



Masthead Design by Arya Brabazon

Blizzard of 2026 By Alaina Ulceus

In late February, there was a record breaking snowstorm in our area. This event was so severe that Governor Hochul declared a state of emergency which included a travel ban on the roadways..

During the storm, there were power outages in multiple areas. Record wind gusts in Montauk, NY reached up to 84 mph. In the Islip area, there was a total amount of 31 inches of snow reported. This led to 2 full snow days here in East Islip on February 23rd and 24th and then a 2 hour delay on February 25th due to icy roadways. Some students who traveled the week before during February break had issues flying back to NY in time for school that Wednesday.

Our custodial, maintenance and grounds staff did an amazing job. They worked for many hours to clear the snow and make a safe environment for the students to continue their learning. We would like to express our thanks and appreciation. Bravo!



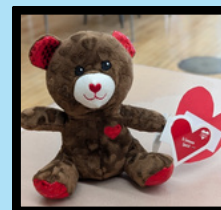
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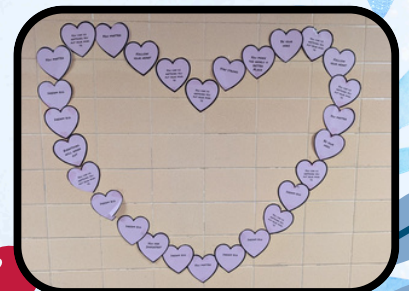
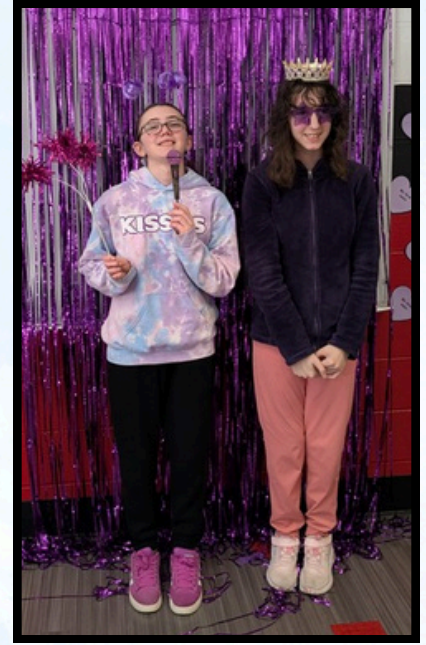




PS I Love You Day

February 13, 2026
Gift Card Raffle Winners

- Aiden Cirne
 - Addison Genova
 - Jessica Lein
 - Isabelle Vincent
- Congratulations!**





Spreading Love to Cohen Children's Hospital By Arya Brabazon



Love is in the air, especially this February season with Mrs. Voss running the Valentine's Day toy drive! If you don't know much about this fundraiser for the Cohen Children's Hospital in New Hyde Park, you can find out how it started and other information by reading this article.

Mrs. Voss, one of the amazing teachers here at our middle school, has been running this fundraiser for 4 years, starting in 2022. During lunch periods in late January/early February, students and staff were able to order a bear for a friend, teacher, classmate or even themselves! The colors were completely randomized when these Valentine's Day Grams were given out on February 13th during homeroom.

When purchasing a bear for only \$5, you may think you're just doing a kind thing for one of your friends, but you are also helping sick children in the oncology unit receive a toy or game. Buying just one Valentine's Day Gram can make a huge difference.

Mrs. Voss started this fundraiser for the hospital as a way to pay forward the kindness that was shown to her family. Her own son was in that hospital because he was very ill a few years ago. Thankfully, he has recovered. Mrs. Voss states that whenever she took her son back to the hospital for checkups, they would always have a new toy or game for him to keep.

The money raised with this fundraiser was used to buy toys for the hospital to have on hand to make kids feel a little happier and not so scared. Mrs. Voss appreciates the support from our school year after year. She says "Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"



Photos courtesy of Mrs. Voss



BEFORE



AFTER



Stop Wasting Your Money

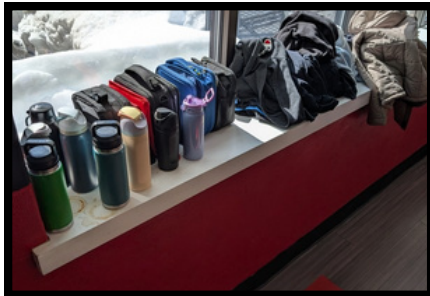


By Matthew Rosand, Salvatore Tringali & CJay Mendes

Attention all students! There is a really large stash of water bottles, lunch bags and sweatshirts in the "Lost and Found" area in our school cafeteria. It is located on the windowsill in Section A. This is a big problem in our school year after year. This article is meant to call attention to the issue.

