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Unami Times

Unami/Community News

Unami Chorus Winter Concerts

by George LaSalle

For five long months, Unami's five choirs, those being the seventh-grade chorus, eighth-grade chorus, ninth-grade chorus, Warrior Chorale, and U-Tunes, had been practicing their music for the winter concert. Finally, at the end of the month, the concerts took place, featuring many great songs and even better singers. The choirs were spread throughout two concerts, with seventh-grade chorus, Warrior Chorale, and U-Tunes performing at the first and the eighth and ninth grade choruses performing at the other.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON UNAMI'S CHOIRS

The seventh, eighth, and ninth grade choirs are exactly what they sound like. They are the easiest choirs to get into here at Unami; if you are in a choir class, you are in your grade's chorus. It should be noted that because there is more freedom to choose electives in ninth grade, the ninth-grade chorus has more freedom and responsibility with what they sing, and they are also the smallest of the three. These choirs, along with the Warrior Chorale and U-Tunes, are led by Mr. Beal.

Unami's larger audition choir is Warrior Chorale. With over one hundred students involved, it is clear that much of Unami's population is interested in singing! The Warrior Chorale does four performances a year and participates in many other activities, including a trip to Dorney Park that will be happening later in the year.

The smaller and harder to get into audition choir is U-Tunes. Everybody in this group is also in Warrior Chorale, and, with less than a fifth of Warrior Chorale's members being involved, not everybody is going to get in; in fact, the majority of people won't. U-Tunes is a very advanced choir, and this is why it is harder to get into. U-Tunes does ten performances a year, including an exclusive acapella-exclusive performance at an event called the Acapella Fest.

JANUARY 16TH: SEVENTH GRADE CHORUS, WARRIOR CHORALE, AND U-TUNES

The concert was set to officially begin at 7:00 PM, but all three choirs arrived before then. All U-Tunes members arrived at 5:30 PM and practiced their songs for fifteen minutes with Mr. Beal. At 5:45 PM, the Warrior Chorale showed up and practiced their songs for fifteen minutes.

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Finally, the seventh-grade chorus arrived at 6:00 PM and practiced their songs with Mr. Beal.

Seventh grade chorus was up first, and they started by calling out the audience. It was only fitting to throw out some reminders for how to behave at the very beginning, and this is what the chorus did with their original piece, "Turn Off Your Phones." This song, as the name suggests, told the audience not to use their cell phones during the concert, and it started with a comedic skit with several seventh graders using and throwing prop cell phones.

Moving from an original song to an existing piece, the next song was "Fireflies" by Owl City, and the following song went back to the great days of old with "Can't Help Falling in Love with You" by Elvis Presley.

Continuing the trend of having great classics, the seventh-grade chorus sang "Won't You Play a Simple Melody" by Billy Joel. This song has been learned by many choirs in years past, including the eighth and ninth grade choruses. This song perfectly showcased the ability of the seventh graders to sing different parts at the same time.

The seventh-grade chorus's role in the concert was concluded with one of the most popular modern choir songs, "Yonder Come Day."

The song has been done many times before in Unami, including this standard version done with seventh grade choir in years past as well as an acapella version performed by the Warrior Chorale for the 2023-2024 school year. Unsurprisingly, the song delivers every time, and this performance was fortunately no exception. In fact, after this song specifically during practice, the Warrior Chorale, who were seated in their assigned seats that would tell them where to stand in line when filing in, gave the seventh-grade chorus a large round of applause, which, according to Mr. Beal, is not something that always happens. Congratulations to the seventh-grade chorus on an outstanding first performance for the school year.

The next choir to perform was the U-Tunes, and they had three songs, with the first one, "The Sleigh", fitting the winter theme perfectly. It had amazing power from the sopranos and altos and was incredibly short, but it didn't need to be long to sound amazing.

The next song was an acapella selection, as "House of Gold" by Twenty-One Pilots was up after "The Sleigh". A very popular selection, the song had several very impressive soloists and, as always with U-Tunes, outstanding singing.

