

THE SPRESS

April 10, 2025

* LITTLE SHOP

* DANGERS OF AI

* BAND TRIP

Rolling into states

Addi Yochum



That's bocce, baby! South Park's unified bocce team made it to states. In first period on March 26th, the team was met with students and teachers lined up in the hallways, cheering them off to the Hershey state bocce competition, where they scored 6th place.

Bocce is an Italian sport that has been played since around 5000 B.C. The sport consists of rolling a ball closest to the target, a pallino. Unified bocce is more than just rolling a ball and scoring points, however. Unified bocce, being a Special Olympics sport, gives the opportunity for students to have more engaging social contact, physical development, and confidence. This helps students from different corners of the school get out of their comfort zones, and interact with people they usually wouldn't. All players build each other up and support one another, with an emphasis on inclusivity.

Mrs. Feth, high school special education teacher, described some of the challenges and highlights of this trip. She states the students were most excited about going to Chocolate World, Hershey's amusement park, and, obviously, getting to compete

at the highest level in bocce. However, not everything about this trip was ideal. Some challenges they faced were being around unfamiliar people, a different layout of the courts, and the rules being different than they are used to.

Ms. Larner, who assists with students in life and skills programming, also went into detail about the trip. When asked what she believes her students were most excited about, she said, "the students/teammates were incredibly honored to make it to the state level. They were thrilled to go to Chocolate World and experience Hershey." Ms. Larner agrees that a different environment was tough to get used to, but she also added that the bus rides were also one of the worst parts because they were too long and exhausting. Another challenge she mentions is having to face the championship teams and enduring the pressure.

Even though they felt they were under pressure, they still placed 6th in the whole state of Pennsylvania. Congratulations, bocce team!

Melia's Mixtape: "Post" by Björk

Melia Petrello



Icelandic singer, songwriter, DJ, actress, and producer Björk is one of the most influential artists. She is known for her unique style within her music, music videos, and fashion as well as her odd and silly behavior in interviews. She pioneered electronic music, influencing a wide range of genres and artists. Artists such as Travis Scott, Radiohead, Frank Ocean, and Arca have all credited her as an influence. Her best selling album "Post" displays her wide range of talent with its unique songs.

Björk's song "Army of me" was her first top ten single. In typical Björk fashion, the song features heavy electronic elements. The song's lyrics capture the frustration of dealing with someone complaining about problems they make no effort to fix. Björk herself has said the song was written about her younger brother and has described it as a "big sister telling her little brother off song". In the song's verses, she is telling him to get up and work to change his life, while in the chorus she expresses her frustration stating, "and if you complain once more, you'll meet an army of me". She is at the peak of her frustration with her brother's laziness and complaining and feels as if she is about to explode.

The song, "It's Oh So Quiet" is one of Björk's most successful songs. The song is a cover, and was originally recorded in English by Betty Hutton in 1951. However, that song was also a cover of the German song "Und Jetzt es Still". The song goes back and forth between quiet verses and loud, shocking orchestral instruments in the chorus to parallel the chaos of falling in love. Björk recorded the song partially as a joke, since her producer would always play the song on their tour bus. She also has expressed she isn't thrilled with one of her most popular songs being a cover since she wanted to place

emphasis on creating new and unique music. However, the song was necessary to complete the album. In an interview with Stereogum, Björk said, "It was the last song we did. Just to make it absolutely certain that the album would be as schizophrenic as possible. That every song would be a shock."

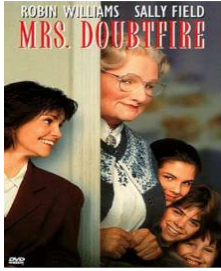
The track, "Enjoy" is an intense song about greed. The loud, electronic instrumentals are bold and shocking. Björk described it as a song about not being fulfilled with what you have from life, "so you have to go out and get it". In the first verse, Björk states, "look out the speed out there, it magnetizes me to it", describing the way in which she feels she needs more from life, and something is calling her. The chorus repeats the word, "enjoy", emphasizing the narrator's greed and indulgence. Alternative metal band Fleshwater has also covered the song, showing the wide range of genres Björk has influenced.