At one point last month, there were 9 water bottles, 9 sweatshirts, 2 pencil cases and 6 lunch boxes. Those numbers are increasing every day. We need to clean it up and use the space for something else.

So if you lost anything recently, please check the "Lost and Found" today! Many items will be donated to charity if they are still there at the end of the year. At that point, you have lost it for good and wasted your parents' money. Let's be more responsible.



Favorite Cereal



By William Piezzo

Here is a list of favorite cereals of newspaper club members:

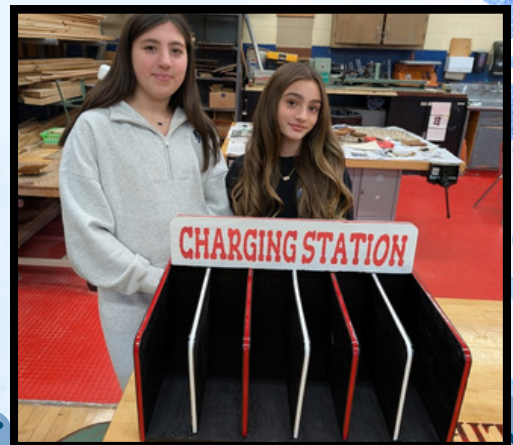
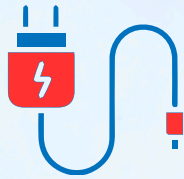
- 1 Cocoa Puffs
- 2 Cinnamon Toast Crunch
- 3 Frosted Flakes
- 4 Lucky Charms
- 5 Honey Nut Oats
- 6 Cookie Crisp
- 7 Corn Flakes

THE WINNER IS COCOA PUFFS!



NEW CHARGING STATION

The Technology Department, along with Tech Club students and custodial staff, collaborated on a charging station for the school cafeteria.



All About Coraline

By Eleanor McRedmond



We all watch movies, don't we (especially during Christmastime with all those movie marathons)? And if you don't, you're missing out! There is this one movie in particular that caught my attention when I was younger. I loved scary or spooky things as a kid, because of my family. They watched lots of Halloween and other scary movies all year round. But I loved the Claymation style movies, for example: *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Corpse Bride*, *ParaNorman* and *Frankenweenie*. One Claymation movie blew me away. Before I tell you about it, let's get into the history and making of Claymation movies.

Claymation: History and Process

Claymation (also known as Clay animation) started all the way back in 1897. There was a man named William Harbutt who created the modeling material plasticine. To advertise his educational "Plastic Method" he created a manual or handbook that included seven photos that showed different stages of creative projects and ideas. The images showed using the putty-like material to create changes of motion (like a Claymation). However, the handbook never had a direct influence on Claymation films. But plasticine is still used by Claymation artists today in their films. Why, you may ask - two reasons: 1. As it dried, it did not harden like regular clay does. 2. It is harder and more malleable (moldable/shapeable).

Let's go over the process of making a Claymation film. First, the animators have to make lots of different puppets for their characters. In one movie, they had 28 identical puppets of the main character! And it usually takes 3-4 months to make them and around 10 people to construct one. Once all the puppets are made, they have to make the puppets move. Twelve different changes of moving the puppet position is equal to one second of film. So, you can imagine how many times they had to change the puppets in a 90-minute movie. (The estimation is 46,800 times they would move the position of the puppet if they only did twelve motions per second, but sometimes they use more). They must take shots of every little movement to make the motions flow. It's a very long process and takes years to work on, especially when you add actors to do the voice acting. It takes a lot of time and effort so that's why we should appreciate these directors and animators for doing this work.

Continued on next page.



What is Coraline?

Coraline is a stop-motion and clay animation film released in 2009 (by LAIKA Studios). The movie was adapted from the book with the same title, written by Neil Gaiman in 2002. Gaiman met director Henry Selick who had worked on *Nightmare Before Christmas* with Tim Burton. Gaiman approached Selick and told him about how he loved his work and asked if he could do a film adaptation of *Coraline*. Selick thought it would be at least a “47-minute movie” and agreed. Gaiman then expanded the story for the movie, adding the character Wybie Lovatt and they talked about how they were looking for a design that was different from other animation.

