

# THE SPRESS

February 28, 2025

\* PALESTINE-ISRAEL \* BLACK HISTORY \* TRUMP'S FIRST MONTH

## Diving into senior swim season

Megan Beam



On Thursday, February 6, 2025, the SPHS swim team had their annual senior recognition. They honored their three seniors: Megan Beam, Yume Nakayama, and Dominic Sprouse.

Megan Beam has been a member of the high school swim team for the past four years, and she has been on the club swim team for the past 12 years. Megan is a four-time WPIAL qualifier and has been to the PIAA state championship meet for the past three years. After graduation, she plans on attending Penn State Behrend to further her academic and athletic career, swimming and studying biology. Megan's favorite swim team memory was when she was hugging her brother after his final race of his high school career at states. At WPIALs this year, Megan will be competing in the 100 yard butterfly, the 500 yard freestyle, the 200 yard medley relay, and the 200 yard freestyle relay.

Yume Nakayama has been on the high school swim team for the past four years and she has been on the club swim team for the past 11 years. She is a four-time WPIAL qualifier and she attended the PIAA state championship meet her sophomore year. After high school, Yume is going to at

tend a four-year university to study hospitality and become a wedding planner. Her favorite memory was when she accidentally bought XXL underwear at Target on the way to states her sophomore year because she forgot her own, and she found out how big they were back at the hotel room with her teammates. Yume will be competing in the 200 yard medley relay and the 200 yard freestyle relay at WPIALs this year.

Dominic Sprouse has been a part of the high school swim team for the past four years, and he has been on the club swim team for the past 14 years. Dominic is a two-time WPIAL qualifier and he is a one-time section champ. After high school, he is going to attend Penn State Greater Allegheny to further his academic and athletic career, playing soccer and studying business sports management. Dominic's favorite memory was when he bleached his hair for the first time his sophomore year with the WPIAL team.

Although it was the last swim season for these seniors, it was a great one. Good luck in all future endeavors!

## Debriefing the Palestine-Israel conflict

Dalya Jabra



As many have probably heard, Palestine and Israel have had problems for a while now, but most don't know why these problems are occurring. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest running and most violent disputes in the world and goes way back to the end of the 19th century when Jews were migrating into Palestine.

Following the events of the holocaust where 6 million Jews were exterminated, in 1947, the United Nations adopted Resolution 181. This is known as the Partition Plan and it divided the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. The State of Israel was created on May 14, 1948, which sparked the first Arab-Israeli war. Israel won the war in 1949, but about 750,000 Palestinians were displaced, and the territory was divided into three parts. These parts became known as the State of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

Later in 1987, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip rose up against the Israeli government. This is also known as the First Intifada, which lasted from 1987 to 1993. It was a series of non-violent protests, acts of civil disobedience, and riots carried out by Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. The Second Intifada happened in 2000 and continued for several years. In response to the Second Intifada, the Israeli government approved the construction of a barrier wall around the West Bank.

When Hamas, a group seeking to violently fight up against Israel, won the Palestinian Authority's parliamentary elections in 2006, factionalism among the Palestinians rose and deposed Fatah, a Palestinian nationalist and social democratic political party. This gave Hamas control of the Gaza Strip. Following Hamas's seizure of control, violence broke out between Hamas and Fatah. Between 2006 and 2011, failed peace talks and deadly confrontations came to an end, eventually leading to an agreement to reconcile. Fatah entered into a unity government with Hamas in 2014.

In the summer of 2014, Hamas fired nearly 3,000 rockets at Israel, and Israel retaliated with a major offensive in Gaza. It ended in late August 2014 with a ceasefire deal organized by Egypt, after 73 Israelis and 2,251 Palestinians were killed. After the violence between Israelis and Palestinians in 2015, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah announced that Palestinians would no longer be bound by divisions of the territories created by the Oslo Accords, which were agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On October 7, 2023, hundreds of Hamas-led gunmen launched an unexpected attack on southern Israel. This attack continued with Israel blockading Gaza from the rest of the world. Gaza was flattened and the conflict between Israel and Hamas continued. As a result of the growing conflict, a ceasefire *Continued on page 6*



