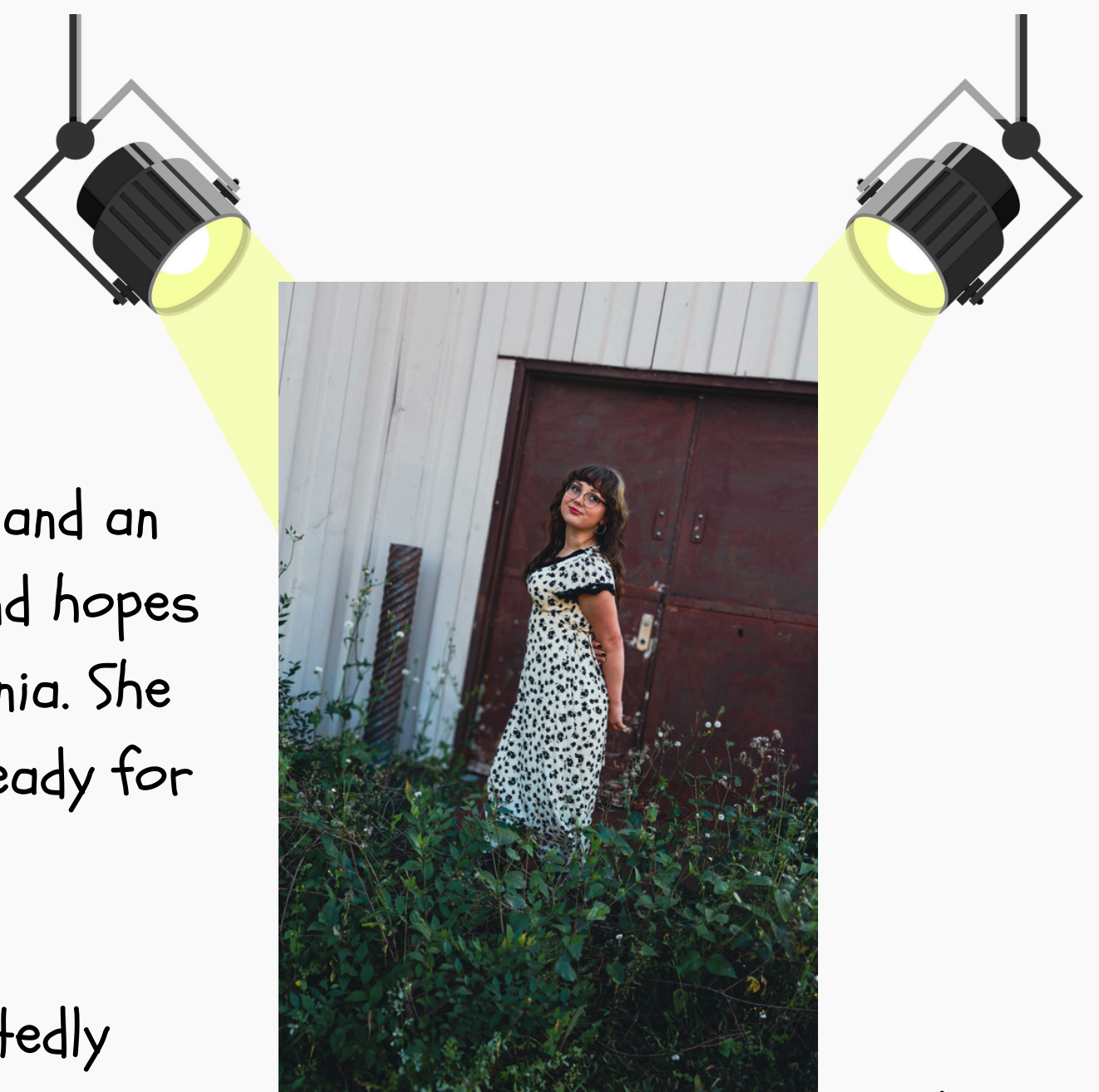
Dear Senior,

How exciting your Senior year is! Enjoy it for certain! I have always appreciated your quiet, thoughtful personality. How you always have a cheerful smile and are always quick to offer a compliment to brighten the day! Tremendous gift! I appreciate how you perceive when others are struggling and take time to care about their well-being. You are a responsible young lady, and I have seen your confidence grow! I pray for God's continued blessings & guidance in your exciting journey ahead! Keep smiling & Keep looking up!! YOU ARE AWESOME!! BLESS YA TENFOLD!!