Selick then discovered some of the work from a Japanese artist named Tadahiro Uesugi and asked him if he would like to draw the concept art for the film. Uesugi explained that he wanted the colors in the real world to be muted and boring, but in the other world, it was bright, colorful, and eye-catching, similar to *The Wizard of Oz* (released in 1939). They worked on this film for 4 years before it was released in 2009. In my opinion, it's like a darker version of *Alice in Wonderland* and may be scary for younger audiences (2-6 years old maybe). Uesugi states “at the beginning, it was supposed to be a small project over a few weeks to simply create characters; however, I ended up working on the project for over a year, eventually designing sets and backgrounds, on top of drawing the basic images for the story to be built upon.”

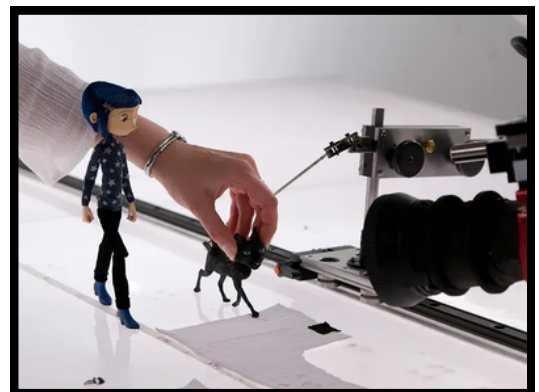
When *Coraline* was being filmed, they had to make over 207,336 faces for Coraline alone. Later, after the movie was made, they auctioned off a few of the original puppets. Coraline in her blue and silver star sweater sold for \$23,900 alone. However, a puppet of the Beldam Other Mother sold for...\$50,190 - that's insane! LAIKA studios also sold a few other puppets from other movies. But the money they made just from the *Coraline* puppets was \$70,090!

Music of Coraline

The music for *Coraline* was written by Bruno Coulais. One song, “The Other Father Song” was written by the group They Might Be Giants and sung by John Linell. The score for the movie was performed by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra. Some of the songs, including “End Credits” and “Dreaming” were performed by the Children’s Choir of Nice. A fun fact is that one of the choir members is named Coraline! If you listen to the song, it sounds like they are singing in maybe French or German, but it turns out that the lyrics are total gibberish! Isn't that crazy?

Conclusion

Coraline is a great movie, with creepy aspects and awesome music. I would definitely recommend watching it. Look for it on streaming platforms! The incredible puppets and amazing voice actors really pull the whole movie together. I loved it! Why don't you give it a try?



The Backrooms

By Dahian Genao

You may have heard of *The Backrooms*. It is an Internet horror concept about an endless maze of rooms. The story has inspired videos and games over the years. It usually starts at level 0 but can sometimes start at a random level, like 4304, but you'll probably go to level 0 first. I'll explain ten different levels.

Level 0 is a yellow wall and buzzing lights. Class 0 is the lowest danger classification for levels, typically near-impossible to die in (aside from resetting, bacteria entity which is hard to find, and going insane which is always a problem no matter the level).

Level !!! a.k.a level Run for you life - JUST RUN, DON'T STOP!

They're behind you for 5 KILOMETERS.

SURVIVAL DIFFICULTY:

Class: *Unstable*

N/A

- ◆ Safe for Life
- ◆ Sustained Matter
- ◆ Devoid of Harmful Entities
- ◆ Void



Level Fun - its not fun, not one bit. It will deceive you with birthday party balloons and decorations. The cakes - they're made from humans. It's a party, and you're the meal.



Level Kitty's House - it's safe if you don't stay for long. Kitty will become aggressive at some point.

Level You Cheated - you're dead, no escape, small door, just hope it's quick.



Level 117 - the level's irregular lighting will make you go into an epileptic seizure almost immediately, and there are no known exits other than extremely deadly levels.



Level 188 - is an actual place in real life.

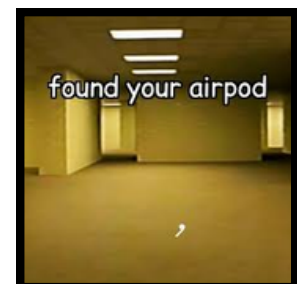
Level 14 - A hospital usually helps you, right? Not level 14, it'll infinitely torture you.

Level "PEACEFUL" - one of the safest levels of Backrooms. It is a gravel road that stretches across a very peaceful rice field lined by trees.

Level 4 - Here, you must find the room that leads to a hallway with a button on the wall. The button says "Reset Cameras". Press this button, and then you must sneak past 4 different cameras scattered throughout a bunch of rooms.