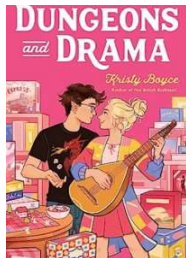
## Ox 'n' Koh's movie corner: Romance edition

Autumn Kohnen and Lillian Oxford



“Better Than The Movies” by Lynn Painter is about a girl named Liz Buxbaum, the main character, who is obsessed with romance and loves books, movies, and music. Liz lives next door to the main love interest, Wes Bennett. Liz and Wes have grown up next door to each other for a while which led to an argument over a parking spot. The argument sparked the two to talk a lot more and even become friends. But while the two are only friends, Liz’s old crush comes to school and all she wants to do is go to prom with him. As a result, she uses Wes for help. In the end though, Wes falls for Liz even though she has eyes for somebody

else. However, when Wes starts hanging out with another girl, Liz starts to get jealous and realizes that she has feelings for him too. This friends-to-lovers, love triangle romance novel will keep you on your toes and make you want to keep reading. Cassie Oxford, junior, says “Better Than The Movies” is her favorite book and would recommend the book as it is “an easy read full of lots of cute moments.” Cassie adds that she enjoyed the novel as a whole and liked the ending even though it took “a lot of annoyance and frustration” to finally get there.



“Dungeons and Drama” by Kristy Boyce is about a girl named Riley who is forced to work at her dad’s shop that sells tabletop and other types of games as a punishment for taking her mom’s car without permission. While working, she finds out there’s a room in the back of her dad’s shop where the game DND is set up for people to play. Riley ends up joining the group that one particular coworker is also a part of. Her and her coworker, Nathan, do not like each other very much, but as Riley tries to make her ex jealous, and Nathan attempts to make his crush jealous, they agree to start fake dating. Lillian Chase, sophomore, says this is her favorite romance novel and would recommend it to her friends “because it’s funny, cute, nerdy, and just a fun rom-com like book to read.” This fake dating, enemies to lovers novel is well written and according to Lillian is “wrapped up really nicely and it was really cute.”



“See You Yesterday” by Rachel Lynn Solomon is about a girl named Barret Bloom who has her first day of college. Barret Bloom has an awful first day of college. She goes back to her college dorm to sleep it off. When she wakes up the next morning, she goes to do her normal routine. She realizes that it is her first day of college again. She continues to go about her day, again, only to realize her nemesis, Miles, is also stuck in the loop with her. Barret and Miles have to constantly relive the same day over and over again. They decide to make the most of it and “do everything they ever wanted because only they will remember.”

Bailey Vietmeier, junior, absolutely loves this friends-to-lovers, groundhog day novel and would say it is her favorite romance novel she has read. She adds that the “time warp” idea is in other books but “the way that they decide to do everything reckless, fun, challenging” in this novel makes it more exciting. She would recommend this book because “it makes you think about what you would do if you knew no one would remember but you.”

## Fab-tastic Feburary students



Pictured from left to right, Kaitlyn Polk, Sydney Dubyak, Hayley Bennett, Kate DeYoung, and Ella Clifford

**Creativity:** Sydney Dubyak, junior, is being recognized for creativity. She likes to put a fun, positive twist on everything she does and says that being Student of the Month “shows people do care about the things I do.” Apparently the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, as Sydney states that her role model is her mom. Many students remember Sydney’s mom, Mrs. Dubyak, from elementary school and the fun and creative activities she brought to the classroom. With Sydney’s creativity comes her ability to think outside the box. She said the fictional character that most represents her is Disney’s Merida due to the fact “she comes up with different ways on her own to solve her problems.”

**Leadership:** Ella Clifford, senior, is highlighted for her leadership. Not only did she say that she tries “to be a nice person to everyone around her” but “it makes [her] happy to see that people can see those efforts.” She was surprised she was recognized for leadership, as she noted she doesn’t think about it at all and only does what she feels she should be doing, just like her mom, her role model, taught her to do. The fictional character she feels represents her is Jess from the television show “New Girl”. Not only is Jess a teacher, Ella’s career goal, but she’s super energetic, confident, and selfless.