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U-Tunes's finale in the concert was another very popular song, "Dynamite." No, it wasn't the hit song by BTS, but it was the song by Taio Cruz. Several soloists took the stage to sing the majority of the song, and the rest of the small choir took a back seat, singing no lyrics but instead hitting acapella-esc notes. Congratulations to the U-Tunes on a very impressive showing.

The final choir to perform in the concert was the Warrior Chorale. The choir started with an acapella rendition of the song, "The Greatest Show", from *The Greatest Showman*. Now, there are several popular songs from *The Greatest Showman*, with those including the likes of "A Million Dreams" and "This is Me", the former of which having been performed by the seventh-grade choir last year, but "The Greatest Show" is arguably the one that stands out among them. It gives off a feeling of inspiration and pure happiness, and this is kept with the Warrior Chorale's rendition.

The next song performed by the Warrior Chorale was "From the Start" by Laufey. This is a relatively new song, but it immediately became a hit, so it's only natural that one of Unami's choirs would be performing it eventually. Although there were several hiccups and bumps in the road, the final product still turned out great.

Popularly, an acapella version of "You Belong with Me" by Taylor Swift followed "From the Start." Many soloists, with them all being sopranos and altos (the baritones didn't seem to be too fond of this song), got to shine in their own light for a second and sing a song they loved. The performance was recognizable, catchy, and upbeat, though it wasn't the song that was chosen to end the concert.

To conclude the concert, the Warrior Chorale performed "Who Loves You" by the Four Seasons. This song was the only Warrior Chorale song to not have any solos, but that was probably the best direction as having solos would disrupt the flow of the song.

JANUARY 22ND: EIGHTH AND NINTH GRADE CHORUSES

The eighth-grade chorus started off the concert with a very popular song from the 1970s, "I'm Still Standing" by Elton John. This song was a fresh way to start the concert, and it got the audience excited for the rest of the show. Several soloists got a chance to shine, and the chorus sung loudly.

"Pompeii" by Bastille was up next, and the eighth grade girls' basketball team notably took the "Eh, eheu, eheu" part during the chorus when the rest of the choir was singing the lyrics.

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This song, like “I’m Still Standing”, featured several talented soloists, and the performance delivered an empowering message.

The third song the eighth-grade chorus performed was “Golden Hour” by JVKE. Elsie Hubbard, a former Unami student, came back to Unami for one night to play the violin during several songs, and this was the first song she played violin for. This is a song that the eighth-grade choir voted on, and it was nice to hear them singing loudly for their song.

“Drag Me Down” by One Republic was the final song of the first portion of the concert, and this was where the eighth-grade baritones got to show off their skill. The sopranos and altos were amazing as well, and this served as an energetic song to transition to the ninth-grade chorus.

The ninth-grade chorus was up next, and they started with “The Tide Rises.” This song felt excellent and powerful, and it showed off the true capabilities of the ninth-grade chorus. A pure choir song, there was a balance between all four vocal parts, which is always nice to hear in a choir song.

An amazing song for any choir, “Africa” by Toto was truly delivered by the ninth-grade choir.

Next up was another popular song in the form of “Attention” by Charlie Puth, and all four vocal parts sounded amazing during this song. There were several soloists, and the song certainly stood out.

Earlier in the article, a song from *The Greatest Showman* that was performed by the Warrior Chorale was mentioned. It turns out that over the course of the two concerts, that was not the only *The Greatest Showman* song performed, as the ninth-grade chorus finished their section with “From Now On.” The song had many impressive harmonies and presented the 2028 class as one to admire when they move onto CB South later this year.

“From Now On” would not be the song to end the concert, though. Instead, the ninth-grade chorus moved to the stage, and the eighth-grade chorus came back in front of them. Suddenly, Mr. Beal made a joke about being able to be seen before he and his band, including Elsie Hubbard on the violin, started playing “Linger” by The Cranberries, and the choirs eventually started to sing as well. “Linger” was an impressive showing of how strong the eighth and ninth grade choruses can be together, and it had several impressive harmonies, showing what the eighth graders who stick with the choir program next year can look forward to.

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“Vienna” by Billy Joel was up next, and this song had several soloists who were all very impressive. There was just one minor issue, though; Mr. Beal tossed around the idea of having an accordion player come to play the accordion solo in the original song, but he couldn’t find one, so it was eventually decided that Elsie would play the solo on her violin, which ended up being a great creative choice.

