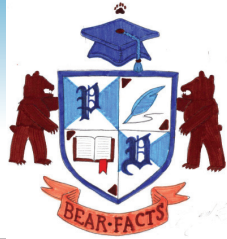


Bear



Facts

Volume 71 Issue 2

JANUARY 2026

Venezuelan President captured and indicted by U.S.

Nicolás Maduro President of Venezuela, and his wife were captured by the United States early in the morning on Saturday, Jan. 3. They were subsequently indicted in the South District of New York on Monday, Jan. 5.

By: Gavin Tonkay

On Friday, Jan. 2, at approximately 10:46 pm local time, President Donald Trump gave the green light to carry out the US's plan on infiltrating, and capturing Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, who was indicted on Jan. 5 in the Southern District of New York.

Maduro was sworn into office in 2013 and has been in office since. However, Maduro is known more for his dictatorial style rule, corrupting the entire government of Venezuela. President Trump has accused Maduro of trafficking drugs and criminals into the United States, as well as stealing U.S. oil supplies. However, Trump lacked evidence in all of his accusations.

Dr. Taylor Lindsey, Economics teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, was able to provide context for what happened in Venezuela.

"The U.S. Department of Justice has unsealed a major indictment charging Nicolás Maduro with narco-terrorism (purposefully bringing large quantities of drugs into the country through terrorist groups to bring down the U.S. via drugs), cocaine importation, and weapons offenses. Federal prosecutors allege that Maduro led the Cartel of the Suns, working with terrorist groups for over 25 years to flood the United States with thousands of tons of cocaine. Following his recent capture, Attorney General Pam Bondi stated that Maduro will 'soon face the full wrath of American justice on American soil in American courts,'" explains Dr. Lindsey.

After months of tension between the two countries, Trump decided to take the first move by launching a sneak attack in the middle of the night in hopes of catching Maduro off guard. As

soon as Trump gave the order, multiple military helicopters flew into Venezuela.

Shortly after the strikes ended, U.S. forces then proceeded to infiltrate Maduro's compound around 2 am local time on Jan. 3. Although U.S. forces were under heavy fire, they were able to all return home safely with only minor damage to one of the helicopters.

However, 40 citizens of Venezuela were unfortunately killed from the airstrikes. Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, were then flown across seas and have been relocated at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York, to await trial.

"It was well orchestrated. Our military had time to set it up, to provide the resources, and then he took that bold stroke. And through it, we flipped that very dynamic, and Americans will benefit," stated Secretary Pete Hegseth,

head of The Department of Defense.

Later on Jan. 3, President Trump held a press conference from his Mar-a-Lago home in Florida to update the country on the event.

"We have a group of people running [Venezuela] until such a time it can be put back on track, make a lot of money for [Venezue-

lans] give people a great way of life, and also [reimburse the] people in our country who were forced out of Venezuela," explained President Trump.

As of now, the impact of this, positive or negative, is still unclear.



Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores being brought to court in New York City. Source: nbcnews.com

Nation

46th Vice President of the United States dies at 84

Dick Cheney, who served as Vice President for eight years under President George W. Bush, passed away from complications with cardiovascular disease and pneumonia. He is survived by his wife Lynne and his daughters Elizabeth and Mary.

By: Harison Sullivan



Source: abcnews.com

Dick Cheney, former Vice President of the United States, passed away of cardiovascular disease and pneumonia at the age of 84. He made a profound impact on the United States as people know it today.

He changed how the role of the Vice President is perceived, often seen as mostly a ceremonial position that is second in the line of the presidential succession order.

He was a controversial figure in American politics, being very firm in his beliefs and taking a more active role in US politics

than many other Vice Presidents before and after him.

"Not all people can replicate the influence that Cheney had, but it showed that the Vice President can do a whole lot more than just sit around and wait for the President to leave office," says Jason Robbins, social studies teacher at Pleasant Valley High School

His legacy looms over the Republican Party today, mostly through his daughter, Elizabeth Cheney, who formerly served in the House of Representatives.

He is best known for his role as Vice President under President George H. Bush, in which he helped lead the war on terror. He is also well known for his dedication to his positions and taking more action in his role than many thought possible for a man in his position, one which appeared to have more weight in its name than its role.

After the attacks on the World Trade Center on

Sep. 11, 2001, Cheney would seek vengeance on the terrorist group of Al-Qaeda, who were responsible for the attack. The experience of watching the tragic event changed the way he lived and wanted to take action for the safety of the United States.

According to Stephen Collinson of CNN, "[Cheney] said he became a changed man, determined to avenge the al Qaeda-orchestrated attacks and to enforce US power throughout the Middle East."

He would employ the US military throughout the Middle East, in what is now known as The War On Terror.

Born Richard B. Cheney in Lincoln Nebraska on January 30th 1941 to parents Richard H. Cheney and Marjorie Dickey, he would go on to attend Yale University, Casper College and The University of Wyoming and gain a masters degree in political science.

Cheney officially entered federal service in 1969,

serving as an assistant to the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. In 1971, he became a White House assistant under the Nixon Administration, which allowed him to become the assistant director of the Cost of Living Council. From 1974 to 1975 he returned to the White House to become deputy assistant to President Gerald Ford.

For the next two years, Cheney would go on to serve as the White House Chief of Staff after Donald Rumsfeld was reappointed as Secretary of Defense. After the Ford Administration ended, he would become a Wyoming Representative in the House of Representatives for more than 10 years before resigning on March 17, 1989 to become the 17th U.S. Secretary of Defense under President George H.W. Bush..

While serving as Secretary of Defense, Cheney would focus on external matters and delegate work among his constituents. He also met regularly

with Bush and other top-level members of the administration, greatly aiding the administration in its endeavors.

Cheney's position gradually became more and more important as the Cold War ended, and the Soviet Union dissolved and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact.

"He believed that NATO had to remain the foundation of European security relationships and that it would continue to be important to the United States in the long term," explains the Office of the Secretary of War.

This specific issue resulted in Cheney being tasked with reevaluating NATO's purpose and makeup, leading to his consideration as Vice President under George H. Bush.

Science

FDA approves drug delivery system that could change the treatment of cancer

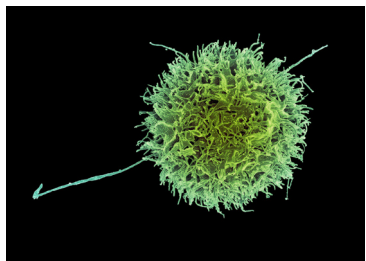
The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has developed a new delivery system that could help patients as soon as they are diagnosed.

By: Madison Zorn

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, commonly known as MIT, has recently had one of their drug delivery systems approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for treatment of bladder cancer.

Along with the drug delivery service in 2025, in 2024 the FDA approved a plan for an onco-fluorescent agent and a handheld imaging tool. These would help in breast cancer surgery for the surgeons to see internal structures and differentiate between cancer and healthy tissue.