**Academics:** Kate DeYoung, junior, is showcased for academics. While Kate noted that she does try in all her classes, she still thinks “it’s crazy, but it makes [her] happy to see” she’s being recognized for her hard work. Kate has grown up always being encouraged to work hard in her classes, as she identified her role model as her mother. Kate noted that Batman is the fictional character that represents her because he’ll always step in and save the day, doing what is right...with a mysterious flair, of course.

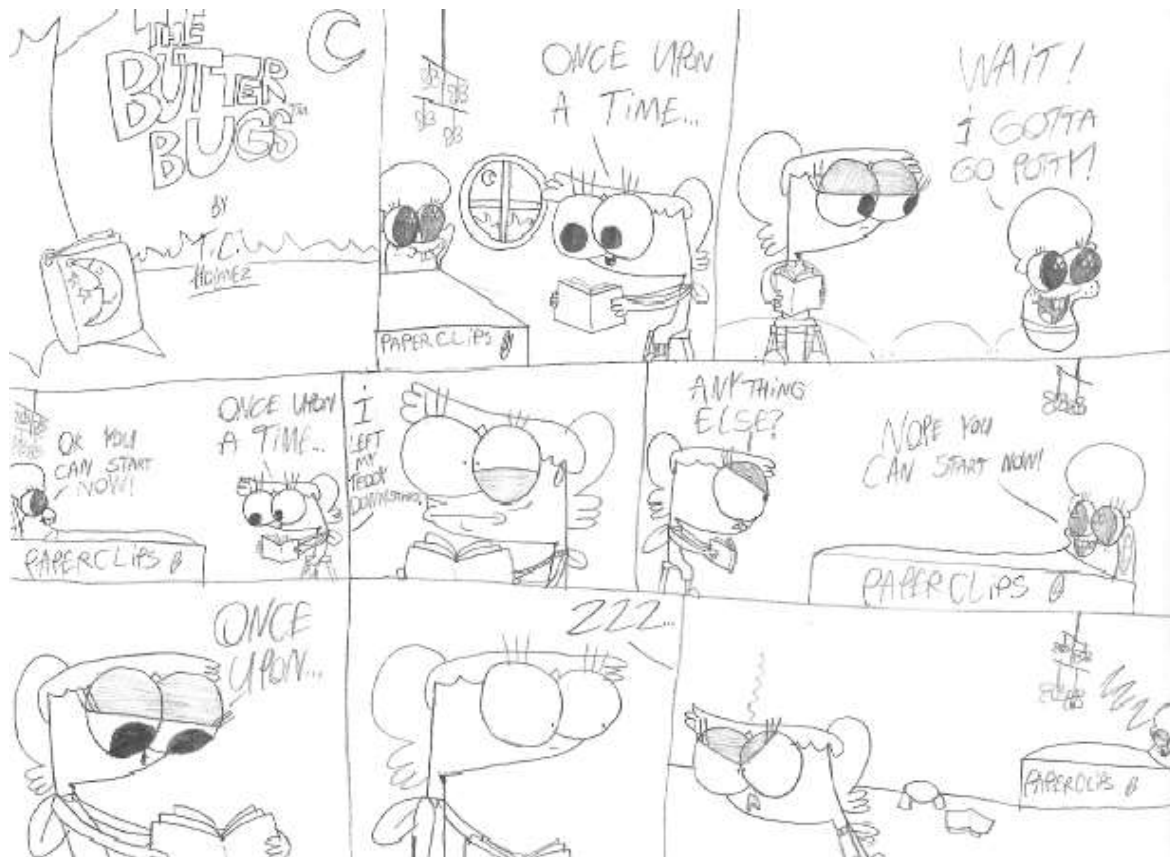
**Athletics:** Hayley Bennett, junior, is being acknowledged for athletics. While she works really hard maintaining high grades, she says she also “cares alot about athletic performance”. She also notes that it’s not always about how good you are, as she believes she was nominated for her “drive to always try to get better” than where she is currently. That drive and work ethic is why she looks to none other than Kobe Bryant as her role model, who she describes as “unmatchable”. She does admit that she’s pulled in different directions sometimes though. She says the fictional character that represents her is “Peter Parker because he balances two lives basically, and with school and basketball, [she] feels like that sometimes.”

