

Bear



Facts

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Alumni inducted into PV Hall of Fame

Pleasant Valley will hold their annual Hall of Fame induction on May 19 during the Triple "A" Awards Ceremony, enshrining alumni into PV history.

By: Max Sullivan

This year, many new inductees will be admitted into the Pleasant Valley Hall of Fame, which contains the legacy of many players throughout the years, listing their achievements throughout their high school athletic career.

"It is about more than just awards; it's about connection. It honors those who shaped our district and went on to make a difference in the world, proving to every student and staff member that they are part of a tradition of excellence," explains Dr. James Konrad, Superintendent of Pleasant Valley School District. "By displaying success both within and beyond our walls, our inductees show that a PV education is truly the definitive foundation for world-changing success."

Athletic Director James Korcienski has a more in-depth understanding of the PV Hall of Fame, believing that it provides an in-depth history of the school. "It is a living testament to the enduring spirit of our district. By

honoring these individuals, we are not just looking back at records broken or programs built—we are looking at the 'through-line' of character that connects a student's time in our halls to the impactful lives they lead today."

There are five new names entering the hall of fame, those being: Dean Borger, Brittany Maeve Hawley Baak, Denise O'Connell Mack, Dora Tartar, and Lindsey Smith Rich.

During Dean Borger's high school career of 1972-1975,



Dean Borger

he excelled at baseball and football, and even became team captain for



Brittany Maeve Hawley Baak

football, as well as becoming Male Athlete of the Year for his outstanding performance in his games. After graduating, he became a pillar to the community by helping out people, as well as having his own business. Though he unfortunately passed away in 2012, leaving behind his wife and three kids.

Brittany Maeve Hawley Baak graduated in 2004 and is a distinguished business executive, former Division I Collegiate athlete, and a devoted community leader. During her time from 2000-2004, she was both an honor roll student and a standout dual sport athlete. She was also a three year

letter winner in volleyball, as well as a key player in the MVC Championship basketball team. Following graduation, she attended La Salle University on a Division I volleyball scholarship, joining the basketball team as well as graduating in 2008 with a bachelor degree in Science, and a triple major in Accounting, Management Information Systems, and Marketing. She is currently a Managing Director at Protiviti Global Consulting.

Denise O'Connell Mack graduated in 1997, being one of the



Denise O'Connell Mack

most dedicated athletes in Pleasant Valley history. From 1993-1997,

she excelled in basketball, volleyball, and track and field, and got a full athletic scholarship at Virginia Tech University from 1997-2002 and became one of the nation's top javelin throwers while also competing in shot put, hammer, and weight throw. After winning many record breaking performances in college, she also competed on national and global stage, and even won international gold at the NA-CAC Championships. Afterwards, she became an educator and coach at Parkland High School from 2008 until present, spending 19 years teaching the next generation of athletes.

See Hall of Fame, page 8

District LEO Club launches Mini-THON to raise money for a major cause

The annual Pleasant Valley Mini-THON will begin on April 25, hoping to raise money for cancer research. Students will dance the night away as they look to break last year's fundraising goal.

By: Noelle Wolff

April 25 is the kick off for Pleasant Valley's annual 12 hour Mini-THON. From 7 PM on Saturday to 7 AM on Sunday, the long lasting dance-a-thon raises cancer awareness.

Amanda Altemose, English teacher at Pleasant Valley High School and advisor of LEO Club, believes in the importance of hosting it.

"The importance of Mini-THON is to raise money and awareness for Four Diamonds, which provides Pediatric

Cancer Research" states Ms. Altemose.

Ever since 2017, LEO club has been the host of Mini-THON at Pleasant Valley. Mini-thon is similar to Penn State's THON, happening in February each year.

For 12 hours students dance to raise money to raise awareness for Pediatric Cancer Research. Each student who attends needs to stand and dance for the full twelve hours they are there as well as raising a mini-

mum of \$25 to participate.

LEO Clubs holds these events statewide, but our own LEO Club is hosting it with PV pride. In relation to raising money, if Pleasant Valley seniors raise \$500 dollars, they can be eligible to earn a Four Diamonds Graduation Cord.

Planning Mini-THON isn't an easy task, leading to different committees planning and organizing for the event to be able to happen.

Increasing the goal from last year, from 15,000 to 17,000 PV has set a new high for money wanting to be raised. In previous years Pleasant Valley has exceeded their goal, allowing for the positive look for soaring expectations.

"I think Minthon as a whole is a great event that brings the school together" states Sienna Pearce, senior at Pleasant Valley High School and co-Presi-



2025 PV Mini-THON

Source: Amanda Altemose

dent of LEO Club.

An important part of mini is the community of coming together spreading cognizance about Pediatric Cancer. People from every grade dance together for one cause. Since 2017 PV has raised \$71,885.07 total. Every year, the goal increases, leading to this big result.

"It's a great thing the school does to help support our community" states Areli Ramirez, senior at Pleasant Valley High School and co-Presi-

dent of LEO Club

The hosting of Mini-THON not only brings the school together, but shows the community the connection the school and students have to make this a possibility for everyone out there who needs the money Pleasant Valley raises.



2025 PV Mini-THON

Source: fox56.com

Find Inside: News: PG 1, 2, & 4; Opinion: PG 3; Feature: PG 7, 8, & 9; Sports: 10

Nation

Protests in Minnesota against ICE grow as more people get hurt

Protests against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency have intensified as video evidence shows them attacking civilians.

By: Sarah Jhingoerie

On Jan. 5, over 2,000 ICE agents were deployed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to carry out what they call the ‘largest immigration operation ever.’ As a result, over thousands of arrests have been made so far, and with the protests along with ICE agents, there have been civilians paying the price.

The first event had been Renee Good. There were many rumors and controversy over what exactly happened and how. Some believed that the woman had tried to run over the officer, but recently it has been confirmed that the woman was trying to turn her car away before pulling forward.

“The officer was hit by the vehicle. She hit him. He went to the hospital. A doctor did treat him. He has been released,” DHS Secretary Kristi Noem told reporters, despite cellphone videos seemingly showing otherwise.

President Donald Trump threatened to enforce the Insurrection Act as Minnesota protests grew as a result of both the ICE raids and the murder of Renee Good.

A few days later, on Jan. 13, Aliya Rahman was dragged from her car and into an ICE vehicle. Reports say that she was on her way to the Traumatic Brain Injury Center when one agent smashed her passenger side window and another cut her seatbelt and dragged her out of the car through the driver side door.

“Masked agents dragged me from my car and bound me like an animal, even after I told them that I was disabled,” Rahman stated.

A DHS spokesman stated that there were six ‘agitators’ including Rahman, one having jumped onto an officer’s back. The spokesman hailed ICE’s efforts in Minneapolis after four illegal migrants were detained.

Rahman had repeatedly asked for a doctor, but was taken to the detention center. It wasn’t until she lost consciousness that she was taken to a hospital, where she was treated for her injuries and released from the

hospital.

“We are a nation founded in revolution.” Pleasant Valley High School history teacher, James Ward, stated. “Protest is a part of the fabric of our nation and a fundamental constitutional right. Examples of protest positively impacting our nation are too numerous to mention.”