It is no doubt that Björk is one of the most influential artists, and has influenced artists across nearly every genre. She is incredibly talented across many fields, and has phenomenal and unique artistry. Whether it be because of her music, her personality, her performances, or her fashion, Björk is adored by many. "Post" beautifully showcases her wide range of talents and is an essential listen.

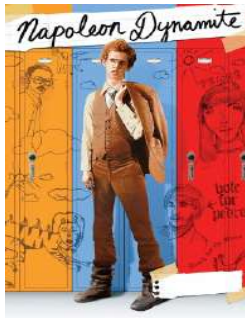


Ox 'n' Koh's movie corner: Comedy edition

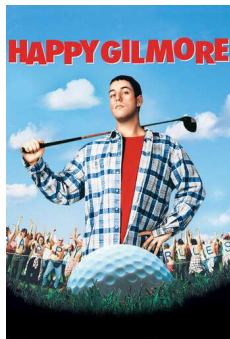
Ox 'n' Koh's Corner is returning to favorite movies with a focus on comedy in light of April fools' jokes and pranks. We sent a poll to our South Park students to vote for their favorite classic comedy movie of all time. From those votes, we pulled out the top three most-voted movies for this goofy season.



The top favorite comedy movie was “Mrs. Doubtfire” with an 18% winning vote from South Park High School students. “Mrs. Doubtfire” is a fun and witty comedy released in 1993 about a divorced man named Daniel Hillard, played by Robin Williams, who doesn’t have a lot of time with his kids. As a result, he comes up with this plan to disguise as a nanny for his ex-wife Miranda, played by Sally Field, so he can spend more time with his kids. Throughout the movie, Daniel wins the affection of his kids as their nanny which ultimately makes him become a better father. Of course, his secret can’t stay hidden forever. Miranda and the kids will have to find out who is really their nanny.



“Napoleon Dynamite” won second favorite comedy by South Park students with 15% of the votes. “Napoleon Dynamite” is a popular 2004 comedy about a high school in the 80s. The movie focuses on an awkward teen, Napoleon, in Idaho who struggles to fit in. The fun begins when Napoleon’s grandmother, who he lives with, gets injured on a trip which brought his strange uncle to watch over him and his brother. Napoleon’s uncle is oddly stuck in the past and tries to make money off of random businesses which he gets his nephews into. With his weirdly nostalgic uncle in town, Napoleon befriends the new kids at school, Pedro, a Hispanic boy who speaks little English. Together, they become great friends and decide to run for class president and go to a school dance, finding a place within the school where they belong.



“Happy Gilmore” won third place with a vote of 9% of students. The movie focuses on All Happy Gilmore’s golf journey. All Happy Gilmore is played by Adam Sandler. Happy wanted to be a professional hockey player, but that was not working out. He eventually discovered that he had a natural talent for golf. Happy’s grandmother found out that she was about to lose her house. Happy joins the PGA tour to win the tournament to pay for his grandmother’s house, which was threatened with foreclosure. While golf is supposed to be a calm and focused sport, Happy is a foul-mouthed, temperamental, and unserious player. To everyone’s surprise, he is an amazing golfer. Happy’s main opponent is Shooter McGavin, played by Christopher McDonald. Shooter is an arrogant player who is not worried about Happy’s talent. Eventually, Happy wins the golden ticket to pay for his grandmother’s house. Happy Gilmore just recently got a sequel in 2025, so if you loved Happy Gilmore, there’s more for you to see!

Spring it on!

Megan Beam

During the colder months of the year, oftentimes we are cooped up in the house. The warmer weather offers opportunities that we have not had since fall. Get outside and have some fun this spring season! Not sure what to do? Here's some options to try out. There's places to go and things to do with loved ones or by yourself.