Finally, the eighth and ninth grade choruses told the audience exactly what they wanted them to think of their concerts with “Lovely Day” by Bill Withers. The song had many impressive sections; the song started out with just the baritones before moving onto just the sopranos and altos, and all four vocal parts came together in the end, even adding a great-sounding soloist into the mix to spice things up. This song served as a lovely end to Unami’s winter concerts, and the eighth and ninth graders sure sent the attendees home happy.

THE SUM-UP

The winter concerts for Unami, for some choirs, are a time of finding new territory and forging a path to success; this is especially true for the seventh-grade choir each year.

For other choirs, specifically the eighth and ninth grade choirs, it is a time of showing off what they are capable of not only to their director but also to their families and friends. Finally, for the Warrior Chorale and U-Tunes, not only are the concerts a time of doing what they love, but they are also a time of having genuine fun. At the end of the day, though, neither how many choirs you’re in nor how many solos you get matter; what matters is that you sing the music and have fun doing it, and this is what the winter concerts are truly all about.



World News

Los Angeles Wildfires by Jannat Bilal

In case you don't already know, wildfires are caused by three different factors known to firefighters as the "fire triangle": oxygen, a heat source, and fuel. Another cause for wildfires, however, is lightning. The two types of lightning are hot and cold. Cold lightning is less common to cause wildfires because of its short time span. Hot lightning, however, causes a greater number of wildfires since it generates more heat. Hot lightning has a longer time span than cold lightning, which is another reason why it causes more wildfires. The current wildfires in Los Angeles were caused by the change between dry and wet weather.

Several fires are still in the process of being contained. When a wildfire is contained, it means that firefighters can stop the perimeter of a wildfire from expanding. Human inventions such as bulldozers and natural barriers, which can consist of creeks, and rivers, can help contain a wildfire. The wildfires started on January 7th, but the most recent one, at the time this article is being written, is the Laguna fire, which started burning on January 24th. This fire has burned fifteen acres so far.

The Palisades fire, which is included in the ranking of the ten largest fires from 2013 until now, is 90% contained so far and has sadly burned 23,448 acres of land. Also included in the ranking of the ten largest fires in the Los Angeles County are the Eaton and Huges fires. The Eaton fire is 98% contained and has burned 14,021 acres. Not unlike the Palisades fire, this fire has also been burning since January 7th. The Huges fire, however, is 95% contained and has burned 10,425 acres. The Huges fire has only been burning since January 22nd. This fire is currently having a warning to evacuate unlike the Palisades wildfire's compulsory evacuation. There is also the Border 2 wildfire which, like the Palisades fire, is also under essential evacuation. The Border 2 fire started on January 23rd and is 43% contained so far. It has burned 6,625 acres. These are what Los Angeles wildfires are, but the statistics may have changed since when this article was written.

Sources:

[Fire containment: What does it mean? - Los Angeles Times](#)

[2025 California fire map - Los Angeles Times](#)

[Incidents | CAL FIRE](#)

[Visualizing the Los Angeles wildfires and evacuation zones in maps and charts |](#)

[CNN](#)

[Wildfires: How They Form, and Why They're so Dangerous](#)

[What Causes Wildfires? | Earth.Org](#)

Technology and Entertainment

Which *Studio Ghibli* Movie Should I Watch? by Lily Heller

Studio Ghibli is an animation studio known for making both happy and joyful films and serious movies that contain metaphors. Each of their movies are unique, so it can be difficult to find out which movie you will enjoy the most.

I'm here to help you decide what to watch without spoiling what's going to happen.

Movies I Have Seen

My Neighbor Totoro (PG): *My Neighbor Totoro* is arguably Hayao Miyazaki's most famous movie. It is known for its happy story and beautiful artwork. This story is centered around the Kusakabe family, who just moved into a new house. This house is surrounded by nature. The story follows them settling into their new home and life. The main characters are Mei and Satsuki, the two Kusakabe daughters. This is a slice-of-life anime with some fantasy elements about the creature Totoro. I would recommend this movie to anyone who wants a calm, slice-of-life movie to watch on a calm day.