Your friend,

Mrs. Wertz

To her, being a senior means one simple, powerful thing. She made it. And she is ready for what comes next. 2



The Storm Report Top 10 Christmas



Movies

By: Nadysen McKay

When Christmas comes around, everyone starts talking about their favorite holiday movies, and honestly, it's one of the best parts of the season. There's just something really nice about sitting on the couch, drinking hot chocolate, and watching a movie that makes you feel all warm and festive inside. So here are the top 10 Christmas movies that pretty much everyone likes, and if you haven't seen them yet, you probably should, because they'll definitely get you into the holiday spirit.

1. Home alone:

"Home Alone" is one of the most popular Christmas movies ever because it's funny and kind of crazy. It's about this kid, Kevin, who gets left behind when his family goes on vacation, and then he has to deal with two burglars trying to break into his house. Most people like it because the traps he sets are over the top and hilarious, and it also shows how important family really is, even when they get on your nerves.

2. Elf

"Elf" is a Christmas movie that basically everyone quotes because it's so silly. Buddy the Elf is a grown man who acts like a little kid, and he goes to New York City to find his real dad. The movie is funny, but it also has a really sweet message about believing in yourself and spreading Christmas cheer, even when people around you don't feel like

3. The Grinch

The live-action "Grinch" movie with Jim Carrey is super memorable because he plays the character in such a weird but entertaining way. It's about a grumpy green guy who hates Christmas and tries to ruin it for everyone in Whoville. But in the end, he learns that Christmas is more about love and kindness than presents, which makes the story really meaningful

4. The Polar Express

"The Polar Express" is a movie a lot of people watched when they were kids, so it feels nostalgic. It's about a boy who takes a magical train ride to the North Pole and learns about believing in things you can't see. The animation can look a little strange, but the movie still gives off a strong Christmas vibe with all the music, snow, and wonder.

5. Christmas Story

"A Christmas Story" is set in the past and focuses on a boy named Ralphie who wants a BB gun for Christmas. Most of the movie is just him dealing with normal kid problems, but it's funny because everything feels overly dramatic to him. People like it because it shows what Christmas was like in a simpler time and because it's super relatable.

6. The Santa Clause

"The Santa Clause" is about a guy who accidentally becomes Santa after the real Santa falls off his roof. At first, he doesn't want anything to do with it, but over time he starts to enjoy spreading holiday cheer. It's a fun movie because it mixes regular life with magical stuff, and it shows how unexpected things can change you for the better.

7. How the Grinch Stole Christmas! (Animated)

The animated "Grinch" is a classic that's been around forever. It's short, simple, and has the original story that a lot of people grew up with. The animation might look old, but it still has the charm that makes it a must watch every year. Plus, the message about Christmas not being about gifts still hits hard.

8. The Nightmare Before Christmas

This movie is unique because it's kind of a Halloween movie and a Christmas movie at the same time. Jack Skellington tries to take over Christmas, but he doesn't really understand how it works, which leads to some pretty weird situations. The animation and music make it stand out, and it's great for people who like something a little darker.

9. It's a Wonderful Life

"It's a Wonderful Life" is older and more serious than most Christmas movies, but it's still really important. It's about a man who feels like his life isn't going anywhere, but then he gets to see what the world would be like if he never existed. It's emotional, but it also reminds you how much of a difference you can make without even realizing it.

10. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

This movie is basically about everything going wrong during a family Christmas. Clark Griswold tries way too hard to make the "perfect" holiday, and obviously nothing goes like he planned. The movie is chaotic and goofy, which is why a lot of families watch it every year it makes you feel better about your own holiday disasters.