Go to Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Garden: Every season Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Garden has a flower show, and this one is no different. From March 22 to April 20, you can see this year's spring flower show. Each room shows off a variety of seasonal flowers.

Take pictures with the Easter Bunny: Some places you can go to take pictures with the Easter bunny are South Hills Village mall, Ross Park mall, and Bass Pro Shop. If you have a pet, you can take them to PetSmart and get pictures with the Easter bunny.

Go for a walk: Avid walkers know that you can still get exercise during the colder months on a treadmill or in an indoor track, but where's the fun in that? Now that spring is here and warm weather is underway, there are plenty of gorgeous trails in and around South Park that you can walk on.

Plant some flowers: Often times when spring is mentioned, the first thought is usually flowers. A great way to get into the spring-spirit is to plant some! Tulips, daffodils, lilies, and daisies are truly the epitome of spring. How will you arrange your springtime garden?

Make an Easter egg hunt: If you have a little sibling, or just want to have some fun, you can make an Easter egg hunt! You can get a whole bunch of plastic Easter eggs for cheap and then fill them with your favorite candy and host it right in your front yard. There are also plenty of places that host egg hunts as well!

Dye Easter eggs: Throughout history, Easter eggs have represented new life and rebirth, so why not make them pretty? Dying hard boiled eggs is a fun way to spend time with family and friends. In a bowl put hot water, vinegar, and food coloring in whatever colors you want. Then dunk the eggs in or let them sit for a while to get your desired saturation.

Go to the Aviary: Explore the exhibits of the aviary during their Eggstravaganza. Go on an egg themed scavenger hunt and get prizes and treats along the way! There is also an opportunity to take a picture with the Easter Bunny. The Eggstravaganza is being held on April 12-13 and 18-19 from 11:00am-3:00pm. On those same days, there are plenty of other spring and Easter themed activities.



Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Tunes in Tennessee

Savannah Booth

The Road to Nashville... more like The Road to Tennessee. South Park High School's Eagle Blues Band has been working hard to fundraise and practice so they can perform in a new place where the band has never gone. At the beginning of the season, the band was introduced to the theme of "The Road to Nashville" where they would begin to play some fun country music, have cowboy hats instead of shakos, and have fun backdrops that follow each song in a state that led to the heart of country music. Although the band did not go to Nashville, the band got to enjoy the Smokey Mountains in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. This season has been filled with many memories and stepping stones for how far our beloved marching band has gone.

The beginning of the trip started pretty rocky when the bus broke down and students were filled with adrenaline while waiting to finally get moving on the ten-hour trip to come. Coaches and students kept vibes up while watching movies and singing songs together. Angie Trinidad, junior, states "I loved when Jarrett Thompson sang 'Dentist' from the musical, along with the Urchins from the show." After two hours when a new bus arrived, everyone was finally ready to settle down and enjoy the scenic views to come. Even though the road trip was long, students were very excited to reach the hotel so they could jump into the pool and have a pizza party.



To begin their list of activities on day two, students got to learn the history of crime across America and see artifacts from real criminals along with the behind-the-scenes work of detectives and cops in action at the Alcatraz Museum. Following the first museum, students got to play the role of a first-class passenger at the Titanic Museum while hearing stories and finding out just how cold the water was that the passengers would be treading in, and finding out if their passenger lived or died. Keira Mitchell, junior, states, "My favorite part of the trip was going to the museums. I love history so to me museums are so interesting, and I love learning about things I thought I already knew a lot about." To end the night to a great first full day in Tennessee, the marching band went to a Pirate Voyage dinner and students were filled with enthusiasm and excitement when watching all the pirates, animals, and mermaids tell a love story with fun acrobats and tricks directly in front of them.

Performance day! Starting off the day bright and early, students got ready to kick off their reasoning for the trip by performing in Dollywood. Even though the performance was incredibly hectic, it was fun for students to perform in a new place for the first time. Coaches came back enthused about the performance and it ended with Dollywood inviting the marching band back and making the coaches incredibly proud and happy.