As the protests continued to grow, a family, including a six-month old infant, was tear gassed by ICE agents on Jan. 17 as they were on their way home from their son’s basketball game and got caught in a clash between ICE and protesters.

Both ICE and the family made it clear that the family was never a target, but simply caught in the cross-fire. Luckily, everyone was okay in the end.

Four days later, Alex Pretti was shot by ICE agents on Jan. 24. Pretti had been filming ICE agents detaining someone, and then after trying to defend a civilian shoved by the ICE agent, he and the two civilians were pepper-sprayed, and then Pretti was held down and shot.

According to cellphone video taken of Pretti’s murder, at least ten shots were fired in the seconds after, and Pretti was dead.

While Secretary Noem was quick to label Pretti as a danger to the community and ICE agents by threatening them with his personal firearm, CNN’s Josh Campbell notes that “a federal agent was seen on video disarming Pretti just before agents opened fire.”

As the backlash of what was happening in Minnesota has grown nationally, it was later announced by the Trump Administration that Border Patrol Commander Gregory Bovino and some immigration agents would be leaving Minneapolis, and President Donald Trump’s border czar, Tom Homan, would now be leading the on-the-ground efforts in the city instead.

As of Feb. 4, Homan has pulled 700 ICE agents from Minnesota.



Source: mprnews.org

District

Pleasant Valley promotes reading as it prepares to host Reading Challenge

On April 9, 2026, Pleasant Valley School District will be hosting the Spring Reading Challenge, a reading competition that tests students’ reading skills across multiple books.

By: Jayda Bacchus



Source: PVTV

Pleasant Valley Middle School is hosting the Spring Reading Challenge for all ages in Middle school and High school. The Spring Reading Challenge is a challenge for grades 6-12 that happens every year where schools create teams that plan on competing against each other to win the challenge.

This challenge is held at the Pleasant Valley Middle school on April 9 at 3PM to 5:30PM.

The challenge contains a list of 25 books that are given out to each team, and they are meant to divide and conquer these books and gain as much knowledge on them in order to answer questions only someone who read the book would know.

“This year, it is April

9, 2026 at Pleasant Valley Middle School. Schools put teams together and plan to compete against one another to be crowned the Spring Reading Challenge winner.” states Amanda Altemose, an English teacher at Pleasant Valley High School.

The Spring Reading Challenge is open to all Pleasant Valley students and even those who are in the Bears Academy. The goal is to get as many people participating as possible.

“It is open to students who are PV Students, so if someone is attending Bears Academy, they would be able to participate but would need to get me the permission slip and be able to get dropped off and picked up from the middle school on April 9,” explains Ms. Altemose.

Anyone who loves books should join the challenge. Ms. Altemose and Dr. Alexandria Gibb, gifted teacher at Pleasant Valley Middle School and the director of the Spring Reading Challenge, both encourage students who love reading and challenges to participate. This challenge is not only extremely stimulating and entertaining for everyone, but it is beneficial for each and every student to actually understand books and build on their reading and comprehension skills.

“I would encourage

anyone who enjoys reading to join. We’ve taken care to add books to the list that are diverse and represent all areas of our communities. I also think that people who like competition would like to be a part of this challenge,” explains Dr. Gibb. “Teams respond in a group setting, so the pressure is off the individual; however, the competition is fierce and teams really get into the battle, especially when they can steal another team’s points.”

Altemose also states that it can also provide a way to engage and network with other students your age.

“It provides a full way to get something out of what you are reading and provides a way to network with other students who enjoy reading,” notes Ms. Altemose.

In the end, there will be participation certificates for every student who participates along with small prizes for the winners. There will be a medal and group trophy for the top three winning teams.

“Each participant in the challenge gets a certificate of participation. The top three teams in high school and middle school get a medal and a group trophy. There are also little door prizes that we have drawings for.” exclaims Dr. Gibb.

District

Student safety a top concern for admin

Navigating the school renovations can be tough, but the high school admin is dedicated to making sure students can navigate the building in case of an emergency.

By: Quinn Johnson

Fire drills have long been a routine throughout the school year. However, recently, administrators have implemented a few changes designed to improve student safety and work around the construction site.

Construction around campus has played a major role in the changes. The school has had to remain flexible and adjust many procedures as needed.

“We changed the evacuation locations a couple of times due to construction; some exits cannot be used, and some teachers’ classrooms have moved,” explains Dr. Zachary McMichael, assistant principal at Pleasant Valley High School.

The goal and alarms remain the same, but the updated procedures provide clearer communication, more orderly exits, and more safety for students and staff.

Another major focus has been improving how student attendance is confirmed during

drills.

“As for the student confirmation process, we have strived to develop a system by which we can confirm that all students are accounted for without making the fire drills take too long,” as confirmed by Dr. McMichael.

School officials believe the updates strike an important balance between learning and safety. Students’ times are maximized in the classrooms, while also being kept safe. It is also emphasized that further changes are possible as the staff and students adapt to the construction process.

Students also have opinions on the matter. Shelby O’Neill, sophomore at Pleasant Valley High School, believes that these updates are not only important, but they are necessary,

“I think that it is necessary because of the construction. I was in Health and because of the construction, we couldn’t go

into the Health room. So, we had to do the drill from D-19. It was quicker for me, but some students might now have the same experience,” explains O’Neill.

Administrators encourage all students and staff to remain attentive during drills and follow directions carefully, ensuring a safe and organized environment.



Editorial

In Our Opinion

As the renovations to Pleasant Valley High School continue, student frustrations rise due to ongoing changes that are put into place during the school year.

Upon returning from winter break, students were faced with yet another challenge regarding Pleasant Valley High School's construction-room changes.

The justification for these sudden changes remains that the relocations are made to prevent disruptions in learning, but are the room changes necessary or are they creating more problems than anticipated?

In general, the renovations are a distraction to learning, and the school faces a difficult challenge of how to navigate them throughout the year.

"If a classroom is located near an active construction zone where noise or other disruptions could impact the learning environment, we will relocate that classroom," explains Brian Boylan, Principal of Pleasant Valley High School.

While this does make sense, there are other factors that create inevitable disruptions like temperature that work in tandem with construction noise.

Some rooms have plenty of heating to battle this year's below zero weather conditions, but

others require students to bundle-up. With some teachers having to move multiple times, students often get mixed-up on where their teacher is located and feel as if they aren't being heard as construction noise is still disrupting classes.

"You go into one room and it's blistering hot, you go into the next and it's freezing cold," says Sam Lowell, junior.

The administration is doing their best to navigate each challenge as it arises, which is appreciated. However, the immediate impact on daily student life cannot be overlooked as construction during school hours has made it difficult for some students to focus.

"There have been multiple times that I have been in my AP classes taking very important tests and there's just banging, drills, hammering, everything," says Khloe Gutai, senior.

At one point, the sound of the construction was so disruptive that students in Sherry Getz's geometry class in E-2 thought a drill would come through the wall at any moment.

Thomas Murphy's original English class in F-10 was both

cold and disrupted by the loud noise of the construction that he regularly scheduled class time in the library and the Pleasant Valley Bear Academy flex room, and Amanda Altemose's room before he being officially being relocated to J-237 in upper JCM.