MEMES



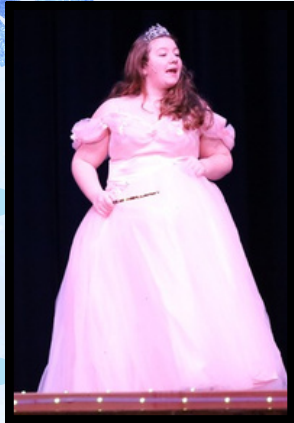
Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition February 6-7, 2026

**Congratulations to the cast and crew
of The Wizard of Oz for an amazing
performance. Bravo!**

Dorothy: Savannah Pabon
Scarecrow (Hunk): Tyrone Davis
Tin Man (Hickory): Haylee Taylor
Cowardly Lion (Zeke): Taryn McCall
Toto: John Simonelli
Glinda: Leah Kearns

Wicked Witch (Miss Gulch): Jayda DeMaio
Uncle Henry: Peter Blumenauer
Aunt Em: Julia Caviedes
Professor Marvel (Wizard): Eleanor McRedmond

Photos courtesy of Kaylee O'Boyle



How to Fossil Hunt in New York State

By Trent Perry

New York has a lot of activities related to fossils. There are even some places where you can dig for fossils and keep them. There are a lot of places in New York that are good spots for fossil hunting, including Long Island. Some of these locations are: Penn Dixie Fossil Park, 18 Mile Creek, Beecher's Trilobite Bed, various Trenton Limestone sites, Alasa Farms, Catskill Region quarries, areas with widespread shale and/or road cuts, Glimmerglass Lake, Rockland County and Garvies Point Reserve (located here on Long Island).

There are also many things that have to happen before you go. The first and most important thing to do is to check if you are able to take home the fossils and if there are fees (such as an entrance fee). Second, you need to have safety gear. An important item to bring is a helmet because it is good for protection if a rock falls from above you. The other equipment you need are a first aid kit, boots and tools such as shovels, pick-axes, brushes, toothpicks and toothbrushes. You should also

bring water, food, sun protection and books about fossil identification.

There are several more tips and tricks for when you are fossil hunting. One is to never dig into an unstable cliff. Then, if you see something that looks like a fossil, use a chisel and hammer to strike the area around the fossil until it is loose enough to take out (this is called excavating).

Once you take it out, you have to identify if it is a fossil or a rock. One method sometimes used by paleontologists to tell the difference is to lick the fossil (not recommended). If it is a fossil, it should feel sticky on your tongue. Radiometric dating can also be used, which determines fossil ages by measuring the decay of the radioactive isotopes (like Carbon-14, Potassium-40, or Uranium-238) in the surrounding rocks or layers of the Earth. Doing so will allow you to figure out what time period the fossil came from, such as the Mesozoic Era or Devonian Era.

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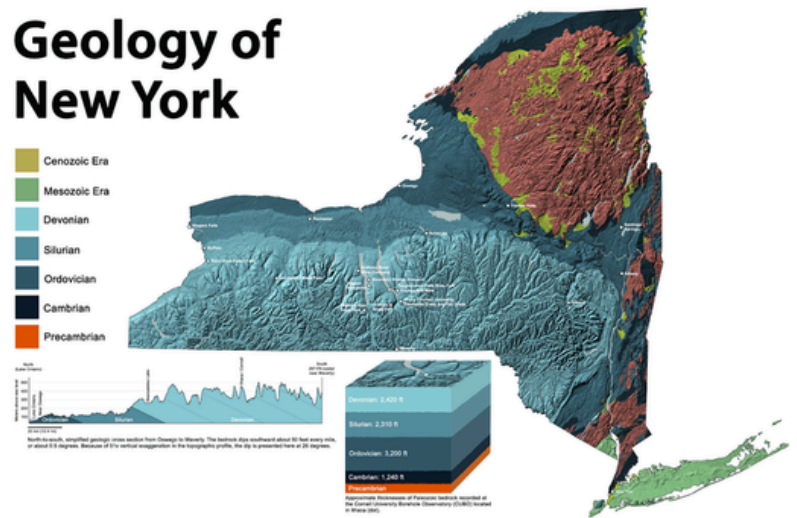


A fossil I found at Glimmerglass Lake in Upstate New York.