Continued on page 6



Tunes in Tennessee (con't)

Savannah Booth

The day was filled with many photos and memories created to capture the environment of the rollercoasters, food, and tributes to Dolly Parton that were spread throughout the park. Even though it was a long day, students ended it off with a night at the island that had amusement park rides, food, and many places to shop for families and themselves.

On the final day of Tennessee, the band took a trip to Gatlinburg to take a more scenic view and to experience the culture before them. The band started off with an aerial tramway going up to Ober Mountain to see the beautiful views and fun activities. Jocelyn Wirth, sophomore, explains that she loved the aerial tramway the most because she loved seeing the view from that high up. Once on the mountain, students could participate in a number of activities like mountain coasters, ski lifts to get a better view, snow tubing, ice skating, ice bumper cars, and a rescue shelter to see the animals. Ending this sweet trip, students spent many hours shopping on Main Street and having a group dinner before heading back to the hotel. Seniors were then able to celebrate their time in the band and went go karting with the band directors who have made their years in the band bittersweet.

IMPORTANT DATES

- April 11: ASVAB Test**
- April 12: Passover begins**
- April 17: MiniThon Volleyball Tournament**
- April 17: Early dismissal**
- April 18: No school**
- April 20: Easter**
- April 21: No school**
- May 5: Cinco de Mayo**
- May 5-16: AP Testing**
- May 7: Talent Show**
- May 9: Prom**
- May 11: Mother's Day**
- May 13-15: Keystone Testing**

Local Artist Highlight: Gina Gory

Melia Petrello

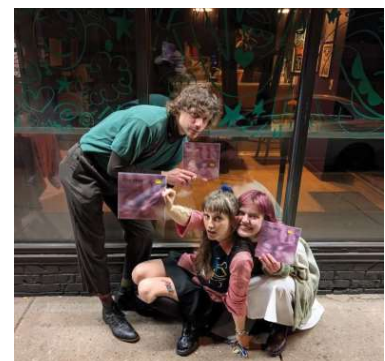


In October of 2024, local artist Gina Gory released their debut LP “Died Laughing”, instantly becoming a staple in Pittsburgh’s indie rock scene. The album has a very unique sound, combining elements of pop, rock, and slowcore. With the songs’ upbeat sound contrasted with sludgy guitars, it sounds as if they had deconstructed a pop song and put it back together. Their odd sound could be compared to fellow Pittsburgh indie rock legends, Feeble Little Horse.

The band consists of Veronika Cloutier on guitar, Connaley Martin on bass, and Dylan Henrickson on keys and drum machine. As for the band’s odd name, Cloutier was inspired by a similarly named customer at the Government Center, a music venue, bar, cafe, and record store all in one. The band frequently performs at the Government Center as well. They recently performed there on March 29 alongside James Castle to celebrate the release of their 7” record. They will be playing there once again on April 20 with Zastave, Ira Glass, and Her Charms.

Gina Gory’s music can be found on Bandcamp, Spotify, and Soundcloud. They also have multiple music videos available on YouTube. To keep up with future releases and shows, follow them on Instagram @ginag0ry (“gory” spelled with a zero).

Gina Gory celebrating the release of their 7” record at The Government Center



History of a bunny mystery

Rhi Lord

What comes to mind when you think of Easter? Perhaps, it is just another excuse to visit family or get a break from school. Or, it could be a time to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. Some Easter symbols may come to mind, even, like... rabbits? How did we get from a Christian celebration to bunnies?

In early Christian tradition, Pagan symbolism was used to help convert non-Christians to the religion more easily. One of these symbols were rabbits, which were brought over as a representation of fertility and rebirth. Rabbits fit perfectly with the story of the resurrection of Jesus, solidifying leporine symbolism into Christian Easter tradition.