MIT's main accomplishment of 2025 are their CAR-NK cells. These are immune cells known as "natural killer" cells or "stealth" immune cells. These cells are programmed to attack cancer cells. This could allow the creation of "off-the-shelf" treatments, meaning that they can be used right after diagnosis.



The CAR-NK cell developed at MIT. Source: news.mit.edu

"This enables us to do one-step engineering of CAR-NK cells that can avoid rejection by host T cells and other immune cells. And, they kill cancer cells better and they're safer," explains MIT biology professor, Jianzhu Chen, in an interview with Anne Trafton for MIT News.

MIT created gene editing (scientists change DNA by altering genetic code) and organoids (small 3D structures made from cells that imitate organs) for the modeling of tumors. MIT portrayed metabolic targets (the reprogramming of cells to create energy) for cancer cells, and along with it a new drug for battling cancer which is AG-221 or enasidenib. This was approved by the FDA in 2017 and is used for acute myeloid leukemia.



The Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at MIT. Source: news.mit.edu

"Part of our criteria was it had to fit into urologists' existing procedures. We wanted urologists to know what to do with the system without even reading the instructions for use," explains MIT Professor Michael Cima.

"By devoting ourselves to the study of cancer, we have made an implicit pact with people who suffer from cancer and people who contribute to cancer research. We must do our best to bring a new understanding to the cancer problem if we are to fulfill our side of the pact," explains David Baltimore, a Founding Member of the MIT Center for Cancer Research.

Barbara Below, English teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, is a breast cancer survivor. She believes that the evolution of early detection for those with no family history or cancer genes would have helped her the most in her journey.

"Cancer completely changed my life. It was the most difficult thing I have ever been through, but life after cancer is absolutely beautiful," explains Mrs. Below.

MIT officially began their cancer research program in 1974, led by Salvador Luria. Most programs studied cancer's symptoms, treatments, and the effects and side effects of treatments, while this program set out to study and understand cancer and what it is.

Some of MIT's first work was when researchers secluded the first human cancer genes to effectively study them. Through their studies, they discovered split genes and RNA splicing, the extracellular matrix and the part they have in metastasis, and the discovery of the molecules that created Herceptin and Gleevec which were the first cancer drugs.

Nation

Longest government shutdown finally comes to an end

The United States government reopened after being shutdown for 43 days due to policy disputes between Republicans and Democrats.

By: Quinn Johnson

The federal government reopened on Nov. 12, marking the end of a 43-day shutdown, the longest in the nation's history, with a vote of 222-209. The stalemate ended after a funding bill, "Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026," was passed through the branches and later signed by President Donald Trump.

The shutdown began when Congress failed to pass funding measures at the fiscal year deadline on Sept. 30, triggering a halt in non-essential federal activities. Some essential operations and their workers are heavily affected and, therefore, limited. The bill, however, aims to rehire the fired federal employees.

Jason Robbins, a government teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, says, "Those federal employees that are deemed 'essential,' like military personnel or air traffic controllers, are forced to go to work but will not be paid until the shutdown is over."

These government workers and the general public struggled throughout the shutdown and disagreed on solutions. The workers had families and themselves to support, putting extra stress on them.

Lauren Staub, another government teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, states, "I have



Source: NPR.com

friends who are no longer working and are worried about their rent, mortgages and other bills."

The whole debacle created friction between political parties. The Republicans blame the Democrats, claiming that voters should avoid being in Democratic favor during next year's midterm elections. Republicans also accuse the Democrats of using the shutdown to their advantage regarding a policy dispute.

The Democrats, on the other hand, want to extend tax credits that lower the cost of health coverage, which the Republicans believed was to confront at a different time. The Democrats plan on sticking to the subsidies regardless of vote results.

This shutdown is very similar to previous ones—political, policy, and budget disagreements. Before, the longest shutdown in U.S. history was during President Trump's first term, from Dec. 22, 2018 to Jan. 25, 2019.

Regarding the economy, Mrs. Staub says that, "The impact varies based on which agencies are targeted and how long the shutdown lasts. Longer shutdowns have a noticeable drag on the national [gross domestic product]."

These situations are preventable, however. There is a filibuster in the Senate that allows the party with the least amount of members to stop a bill. But, this only happens if the Senate does not get a 60 vote supermajority. If the filibuster is ceased, it could prevent future shutdowns. There are a few other ways to prevent shutdowns in addition to this.

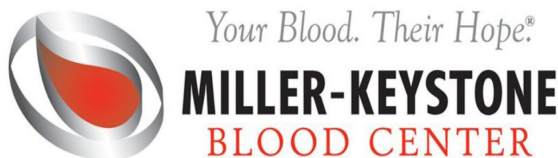
Mr. Robbins explains, "The American people can decide that they are sick of the dysfunction that occurs in Congress and make those responsible pay the price by voting them out of office. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to occur in today's polarized environment."

District

Pleasant Valley looks to "B Positive" while donating blood

The 2025 PVHS Blood Drive was hosted by the National Honor Society on Dec. 8. People from around the community gathered to give blood to help those in need during the holiday season.

By: Emma Weber



Source: giveapint.com

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, Pleasant Valley High School kicked off its annual Blood Drive, a huge event organized by the National Honor Society.

This drive, sponsored by the Miller-Keystone Blood Center, has become a very important tradition at PV, giving students a chance to lend a hand to the community while helping NHS members gain service hours.

Emily Heckman, a senior in NHS, shared that the blood drive serves a couple of important roles for the club.

"It's a great way for NHS members to earn volunteer hours, and it also lets students who are

16 and older donate blood themselves," explains Heckman.

For many of the members, it's one of the most hands-on service projects of the year, but the impact of the drive goes way beyond just the school. In an email sent to students, Ariella Mease, Assistant Principal at Pleasant Valley High School, highlighted how crucial each donation is.

"Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood," wrote Mrs. Mease. "A single donation can potentially save up to three lives."

All the blood collected stays local, so students might even be helping someone from their

own neighborhood.

Along with supporting local hospitals, Pleasant Valley is also aiming for a Miller-Keystone scholarship, which is based on how many units of blood the school collects. This gives students and staff even more motivation to get involved.

All in all, the blood drive remains one of the most meaningful service opportunities for the NHS. It not only helps students give back in a tactical way but also can strengthen the bond between Pleasant Valley and the wider community.

Donating blood is a simple act that can truly make a difference, and for PV, it's a yearly reminder of the power of helping others.

Editorial

In Our Opinion

The new district-wide ban on metal water bottles has students complaining about safety protocols.

For the last few months, the ban on metal water bottles that the board announced over summer has been in motion throughout the Pleasant Valley District. Why did it happen? How far does the ban extend? What was the reason behind it?

Students have complained about the new ban, due to the deficiency of plastic water bottles. In regards to the advantages of metal water bottles, students have stated how inconvenient it is to no longer have cold water with them.

Sports kids, after-school clubs, and kids with health concerns all disagree with the metal water bottle ban. Averie Acevedo, Junior at Pleasant Valley High School and member of the tennis team, believes this issue has impacted the hydration for the team.