The Storm Report

Advice

By: Kalyn Haafke



Class of 2024 graduate Trey Skoglund knows what it means to stay committed. During his time at OHS, he played football and basketball all four years, ran track for two seasons, and was an active member of National Honor Society. No matter the activity, he was someone who showed up, worked hard, and helped wherever he was needed. Now, as a college student, he's learning how that same discipline translates into real-world responsibility — and he has some advice to pass on to our seniors.

As Trey explains, one of the biggest changes after graduation is time management. As teachers, we try to prepare students for this, but many don't really feel it until they're on their own. Trey puts it best: "In high school everything is always at the same time every day for all 5 days of the week. College, however, is all over the place..." He shared that using a whiteboard calendar helps him stay ahead. He writes down assignments, practices, and anything he needs to remember — something any senior could easily start now.

Trey also talked about how habits built in high school can carry into adulthood. He developed the habit of waking up early to work out, and he says it continues to help him "attack the day" in college. From a teacher's perspective, this is a great reminder: the routines students create now, even small ones, can make their transition smoother later.

Another point he emphasized was balance. As educators, we see students struggling with this constantly — either too much social time or too much stress. Trey admits it's tough, but he's learning that free time matters most when it comes after responsibilities are handled. He said, "I like to do my schoolwork before my free time... that way I'm less stressed and I make sure I get the things I need to get done first."

And of course, Trey addressed every senior's favorite (and least favorite) topic: studying. He admitted that in high school he often waited until the night before a test to start cramming. His honest advice now? Start early. He's learning quickly that college isn't as forgiving as high school, and preparing just a few days ahead makes a major difference in how confident and successful he feels.

As a teacher, I'll back Trey up on this one. Procrastination might feel like it works in the moment, but it builds stress, weakens learning, and usually leads to work that doesn't represent your best ability. Starting even a little earlier — reviewing notes, planning ahead, or spreading out study time — takes far less effort than panicking the night before. You deserve to learn in a way that leaves you proud of your work, not exhausted by it.

His final message is one that every teacher wishes students would take to heart: enjoy this time. Trey says, "You can't get the time back... don't be 'too cool for school' and enjoy still being a kid." He reminds seniors that the next chapter may feel scary, but only because it's new: "It's only scary because you've never done it before, not because you can't do it."

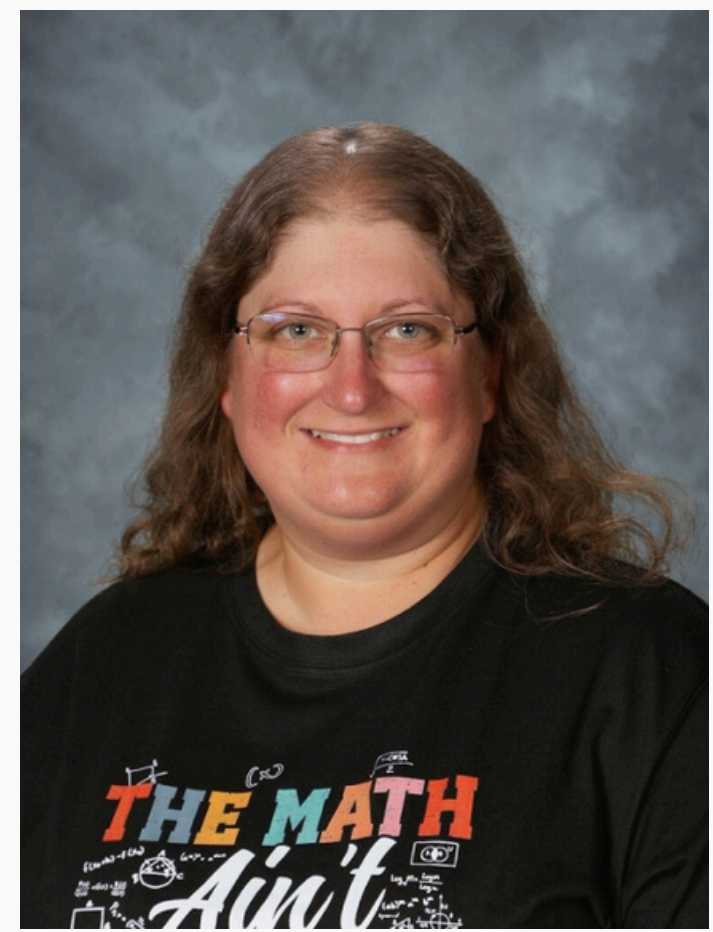
As teachers, we love seeing former students succeed, and we love even more when they turn around to encourage the next group. Trey's message is a reminder that effort, habits, and perspective matter — and that there's value in enjoying the journey, not just rushing to what's next.