Renovating any active school, let alone one as big as Pleasant Valley High School, is a complicated undertaking, and unforeseen problems often come up. Although the day-to-day changes can be frustrating, it is worth noting that the broader renovation process has remained largely on track thanks to careful coordination by the administration.

"Anyone familiar with construction knows there are always minor challenges along the way, but the process has been very smooth so far," explains Principal Boylan.

As smooth as the construction is running, it certainly took some time for students to get used to it, and student frustration is understandable given the uncertain nature of the changes that occur during the school year.

Op-Ed

Pleasant Valley fends off Fern, handles Hernando

Winter Storm Fern crashed into Pennsylvania on Jan. 23 while Winter Storm Hernando arrived a month later, causing Pleasant Valley to shut down for traditional snow days. The heroes, however, are those who helped get Pleasant Valley opened after only having to have a virtual learning day once after each storm.

By: Sienna Pearce

During the last notable snowstorm at the end of January, named Winter Storm Fern, over a foot of snow fell on the United States. A month later, Winter Storm Hernando achieved almost the same feat on Feb. 23. Both storms caused freezing temperatures, power outages, car accidents, and school closures across the Mid-Atlantic area of the United States.

While southern states are not used to storms like this, states in the northern portion of the United States handle this adverse weather regularly. For example, Zohran Mamdani, the newly elected mayor of New York City, put many protective measures in place to keep his residents safe.

"Sanitation trucks will be transformed into the nation's largest snow fighting operation," Mamdani stated during a press conference at the city's emergency management headquarters in Brooklyn before the snowstorm in late January.

He also emphasized that the city has procured 700 million pounds of salt ahead of the storm.

Just 88 miles west of New York City, Pleasant Valley School District prepared similarly as it faced the very same storms. As a result, the district is well versed in dealing with the chaos of winter weather. Before sending students and teachers off to school, Pleasant Valley goes through a decision making process that focuses on the safety of everyone who spends the day within one of the district's many buildings.

"My primary goal is simple: to keep our children and staff safe while providing you with timely information," writes James Konrad, Superintendent of Pleasant Valley School District, in a memo titled "Safety and Transparency: Our Weather Decision-Making Process" that is sent out to families within the

district.

If the decision is made to either have a virtual learning day or a traditional "snow day," the process of reopening the district begins. Generally, this means making sure parking lots are plowed and all main roadways and sidewalks are heavily salted to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Randy Smale, Director of Operations for Pleasant Valley School District, explains that the cleanup of a winter storm depends entirely on the winter storm itself.

"Outside contractors are responsible for plowing [Pleasant Valley School District] parking lots and roadways," explains Mr. Smale. "The PVSD maintenance team handles the sidewalks and assists with plowing the parking lots and roadways, in addition to salting throughout the district."

As is the case with all winter storms, however, the time this process takes is often hard to pin down exactly.

"This work typically begins once a storm has ended; however, during significant snowfall, removal efforts may be ongoing to keep up with the accumulation," says Mr. Smale.

Preparing for winter storms is nothing new for cities and schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Thankfully, Pleasant Valley has a process in place that keeps everyone safe, especially with the severity of the storms that have hit the area this year.



District

Pleasant Valley sets prom date

May 16 has been set for the 2026 senior prom. This year, the annual dance will be held at Penns Peak.

By: Giada Morales

Prom, one of the most exciting events of the year for Pleasant Valley High School. This dance is a high school formal event that is dedicated to the seniors graduating at the end of the year. This year it will be held on May 16 and has the theme "Night In The Enchanted Forest".

things students should get excited about.

"We got really good feedback on the DJ from last year's prom. The students wanted a big party so we will be bringing that same DJ back," Ms. Burchfield stated. "We are planning to bring the prices of tickets down and still

council is working hard to make it perfect for our class," Henry stated.

"We are preparing for prom by making sure the theme of prom is spot on and perfect for pictures. We will also make sure to get student opinions so it is made by the students for the students," said Henry.

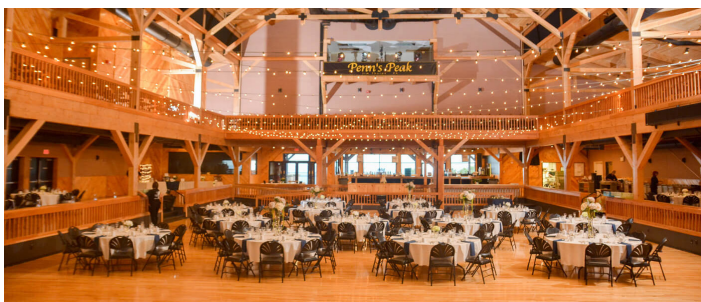
Penns Peak event manager Krysta Fink was also able to give details about their venue including what to expect and general guidelines for the event.

"From my side as an event manager, I help in planning things like the timeline of the event, the food and beverage choices, the table set ups and staffing. Our catering team orders all of the food, beverages, and supplies needed for dinner service," explained Fink. "We do not allow any helium balloons or open flames. For the most part, any other decorations are permitted. The students will be able to pick their own theme."

maintain a fun time for the students."

Senior and member of student council Chelsea Henry gave some inside information about prom.

"Prom this year is one to look forward to. Our student



Source: pennspeak.com

This year Ms. Burchfield is in charge of prom along with help from members from the Pleasant Valley community including senior student counsel.

Ms. Burchfield gave insight on what will be going on for prom this year with details of

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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District A “tree-mendous” undertaking: Pleasant Valley travels “Into the Woods”

Pleasant Valley High School Drama Club is putting on the junior version of Stephen Sondheim’s “Into the Woods,” a story that involves fairy tale characters trying to traveling through an enchanted forest, only to discover that their paths—and their wishes—are deeply intertwined.

By: Madison Zorn

On Feb. 27, 28 and March 1 the Pleasant Valley High School Drama Club will be performing “Into the Woods Jr.” as their yearly musical. “Into the Woods” is about different fairy tale stories that intersect when the characters go into the woods with a goal.

“I chose to do ‘Into the Woods’ because it was a show I wish I could have done in high school,” says director Aubrey Sawyer.

When asked why she chose this musical, Ms. Sawyer explained she was interested in creating a creative set. This was completed by Ms. Sawyer with the help of Rhonda Sawyer, Anthony Long, participating students, and parents that volunteered their time.

This is Ms. Sawyer’s second show directing at the high school after being at the middle school. She enjoys working with the high school students. She explains their talent and her pride in her students.

The main characters of the show are the Baker, the Baker’s Wife, Cinderella, Jack, Little Red Riding Hood and the Witch.

“Honestly, I was a little nervous. It’s a great show but the full version of Into The Woods is about three hours long, and it is

written by Steven Sondheim who notoriously writes difficult music. I was nervous we were biting off more than we could chew,” explains Sam Lowell, junior, who is playing the Baker.

Pleasant Valley is only performing the one act version of the show, which relieved Lowell. He believes with so many roles it showcases the amount

played by Jaime Rodriguez, junior. Once familiarizing themselves with the musical, they were thrilled to perform in it.

The Baker’s Wife is a kind yet stubborn woman who desires a family with her husband, The Baker. Rodriguez describes their character as “filled to the brim with care for everyone.”

ter who dreams of attending a festival in the kingdom. Dobson’s challenge in playing this role was animating herself.