“Because we’re in tennis, so for sports, it’s really really important to have cold water. And since we don’t have metal water bottles, we don’t have cold water,” explains Acevedo.

The Editorial Board shares this opinion.

“I see no real point to it. Plastic water bottles of the same capacity are just as dangerous along with any other blunt object”

Among students, most have disagreed with the ban since some might say it causes more inconvenience than it does good.

Due to the health concerns with plastic bottles (especially with students who drink coffee or tea at school), and students who may need cold water for health reasons, some students, parents, and community members of Pleasant Valley School District started a petition with over 200 signatures.

“We demand Fair, Logical, and Safe Policies for All Students” stated the petition’s explanation.

When interviewing a few of the teachers at Pleasant Valley High School, it was shown that they have the same ideas in mind. Student safety comes first.

“I understand that the decision wasn’t made easily, metal water bottles are very popular for their insulating qualities and rugged good looks. However, I

am also aware of the variety of problems they may pose in use as a weapon or the smuggling of contraband materials,” explains James Ward, history teacher at Pleasant Valley High School.

James DeVivo, the band teacher at PVHS, agrees that the decision wasn’t made lightly, and the safety of students comes first.

“It certainly has prevented future incidents of using a metal bottle as a weapon, so therefore it was a good call,” says Mr. DeVivo.

However, Dr. James Konrad stated how the metal water bottle ban was actually not enacted for the reason most people think.

“While there was an incident last year in middle school involving a metal water bottle, the decision to eliminate metal water bottles starting this year was only based on how our new and enhanced safety and security systems would be impacted by metal water bottles especially at the high school,” explains Dr. Konrad.

So, as Dr. Konrad explained, the ban on metal water

bottles had little to nothing to do with the incident at the middle school, but most to do with the new metal detectors for metals procedures going around the school, to ensure student safety from any metal items that could harm us.

While this does ignore the objects that could be used as weapons such as chromebooks, and chairs, those objects are also required for class, and metal water bottles are not required to learn.

The district taking student safety seriously is greatly appreciated, especially with the increased metal detectors. How-

ever, outside of one instance, it does not seem that metal water bottles are the source of what would make school unsafe.

Part of student frustration with this new policy is that it does not extend to faculty and staff. While Dr. Konrad and a few others have switched to plastic water bottles, the staff members are not obligated to make the same change.

“Staff members do not walk through our safety and security systems,” explains Dr. Konrad. “They are not required to use plastic water bottles.”



Source: walmartimages.com

Opinion

Students concerned about graduation

Seniors have expressed concern about what life will be like after graduating from high school and should be given the opportunity to learn what comes next.

By: Alina Thomas

The majority of student lives are spent in schools, trying to prepare us for college. It comes in the blink of an eye, and students are just thrown into it, expected to figure it out.

However, more often than not, Seniors are not ready for the college process and what comes after.

Payton Storms, a guidance counselor at Pleasant Valley High School, claims that at least 50% of students may struggle with the college process.

The main questions she receives are about Kuder Navigator. She believes that because the school only just recently started using Kuder Navigator, there are more questions regarding the application process.

“I think one of the most difficult parts of the college process for students is the lack of exposure they may have,” says Storms.

This may prove to be

true in some cases. A survey of students proved their concerns about their life after college.

“About half of students said they’ve never had a job or internship, and more than a third said they’ve never gone for a college visit,” explains Carolyn Crist, writer for k12dive.com.

Students claim that they weren’t informed about certain pathways, college visits, and internships.

Even when pointed in the direction of college visits, they still haven’t obtained the experience they need for a career.

“More than half of hiring managers say recent graduates are unprepared for the workforce,” says Crist.

Students from across the country believe that they are ready to take the next steps to start their career.

However, they also expressed that their school isn’t

providing them with the skills they need after graduation.

“While it’s encouraging to see the proportion of students with high college and career expectations, most do not feel prepared to do so,” explains Fermin Leal, reporter for edsources.org.

Many students claim that though obtaining a career is the end goal, they don’t have enough essential knowledge and skills to actually go through with it in the future.

“An overwhelming number of students, 87 percent, want to eventually earn a college degree and land a career. But many believe that their schools aren’t helping them develop the skills they’ll need to succeed after graduation,” says Leal.

Overall, many students feel unprepared for their future, and this is mainly due to the education system not providing more opportunities for students. Pleasant.

Pleasant Valley High School recently brought in alumni to speak with students about life after high school, providing much needed and welcomed perspective on what students should expect in the years to come.

High schools around the country should not only

follow this example, but they should also consider implementing a college introduction class or another class to really prepare students for the workforce.



Pleasant Valley Alumni after speaking to students about life after high school.

Editorial Policy of Bear Facts

The Bear Facts is the official student newspaper at Pleasant Valley High School. Its primary purpose is to inform, interpret and entertain through accurate and factual reports. It will strive to be accurate, fair, impartial and responsible in its coverage of issues that affect the school community. The Bear Facts will not publish any attack material that is obscene, libelous invasive of others’ privacy or that encourages physical disruption of school activities. It will not publish any material regarding individuals’ religion, gender, age, mental or physical ability, ethnicity, race, culture or lifestyle choices.

The Bear Facts accepts advertising as a fundraiser and reserves the right to reject any advertising not in accordance with school policy.

All editorials are written by a member of the Editorial Board. Letters to the editors are welcome, but must be signed and have the writer’s homeroom. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters become the property of the Bear Facts.

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Local

Trump visits Monroe County

In the fallout of the 2025 elections that have Republicans reeling, President Donald Trump visited the Mount Airy Casino located in Pennsylvania to attempt to change course for the 2026 midterm elections by refocusing his messaging on affordability.

By: Noelle Wolff

On Dec. 9, a surprising visitor made his way to the Poconos, starting off his economy tour. President Donald Trump spoke at Mount Airy Casino resort near Mount Pocono about affordability and making America affordable again.

Since 2005, no president has visited Monroe County before Trump. Bringing such a large presidency to such a small town has a lot to do with the results of the 2025 “off year” election.

On Nov. 4, the general election took place. Results showed a democratic win across the board. Even some states that are usually swing states turned blue in an unexpected outcome.

Many Republican voters are worried about the results for the mid-term election next year, and to reassure his voters, Trump chose to go on tour. It shocked spectators that he picked such a small venue, but it allowed the Republicans to have a better experience listening to the President.

Christine Wilkins, the Vice Chairman of the Monroe County Republican Committee, stated the Poconos is a great area for affordability and people

moved to the Poconos because it is an affordable and fine place to live. In relation to Trump, a good place to visit is a place with a good economy.

“It’s great on the economics. Monroe County is a gateway to the Poconos, and people



Source: wsj.com

reputation.

Many citizens are upset about the rising prices of groceries going up the past month, even though some prices like fuel and eggs are dropping. The current issue citizens are worried about is how inflation will affect their

move here for affordability. They moved here because it’s a better way of living,” says Wilkins.

During Trump’s speech, he stated the problem is the Democrats set up affordability issues and he will be lowering tariffs. To back up his statement, he concluded the Democrats were using affordability as a hoax to differ his

lives.