**Kindness:** Kaitlyn Polk, junior, is featured for her kindness. Kaitlyn stated that it really does “pay off to just be kind”. She said she tries “to compliment at least one person a day because it makes them and [her] feel good”. Her role model is a role reversal. While she stated that her little sister looks up to her, she looks up to her too. It’s no surprise that Kaitlyn’s thoughtful nature is matched by her saying Cheer Bear, from Care Bears, is who represents her best.

**Congratulations to all the winners!**

### The Butter Bugs

T.C. Holmes



## Debriefing the Palestine-Israel conflict (con't)

Dalya Jabra

agreement between Hamas and Israel came into effect in Gaza during January 2025. The ceasefire agreement consists of three six-week phases. These phases include a surge in aid, the exchange of all hostages in Gaza for Palestinian prisoners, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, the return of displaced Palestinians to their homes, a permanent end of hostilities, and the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza. The ceasefire agreement gives hope for a cessation of hostilities in Gaza, but also the risk of ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and genocide.

Students are discussing this conflict in Mr. Labarbera's, international relations teacher, history class. The students have been researching the subsequent wars between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the desires of Israeli and Palestinian people, and the issues standing between a lasting peace between them. As the dilemma between Palestine and Israel continues, Mr. Labarbera has many predictions for the future. He predicts that the conflict will continue to go on for some time, since both sides think they are right, and that there is a lot of "historic memory and pain" which makes negotiating difficult. Mr. Labarbera's predictions are most likely to be true, as the conflict has been going on for about 80 years and isn't going to be able to be resolved just yet.

## This is bigger than the music

Callie Heynes

Normally, the halls of the high school are filled with pop culture references and talk about new music and what's going on in the lives of celebrities. The last couple of weeks are no different. After the Super Bowl, halftime performer Kendrick Lamar gained negative and positive reactions to his show. But what do South Park students think about Kendrick?

Many fans watch the biggest football game of the year to see the players play. However, between the Eagles and Chiefs rivalry, Kendrick Lamar took the stage, and many soon forgot about their team alliances. Lights dimmed, and over 133 million people tuned in to watch Kendrick Lamar in his unapologetic performance.

Kendrick's stage was the most watched Super Bowl halftime show ever and one of the most watched live events. What exactly made Kendrick's performance so remarkable? On stage, he performed with powerful visuals and raw energy. He also had many celebrity guest appearances like Serena Williams, Samuel L. Jackson, SZA, and Mustard, a well known DJ. He had the sole focus of the entire stadium as he performed his most popular Grammy-winning songs. However, Kendrick's performance wasn't just entertainment but a political statement.

Kendrick used his musical influence as a rapper to not only perform his music but address American viewers as a whole with his political agenda. His many messages were regarding his experiences as a Black man living in America and his first moments on stage were jarring to some at first, but resonating to those who recognized a deeper message.

Lamar visually displayed how he believes America is divided. At first, Kendrick's back up dancers formed the American flag, dressed in red white, and blue, standing together and untied. As more songs were played, however, the flag divided with Lamar in the middle of the separation. Not only does the split of the flag speak to political division, but also Kendrick Lamar trying to bridge a cultural gap as well. By having solely Black performers both create and separate a symbol of America, it now becomes an image of cultural representation that is echoed in Lamar's statement, "It's a cultural divide...this is bigger than the music".

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Photo credits to Pittsburgh's NPR News Station

## Melia's Mixtape: "Lullabies in A Glass Wilderness" by Lalleshwari (Katie Jane Garside)

Melia Petrello



Katie Jane Garside is an English singer and songwriter who has been a part of many musical projects. Her first and most successful band was Daisy Chainsaw, where Garside became known for her erratic on-stage behavior. The band was formed in 1989 and released their first album "Eleventeen" in 1992. Garside left the band and disappeared from the public eye shortly after in 1993 due to her on-stage histrionics. In 1999, she formed the band Queenadreena and released four albums between 2000 and 2008. In 2007, she released her solo album titled "Lullabies in A Glass Wilderness". The same year, she also started her project Ruby Throat. Her current project is called Flower, Liar.