Long before Christianity became Europe's dominant religion, and long before even the birth of Jesus, the peoples of the continent had various mythologies and belief systems. Europeans would share stories of powerful gods, heroes, and fantastical events. "Paganism" refers to these pre-Christian European religious groups. These pantheonic faiths told tales of Thor, of Zeus and the Olympians, and of the Germanic goddess Eostre. Eostre, also known as Ostara, was (or is, to modern Pagans) a goddess representing spring, dawn, and fertility. Modern scholars have connected ancient celebrations of Eostre to our modern Easter, even believing that the word "Easter" comes from her name. And wouldn't you know: Eostre was commonly associated with eggs and our big-eared fellas.

In the 16th century, a new mythical figure was appearing in German folklore, possibly inspired by the previously-established Easter traditions. The Osterhase was a mysterious rabbit that left colorful eggs for children to find; this is who we now know as the Easter Bunny. Pennsylvania Dutch (Amish) immigrants introduced this folk tale to America in the 1700s, and it eventually solidified into a classic Easter legend.

For thousands of years, people have celebrated the coming of spring, whether it be to honor the resurrection of Jesus, praise a Pagan goddess, or just have a peaceful break from the everyday hustle. Now, millions of children across Europe and North America celebrate Easter by hunting eggs and enjoying the company of family.

Down on Skid Row

Callie Heynes

In an early year of a decade not too long before our own... "Little Shop of Horrors" was performed the last week of March. Performers, viewers, students, and parents are sad to see this musical pass. However, many memories have been made "Down on Skid Row". From puppeteering man-eating plants, offstage acting, and songs that will get stuck in your head, this year's musical was one of South Park's most interesting and memorable shows.

Even though it is commonly known as "Little Shop", there is a big history behind its release from book, to movie, to musical. Its origins date back to 1894, when H.G. Wells wrote a short story, "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid", with the main idea centered around a man-eating carnivorous plant. In 1932 and 1956, more and more dark comedy and sci-fi stories were written with original spins on this funny, yet horrific transformation of plant to murderer. These stories would inspire Roger Corman and his movie "The Passionate People Eater", which entered the public domain as "The Little Shop of Horrors". Off-Broadway theaters scooped up the film almost immediately and adapted it to the production seen in our very own auditorium.

Our version was obviously better, as no one could replicate our talent. As Mr. Baker claimed, he chose this show since the cast basically wrote itself. With Olivia Sperber and Ethan Short as the main leads, Audrey and Seymour, and the voice of the talking plants (Audrey II) could be heard by Alex Marshall. The acting and all movements for the plants and plant limbs had to happen through full body puppeteering by Callie Heynes, Milo Levine, and Owen Stillwell, who had to perfectly sync up with everything going on around them.

One aspect of our show that sets it apart from others is that some of the acting was done off-stage. As the audience sees the puppet on stage, Alex Marshall, senior, is the voice heard in the wings. While performing offstage, not in front of an audience, may seem easier than being on stage, this is not always proven to be the case. Marshall admits it was "harder, because I couldn't physically see any of my fellow

Continued on page 8

Down on Skid Row (Con't)

Callie Heynes

actors. I need to look at monitors in order to get my cues, which is harder than you may think". However, the difficulties didn't end there. Not only was acting and performing difficult, but not all accidents happened on stage. For senior Jarrett Thompson, playing the role of the motorcycle riding-sadistic-teeth pulling dentist, there were accidents offstage that affected the production. He says that the most memorable and challenging part was "cutting my head open after a freak accident during a celebratory gesture" less than an hour before the Saturday show.

Another aspect that makes us unique is the blood, sweat, and tears spent on stage building the set. The club has one movie set professional, Maime Stein, an Oscar winning set designer. She leads students in the early stages of tech and set building until they are capable on their own. Without her guidance, set pieces wouldn't be as elaborate. Many other aspects of our club are almost completely student run, meaning that the lighting, music, and set are all built and mainly put together by student efforts. The show that the audience gets wouldn't be made possible without the technical crew that no one sees. This show has one of the smallest tech crews with less than ten people to move around and organize props and set pieces for the entire duration. Regularly and ideally, a tech crew would have around 15 people, so many underclassmen, and first time tech members jumped in to set up the overall vision.