Trying to control inflation and the economy, Trump added tariffs which is part of what boosted common prices of goods. Now, tariffs on imported goods have been brought down to a small standing amount, or no tariff at all.

With the removal of

tariffs, in order to try and lower prices, in November Trump removed tariffs on certain foods like bananas or tomatoes. Statistics have been done to show the resemblance to the tariffs and the prices of consumer goods.

The result of the speech left many of the people satisfied, and others felt displeased with what he had to say, by instead focusing on what is causing his reputation to fall, but talking about bringing economic certainty back to the country. Trump even mentioned he knew prices were high therefore he cannot call affordability a hoax.

In Trump’s words, getting fewer of an item would be proper, instead of so many. As well as mentioning the tariffs and the result of them. He states the tariffs have brought hundreds of billions of dollars to America.

Business Insider states, “You can give up certain products,” Trump said at one point. “You could give up pencils. Because under the China policy, you know, every child can get 37 pencils. They only need one or two, you know. They don’t need that many.”

Even though Trump is

stating his policies to support and encourage his voters, it has to be followed by his administration. The Republicans in Pennsylvania, specifically because it is a swing state, need to be assured.

Jason Robbins, a Social Studies teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, talks about the importance of following up on policies.

“Touring around and giving speeches can be helpful, but ultimately the policies of this administration need to be effective to really motivate people to vote. If people do not see or feel the effects of the policies that the President is promoting they may not be motivated to get to the polls on election day,” explains Mr. Robbins.

The 2026 midterm election depends all on how the Trump administration follows up on his messaging, promotions, and how confident his voters feel about his performance to that point. Trump’s tour has begun, but it is how voters respond that will show the result of his actions whether they were consequential, or beneficial.

Nation

Thousands gather to speak out against President Trump at second “No Kings” rally

More than 2,700 people gathered around the country to protest the Trump Administration’s actions and what they perceive to be abuses of power.

By: Daniel Fedik



Source:gwhatchet.com

On Oct. 18, protesters rallied throughout Washington to oppose President Donald Trump’s policies. This is the second protest of its kind during Trump’s second term. The demonstrators, motivated by their opposition, gathered to express their discontent.

“The overriding theme of THE marches was the accusation that President Trump is behaving more like a monarch than an elected official,” says Alana Wise, Chandelis Duster, and Emma Bowman of NPR.

While Republican congressmen described that event as “Hate America” rallies, the message from the participating crowds were clear, as CNN’s Dalia Faheid, suggests.

“The event was one of more than 2,700 ‘No Kings’ rallies held across the country on Sat-

urday, protesting what organizers describe as President Donald Trump’s ‘authoritarian’ agenda,” explains Faheid.

The main theme for many of the protestors was anger, as they believe Donald Trump abuses his power as President of the United States.

“I came from a country of kings. I didn’t come here for another one,” explains Debbie Whaley, a protester in Los Angeles, expressing fear for American democracy. “I’m here because I’m frightened of how we are traveling in this country. But my anger supersedes my fear.”

It wasn’t just one group of people, it was people from different

points in life each with their own reasons for being there. Protesting a part of a society It’s a way for people to let people know what they think and to push for change when they feel things aren’t right.

James Ward, Social Studies teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, thinks that people should be able to protest.

“I think people should be able to exercise their rights and they should be allowed to protest what they feel,” says Mr. Ward.



Source:columbiachronical.com

District

Pleasant Valley students celebrate Homecoming

Homecoming 2025 was held on Nov. 8. With the “Roaring 20s” set as the theme, students danced the charleston all night.

By: Dakari Fleming

On Nov. 8, 2025 Homecoming happened and this year’s theme was “The Great Gatsby” based on the award winning novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This year took us back to the Roaring ‘20s with gilded streamers, art deco, and someone with a fur coat. The Hoco king and queen winners this year were Logan Krock and Mercedes Rizzo. When asked about how they felt about this year’s Hoco event they both had positive things to say about it.

“I thought homecoming was good. I had the ability to spend time with a lot of my friends in one place; it’s something that doesn’t happen much, plus since it’s our last homecoming it was more special,” states Krock.

When Rizzo was asked about how she felt about winning Homecoming Queen, Rizzo stated,

“When I won homecoming Queen I was in shock. I knew it truly could have been any one of us standing up there so hearing my name be called was truly so surreal. It is a once in a lifetime experience and I am so so grateful that I got to live it. I mean winning homecoming queen is something you hear in the movies, never would I expect it to happen to me.”

Similarly to last year there were photo booths, snacks, drinks, music, and a king and queen. Despite his retirement Mr. Rehrig returned to PV to continue being Homecoming’s DJ. This Homecoming is just another successful event in the long line of PV school events.



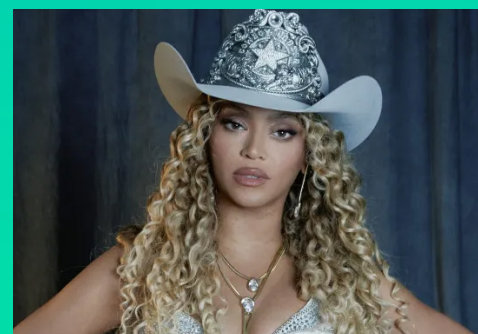
Homecoming at PVHS

2025 Wrapped

Jan: TikTok Ban
Donald Trump



Feb: Beyonce's Grammy
Beyonce



Mar: Deportations
Kilmar Abrego Garcia



Apr: Pope Passes Away
Pope Francis



May: Late Show Cancelled
Stephen Colbert



June: No Kings Day
50501



July: CEO Caught Cheating
Andy Byron (ft. Coldplay)



Aug: Engagement
Taylor Swift, Travis Kelce



Sept: Political Violence
Charlie Kirk



Oct: Louvre Heist
French Crown Jewels



Nov: Shutdown
U.S. Congress



Dec: Bid for Warner Bros.
Netflix, Paramount



District

Pleasant Valley High School

Teacher wins “Best Teacher”

Kerry Freeman, Transition Coordinator for Pleasant Valley High School, won ShopRite’s Best Teacher Award and has been entered for a national prize.

By: Julian Dempster

One of PV’s own staff, Transition Coordinator Kerry Freeman, has won ShopRite’s Best Teacher Award. She specifically got \$5000 rewarded by the several news stations and is now in the running for the nationwide teacher of the year award.

“When I heard I had been nominated as an Amazing Teacher honoree, I cried. It was such an overwhelming moment because I truly love what I do, and to be recognized in this way is such an honor,” says Mrs. Freeman.

Being nominated by a parent, this reward shows the culmination of all of her work and effort to support her students, their families and colleagues. Previous years more of our outstanding teachers have won this award, including history teacher Mr. James Ward.

Her friend and Special Education director, Christine Deutsch, has this to say about Mrs. Freeman’s award,

“I’m incredibly proud of Mrs. Freeman for receiving the ShopRite Best Teacher Award. She truly deserves it. She

is a dedicated teacher who always puts students first and goes above and beyond to make sure they have the support and opportunities they need to succeed in life beyond high school,” says Deustsch.