Kiki's Delivery Service (PG): *Kiki's Delivery Service* follows a young witch named Kiki who is about to start her training. Because she has turned 13, she must

spend a year in a new town to become a better witch. She picks a town by the sea. After her introduction to the town doesn't go as planned, she gets a job at a local bakery in exchange for a place to live. Her talent is flying, so she decides to open a delivery service using the bakery's phone number. The story mainly follows her making deliveries and meeting people in her new town.

I would suggest this movie for anyone who wants a calm, low fantasy, cozy movie to enjoy with fresh baked goods.

Ponyo (PG): The movie *Ponyo* takes place in a small town by the sea. Sosuke, a small child, and his mother live in a house on the top of his hill. His mother works at a retirement home while he goes to the school next door. One day while he is by the ocean, Sosuke sees a goldfish that he keeps in a bucket and becomes friends with. He names this goldfish Ponyo. When he releases her back to the ocean after school, she goes back to her home, but she wants to see Sosuke again. Her father says no. In response, she turns into a human girl. She goes to Sosuke's house, but the weather isn't good. I would suggest this movie to anyone who wants a movie about nature, friendship, fantasy, and aquatic life.

Technology and Entertainment

Spirited Away (PG): Spirited Away is about a girl named Chihiro moving into a new house. She clearly wanted to stay in her old city with her old school and friends. Driving through the countryside, her parents spot an old archway and decide to explore. They see what looks like an abandoned theme park. Walking further, they see fresh food at some of the restaurants. The parents are turned into pigs after eating the food. Chihiro works at a bath house until she can turn her parents back into humans and go home. This movie is a good blend of slice-of-life and adventure.

Interviews

Unami 7th Grade Football Interview by Achyuth Chivukula

1. What makes you different than other football players?

Tommy: "I have a good stiff arm."

2. What has been your proudest achievement in football so far?

Gavin: "Scoring two touchdowns."

3. Which team was the toughest opponent you've ever faced?

Ryan: "Holicong."

4. What was the best piece of advice you received after a challenging game?

Tommy: "It's not ever one person; it's the whole team."

5. What is one moment on the field you'd like to feel again?

Max: "Running in the endzone after head-tapping someone."

6. Is there a coach who has greatly influenced your career?

Ben: "Coach Vasui."

7. How has your playing style evolved since you started?

Joey: "I learned how to hit harder and get more aggressive."