Although Katie Jane Garside has gone by countless names, her solo album "Lullabies in A Glass Wilderness" is one of her most celebrated. In the album's fifth track "Dark Angel", Garside expresses wanting more out of a relationship. She opens the song with the lyrics, "A new morning star, and it's falling so fast". She has formed a new relationship but just as it begins she can already see the end approaching. Garside then says, "So incomplete, When we sleep in deceit, How can I hold you? Dark angel, dark angel, it's time for fire". The relationship is built on lies but Garside wishes for genuine connection and commitment.

In "For You I Hold My Breath", Garside explains

how she must leave a relationship because her devotion to her love interest ultimately ends up destroying her. She refers to both herself and her love interest as having their "cupboards bare" meaning they have nothing left to offer each other. Garside sings, "This broken bird lost in the snow, migration claws this tethered soul". Being in this relationship, she is in an unnatural and unhealthy environment and knows she is meant to leave.

Amongst Katie Jane Garside's many musical projects, "Lullabies in A Glass Wilderness" is some of her best work. Garside excels with her poetic lyricism and unique vocals. Her soft, whispery vocals and acoustics beautifully contrast with the loud punk sound of her most popular band Daisy Chainsaw. Whether it be Daisy Chainsaw's raw punk sound, Queenadreena's metal sound, or the soft acoustic sound on her solo album, Katie Jane Garside shows incredible artistry, creativity, and talent across all her projects.

### IMPORTANT DATES

- March 9: Daylight saving time starts**
- March 17: St. Patrick's Day**
- March 19: "Little Shop of Horrors" preview**
- March 20-23: "Little Shop of Horrors"**
- March 27: End of grading period**
- March 28: No school**

## This is bigger than the music (con't)

Callie Heynes

This division of the flag not only projects how divided Americans can be but also asks us to accept and acknowledge this split both politically and culturally.

Not only did Kendrick use visual symbols to relate the struggle of the American people but also hidden meanings as well. Samuel L. Jackson appeared, dressed as Uncle Sam- normally a white man who is a patriotic symbol for America and the US Government. However, not only was Samuel L. Jackson's appearance shocked viewers but also his words. "No, no, no, no, no! Too loud, too reckless, too ghetto! Mr. Lamar, do you really know how to play the game? Then tighten up." Words echoed the criticism that many Black artists have faced in the music industry. These words were mocking the real criticism that Lamar and other artists faced, Lamar only grinned. He had no intention of watering down his message

that America while being the land of the free and home of the brave, is not always equal to everyone.

What do students at South Park think? When discussing Kendrick and his impact on music, junior Lilly Pritts believes he is an "incredibly thoughtful musician". However, even though she acknowledges the impact of his music she does wish that "his mic was turned up to compete with the backing a little more". Senior, Caxias Gaiter, also believes that the quality of the performance itself was subpar. She states, "it definitely could have been better with the mics and camera angles, but overall it was good."

Even though many people had different opinions on the execution, overall it is clear that a deeper meaning was intended. Either way, Kendrick Lamar got people talking.

## Local artist highlight: Forty Winks

Melia Petrello

Forty Winks is one of the most talented new artists to come out of Pittsburgh's alternative and DIY music scene. They have a very messy and loud sound, yet the guitar is precise and played skillfully. Their sound can be compared to other Pennsylvanian shoegaze bands such as Blue Smiley and They Are Gutting a Body of Water. Their sound could also be traced back to noise rock bands such as Sonic Youth.

They released their first single "Noise" in September and their second single "Spurs" in December. Both songs can be streamed on their Youtube and Bandcamp, and "Spurs" can also be streamed on Spotify. While they only have two songs available to stream, they frequently play shows at venues such as The Government Center and The Mr. Roboto Project in the city.