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Staff Spotlight



By: Addie Umbreit



Ms. Schieler has several jobs while also being a math teacher who teaches PreAlgebra, Algebra 1, College Algebra, Precalculus, Calculus, Consumer, CREAM, and Technical Math. She teaches College Algebra, PreCalculus, and Calculus as dual credits through VCSU and Technical Math through NDSCS. Schieler explained what other tasks she does around Oakes, “I am also the head golf coach for the girls and boys, the prom advisor, and I keep book for the Girls’ Basketball team. In addition to all that, I also help out at other home events by running the clock and scoreboard.” Ms. Schieler does everything from teaching, to coaching, to running clock for events, and it’s important her actions don’t go unnoticed.

When asked who inspired her to teach, she said, “Honestly, I had many good and bad teachers who heavily influenced how I teach.” Overall, she was inspired to go into her profession because of her Calculus teacher, Mr. Stryker. Along with this, her favorite classes to teach are Consumer Math because of the real-life conversations and PreCalculus because she loves the Trigonometry in the 2nd semester.

Schieler says, “The most rewarding part of my job is getting to help students reach the point of understanding. Seeing someone have the lightbulb go on and getting to be part of the “aha” moment is what I live for as a teacher.” Ms. Schieler not only loves being able to teach these concepts but also watch each student figure out how to do it themselves. Additionally, she enjoys these moments even more when helping with non-academic concepts.

With having several tasks to get done as a teacher, coach, and helping out with extracurricular activities, it can be stressful at times. However, Schieler stays motivated by creating systems to overcome the struggles of procrastination and over thinking. This includes writing down important things that need to get done to keep track of everything. “Creating a to-do list for extra stressful times, such as the end of the semester, also helps me feel a sense of accomplishment when I am able to cross things off and therefore helps me build up my motivation through visual acknowledgment of my successes.” These strategies overall help Ms. Schieler minimize the impact of these challenges.

Her favorite part of her job is being a part of the process when helping upper class students make decisions about their next steps in life and how to get there as smoothly as possible. “This is one of the best things about working with the oldest kids in the district and is something I take great pride in being able to do.” She feels privileged to help where she can, whether it be making a pro and cons list for a job or making an educated decision about what dual credit classes to take. “Students are only in our building for a limited amount of time so helping them decide what’s next is, in my opinion, one of our most important and rewarding jobs.” Ms. Schieler’s efforts around Oakes are thoroughly appreciated as she plays multiple roles at our school.