When asked about her expectations for the set and design of the show, senior Alex Stringe says that from a stage managing point of view, she "knew it would be challenging, but according to everybody else we always manage to put together the best set in the area". Along with this, Thompson agreed that the set was ambitious. He felt frustrated, because "plenty of smaller more trivial projects struggled or were outright scrapped". At the end of the day, it is both the journey and the destination. Even though many new members struggled with set building, the end product was well constructed and one of the biggest sets we've managed in years. Looking back, the amount of frustration spent and hours at the school speak to the dedication and care that drama club members have.

Additionally, the pit crew, who plays all of the music, sit at the bottom of the stage, unable to see the musical. Their hard work and dedication to bringing music and life to the show can not go unnoticed. They may not be seen, but they can definitely be heard.

Overall, "Little Shop of Horrors" was a success for the audience and club members alike. There were incredible efforts from so many in the club from singers, dancers, actors, and set builders - not to mention the amounts of hairspray, tears, gauze, and mic tape that has been sacrificed. There is no doubt that Mr. Baker, director, and Maime Stein, set designer, will be telling stories for years to come.



Ethan Short as Seymour



Olivia Sperber as Audrey

Dangers of AI

Dalya Jabra



Image courtesy of Forbes

AI (Artificial Intelligence) opens up a new world to administrators, educators, and students. As AI becomes more incorporated into our daily lives without us even realizing, it can come with many risks and benefits. Students find AI to be helpful in many ways but don't realize how dangerous it could be for themselves and the future.

AI refers to the technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, and creativity. Along with that, it provides people with immediate feedback and can be used to create and supplement content. It is a database, a collection of gathered data, and it feeds off of information taken from the internet. The information AI gathers may not always be accurate, which is part of the reason why it's not trustworthy to rely on.

Oftentimes, students find themselves procrastinating, having trouble on assignments, or simply looking for an easy way out, which often leads to them turning to AI for assistance. Understanding the pros and cons of AI in education is key to using these tools effectively. Although the use of AI can save students and teachers a lot of time while getting their work done, it comes with negative effects too. AI comes with the lack of creativity, misinformation, and the threat of eliminating human authorship. Along with that, it also collects and analyzes

large amounts of personal data, which raises issues related to data privacy and security. This could lead to more serious issues such as identity theft.

A big source for students is ChatGPT, an AI chatbot that allows individuals to have human-like conversations to complete tasks they ask. While ChatGPT is making waves in academia and the popular press, there is a need for more insight into the use of ChatGPT among students and the potentially harmful or beneficial consequences associated with its usage. Although many students have been using ChatGPT as a tool, using it for educational purposes could negatively affect students' academic and professional successes. Relying on AI, even for homework, doesn't give students the opportunity to ever learn.

Academic workload and time pressure have effects on students' outcomes through AI usage. The abuse of AI could lead to high levels of procrastination, memory loss, and lower academic performance. For example, there are times when students who use AI will get A's on their homework and classwork assignments, but are surprised when they fail their tests. Most people think it's impossible for AI to make mistakes, but that has been proven as false. AI can be wrong in multiple ways. It can give the wrong answer, make up completely fake people, events, and articles, and even mix truth and fiction.

Since AI is here to stay, its impact on the field of education will only grow as it continues to develop. Mr. Sinicrope, computer science teacher, believes that the overuse of AI could lead to "an era of misinformation" and that it brings danger to creators. AI is already taking many jobs away from people, with its ability to steal artwork. Using AI can be very beneficial if used as a learning tool, but not as a source to depend on for everything. It is important to be cautious of the dangers that come with the overreliance on AI, as many people use it without knowing how harmful it is to themselves and society.