Many people involved in Pittsburgh's DIY music scene look forward to their future releases and the evolution of their sound. You can follow them on Instagram @40wink to keep up with music releases and upcoming shows.



## Classic rom-coms

Addi Yochum

### “How to lose a guy in 10 days” (2003)



A magazine advice columnist, Andie Anderson gets inspiration from her best friend, Michelle, after Michelle gets into a depressing breakup. I watched this movie for the first time a few years ago and I was hooked on the main character, Andie. I loved her personality and just the way she talked. I feel like that's always a huge component of movies that I pay attention to. Andie wants to see how much she can push a man's boundaries before he breaks up with her. She chose this as a bet to her boss to be allowed to write more significant columns, but all within 10 days. Later at a party, she meets Ben Barry, a diamond salesman, who bet with his boss that he could make any woman fall in love with him in 10 days. Throughout the 10 days, Andie slowly grows more clingy and pushy, however, Ben doesn't back down. The movie has a tricky, sneaky sense to it, hence the fact that they both have bets against one another without the other one knowing. They add a parallel between the two characters in the beginning when Ben says “Oh you are already falling in love with me,” and Andie says “I'm gonna make you wish you were dead.” Who will give in first?



### “10 things I hate about you” (1999)

This movie was always one of my favorites because of the soundtrack. One big part of a movie is always the music, and I think the rock songs and bands chosen, like “Sexyboy” by Air, and “Come on” by Letters to Cleo really capture Kat's vibe, who is the main character. Kat Stratford, an abrasive, tough teenage girl meets a problem when her younger sister, Bianca, who is quite the opposite, wants to go to prom with a boy. However, her dad raises a rule that Bianca cannot date until Kat does, which is basically “impossible.” On the other hand, the new kid, Cameron James wants to figure out a way to get with Bianca, but upon hearing the new rule he feels defeated. He comes up with an idea to set Kat up with someone. After searching, they approach Patrick Verona, who is known for having a shady past. Cameron and his other friend, Michael, bribe Patrick with \$50 a date, but Patrick demands \$100. It won't be easy getting through to Kat, with her having a tough surface. Will his plan work out without Kat finding out he's being paid?



### “13 going on 30” (2003)

Like “10 things I hate about you,” I like the soundtrack of this movie. They include cute, romantic songs like “Head Over Heels” by The Go-Go's, and “I Wanna Dance with Somebody” by Whitney Houston, that kind of set the early 2000's, fun feminine atmosphere. In the movie, Jenna Rink is a soon to be 13 year old who is considered weird in her school, or at least according to the six chicks, a popular group of girls. Like most teenage girls, she wants a boyfriend, but has trouble finding one. So on her 13th birthday, she wishes to be a thriving, beautiful 30-year-old. Suddenly, she wakes up in her New York apartment with a strange man. She soon realizes that he is her boyfriend, however, she still feels uncomfortable and leaves in a panic. The story takes a spin whenever she runs into her best friend from her childhood, Matt, who is engaged to his fiancée, Wendy. She hires him as a photographer for her redesign project, and they spend days taking pictures together. She feels stuck, especially since he's getting married today. Suddenly, she decides to show up and admit her feelings towards him. As she expected, he comforted her and told her that he wants to marry Wendy. She leaves distraught. Then, we are taken back to her birthday in the closet, and she feels that he has to change the future. Will it work in her favor, or will it remain the same?

## Trump: one month in

Rhiannon Lord

On January 20, 2025, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States, becoming the second ever to serve their terms non-consecutively. Trump has been at the center of U.S. politics since starting his first presidential campaign in 2015, promising to “Make America Great Again”. Three presidential elections in a row have all seemingly been referendums on whether he should take the White House. After his loss in 2020, however, he refused to give up, digging in his heels and keeping his relevance until his controversial return in 2024. And “controversial” is no understatement.