Mrs. Freeman’s kind of effort and commitment is exemplary of the care and collaboration the special ed department has for their students. Working tirelessly to help them achieve their goals.

Pleasant Valley congratulates her and hopes for future success in both the contest and her career at large.



Kerry Freeman

Nation

Tragedy comes to the east coast

On Dec. 13, hours apart, shootings occurred at both Brown University and at Stroud Mall

By: Sarah Jhingorie



Source: cnn.com

On Saturday, Dec. 13, there had been not one, but two shootings. One at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and one much closer, in Stroud Mall, Stroudsburg.

“Brown University said in a statement early Sunday that the two people killed and nine others injured in the shooting were all students,” stated Yan Zhuang of the New York Times. “The victims were identified to be Ella Cook and Muhammad Aziz Umurzakov.”

A suspect had been detained by police but soon released, as the evidence no longer supported holding him—meaning the true killer is still at large in Providence, Rhode Island. For now, Brown has cancelled its remaining fall semester classes.

Only a few hours after the events at Brown University, Stroudmall faced a similar situation. Cops were called at 8:30 p.m. and reported a shooting at the mall.

Within moments, the mall was surrounded with cop cars, and

cops with rifles. One of the suspects was apprehended in JCPenney, but it was later revealed that they were innocent.

While another suspect was said to have gone towards the front, towards the entrance of Shoprite, however another source claimed that the shooter fled the scene.

“Monroe County dispatchers say that a call came in around 8:30 p.m. reporting a shooting at the Stroud Mall in Stroudsburg,” stated 69 News.

Fortunately, officials state that no one was hurt and while police are still looking for a suspect, they stated that there was no threat to the public. However, both of these shootings once again ignited a debate between people on gun control and if it’s in control at all.

Jeremy Goff, PVHS’s psychology teacher stated, “Stroudmall is close to home, so that tends to, you know, make people think more [about events like this] when things are local.”

We find ourselves in a dangerous time; war, arguments, gun violence. It’s important for everyone to never go somewhere alone, always have a ride to leave, keep your phone on you and charged, and above all, stay safe.

District

“PV Pink Out” raises money for a great cause

Pleasant Valley’s chapter of FBLA held their annual Pink Out Fundraiser to raise money for breast cancer research, helping to bring the school and community together.

By: Jayda Bacchus

Pleasant Valley’s Future Business Leaders of America, commonly known as FBLA, hosted their annual Pink-out t-shirt sale to support breast cancer research.

Each year during the month of October—Breast Cancer Awareness Month—FBLA sells pink out shirts to raise money for the Breast Cancer Foundation. This fundraiser supports women who are fighting breast cancer while also bringing students, staff and community members together for an important cause.

This year’s ordering process was more advanced than before as shirts were available for both the public and students for purchase making it a very popular cause and easy to participate and show support.

“There was a website this year where the public and students could order the shirts and FBLA was also taking orders,” explains Catherine Britton, advisor to FBLA.

After the orders came in, FBLA members took on the large task of organizing everything and making sure they went to the right people on time.

“FBLA compiled all the orders and sorted, bagged and tagged the orders. FBLA then shipped the orders to the corresponding buildings to be given out to the students and staff members,” states Mrs. Britton.

Even if you were unaware of the website to order the t-shirts FBLA was able to make

the extra pink out shirts available during lunch periods and in her classroom.

“This is a very worthy cause and FBLA is dedicated this year to helping out the community and school district to bring unity, help the students make contacts, and become leaders of



Source: pvbearsathletics on Instagram

the community,” shares Mrs. Britton.

The FBLA president Chelsea Henry was able to speak about the FBLA pink Out t-shirt sales as well. She explains that the fundraiser is something she and many others look forward to every October.

“This year, we updated our design to create a new shirt, but the same Pink Out Concept. We used the new PV Bears logo to put on the shirts in addition to making the shirts pink in honor of Breast Cancer,” states Henry.

The month-long ordering period gave everyone plenty of time to participate and help the cause. After all the orders were

finalized, FBLA distributed the shirts to their customers.

Looking back at the event Henry says that their group was very extremely proud of what they accomplished together and how much they can do when they’re passionate.

“The fundraiser was a

fun and successful way to bring our school community together while supporting our chapter’s goals of outreach and advocating for one another.” Henry says.

The Pink out fundraiser has grown into a strong ongoing tradition at Pleasant Valley by showing how a simple t-shirt can represent hope, strength, and community.

With the dedication of all of the FBLA members, this year’s pink out was an amazing turnout, and it was a reminder of how much of a difference the community can make when they come together.

District

“Slime a Teacher” leaves staff feeling green

National Honor Society hosts their annual “Slime a Teacher” fundraising event, bringing the high school joy before the winter holidays.

By: Emma Wing

The annual Pleasant Valley Slime a Teacher event is a fundraiser where a teacher or principal gets covered in slime by students after they reach a fundraising goal. This year’s event was held on Dec. 18, and the teachers being slimed this year were English teacher Alexander Mountain, Art teacher Elizabeth Negron, Physical Education teacher Philip Masiello, and Athletics Director James Korcienski.

As an event, it makes



Alexander Mountain

students more engaged in the fundraising effort. It builds a sense of community and school spirit. Everyone works together to create a fun time to raise money.

In the past Pleasant valley high school has been very successful with this event and



Elizabeth Negron

has had really good participation. The students love to slime their favorite or least favorite teacher.

“The goal is to aim for several hundred dollars,” explains Keegan Martin Senior at Pleasant Valley High School.

Assistant Principal, Ariella Mease, believes that this year’s fundraiser grabs a lot of attention and gets more people to participate in order to raise as much money as possible for charity.

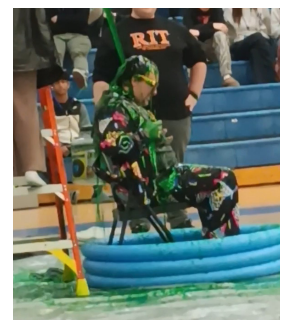
“This fundraiser is to raise money for Toys for Tots,” explains Mrs. Mease.

Teachers who volunteer to be slimed show students that they’re willing to have fun and support the school. It helps build stronger relationships be-

tween students and staff. Events like this make school more exciting. Students get to look forward to a big moment, it really brings the school together and creates memories.

No matter how much money they raise it is for a good cause. The most important thing is to enjoy it while you’re doing something for a good reason. Even though the idea of slime can sound messy, the event is run very safely. Everything is very organized.

Slime a teacher leaves lasting memories for students and staff. They bring joy, raise money, and everyone has a good time together for good causes.



Phil Masiello

Nation

Academy Award winning actress and movie icon passes away at 79.

Diane Keaton, famous for her roles in Annie Hall, The Godfather films, and Finding Dory, passed away at the age of 79, leaving behind a legacy of kindness, humor, and authenticity.