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Library Corner

By: Ava Thompson

Book summaries By Mrs. Dobitz



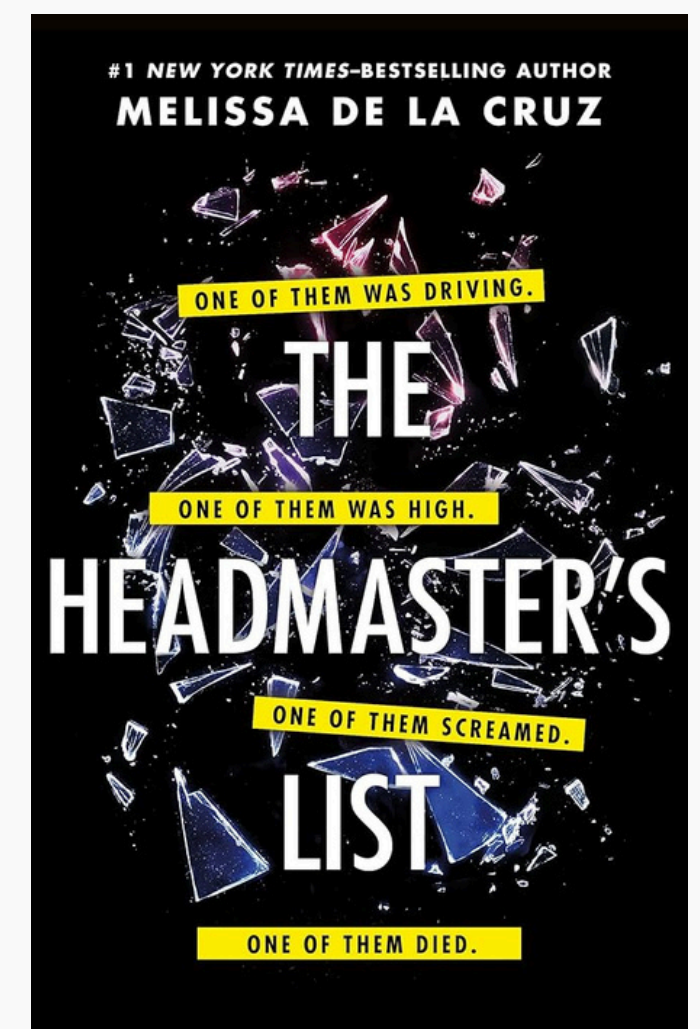
New books arriving one by one in the library constantly. I thought this week would be a perfect time, right before Christmas break, so you have some ideas of what you should read over this break! I reached out to Mrs. Dobitz to learn more about what's going on in the library as far as new books.

The Headmasters List

by Melissa de la Cruz

Genre: Suspense | AR Level: 5.4

A deadly car crash. Four students. Endless secrets. When Spencer wakes up in the hospital with her best friend gone, she realizes the truth isn't as simple as it seems. Was it really an accident—or something far more alarming? This twist-packed thriller is perfect for fans of drama, mystery, and stories that keep you guessing until the very last page.

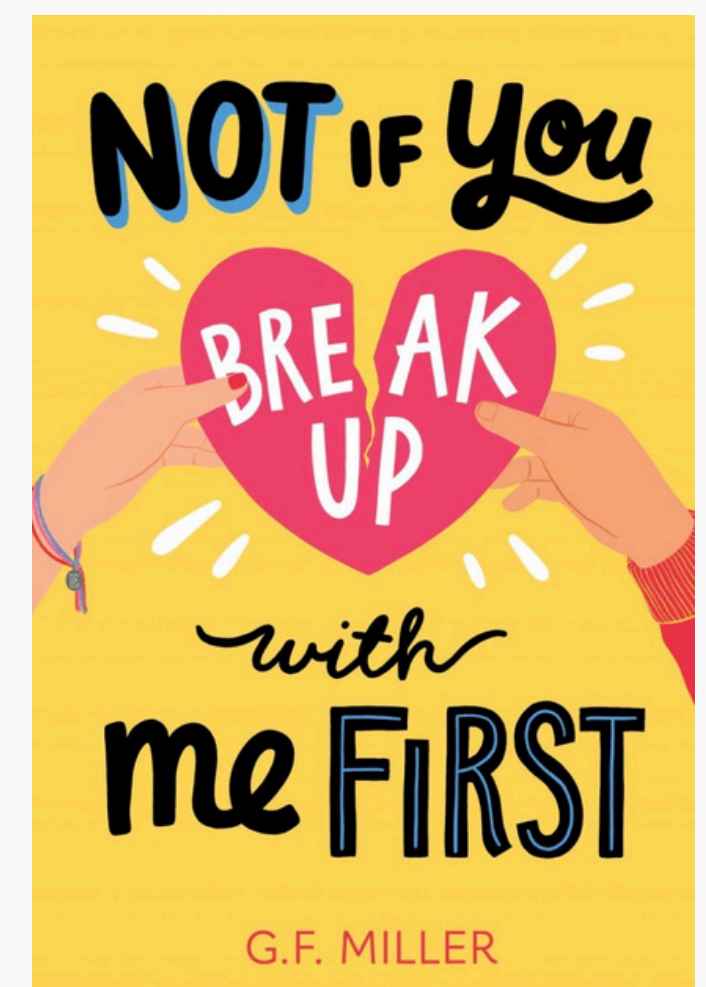


Not if you break up with me First

by G.F. Miller

Genre: Romance | AR Level: 4.9

Olivia and Ezra used to be the perfect couple—until things started to fall apart. So they make a pact: whoever wants out... has to break up first. But feelings, secrets, and unexpected twists make everything a lot messier (and funnier) than they planned. A great pick for readers who love romantic comedies, high school drama, and swoon-worthy chaos.