Trump’s 2024 campaign has reinvigorated many on the right-wing, taking hard, anti-establishment positions on many issues. Here is a review of what Trump has been doing in the White House so far, and what more we could see:

### Israel and Palestine

The conflict in Israel and Palestine has been quite the tricky situation, ever since Jewish people started migrating to the area in the late 1800s. Recently, in October of 2023, tensions exploded again, and the world has been scrambling for a solution to the new war in the Gaza Strip. Trump’s solution is decidedly quite radical. The president has commented many times, even doubling down, to bring Gaza under American authority. So far, the plan hasn’t gone through, and negotiations with Israel and surrounding countries continue.

### Government Efficiency

A highlight of the Trump campaign and his new administration has been the informally-instituted “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE), headed by 2024 Republican candidate Vivek Ramaswamy and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. The DOGE asserts that the federal government has become too bloated, inefficient, and left-wing biased, wasting the precious dollars of tax-payers. The DOGE program has so far cut down on federal employees, halted funding for USAID, and plans to target other departments with audits, rehaults, and straight up abolition.

Many concerns have been raised in regards to the constitutionality of this initiative. Critics claim that the DOGE is effectively staging unconstitutional takeover of the federal government, and fear a centralization of power around the president.

### Department of Education

For many years now, the Right has campaigned with claims of left-wing bias seeping into the public education system, through Critical Race Theory, LGBT+ promotion, anti-Americanism, etc. A specific focus of the Trump campaign has been education and the Department of Education. Trump has claimed that the department responsible for directing our country’s education has been infiltrated by radical left-wing elements, and wishing to gut, or even abolish, the agency. Unfortunately, this position cannot be fulfilled by executive power alone. How a cut in spending or straight up abolition of the department could affect the nation’s students is left to the decisions of Trump and Congress in how they want to carry out this agenda, if Trump can convince Congress at all.

### Elon Musk

Ever since buying Twitter (now renamed to X) and joining the Trump campaign, Elon Musk has been a figure of controversy rivaling that of Trump himself. Critics of his involvement have said that his corporate influence and financial support is anti-democratic. He is also Trump’s main advisor for the DOGE, and has actively promoted the effort on social media. In January, during a rally for Trump’s inauguration, Musk gave a gesture that people were quick to compare to the Nazi salute, stirring controversy even more. Musk’s statement before giving the gesture was “my heart goes out to you”, leading many to defend him by saying it was just awkward. However, those unconvinced use this incident to claim that radical elements are infiltrating the government.

## Immigration

Arguably the biggest highlight of Trump's politics is immigration policy. Millions of illegal immigrants have entered the country over time, and Trump has claimed that this lack of border security is a threat to the nation, potentially letting in dangerous criminals and putting a strain on the economy. Trump has deployed the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to locate and remove suspected illegal immigrants. The humaneness of this initiative, however, has been put into question, and many disagree with Trump's uncompromising and harsh stance.

## Tariffs

Trump has been promoting tariffs since his first campaign for 2016. But now, it has ramped up. Trump has put out the idea of replacing income tax with a system of tariffs, allegedly taking the burden of the government's revenue from its citizens to foreign countries. Specifically, Trump has targeted China, Canada, and Mexico with this tariff policy. Many economists are skeptical of protectionist trade policy and whether a replacement of income tax with tariffs would work is up for debate.

In alignment with his deportation policy, the Trump administration came into conflict with the South American country of Colombia over sending immigrants back to the country. Trump threatened the President with tariffs if he did not comply with this policy, but they were able to come to an agreement where Colombia would allow deportation flights and the U.S. would not place tariffs.

## Editorial

Buckle in, folks.

I honestly think the Trump presidency was inevitable. There's this trend in human history where we flip flop between more liberal and more conservative periods, but ultimately we trend towards a more liberal society. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, a dynamic duo of French philosophers, describe the process of society going more liberal as "deterritorialization". The social standards and traditions of the past become more and more irrelevant, breaking apart, and sometimes being replaced ("reterritorialization"). The conservative movement, at this postmodern point of history, has become more and more radical towards the side of reterritorializing and reversing this natural trend. It is a common theme in right-wing circles today that Trump and other modern right-wing movements may very well be "the last chance", before a more left-wing society solidifies. It is safe to say, in my humble opinion, that this is completely futile. As long as society keeps advancing, traditional human structures will become like dust in the wind. There is no stopping the natural flow of history, and this current upsurge in nationalism and traditionalism is merely a speed bump. It will be a long and messy four years, especially for some vulnerable groups targeted by the Trump administration and radical right-wingers emboldened by this wave of confidence. However, we will (we must) return to progression. This manual reterritorialization effort is no match for innovation in technology and political thinking, like a small crab against the tides.