By: Noelle Wolff



Source: nytimes.com

Diane Keaton, award winning actress, passed away of pneumonia on Oct. 11 2025 at the age of 79. After she was transported out of her home, she passed in St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, Calif.

Movie lovers across the globe mourn the loss of such an actress. Seen as a bright and kind co-star that brought authenticity and laughter to set is sadly being missed by old partners in past projects.

"She was hilarious, a complete original, and completely without guile, or any of the competitiveness one would have expected from such a star," explains Bette Midler in an interview with People.com.

Her intense love for fashion, her genuine personality,

smarts and humor changed the way women were seen on screen. Ever since her debut role, the way women were viewed and written in cinema changed, allowing women's roles to expand and get the appreciation they deserve.

"Diane Keaton was one of a kind. Brilliant, funny, and unapologetically herself," says Leonardo DiCaprio, co-star on "Marvin's Room."

Diane's first on screen performance was in the movie "Lovers and Other Strangers (1970)" as her role of Joan Vecchio. Even though she didn't gain much recognition at first, her performance in "Annie Hall (1977)" was praised for centuries, leaving her first mark on Hollywood.

In Woody Allen's 1977 "Annie Hall," Keaton brought an outstanding performance, making her name known in cinema. She received an Oscar for her leading role as Annie Hall at the following Oscars in 1978.

Following her first win, Diane was nominated for three other Oscars for best leading role in "Something's Gotta Give (2004), Reds (1982) an Marvin's room (1997)."

Besides winning Oscars, she was awarded with many other accomplishments for her out-

standing acting, like the Golden Globes and many Critic Film awards.

Even though she is known for role in "Annie Hall", a common favorite is "The Godfather (1972)," where she plays the role of Kay Adams-Corleone, an intelligent, educated young woman. It was her third film, and it was the film that put her into Hollywood status.

After her famous roles in the seventies through the 2000s, Keaton continued to play roles in movies and shows all the way up to her last movie, "Summer Camp (2024)." Before her passing, she had three projects in the works, "Artists in Residence," "The Making Of" and "Constance."

Known for her sometimes quirky and always fun roles, some things watchers may enjoy is what they would see her play in next.

"She usually had smart and funny roles," states Hyde.

Jamie Hyde, an English teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, said what drew her into watching Keaton was the roles she played, and when asked what she enjoys about her acting, she stated the diversity of Keaton's roles, and even after so long her roles never differentiated; She was a great actress her whole life.

Besides her acting career, Keaton dabbled in directing as well as producing. In directing, Keaton directed 4 films between 1987 and 2000, her last directed film being "Hanging Up (2000)."

As a producer, Keaton was an executive producer and a regular producer, together producing 12 films overall.

Even though she can be remembered by her roles, Keaton is also remembered by her life off-screen. Ms. Hyde says she is memorable for her personality and how she presents herself in and out of films.

"She is a clever, witty actress," states Ms. Hyde.

Agreeing with this statement, Vanessa Fego, English teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, says her acting is enjoyable because of her persona on screen and as an actress.

"She felt very genuine," states Ms. Fego.

Since her death was so sudden, it is upsetting for movie lovers and the people of Hollywood to say goodbye so soon without warning. With the help of Diane Keaton, cinema improved greatly, and movie watchers will remember Diane even after she is gone.

District

Sun rises on the Class of 2026

The 2025 Senior Sunrise was held on Friday, Oct. 17 on the PV Bears football field. Members of the Senior class were welcomed with snacks while students stood together to watch the sunrise on another day at Pleasant Valley.

By: Mason Ostrich

On Friday, Oct. 17, Pleasant Valley High School hosted their third annual Senior Sunrise at their football field, where they served doughnuts and hot chocolate.

The Senior Sunrise is an annual event where seniors gather together to watch the sunrise before school.

Senior Class Advisor, Julie Burchfield, the Senior Sunrise, which was started by the Class of 2024, is a sign of passage when two seniors approached their class advisor, Daisy Genovese, and asked her if they could host the event.

"Students worked all their way to get to where they are now, so the Senior Sunrise symbolises the start of the beginning of the senior year," explains Ms. Burchfield.

Steven Walter, Senior at Pleasant Valley High School, believes the event was well worth it, despite the weather conditions.

"Although the weather was cold, it was nice to hang out with friends and eat snacks," says Walter.

Class advisors continue to look forward to this event, watching the seniors interact with their classmates and enjoying their time.

District

Pleasant Valley's impactful Schyler Night rescheduled due to inclement weather

Due to a severe snowstorm, Pleasant Valley High School rescheduled their annual Schyler Night that was originally scheduled for Jan. 17, honoring the memory of Schyler Herman, who passed away from Leukemia in 2018.

By: Quinn Johnson

The school community was scheduled to gather on Jan. 17 for a girls' basketball game dedicated to the memory of Schyler Herman, who was a member of both the Pleasant Valley Girls' Soccer and Basketball teams. Due to a snowstorm, the game has been rescheduled.

The night is organized annually to honor her life, recognize her impact on others and bring staff, students and families

together through the shared support of the event and the athletes.

Schyler Night, now known as Cancer Awareness Night, has been combined to "recognize and support all of those who have lost their lives to cancer and to raise awareness for those that have lost loved ones," as stated by Head Varsity Girls Basketball Coach, Angelica Zimmerman.

This game holds special meaning for many people, par-

ticularly the girls' basketball team, either through friendships, classes or practices.

One of the girls' basketball captains, sophomore Amaya Fuentes, explains, "[Leading the team on Schyler Night] means a lot because it's more than just being a leader—it's carrying on her legacy."

Schyler left a lasting impression on those around her, leading students and athletes alike to be inspired. Those who did not know her even felt the effects of her hard work.

Another girls' basketball captain, junior Rylan Knapp, says, "although I have not met her, myself, it feels like I know her story to its full extent, which is exactly what the tradition is for; letting her and her story never be forgotten."

It is unfortunate and unfair that someone as young as Schyler had to face such hardships. That is one of the leading reasons behind the institution of the event. Her legacy will not be forgotten any time soon, and everyone will recognize her dedication to her sports.

New players become inspired and even feel a connection to Schyler's love for the game. The way she brought people together and her positivity created such a large effect.

Addison Krock, sophomore and girls' basketball player, states, "On Schyler Night, the team approaches the game as a unit rather than individual players. Schyler believed that a successful team is one that picks each other up."

Schyler's beliefs and personality will continue to impact old, current, and new players for years to come.



The memorial of Herman that hangs in the gymnasium.



Seniors enjoying their time at the Senior Sunrise.

Source: Sienna Pierce, Senior

Nation Kiss founder passes away at 74

Ace Frehley, co-founder of the band Kiss, passed away peacefully on Oct. 16 after suffering injuries back in September.

By: Aubrianna Finocchio

Ace Frehley, co-founder of the famous rock band Kiss, has died at the age of 74-years-old due to injuries suffered from a fall back in September. Ace had died peacefully on Thursday, Oct. 16, surrounded by his loved ones in Morristown, New Jersey.