“The biggest challenge in taking this role is becoming very animated and dramatic,” explains Dobson.

She enjoys portraying the change of her character throughout the story. Her

Kailey Grave De Peralta, sophomore, plays the role of Jack, who sells his cows, which are his only friends, to the Baker in exchange for beans. The beans he receives are the beans that become a giant beanstalk.

Grave De Peralta hasn’t had a role this big since middle school, so she struggles with memorizing all of her lines and is eager to prove herself to the directors.

Brooke Burke, sophomore, plays Little Red Riding Hood, who goes into the woods to bring bread to her sick grandmother, as her mother told her to do. Burke portrays her as a naive child who does not hold back what she wants to say or do.

Burke finds the age difference between her and her character makes it difficult to play her, but she is honored to have been given this role. She loves playing the character, and it’s not just for the role for her; she enjoys the feeling of knowing she is improving. “It is the best feeling when you audition for a character and get them,” says Burke.



Cast and crew of Into the Woods Jr.

of talent they have in the Drama Club nicely. He anticipates seeing how the actors use that talent in the show.

Sam explains his character as hardworking despite his family struggles.

“Throughout the story he goes from being a fearful husband to a courageous father,” says Lowell. “I’ve never played such a well-rounded and complex character so it’s been fun really diving deep into his personality.”

The Baker’s Wife is

Rodriguez struggles in the number of their lines. This is the most recurring character they’ve played yet, and they find it a little challenging. They feel excitement towards playing the role of a main character.

Sophia Dobson, junior, believed a different musical would be picked for the Spring musical, though she is not disappointed with this pick. She feels as though “Into the Woods” fits for the cast acting in it.

Dobson plays the role of Cinderella, a classic charac-

ter. Her favorite part of her role is how she gets to portray herself on the stage. She can do a lot with her character, and according to her that’s what is important to her in a role.

She is both nervous and excited to have this opportunity and she hopes to do the character justice. She wants to make the show the best she can.

“This is my first main role in a show where I get to act and be my own person all on my own, so that is so surreal for me,” explains Dobson.

State Senate passes bill to ban cellphones in schools

Pennsylvania Senators vote in favor of Bill 1014, which bans cellphones in schools from “bell-to-bell.” With the bill heading to the PA House of Representatives, cellphones in schools aim to become a thing of the past.

By: Alina Thomas

An increasing number of people believe that cellphone usage in schools has a negative impact on students’ learning. This belief is making its way through the Pennsylvania State Capital Building as the Pennsylvania Senate passed Bill 1014 on Tuesday, Feb. 3.

The bill states that students may not use mobile devices during the school day, while on school grounds. While it passed the State Senate, there are more steps in the legislative process that are needed before it can be applied to school districts across the state.

“The goal is to ensure students are focused on interacting with their classmates and their teachers, while focusing on learning,” explains Rosemary Brown, Senator for Monroe County.

Throughout the years, phone usage has increased, and it is now uncommon to see a student without a phone in hand. Administrators have noticed the pattern in student behavior ever since students began to utilize their phones in the classroom

According to the Institute of Educational Sciences, “more than two-

thirds feel cell phones have had a negative impact on their students’ mental health (72 percent) and attention span (73 percent).”

Even without the statistics it has become clear to teachers and other adults that cellphones have become an issue. Senators in Harrisburg believe that this bill will be in the best interest of both students and staff.

“There has long been discussion on the negative impact that a cell phone has on both a student’s mental health and academic success. The goal is to ensure students are focused on interacting with their classmates and their teachers, while focusing on learning,” explains Senator Brown.

Each school district will have the power to decide how they want the cell phone ban to look within their schools. There are, however, some caveats to the bill itself, as Jacob Kise notes in his article for WFMZ.

“The bill includes exceptions for medical needs, individualized education programs (IEPs) requiring a communication device, English-language learners using



Senator Rosemary Brown

Source: ballotpedia.org

translation apps, and instructional use with teacher permission, according to the news release,” writes Kise.

If the bill is passed by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and then signed by the Governor, the law will begin to be implemented statewide by the 2027-2028 school year.

Local 2026 Winterfest showers Stroudsburg with snowflakes

Stroudsburg held their annual Winterfest celebration on Feb. 14, bringing plenty of winter fun to the area.

By: Emma Wing

Stroudsburg Winterfest is a lively, free winter celebration held on Feb. 14 in downtown Stroudsburg. It was set against the snowy backdrop of the Pocono Mountains and aspires to bring the community together with fun activities, art, and seasonal cheer.

“Downtown businesses will be joining in the fun with Winterfest specials and promotions,” notes visitpa.com.

There will be ice sculptures and live carving demonstrations, music and entertainment, shops and eateries joining the fun. So many family friend activities to do and story time sessions with warming stations and hot chocolate.

Many visitors love this festival. This festival brings the small town together to create an amazing day. Co-organizer Brianna Strunk highlighted the 2026 Winterfest theme, saying, “The theme is love, because of course, Winterfest is on Valentines day.”

This event means a lot to the town by celebrating local artists and businesses. Offers op-