How to Fossil Hunt in New York State continued

Now, once the fossil is out, you have to cover it in a protective plaster called plaster jackets (a.k.a. field jackets), which is made of plaster-soaked burlap strips or bandages. To clean and prepare the fossil, you have to take it out of the plaster (if needed, since you don't need plaster for small fossils like trace fossils). Then, you have to identify its hardness. If the fossil is delicate, use soft brushes, water, and gentle picks while working on a stable surface. With a harder fossil, you can use soap, water, or even mild acids like vinegar while using coarse tools or fine tools.

Geology of New York



A map showing New York's geology and the time periods each place has in fossil records.
<https://www.museumoftheearth.org/ny-rocks/devonian-geology>

Wear gloves while cleaning and preparing the fossil to prevent it from getting damaged. Always avoid the sink and work outside with a bucket full of water. It is also a good idea to take photos of the fossil so you can fix it in case the fossil breaks during cleaning. Once you are done cleaning it, finish with reversible consolidants or varnish to protect the fossil. Finally, when it is fully cleaned and prepared, you can give it to a professional paleontologist to identify the fossil or you could sell it for prices that can range between \$20 to millions of dollars (but this keeps people around the world from being able to see it). You could also keep the fossil so you can study it and try to identify it on your own.

There are three main safety rules for fossil hunting in general, although the rules at some locations may vary. The first rule is to never go fossil hunting alone. The second rule is to never climb into dangerous areas. The third rule is to never touch animals, especially if you think they could be dangerous.

There are also two more major items to bring with you while fossil hunting. Those important items are a journal and a pen with waterproof ink to take notes.

That is all about you need to know to go fossil hunting safely and correctly.
Happy Digging!

Best Valentine's Day Brownies

By Ava Pagan

Looking for a delicious, easy, and yummy Valentine's Day recipe? Well, you should read this fabulous article! These brownies live up to their name: 😊 THE BEST! Keep reading for the best recipe ever! I hope you try it!!

INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsalted butter (227 grams)
½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 cup all purpose flour
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
M&Ms - just a handful or more, you can never have too many Valentine's Day M&M's to add color and fun!

TOPPINGS

-Frosting or glaze (vanilla or chocolate)
-Pinches of Valentine's Day sprinkles (or just pink, red, and white)
-Extra M&M's if you still have left over from the brownie mix!



DIRECTIONS! PLEASE FOLLOW!

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a 13x9 inch baking dish with parchment paper. Put aside. PRO TIP: put water UNDER the parchment paper to keep the parchment paper from popping up from the pan!
2. In a medium sized saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Remove from heat and add chocolate chips and sugar.
3. Stir until chocolate is completely melted. Add in eggs, one at a time, stirring completely after each addition. Stir in vanilla extract.
4. Add in cocoa powder, flour, salt, and baking powder. Using big strokes, stir JUST until mixed and you see no dry ingredients. DO NOT BEAT OR OVER STIR.
5. Pour batter into the dish and bake for 22-24 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool completely before decorating.
6. Cut cooled brownies into squares.
7. Add frosting, sprinkles, M&M's and your own touch to these delectable treats!

LET'S SEE WHAT MY FAMILY THINKS OF THIS RECIPE:

MOM: "I love it when my daughter makes brownies so I expected nothing less of what she made!"

DAD: "They were so delicious! They were chocolatey, but in a great way! Yum! 👍"

BROTHER: "😊 They tasted so good! My sister makes the best brownies!!"

ME: "They were so chocolatey and delicious!! They were sweet and almost cakey! They tasted so delicious!! A must try!" 🍫

I hope you try these brownies for yourself and enjoy them! Credits to Shugary Sweets for the recipe. I customized the toppings and the M&M's in the recipe. Hope you enjoy this!

Enjoy!! 😊😊

February

S	V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E	S	D	G	R
A	S	N	D	S	L	L	I	U	D	R	A	C	O
S	O	E	E	I	Y	I	U	L	V	K	C	A	S
N	W	C	B	R	E	A	K	N	R	N	S	N	E
M	A	R	D	I	G	R	A	S	A	L	N	D	S
E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C	O	R	I	Y	T
W	I	U	O	H	L	W	E	V	T	K	C	H	A
S	P	I	H	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	U	E	A
C	C	W	A	E	R	S	E	V	Y	I	P	A	T
D	P	T	S	T	E	E	W	S	L	U	I	R	I
A	G	R	O	U	N	D	H	O	G	E	D	T	U
P	U	N	X	S	U	T	A	W	N	E	Y	S	A
C	N	I	P	N	T	I	W	I	N	T	E	R	R
E	A	E	P	R	E	S	I	D	E	N	T	S	O

- PRESIDENTS
- LUNAR
- FRIENDSHIPS
- MARDI GRAS
- SWEETS
- LOVE
- GROUNDHOG
- CANDY HEARTS
- CUPID
- ROSES
- WINTER
- BREAK
- PUNXSUTAWNEY
- VALENTINE
- CHOCOLATE

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/9366774/>

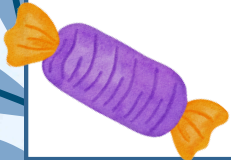
Student Government Contest

Candy Guessing Jar

Winner - Haylee Shelorke

*She won the jar of Jolly Ranchers
and a \$10 gift card.*

Congratulations!