The Side of Wild

by Gary Paulsen

Genre: Nonfiction | AR Level: 6.6

In this collection of true stories, Gary Paulsen shares surprising, funny, and heartfelt moments from his encounters with animals—from loyal dogs to wild birds to unexpected creatures with unexpected lessons. Perfect for anyone who loves nature, survival stories, or seeing the world through a new lens.





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Roads, Runways, and Reunions: The Holiday Race Begins

By: Breann Young

It's the most wonderful time of the year, but for many people, it's also the most stressful. Christmas is here, and that means traveling, whether it's by car, plane, or train, to be with family and friends. Airports are busier than ever, highways are jam-packed, and train stations are crowded with people trying to get home in time for the holidays. For some, the excitement of holiday travel is worth it, but for others, it feels more like a marathon than a celebration.

Airlines have reported that flights are full, and delays are becoming more common. Some travelers are arriving at airports hours early just to make sure they don't miss their flights. Families with kids are trying to keep spirits up despite long lines, crowded terminals, and limited seating. Meanwhile, drivers are facing heavy traffic on highways, and some are even preparing for overnight stays in their cars to make it through. Despite all this, most travelers agree that being with loved ones makes the effort worth it.

It's not just transportation that's busy, stores and shopping centers are also filled with last-minute shoppers. Many people are trying to finish buying gifts while also managing travel plans, which can lead to stress and exhaustion. Social media is full of people sharing both the chaos and the joy of holiday travel, from hilarious airport mishaps to touching moments of families reuniting after months apart.

Some experts say planning ahead is the best way to survive Christmas travel. Booking flights early, checking traffic reports, and packing snacks for the road can make the trip smoother. Even with these strategies, travel during the holidays is still a challenge. But for most people, the reward of spending Christmas with family, sharing meals, and creating memories outweighs the frustration. After all, the holidays are about connection and celebration, even if it takes a little patience to get there.

Whether it's a long car ride, a delayed flight, or a crowded train, Christmas travel is part of the adventure of the season. And in the end, the hugs, laughter, and holiday cheer make every stressful moment worth it.

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How Snow Days Work

By Lila Iverson

Winter is here, so buckle up. One downside of winter is wanting to be home drinking hot chocolate while it's snowing, but instead being at school. To learn more about snow days, I talked with Superintendent Mrs. Sell about how those decisions are made.

First, schools have to watch the weather closely. Mrs. Sell uses the National Weather Service radar and also checks updates through the school's Slack channel. She watches to see when snow will start and stop. There is also a superintendent text stream where local superintendents share road conditions and weather updates.

If the weather looks rough, safety becomes the main concern. Student safety is always the number one priority. Farm families often help by calling in to let the school know if their roads are not plowed or safe.

Schools also have to follow state rules. The state requires a certain number of instructional minutes and school days each year. The district calendar has 183 total days, but only 170 are school days. The district does have a small "bank" of extra minutes, but they cannot rely on those minutes alone.

The district also builds in two storm days each year. This year those days are February 16 and April 6. After those days are used, the district may have to use extra minutes or makeup days. School will be canceled if there is a Blizzard Warning or a No Travel Advised. If bad weather is expected to hit later in the day, school may be canceled to avoid unsafe travel. Delays are used when conditions are expected to improve, and early releases help bus drivers get students home safely before it gets dark.

Conditions across the entire district are considered when making decisions. With all of this in mind, canceling school is not an easy choice. "Forecasts can be wrong, and everyone has different opinions about winter weather," said Mrs. Sell. Even though snow days are exciting, staying in school is important for students and the community.