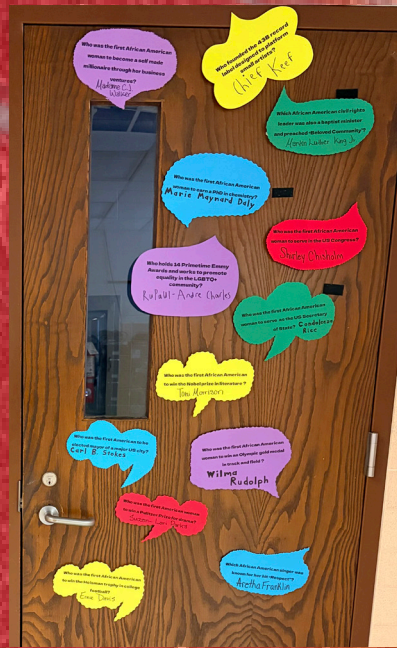
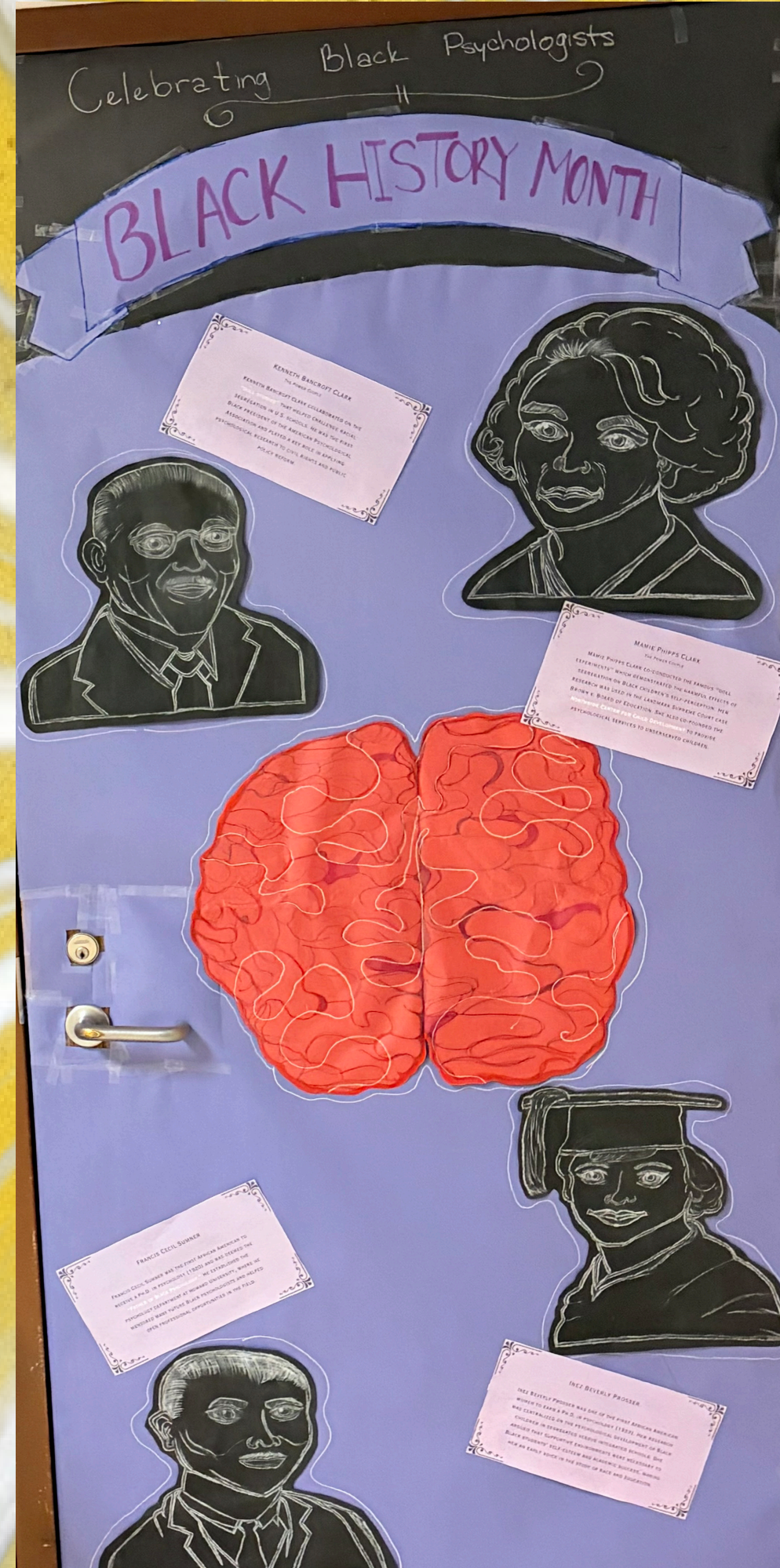
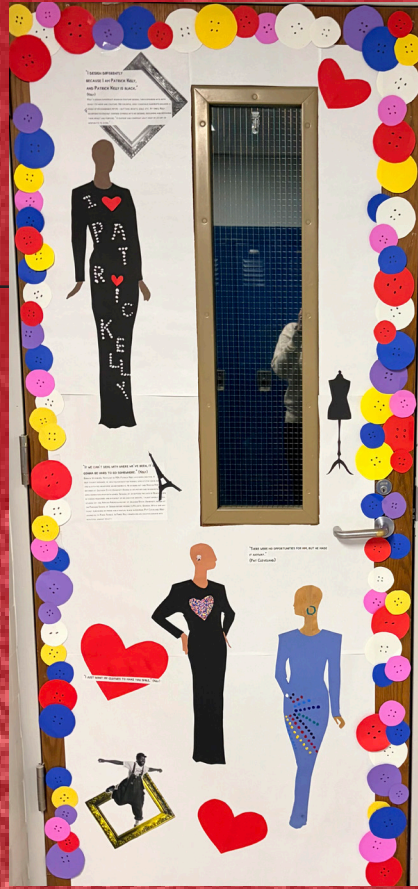
portunities for families and friends to make fun memories and it adds winter excitement when it’s cold outside.

Jake Smith, an ice sculptor at Winterfest, explains the time it takes to prepare for ice sculpting. “The prep time was three days to freeze, and it takes about an hour to carve per piece but it mostly depends on the artwork,” says Smith. This event is free to attend and lasts from 11:00 AM to 4 PM. Advice for visitors is to dress very warmly.



Ice sculpting at Winterfest

Black History Month



Door Decorating Competition

Nation

Grammy Awards delivers high energy and viral history

The 68th Grammy Awards were held on Feb. 1 and saw many receiving awards for their music. It was a night full of inspiration and brief chaos.

By: Harrison Sullivan

The 68th Grammy Awards, which was broadcasted live from CBS for the last time after 54 years, was held on Sunday Feb. 1 was a night of high energy and buzzing topics. The ceremony consisted of record breaking wins, show-stopping performances and both controversial and absurd moments which have set social media ablaze.

Despite the occasional controversy, the ceremony is still a welcome part of millions of people's lives each year, offering a platform for both new artists and long time veterans of the industry to come together and participate in the biggest night in music.

An early performance featured Justin Bieber in what was the most minimalist performance of the entire ceremony, consisting of only an acoustic guitar and a looping pedal to perform his song "Yukon." However, even with this simple of a performance, Bieber left his looping pedal running after the performance ended and had to come back on-stage and turn it off.

Despite this technical issue, the performances were enjoyable and received positive feedback.

"I hadn't watched in a while but I believed it was a fun night with a variety of performances," says Jamie Hyde, English teacher at Pleasant Valley High School.

The next award to be given out was the first of the "big four" categories—Best New Artist. Prior to the award being presented, the nominees each performed one of their songs, beginning with indie-pop group The Marías who brought the entire room to silence with performed their hit song "No One Noticed." In a sharp juxtaposition, the next performer, Addison Rae, performed her song "Fame Is A Gun" on the Grammys' backstage, a lively pop hit with witty lyrics and fast choreography which quickly reset the mood of the crowd and audience to a lighter mood.



Olivia Dean Source: billboard.com

The Grammy was then presented by the previous year's winner, Chappell Roan, to Olivia Dean. Dean would then go on to give her acceptance speech in which she made a statement about her family and how they sacrificed to allow her to achieve

her success.

"I'm up here as the granddaughter of an immigrant—I'm a product of bravery and I think those people deserve to be celebrated—we are nothing without each other," said Dean.

Definitely the most controversial choice of the big four awards was Song Of The Year, which went to "WILDFLOWER" by Billie Eilish, which was met with instant pushback from the viewers because of her politically charged speech. However, not all fans were annoyed with this moment.

"I was really proud of the acceptance speech and I was happy to see these celebrities using their platforms to make a statement, I also liked seeing my favorite singers winning awards," explains Sofia Gonzalez, freshman at Pleasant Valley High School.



Cher Source: billboard.com

One of the biggest awards of the night, Record Of The Year, went to "Luther," a collaboration between both Kendrick Lamar and SZA, two of the biggest artists in Rap and RNB respectively.