Frehley's family and bandmates were devastated from his death but still keep his memory alive in honor of his legacy and what he has accomplished throughout his life and being a member of the hall of fame.

Ace Frehley's bandmates, Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons, had made a statement about how they feel about his recent passing.

"We are devastated by the passing of Ace Frehley. He was an essential and irreplaceable rock soldier during some of the most formative foundational chapters of the band and its history. He is and will always be a part of Kiss' legacy. Our thoughts are with Jeanette, Monique and all those who loved him, including our fans

around the world," state Stanley and Simmons.

Their concerts had always been visual with experimental fireworks, explosions, fire-breathing, etc, and has always been one of the many different things the fans were looking forward to watching when going to a Kiss concert.

Born as Paul Daniel Frehley, he had grown up in a family that had generations of musicians and people that had an interest in making music. Paul had started playing instruments, specifically the guitar, at the age of 13-years-old. Before joining Kiss, he had already played in local bands around New York City, which meant that he already had experience in being in a band when he was around 18-years-old.

Frehley was a very crucial member to the band Kiss because he had come up with the name and band logo when he co-founded it. He was also the band's lead guitarist and was responsible

for creating the band's signature sounds and solos, Ace Frehley's old bandmate, Poison front man, Bret Michaels, had sent him a thoughtful goodbye message when Ace was found dead on Oct. 16, 2025. "Ace, my brother, I surely cannot thank you enough for the years of great music, the many festivals we've done together and your lead guitar on Nothing But A Good Time," states Michaels.

He will be missed dearly by his loved ones and his bandmates, and will go down in the rock hall of fame as one of the most influential rock stars of all time.



Source: variety.com

Culture Famed movie artist passes away

Drew Struzan, the artist known for painting the movie posters for Back to the Future, Star Wars, and many more past away on Oct. 13, losing his battle with Alzheimer's disease.

By: Julian Dempster

Famed artist Drew Struzan has unfortunately died at the age of 78 on Oct. 13. He lost a battle with Alzheimer's Disease, diagnosed in March of 2025.



Source: rtlogic-res.cloudinary.com

He was most well known for his artwork for movies like Back To the Future, Indiana Jones, and Star Wars. His unique style is defined with his striking use of color, both realistic painting technique and an airbrush and even diving into mixed media by taking his own photos. He was best noted for being able to capture the feeling of wonder and adventure in each stroke.

Elijah James, Senior at Pleasant Valley High School, holds the opinion that Struzan's artwork not only helped these movies when they were released, but also made them more iconic.

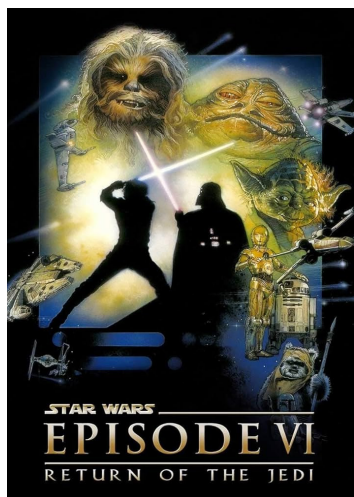
"I don't think these movies would be nearly as well remem-

bered as they are now without his art for their movie posters. Though these movies were amazing films, some people may not have been as interested in seeing them in the first place without Struzan's art work."

This truly goes to the power behind his artwork, how good it is at depicting characters.

Elijah also notes that, "If I had to choose a favorite artwork of mine that was done by him, I would say the movie poster for Star Wars: Revenge of the Jedi."

Born in 1947, Struzan wanted to be an illustrator for stability and consistent money. He was able to pay his way through his five years of college at the Art Center College of Design through selling commission work further cementing his decision in major.



Source: amazon.com

Comic book artist, Neal Adams, has said on numerous oc-

casions of his immense respect for Drew Struzan and his work. He himself has a storied history working for DC, Marvel, most notably the bronze age of Batman comic books.

"The movie posters that used to be Bob Peak and Drew Struzan now are photographs for the most part. You get a Drew Struzan poster once in a while, but really you know the illustration field, it hasn't dried up, there's certainly illustration work out there, but nothing like what used to exist," explains Adams.

Before his work in the cinema, Struzan illustrated album covers for bands like Black Sabbath, Earth, Wind & Fire, and Bee Gees.

As time went on and the new age of digital media began, Struzan struggled to find work in his usual field, branching out to comic books and even collectible plates including a twelve-piece set commemorating the late Princess Diana.

"Drew Struzan is an exceptional painter and uses photos to create likenesses of famous actors better than even photographs can," states Peter Stone, writer for 13thDimension.com.

He is survived by his wife Dylan Struzan who he met during college and his son Christian Struzan who was also born during his time in college.

Fashion

The Victoria Secret Fashion Show builds on last year's success

Victoria Secret's 2025 fashion show learned the lessons from the previous year and gave fans what they wanted, including more diversity, more celebrities, and more spectacle.

By: Giada Morales

VICTORIA'S SECRET FASHION SHOW 2025

Source: amazon.com

The Victoria Secret Show was held on Oct. 15, 2025 in New York City. This marked the second year the show was held since its break in 2019, and it seems to be becoming a tradition once again.

This year, many changes were made to the show due to controversy surrounding hairstyles and body positivity. Similarly on the runway, both influencers and athletes were seen as new models such as WNBA star Angel Reese, gymnast Suni Lee, and influencer Gabriela Moura.

Angelica Alberro, Senior at Pleasant Valley High School believes the show was better than it was previously.

guests and the diversity that was on display.

"I was so happy about the music guests this year! See-



Suni Lee

Source: people.com

ing a K-pop group perform just showed how diverse the company is becoming and I absolutely love it," stated Ellianna. "I was the most excited to see the model Alex Consani. She is very influential along with being very funny and was even voted model of the year in 2024."

This does not mean that this year's show was for everyone, however. Some, like Sophomore Eloise Cameron, preferred the show's 2024 iteration.

"Just the rush of nostalgia made [last year] so fun. This year was almost dull," explained Cameron. "I do believe the involvement of athletes and influencers is taking away from the show. It is a runway show and not a fashion presentation. It should be trained professional models only who worked hard to get where they are."

Despite the mixed emotions overall the show was a major success and was able to get 2.7 million viewers during the show. With this the show is able to once



Angel Reese

Source: independent.co.uk

"I honestly do believe that this year's show was better than the last. This year it seemed as if they actually listened to their audience," says Alberro. "I was so shocked to see celebrities like Angel Reese and influencers such as [Gabriela Moura] walking the runway. I think it can engage the shows to a wider audience."

The show also had performances during the runway such as Madison Beer, Karol G, Missy Elliot, and Twice, who made history as the first ever K-pop group to perform at the show.

Ellianna Aye, Junior, was thrilled about the musical



Twice

Source: billboard.com

District Loch looks to leadership as the PV Basketball season begins

Jacob Loch is entering his senior season for the Pleasant Valley Bears with the expectation of leading the team into the future.