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A Peek into Mass Media



By: McKenna Allston

This year, our high school English department introduced a more personalized learning approach by offering English electives for juniors and seniors. Instead of taking a traditional English 11 or English 12 course, students were able to choose from Mass Media, American Literature, or Modern Literature. This change was proposed by high school English teachers Mrs. Haafke and Mrs. Neer to give students more ownership over their learning and allow them to explore areas of English that best fit their interests and strengths.

In Mass Media, students draft articles for the bi-weekly newsletter, The Storm Report, work on the yearbook, and compare and evaluate professional articles. The class is made up of both juniors and seniors, and this is the first year Mass Media has been offered as an English option. I like having the choice of which English class I wanted to take. I enjoy this class because we do more writing of articles instead of reading novels. My favorite part is getting to work together to create articles.

Students in Modern Literature also appreciate having an option that fits their interests. Junior Swaye Jackson said she enjoys the books they read because they are interesting, engaging, and relevant to today's world. She explained that the class focuses on reading and analyzing stories, answering discussion questions, and participating in whole-group discussions.

American Literature student Brody Moore said he enjoys his class because it feels like learning history at the same time. "I like seeing how writing has changed over time," he said. Students in American Literature read books and poems, write essays, and complete creative writing assignments. Brody added, "I think I made the right choice of what English to take."

Overall, each English class offers a unique experience, but all share the same goal: helping students grow as readers, writers, and thinkers. By allowing students to choose their English course, our school is supporting personalized learning and recognizing that students learn best when they are engaged and invested in what they are studying.

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North Dakotas Council of Students at By:Jyles Meier State

Students and Teachers from our school recently attended the North Dakota State Student Council conference, where student leaders from across the state gathered to learn and connect. The conference focuses on leadership, student voice, and sharing new ideas.

Swaye shared that their goal was to help students grow as leaders and support opportunities across North Dakota. Swaye also said she's always impressed by the "original, innovative ideas" students bring and how well the conference is run, even when plans have to change.

I asked Mrs. Meierotto to describe how the atmosphere was, and she said "so hype and full of positive energy", especially during the announcement of candidates. Having a student from our school running for office made the experience even more exciting. Mrs. Meierotto says that the state student council conference is the "highlight of the year" and a big reason the students enjoy being a part of student council.

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Tornado Watch



By: Isaac Bjornstad

The end of this first semester is (or has, depending on when it comes out) come to its conclusion. Though I'm sure all of us are wondering how we can make life a little easier for ourselves next year. Such a solution is called the tornado watch program, and I'm sure you've heard of it at least once. Though for those not in the know, luckily for you, we interviewed Ed Wentworth, a member of the tornado program, to inform us about how tornado watch could help us prepare for next year.

So, to start off, you might want to know what exactly tornado watch is (if you don't already). Tornado Watch is a nonprofit organization that seeks to help the families and children of Oakes. Their mission is stated "to make sure no child goes without the essentials they need to learn, grow, and thrive," as stated by Mr. Wentworth. An honorable goal considering it's gotten rather rough for us these past few years.

The program was founded by Becki Thompson and Jessica Quandt in 2014. It started when their kids told them there were kids in their class in need of help, and asked for help with stuff to put in their lockers that could help. This turned into midnight travel in which they would leave supplies and food at families' front doors. They then realized that creating an official organization would bolster the amount of help they could provide, and so they began to amass support both financially and from communities. Now they're able to provide food for families and children in need like they sought to do.

Now you might be wondering exactly what kinds of services this program provides. Mr. Wentworth states that the program supplies "food, water, hygiene products, school snacks, school technology insurance, graduation, and school supplies." They also provide for a larger range than just educational, such as help with sports equipment, glasses, haircuts, camps, and much more. They're very handy if you're ever in need of help in practically any situation.

Now as stated before, the program seeks to aid families and children, but you might wonder what bracket of financial status it seeks to help. To answer, Jessica has stated that the program has no specific status they seek to aid, rather they want to support everyone regardless of their financial situation. Tornado Watch seeks to do all that it can for the students at OPS. They could help you too if you need it. It's hard to reach out for help, it can be hard, even embarrassing, admitting you don't have as much control over your life as you wish to. But there are people who are always willing to help, no matter who you are. Asking for help is a strength, and there's no need to bear everything by yourself when you have people willing to help.