However, Cher, who was both accepting a Lifetime Achievement Award and presenting the Song of the Year, would speak about her career before leaving the stage before presenting the award. Once host Trevor Noah got Cher back onstage, she would go on to open the letter, look down at it, look around the room and state that she believed the winner would be on the prompter, then she would proceed to state that the Grammy went to "Luther Vandross," who was 1980s soul singer that died in 2005.

Cher attempted to apologize for her mistake to both Lamar and his producer Sounwave, many seemed to laugh the situation off including Lamar himself, who chose to dedicate a large portion of his speech to the late Vandross.

"If I could go back in time, I'd want that to happen again. She's happy with it. She had a great time. You want a bit of anarchy," explained Ben Winston, Grammy's executive producer.

Local

St. Patty's to "shamrock" Stroudsburg

Stroudsburg to host the annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade, honoring Irish heritage and culture.

By: Daniel Huang



St. Patrick's Day Parade 2025

Source: wnept.com

The streets of Stroudsburg once again will be washed in green as the 47th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade steps off on March 22, at 1:15 P.M. This yearly tradition, which celebrates Irish culture and heritage, promises a vivid display of Irish dancers, floats, pipebands and local organizations.

The parade, a two mile route, will begin at Stroudsburg High School and finish at the Municipal Building on Crystal Street in East Stroudsburg. Attendees can expect streets to be adorned with festive Irish flags and decorations, creating an immersive cultural experience.

"The parade has become a premier regional event, attracting thousands of spectators along its nearly two-mile route through Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg. Admission to the parade as an on-looker is free, which invites the entire community to partake in the festivities," explains the Pocono Irish American Club.

Established in 1978 by

the Pocono Irish American Club, the parade serves to promote and preserve Irish heritage and culture. They hope to make this year's parade one of the best yet.

"We're gearing up to make this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade one for the books! With fresh ideas, lively performances, and your incredible support, we're aiming for a celebration that honors our heritage while creating unforgettable memories," explains the Pocono Irish American Club page.

The funding of the event



St. Patrick's Day Parade 2025

Source: poconomountains.com

State

"Phil-ing the gap": Why people still look to a groundhog for winter weather

The small western Pennsylvania town of Punxsutawney became the center of the meteorological world on Feb. 2 as people awaiting to see if Punxsutawney Phil will see his shadow.

By: Daniel Fedik

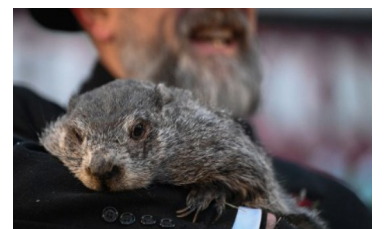
Groundhogs day is celebrated on Feb 2 and began in Punxsutawney, PA in 1887. It started off as a German tradition that suggested that if an animal which was originally a badger or a hedgehog saw its shadow it meant six more weeks of winter.

"As German settlers came to what is now the United States, so too came their traditions and folklore. With the absence of hedgehogs in the United States, a similar hibernating animal was chosen This leads us to yet another evolution in the legend and to present day Punxsutawney," states the Punxsutawney Ground Hog

Club.

As the event has evolved over time, local mascots have emerged. In Punxsutawney, Punxsutawney Phil has become the fan favorite, and he is the most famous out of the groundhogs. New York City also has a groundhog named Staten Island Chuck, and Georgia has General Beauregard Lee. Regardless of which groundhog is followed, the tradition is all fun and games, as CNN's Mary Gilbert and Monica Garrett write.

"In reality, astronomical winter will end on the spring equinox, known also as the vernal equinox," explain Gilbert and Gar-



Punxsutawney Phil

Source: themorningcall.com

ret. "But weather conditions don't always follow the timetable and neither does Phil."

The love for the holiday is not universal, however. Cameron Ward, freshman at Pleasant Valley High School, does not buy into it at all.

"It doesn't make any sense. The season is not determined by a groundhog seeing its shadow," says Ward.



2026 Groundhogs Day celebration

Source: groundhog.org

Nation

Seahawks superior at Super Bowl LX

The Seattle Seahawks lifted their second Lombardi Trophy, crushing the New England Patriots in a 29-13 victory. Seattle's defense stood out as they controlled the game from start to finish, smothering the Patriot's offense for sixty minutes.

By: Samuel Smale

Superbowl LX took place at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California on Sunday, Feb. 8. Competing is Drake Maye and the New England Patriots against Sam Darnold and the Seattle SeaHawks.

Many were excited for the halftime show with Bad Bunny making history by being the first Spanish speaking artist to perform at the superbowl. While his selection as the halftime show performer sparked backlash, it was also a benchmark moment for the NFL.

"For the first time, the halftime show featured a Spanish language-dominant solo performance [...] While Latin powerhouses such as Shakira and Jennifer Lopez electrified previous shows, this groundbreaking moment represented something bigger—a celebration of Latin music's explosive global reach and a nod to the 40-plus-million Spanish speakers calling the U.S. home," notes ESPN's Alonzo Olmedo.

While Bad Bunny was one

of the most talked about aspects of this annual event, the game itself

Vrabel for New England and Mike Macdonald for Seattle—are coach-

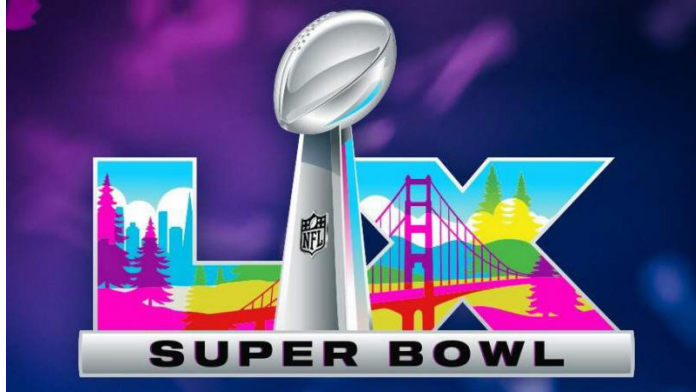
Seahawks defense.

"Seattle swarmed Maye all game, sacked him six times, forced him into three turnovers and generally gave him little room to breathe," explains Tim Rohan of NBC News.

Even though Seattle's defense was dominant all game, the Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Award went to Seattle's running back, Kenneth Walker III, as he rushed for 135 yards.

Even though Seattle won 29 to 13, the sixteen point difference did not tell the full story. Seattle controlled every aspect of this game from start to finish.

Nationally, the game did very well with over 125 million viewers across the United States. My father is a big sports fan and he said that he just wants to see a good game with a good chance of either team winning which is reasonable since he hates both teams.



Source: poconomountains.com

was also full of impressive performances.

Jacob Loch, senior at Pleasant Valley High School, who has been a Seahawks fan since he was young, was extremely excited about Seattle's victory.

"So excited to watch this game and get payback for their last match up against each other," says Loch.

Both head coaches—Mike

ing in their first Super Bowl. While the coaches were new to this NFL stage, it did not impact the teams on the field.

Seattle was first on the board with a field goal by Jason Myers. Myers was a huge aspect to this game, breaking the league record with five field goals in the Super Bowl.