By: Jacob George

Jacob Loch is a senior basketball captain at Pleasant Valley High School. He has been playing basketball for 10 years and preparing to lead the team in his upcoming senior season.

The basketball team is gearing up for the season and are looking to build off of their performance last year.

“The team is preparing the best we can, by working hard at practice and figuring out what we need to do to be able to accomplish our goals for the upcoming season,” says Loch.

Loch is ready to take on the responsibilities of becoming a senior and leader on the team, helping the younger players learn how to play together.

“Being a senior leader is a big responsibility, meaning I have to be a big role model and a good influence on some of the younger kids on the team,” explains Loch.

The basketball team also has a new head coach, Joseph Berzewick, so Loch will have to step up even more if the team

wants to be successful. Coach Berzewick believes Loch has become an important part of this year’s team.

“He leads by example every day through how hard he works and how he carries himself, and he also uses his voice effectively to motivate and support his teammates. His leadership has been evident both on and off the court,” says Coach Berzewick.

As for the future, playing in college was always his goal since he first started playing but he is still undecided as to whether he will play after high school.



Jacob Loch

District Fox leads Lady Bears in second wrestling season

Emily Fox, Senior, captains the PV Girls Wrestling team in their second season, hoping to continue team growth.

By: Max Sullivan

Pleasant Valley has many amazing athletes in their sports programs, this includes Emily Fox, Senior captain of the PV Girls Wrestling team.

Fox is a talented athlete, as the athletic director, Mr Korcevski, describes. She is Team Captain for 2025-2026, a career record of 4-7, and competed in the first ever DXI girls tournament.

“I was interested through my younger sisters who also wrestle. And girls wrestling was a growing sport at the time and I wanted to be part of it. I also did it for an escape from reality,” says Fox.

Although she does also face challenges as well. Preparing for both the season and individual matches can be tough.

“The challenge of making weight and getting out of my own head,” explains Fox.

As hard as it can be, though, Fox enjoys the teamwork that goes into competing because each member of the team helps to make the team better.

“My favorite part is when we all come together as a team and how our coaches push us up to be the best.”

A member of the team and Junior at Pleasant Valley High School, Emily Fox, tells how well Emily does on her team.

“She is a good role mod-

el for me and my teammates and is always there for us. Emily is welcoming to everyone, has good communication towards us all and is always supportive. Overall Emily is an inspiring person to look up to and a good role model towards our team,” explains Stipeck.

Any captain worth their salt makes sure that the team they lead is a cohesive unit, and Fox certainly fits the bill.

“Emily influences my teammates and I to work together, she always is encouraging and trustworthy to go to whether it’s a sports related question or something you just need to talk to somebody about she is always there to listen,” says Stipeck.

Fox leads the PV Girls Wrestling in their second season and hopes to bring them success in the current season.



Emily Fox being held up by two teammates

Nation Chaotic NFL season comes to a close as teams begin run to the Super Bowl

The 2025 NFL season has come to an end, and the teams that qualified for the playoffs are set to compete for the Lombardi Trophy.

By: Gerrit DeYoung

The NFL regular season has come to a conclusion and 14 teams have a chance to strike gold—seven in the American Football Conference and seven in the National Football Conference.

The Seattle Seahawks and Denver Broncos had the best regular season in their conferences finishing 14-3 and have earned a first round bye in the playoffs, but no team as truly been a stand-out this season, as Tom Blair, Gennaro Filice, Dan Parr, and Brooke Cersosimo of NFL.com suggest.

“One of the things that made the 2025 regular season so interesting was just how open it was, with multiple power players of the past few years giving way to fresh faces on the playoff scene. Of course, this element also makes it basically impossible to predict what’s going to unfold between now and Super Bowl LX,” explains Blair etc. al.

In the AFC the New England Patriots play the Los Angeles Chargers, the Jacksonville Jaguars play the Buffalo Bills, and the Pittsburgh Steelers play the Houston Texans. While in the



Source: foxsports.com

NFC the Chicago Bears play the Green Bay Packers, the Philadelphia Eagles play the San Francisco 49ers, and the Carolina Panthers play the Los Angeles Rams.

Nick Brinkerhoff, writer for USA Today, thinks that the chaotic nature of this year’s season is certainly on display when looking at the teams that made the playoffs.

“This year’s theme has been to expect the unexpected and one look at the bracket certainly conveys that message as well,” says Brinkerhoff.

Tyler Rudelitch, Sophomore at Pleasant Valley High School, believes this year’s playoffs feel fresh because of the unique teams that qualified.

“I like the playoffs and the games that are to be played. A

lot of unique teams and no definite winner. It should be a very competitive playoff,” says Rudelitch.

Justin Adamski, Junior at Pleasant Valley High School, likes most of the teams, but feels like some that didn’t deserve to make it over those that did.

“I like most of the teams, I feel like the [Buccaneers] and Ravens should have made it over the Panthers and Steelers, and I wish the Giants could’ve made it,” states Adamski.

The top 2 favorites to win it all in each conference are the Eagles in the NFC and the Patriots in the AFC. Personally, I think that this playoff is so hard to predict and literally any team could win even the 8-9 Carolina Panthers.

District Track and Field goes indoor for winter season

Pleasant Valley High School brought their track and field team indoors this winter to help prepare them for the Spring season.

By: Samuel Smale

The Pleasant Valley Track Team is excited to compete as an indoor track team for the first time. There are a lot of aspects of getting ready for a season of track that are not unlike preparing for the outdoor season.

The coach, Danielle Henry, says that preparation consists of practicing the skills needed for a track meet.

Things like “core work, short distance sprints and plyometric workouts to get stronger and build endurance,” says Coach Henry.

Her goal of the winter season is to give her players an opportunity to train and compete so the team is ready come spring. Henry’s goal for the winter season is to overall be stronger faster and have a better technique and just getting extra reps preparing for the spring.

The physical training consists of about two days a week of weights and running. Coach Henry believes “it is very important to give her runners time to rest and adapt so they can recover correctly and prevent injuries,” says Coach Henry.

Mentally, on the other hand, she wants to treat her players like family so they can feel like they’re in a safe space. They practice goal setting, visualization, mindfulness, and stress management to assure they are in the right head space to compete.

Coach Henry answered how important senior leadership will be to keep the team motivated?

“They know we expect them to lead by example and set the standard. They serve as our role models, they show the underclassmen the desired work ethic, the positive attitude, and the commitment that is needed to be successful. Our seniors’ dedication is an inspiration to our younger athletes,” explains Coach Henry.

She also talks about how student leadership is a key factor to any sports team to keep the players motivated, set the team’s standard, and help shape the

team’s identity.

Pleasant Valley Senior and member of the track team, JT Morton, says that one of the team has lofty goals this year.

“[The team is] really focused this year on getting into the EPC’s and recruiting more kids to get out and run track,” says Morton.

Overall, Coach Henry is excited for what this year of track and field has to offer, and what her great group of seniors can do to provide and motivate the team.



The 2025 Boys Track Team



The 2025 Girls Track Team