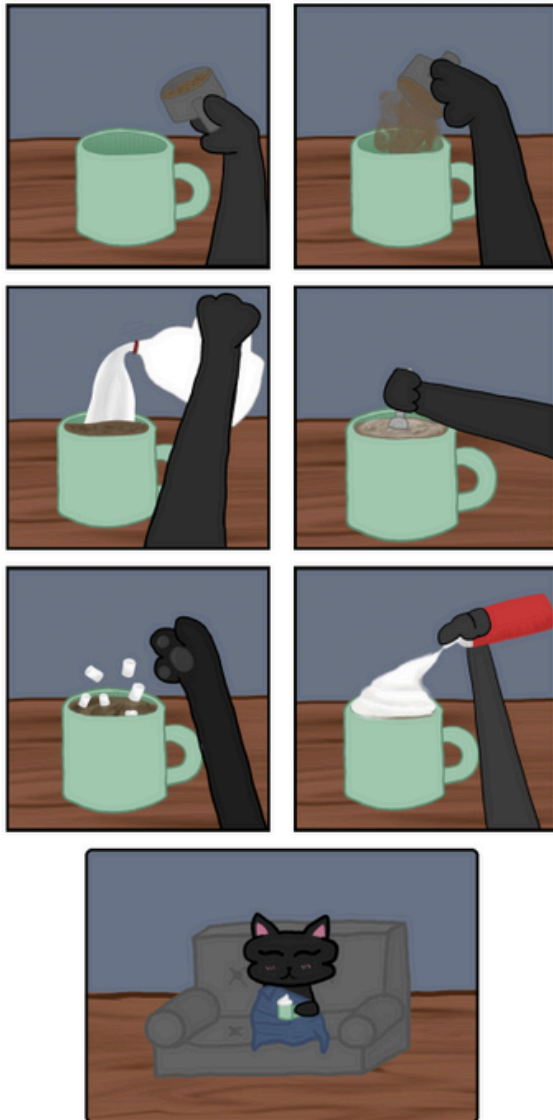


Games/Comics/Riddles

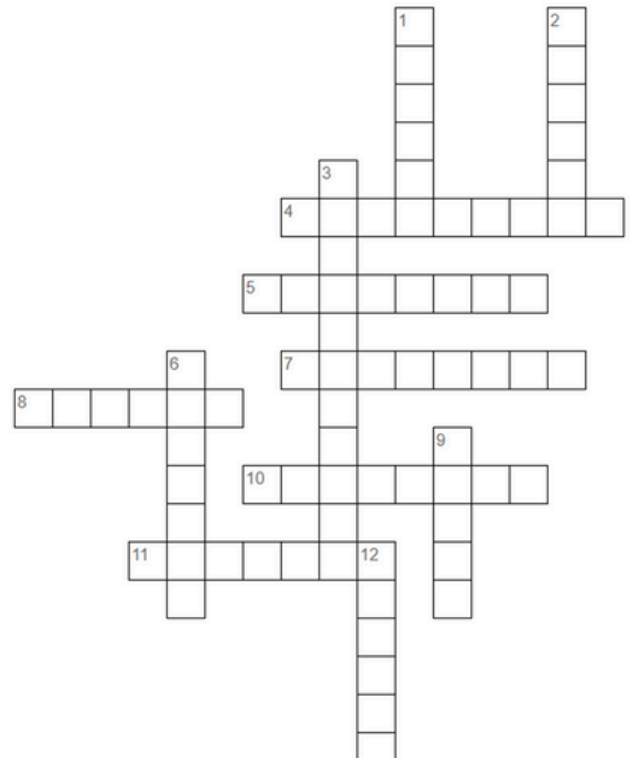
Hot Chocolate by Aven Evola

HOT CHOCOLATE

By Aven Evola



January Crossword by Abi Keerthana Saravanakumar



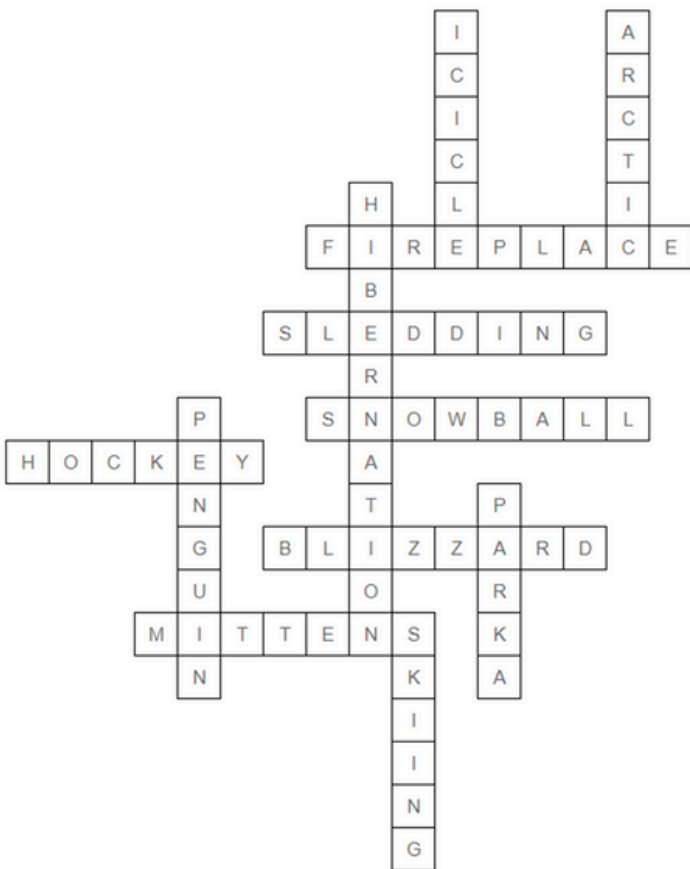
Across

- 4 A structure with a fire inside used for heating
- 5 Sliding down a snowy hill
- 7 A ball packed with snow
- 8 A game played on ice where players use long sticks
- 10 A very heavy snowstorm with strong winds
- 11 A cozy piece of fabric that covers your hands and keep them warm