Maye and the Patriots ofense was pressured all game by the

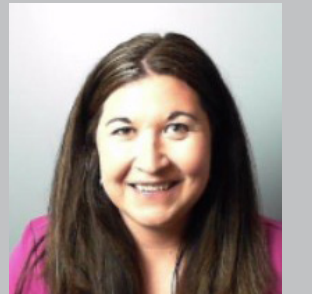
District

Hall of Fame, continued



Dora Tartar

Dora Tartar graduated in 1968, and has dedicated four decades to the district as a teacher, administrator, and innovator before retiring in 2012. During her time in Pleasant Valley, she was a four year varsity field hockey goalie, yearbook editor, a four year member of the student council, chorus, band front, and drama club. Her passion for education led her to Kutztown University, where she got a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a M.S. reading specialist degree.



Lindsey Smith-Rich

Lindsey Smith-Rich graduated in 2003. She is an accomplished healthcare executive and a standout former multi-sport athlete for Pleasant Valley with both basketball and track & field. Following her graduation, she attended Lycoming College and continued her basketball career for the 2003-2004 season before graduating in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in Arts in Corporate Communications, and she currently serves as the Senior Network Director of Wound Management and VNA Business Development in St. Luke's University Health Network.

"The Hall of Fame is an important tradition for both the high school and [the district] because it recognizes and celebrates the achievements of our alumni, staff, and community members who have made a significant impact. It serves as a source of pride and inspiration, showing current students the possibilities that exist when hard work, dedication, and commitment are applied," states Brian Boylan, Principal of Pleasant Valley High School.

Nation

Famed actor and director found dead at 78

Rob Reiner and his wife Michele were found dead at their home on Dec. 14, 2025 with multiple wounds. Their son, Nick Reiner, was arrested as the prime suspect with his next court date set for April 29.

By: Jacob George



Michele Reiner (left) and Rob Reiner (right)

Source: cnn.com

Rob Reiner, famous director and actor, and his wife Michele Reiner died recently. He was allegedly murdered by his son Nick Reiner on Dec. 14 2025. Reiner was 78 years old.

Rob and his wife were found dead by their daughter, Romy, in their home on December 14, 2025. According to sources, Reiner was at a party the previous night and got into an argument with his son. Reiner and his wife were found with multiple sharp force injuries according to the Los Angeles county medical examiner.

Andrew Witinski, robotics teacher at Pleasant Valley School District, shared his opinion on Rob Reiner as a memorable character actor.

"I remember Rob Riener as Meathead on Archie Bunker. He had a few movies that I really liked like A Few Good Men and Stand By Me," says Mr. Witinski.

Even though Nick Reiner allegedly killed both of his parents,

he could still inherit part of their 196 million dollar fortune. Nick Reiner is pleading not guilty during his arraignment on Feb. 23.

Proceedings have focused on his mental health as he was reportedly diagnosed with schizophrenia and was struggling with his medication at the time. He is currently being held without bail, and his next court date is April 29.

Reiner's death is tragic and unexpected, with their other children Jake and Romy saying they were experiencing unimaginable pain following the horrific and devastating loss.

Movies like Princess Bride, Stand By Me, and A Few Good Men were only a few that helped to define Reiner as a director.

"He was brilliant and kind, a man who made films of every genre to challenge himself as an artist," states the representatives of Kathy Bates, actor, in an article for CNN.

Reiner and his wife, along with other recently deceased actors like Catherine O'Hara, will be honored at the Academy Awards on March 15, 2026.

"Reiner's filmography included some of the most popular films of the last 50 years and while some of those movies and performers scored nominations and wins," writes Lisa Respers France of CNN.

District

Harlem Wizards bring basketball magic to the high school

Pleasant Valley School District hosted the Harlem Wizards on March 5 for a PTO fundraiser in hopes of bringing the district together for a night of fun.

By: Gavin Tonkay

On March 5, 2026, the Pleasant Valley staff faced off against the Harlem Wizards, an exhibition team similar to the Harlem Globetrotters. Originally scheduled to be held at Pleasant Valley Middle School, the game was moved to and played at the high school.

The Harlem Wizards are a program founded by Howie Davis in 1962 that predominantly does events for fundraising and charity. "A wizards show is an event that combines aspects of big time productions with hometown community flair," states the Wizards website.

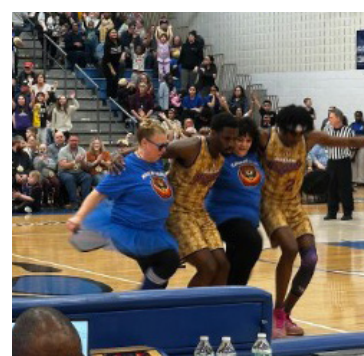
The Wizards are known for their flashy playstyle often going for crazy dunks and shots for the enjoyment of audience members. Timothy McCutchan, Principal of Pleasant Valley Middle School, wanted to bring something new and fun to the district.

"The idea was born out of a desire to bring something high-energy and 'larger than life' to our district. We wanted an event that moved beyond a traditional fundraiser—something that would get students excited to see their teachers in a completely different, fun, and slightly competitive environment," explains Mr. McCutchan. "The Harlem Wizards have a legendary reputation for showmanship, and we knew they

would be the perfect partners to help us create an unforgettable night for our families."

There are nine teachers from the middle school, eight teachers from the elementary school, five teachers from the intertermide school, one teacher from the high school, and two members from the board signed up to participate in the game.

While this game's primary purpose is to raise money for the PTO, McCutchan claims that there is a much deeper meaning behind this game. McCutchan hopes that this game will bring the community together by "bridging the gap between our elementary and secondary schools, creating a space where a kindergartener and a high school senior can cheer side-by-side," notes Mr. McCutchan.



The Wizards having fun with PV staff

Nation

MLB set to begin new season

With another season set to begin, Major League Baseball stares down a looming lockout in 2027.

By: Gerrit DeYoung

Major League Baseball's opening day is Thursday, March 26, and fans are all in for a long season, no matter if they're rooting for the defending champion Dodgers or the hapless Rockies.

This season may be one of the most anticipated seasons ever with the Dodgers are trying to be the first team to three-peat for the first time since the 2000 New York Yankees.

"The Dodgers have the talent to pull it off, but you could have said the same thing about all of the other teams that went back-to-back. And yet, in MLB history, only two franchises have won three straight: the Yankees (1936-39, '49-53, '98-2000) and Athletics (1972-74)," explains Thomas Harrigan of mlb.com.

"We always have to remember that baseball is these people's jobs. They want to work where they get paid the most and they have the best opportunities ahead," explains

With all this in mind, the Dodgers are still favored to win it all. This offseason, they added star closer Edwin Diaz and star outfielder Kyle Tucker, the latter of which signed a league record 4-year, \$240 million, which averages to \$60 million a year.

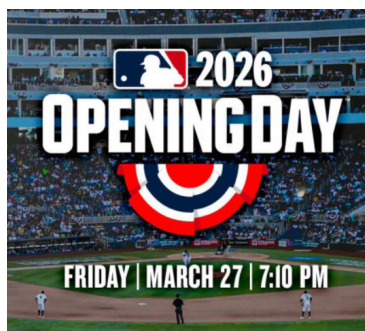
While the 2026 season is fast approaching, Tucker's deal with the Dodgers has fans worried about the 2027 season.