December Fun



SPRIT WEEK
© EIMS

- MONDAY
CANDY CANE COLORS
OR BLIZZARD BLUE
- TUESDAY
HOLIDAY ACCESSORIES
- WEDNESDAY
UGLY SWEATER
DAY
- THURSDAY
ELF OR GRINCH
- FRIDAY
HOLIDAY/WINTER
PAJAMA DAY



More pictures on next page

More December Fun

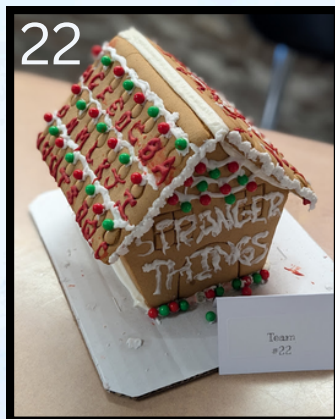


Gingerbread Decorating Contest

Most Festive: Team #16
Claire Melody, Arianna Bayram, Liliana Rosales

Most Creative: Team #22
Payton Peras, Adelina Latino, Eli Selvaggio

Best All Around: Team #13
Anndrea Pumay, Ashley Pumay, Ava Trujillo, Amelia Casull



Staff List



Colin Belrose
Arya Brabazon
Dahian Genao
Alexa Leek
Katherine Li
Kimberly Masaya
Eleanor McRedmond
CJ Mendes
Logan Multari
Savannah Pabon
Ava Pagan
Trent Perry
William Piezzo
Matthew Rosand
Zoey St. John
Salvatore Tringali
Alaina Ulceus
Geovanni Valenti



EIMS Administration

Principal: Mrs. Scully

Asst. Principal: Mr. Spiegler

Newspaper Club Officers

President: Colin Belrose

Vice President: Matthew Rosand

Co-Secretary: Katherine Li

Co-Secretary: Arya Brabazon

Design/Editing

Club Advisor: Mrs. Avella

Graphic Design: Kimberly Masaya,
Eleanor McRedmond, Zoey St. John

Thanks goes out to our music
staff and students for
entertaining us in December!





By Logan Multari

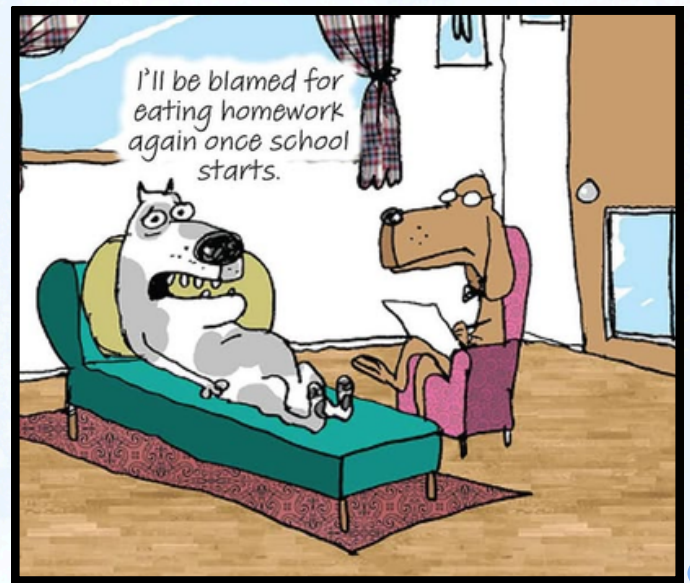
The newest and funniest page in the El Spotlight newspaper!

**What do you call a pig who does karate?
-A pork chop!!!**

**What do evil chickens lay?
-Deviled eggs!!!**

**How do snowmen greet each other?
-Ice to meet you!!!**

**What does a house wear?
-Address**



**How do astronauts organize a party?
-They planet!!!**

**What did the ocean say to the other ocean?
-Nothing. It just waved!!!**

Thanks for reading!!!