## Recognizing African American inventors

Savannah Booth

February marks an opportunity each year to acknowledge African Americans from history and how much they have contributed to our society. Black History Month originated in the United States as a way to recognize and celebrate all African Americans in history. Originally referred to as Black History Week by historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) in 1926, the week coincided with President Abraham Lincoln who was born on Feb 12, and Frederick Douglas who was born on Feb 14. It later became known as an acknowledgement for the entire month of February that we recognize today.

Many everyday materials go unrecognized by who invented these items and why they are so important, and many of our everyday essentials were invented by African Americans.

Marie Brown invented the home security system. Brown was born on October 4, 1940, right here in Pennsylvania. Brown became a teacher in the public school system, then became a multicultural coordinator and helped introduce multicultural education into the school system focusing on African American history. In 1967, Brown went into publishing and later became Editor-in-Chief of the *Elan* magazine. She decided to open up her own literary agency, “Marie Brown and Associates in Harlem becoming one of the few African American agents in the book world. Brown invented the home security system because of high crime rates in her neighborhood and slow response times coming from the police. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology acknowledges her system as the first home security system. This is influential because high crime places do not always get help as fast as they need so this helps many people feel safe whether they are at home or away from home. The system included a video camera and a two-way microphone much like the “Ring” camera that you see once you walk on most people’s porches.

John A. Burr invented the lawn mower. Burr was born on May 5, 1848 in Maryland. His parents were born enslaved but were freed. Burr was a teen during the Civil War and worked as a field hand leading to his invention. He made a living from servicing farm equipment and other machinery. Later he moved to Chicago and also worked as a steelworker.

Later in Massachusetts, he filed his patent for the rotary mower in 1898. After the patent was granted, he went to Harvard Law School and continued with what he knows he does best, and worked as a repairman. He held over 30 U.S. patents for lawn care and enjoyed the happiness of his success. Burr lived a long life and enjoyed traveling and lecturing about what motivated him, he later died in 1926 of influenza at age 78. The lawn mower is a machinery that each household owns in some type of form. Houses would not be able to be kept clean if it was not for this wonderful invention that Burr created from the upbringing of his life, which was made to help make life easier for so many others.

John Lee Love invented the portable pencil sharpener. He was born in and on an unknown place and date but is believed to be born in the Reconstruction Period. Much is unknown about this historical figure but that does not make him any less of an innovator. Love was inspired by the need for a more convenient and efficient way to sharpen pencils. His invention was a response for the practical needs of students, artists, and office workers who required a reliable tool to maintain a sharp pencil point without the hassle of using bulky equipment. His portable pencil sharpener was patented in 1897, and often was referred to as the “Love Sharpener.” Education was becoming more accessible at the time this was first patented, and with more people attending school, the need for efficient writing instruments was a high priority. Love’s portable pencil sharpener not only met that demand, but also showcased his creativity and problem-solving skills. This invention helped people become more efficient in an endless number of ways and fields.

Black History Month serves as a reminder to appreciate and see everyone as equals. This month highlights not only the struggles, but also the achievements of African Americans. The contributions made by African Americans have made our everyday lives easier. With the help of the innovators listed above and many more, these individuals have greatly improved our daily lives, adding to why we should recognize the names who aren’t highly prioritized not only this month but every month.

### Students witness surgery



Students from Mrs. Weston’s Honors Anatomy and Physiology had the incredible opportunity to witness an open heart surgery. After completing an in-depth unit on the cardiovascular system, it was a great experience to see all that they’ve learned in action. In addition, they also got a glimpse into the exciting career paths in the medical field. From surgeons to nurses to anesthesiologists, this experience gave them real-world insight into various health career options.

### Sam and Marci

S.M.G.