"Kyle Tucker was really the last 'big' domino to fall in my opinion and he may be the reason baseball goes into a lockout [in 2027]," says Taylor Lindsey, History teacher at Pleasant Valley High School.

Fan outrage over how the Dodgers are spending money has become one of the largest talking points this offseason, a topic that has frustrated Tyler Rudelitch, sophomore at Pleasant Valley High School.

"The Dodgers have spent over 50 million dollars more than any other team. They are also spending more than the bottom 5 teams combined," states Rudelitch.

Regardless of the controversy around player contracts and the future 2027 season, no one knows what will happen this season, and the only way to find out is to watch.



Source: mlb.com

District

Bears pitcher imbues quiet confidence into team

London Smith enters his senior baseball season looking to build on his previous success.

By: Kobi Spradlin

Pleasant Valley Baseball is lead by London Smith, senior, who is a pitcher for the PV Bears. With an ERA of 3.18 in 2025, he sits among the top pitchers for the Mountain Division and PIAA District XI.

Smith has been into baseball since he was four years old. He realized he wanted to join the team and play his freshman year and has been playing since.

"London is a quietly confident player who has truly grown in his approach," explains Joseph Anderton, Pleasant Valley Baseball Coach and Pleasant Valley Middle School Science teacher.

Throughout his high school career, he has certainly accomplished a lot, and Smith certainly has a lot to reflect upon, both good and bad. Reflecting on what he believes is his best moment, Smith noted that "winning the Golden Arm Award for lowest ERA," says Smith.

But even the best pitchers have off-days, as Smith reflects on his "worst" moment in Pleasant Valley blue.

"Definitely losing to Stroudsburg at Coca-Cola Park," notes Smith.

Playing at Coca-Cola

Park is a big opportunity for high school teams. Although losing was sad, it helped the team rise to new heights.

"My team was being supportive and gave me the confidence to play again," explains Smith. "My coaches definitely push me to keep playing."

A team itself, good or bad, can allow others to rise if each individual gives their support to one another, and Smith's leadership certainly shows.

"While he isn't a vocal leader, he serves as an excellent role model by performing every drill with purpose—something I love to see from a senior," says Coach Anderton.



London Smith

District

Senior athlete looks to finish her high school track career on the right foot

Keeley Lawrence, senior, looks ahead to the upcoming track and field season and hopes to inspire her teammates as she closes out her high school career.

By: Emma Weber

For senior athlete Keeley Lawrence, track and field has been a constant throughout her high school career. She's been running since seventh grade and has been on varsity since her freshman year.

As a mid- and long-distance runner, Keeley competes in events ranging from the 400 meters to the 3200 meters, but she mainly runs the 1600 (mile) and the 800 or 4x800 relay. Although track is often seen as an individual sport, Keeley says the team aspect plays a big role.

"The sport is very individualized except for the relay teams, so the team is basically there for moral support for each person in their event," Lawrence states.

Because athletes are responsible for their own performances, there's rarely drama or blame, which she feels makes the team environment more positive unlike other sports.

Relays are some of Lawrence's favorite moments of the season, especially the 4x4. One race in particular stands out: the annual tanker 4x4 against Stroudsburg.

"It does not count for any points. It's just track kids having a bunch of fun," explains Lawrence.

She also explained that many people don't realize how demanding track really is. Each year, a large number of students join the team thinking it will be easier than other sports, only to quit after the first week. Lawrence emphasized that athletes must earn their spot at meets through consistent effort at practice.

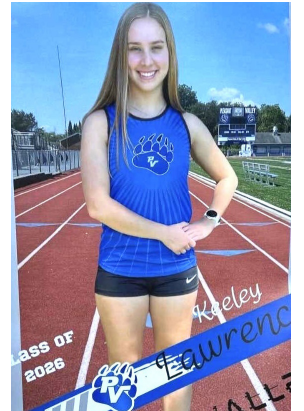
"Some people may not realize just how much work and how tiring track and running can be," Lawrence said.

To prepare for the upcoming spring season, Lawrence has been staying busy with winter track workouts. She lifts weights twice a week, completes coached workouts on other days, and competes at intramural meets held at colleges and other indoor tracks.

As a possible captain this season, Lawrence feels confident stepping into a leadership role. She previously served as a captain for crosscountry in the fall and enjoys helping younger runners.

"I like being able to pass on the things that I've learned over the years and encourage the new runners," she said.

JT Morton, also a senior captain of the team, believes Lawrence would be a strong leader and praised her growth as both



Keeley Lawrence

a teammate and an athlete, adding that he is proud of how far she has come.

"She is very good at leading a big group and has already shown that this indoor season," explains Morton.

With this being her final season, Lawrence says she feels ready. While she knows she will miss the team and the people she's run alongside, her main goal is to enjoy the season and finish strong.

Although she doesn't plan on continuing track in college, Lawrence says being a student-athlete has taught her important lessons that will stay with her beyond high school.

World

World competes for Olympic Gold

The 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan, Italy began on Feb. 6. Athletes from around the world competed in hopes of winning gold medals.

By: Noelle Wolff



Source: nbcuni.com

The Winter Olympics return after Paris hosted them two years ago. This year, the Northern Italian cities of Milan and Cortina brought the Winter Olympics into full swing on Friday, Feb. 6.

The Winter Olympics will consist of sixteen sports; Biathlon, Bobsleigh Curling, Ice Hockey, Luge, Skating—Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Short Track Speed Skating—Ski Mountaineering, and Skiing—Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, Freestyle Skiing, and Snowboarding.

The Olympics are a seventeen day event wherein one hundred sixteen medal events will be held.

The famed Olympic

torch traveled through many different cities to end on the Olympics starting date, Feb 6. The torches get passed from city to city, different celebrities each holding them, just like Connor Storrie and Hudson Williams, who walked in Northern Italy as torch bearers. The ceremony goes on for sixty-three days.

As for location, Italy has been a host of the Olympics four times, and the second for Cortina d'Ampezzo. The opening ceremony will begin in Milan, with many of the alpine events happening in Cortina.

Sophia Spiegel, a freshman at Pleasant Valley High School, states her excitement for the Olympics, and how the biggest thing about the Olympics is bringing people together.

"The Olympics are one of the few events where the world can come together, especially with the craziness in the world. We can ultimately show our athleticism and be considered one people living in what is peace and harmony" states Spiegel.

A bunch of athletes have messages they chose to spread with their fame, alongside of their amazing performances.

Erin Jackson, a speed

skater, talks about the impact she wants to make in the world by showing diversity in winning Olympic medals.

"I just always want to be a good example or someone who other people can look to" states Jackson.

With all of the athletes worrying about how they will perform, a lot of anxiety is being passed around, especially for Chloe Kim, an athlete on the US snowboarding team. She and a bunch of other athletes spread the message about mental health awareness, like Paige Bueckers, Bijan Robinson and Karl-Anthony Towns. Through the "Love your mind" campaign, this was possible.

"Obviously I was super down and into it because mental health is a very important topic to me," Kim said. "So whenever we can continue to spread that messaging it's what I'm here for."

Even though the athletes demonstrate incredible athleticism and perseverance through their events, they share more than their performance by spreading meaningful messages, changing the world with their words and competition to win.