Down

- 1 A long, pointy piece of ice that hangs down
- 2 A very cold region near the North Pole
- 3 When animals sleep deeply to save energy during the cold winter months
- 6 A bird that lives in cold places
- 9 A very warm and thick coat with a hood
- 12 Sliding down snow-covered mountains on long, narrow boards

Games/Comics/Riddles



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Creative Writing

Percy's Diner Chapters 7-9 by George LaSalle

In chapters four to six, Zach took Josh to the hospital after finding him in a room belonging to a man named Bobby Moore but got the feeling that everybody he knew was hiding information about the incident from him. While driving back from the hospital, Zach's car broke down, so he walked over to a place called the Downtown Bar. At the Downtown Bar, he paid for a car repair with \$200 and an apartment ID belonging to Bobby Moore.

In the next three chapters, Zach lashes out at Casey because of his belief before going into Percy's Diner and officially meeting Bobby for the first time. While Trafford explains the origin of Percy's Diner, Zach receives a call from the hospital about Josh. Because of this new information, Zach convinces Trafford and Bobby to come with him to the hospital because Zach has to use Trafford's car. Will the three of them find out if Josh is okay? Find out in chapters seven to nine of Percy's Diner by George LaSalle.

To read the rest of the story, contact [George LaSalle](#).

Honors Chapters 6-8 by George LaSalle

In the previous three chapters of Honors by George LaSalle, Minerva Florence got into a very heated confrontation with Lillianne Myers but still decided to forgive her twin sister, Ramona Florence, even though she caused the whole ordeal, and Sage Cattle checked in with both of them when Minerva finally got back to school. Meanwhile, Jade Carter complained about Edmund Finkle's constant talking about Sage, so Edmund said that he wouldn't stop talking about her until Cato Ryan fulfilled his promise and got him a conversation with her; Edmund later became worried when he saw Cato hugging Sage, and Cato and Jade later talked about the situation separately after the school day ended.

In chapters six to eight, the final five honors students are introduced, with those being Alfred Hayes, Alden Maun, Hugh Johnson, and Ray Serr in chapter six and John Smith, the brother of Leonard Smith, a previously mentioned student, in chapter seven. Additionally, Felicity Hope narrates openly about her opinions on Jade Carter. These chapters may seem boring, and while chapters six and seven may not be the most exciting, chapter eight is where the story starts to pick up the pace and become more exciting. Especially if you've already been reading Honors, you do not want to miss these three chapters.

To read the rest of the story, contact [George LaSalle](#).

Creative Writing

The Land of the Dimensions Chapters 3 & 4 by George LaSalle

In the first two chapters of *The Land of the Dimensions* by George LaSalle, middle school students Theo Ross, Isabella Rose, and Marcus Corbin von Aaric were at their school district's baseball championship game when their school's star player, a friend of theirs named Josiah Marks, hit a fly ball into the crowd which was caught by Theo. It was only after the ball was stolen by another student named Robbie Jackson and thrown at a wall that Theo, Isabella, and Marcus realized that the ball had the ability to transfer people between dimensions, so, after a talk with Josiah and another student named Ava Johnston, the trio decided to use a portal to catch up with Robbie at the area containing the portals to all the available dimensions, the Land of the Dimensions. Once there, they saw Robbie running into the Dimension of the Stone, so they quickly followed.

In the next two chapters, Theo, Isabella, and Marcus find themselves back at the Land of the Dimensions, and they apologize to the talking ladybug that rules over the area for not taking the previously suggested armor. The ladybug says there is now a hefty price on the armor, telling the students to go to the Dimension of the Land to mine for the gems and to go to the Dimension of the Lava to receive the rest of the needed currency. It turns out, though, that Robbie is following them, leading to exciting action and heated tension between the two sides.

This story will cease publication after the February issue of the Unami Times to make room for another short story.

To read the rest of the story, contact [George LaSalle](#).