Tiger Prints

March 2026

The Official Newspaper of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School

Vol. 4

Achoo! The Reason for the Allergy Season

By Lily

The trees are sprouting leaves, and the bees are buzzing. The flowers are blooming, the days growing longer and sunnier, and—achoo! Not everyone views spring as a celebration of life after the cold of winter. For some, this season brings more misery and harm than happiness.

If you suffer from excessive sneezing, a runny nose, congestion, or itchiness, among other symptoms, then you might be part of the 25.7% of adults and 18.9% of children with seasonal allergies.
According to American CDC, or Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one out of every four adults and one in every five children possess this common ailment.

What Causes Allergies?

Also known as hay fever or allergic rhinitis, seasonal allergies are a result of your body overreacting to allergens that it perceives as threats, prompting an extreme immune response. It starts when allergens like mold spores from small fungi, pollen from trees, flowers, and grass, or even dust enters your mucous membranes. Your body treats these foreign invaders like it does bacteria. When pathogens, and in this case, allergies as well, are detected, they get tagged by your immune system as threatening. White blood cells produce antibodies, y-shaped proteins that identify the threat for next time and alert the body to the breach. By the next time these allergens enter the body, white blood cells have been trained to recognize and attach to them, prompting the cell to produce inflammatory chemicals, including histamine, which alert the nerve cells. These nerve cells cause blood vessels to activate the mucous membranes, leading to sneezing, congestion, runny nose, and itchiness.

Allergies typically pop up during childhood, but not always. Genetics are a big factor in determining how likely you are to develop these sensitivities to certain allergens, but your environment also plays a role, too. Exposure to allergens early on makes you more tolerant to them, and less likely to take on an allergy. Children who spend more time outdoors, grow up on farms, or with many siblings have lower chances of developing allergies. Because they are exposed to a greater amount of germs, their immune systems are ‘stronger’ and better-suited for fighting pathogens compared to that of individuals in environments with less of this exposure.

continued on page II

Bored??? Not Anymore!!!

By Flora

Are you bored? Maybe you're not. Maybe you are busy every day and you don't have enough time to fit anything else into your schedule. But if you *are* bored, you should read this right away because this article is filled to the brim with fun things to do!

- Ultimate Frisbee with Katrina Krasnansky starts on April 17 and ends May 15. There are 5 sessions, and it goes from 3–4 pm. It takes place at PVC! There is a fee, though it is about $30-50. For more information, contact Katrina Krasnansky through the Croton Rec Center.

- *Into the Outdoors* summer camp at PVC! This starts on July 6 and ends July 9, going from 9 am—1 pm. Open to PVC students! At this camp you will go hiking, exploring, and do hands-on activities. To learn more check out the poster by the trophy windows and couches in the lobby.

- Celebrate planet Earth at Vassallo Park! It is on Saturday, April 28, from 10 am—3:00 pm. Celebrate with regional experts, live music, hands on activities, and more!

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Red Foxes

By Sebastian

Red foxes are very adaptable, and solitary hunters with insane hearing (They can hear up to 100 feet away!) They can run up to 30 mph, jump over 6 foot fences, and communicate using up to 40 different vocalizations from barks to screams. Their tails help them keep their balance, and also give them warmth.

Red foxes use a high jumping "mousing" technique to pounce on prey, often putting extra food under leaves or dirt for later. A group of foxes is called a “skulk” or a “leash”. While they hunt alone, they are monogamous, and both parents care for their kits (pups), who are often born brown or gray, turning red after about a month. Did you know that red foxes are also adept swimmers?





Eagles

By Sebastian

Eagles are an iconic symbol in many countries. Did you know that this bird is the national animal of 8 countries? America, Germany, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland, Austria, Egypt and Nigeria—and who knows, maybe even more! Croton-on-Hudson hosts something called the "Eagle Fest” every year. You go there and see demonstrations of eagles and falcons and owls! Eagles can live up to 25–50 years! They can fly at 35–44 mph with a wingspan of 5.9 – 7.5 ft. Now that is cool!

Achoo! The Reason for the Allergy Season

continued

The Exacerbating Allergy Season

In recent years, allergy season has been getting noticeably worse, largely in part due to climate change. Researchers have found that in many parts of the world, including the northeastern US, people are now being exposed to more pollen as a result of rising temperatures and an excess of CO2 in the atmosphere, which make pollen producers like ragweed and wild grasses grow larger and more abundantly, expand their habitats, and flower for longer stretches of time. A study by Columbia University found that pollen season in North America now lasts an additional three weeks more than it did in 1990, and with 20% more pollen. One study also found that climate change altered the structure of plants, making them more allergenic. In the case, scientists discovered that increased carbon dioxide CO2 in the atmosphere caused ragweed plants to produce pollen grains with spikier surface proteins, which the immune system of humans easily confuses with viruses and dangerous invaders.

So what can be done about this? Taking medication can help reduce the unfortunate, uncomfortable effects of allergies, relieving you of those itchy eyes, runny nose, and other symptoms. Immunotherapy provides a more long-lasting solution: By taking small injections of allergen(s), your body becomes less sensitive to the invaders, reducing the effects you feel. If it helps, whenever you’re feeling discouraged by the daunting allergy season ahead, just remember that all is a result of your immune system simply being “too good.”

Quick Crafts!

By Willa

Welcome to quick crafts! Here you will learn how to make lots of animals, how to fold origami, and more!

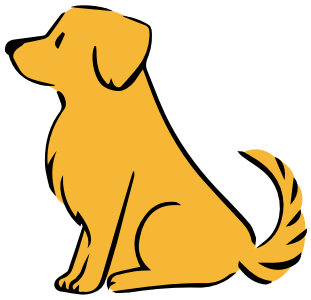
How to Make a Fortune Teller!

1. Make a square from a piece of paper.
2. Fold the corners of the square into the center.
3. Flip over and repeat step 2.
4. Fold in half.
5. Put your fingers in the four little squares.
6. All done!

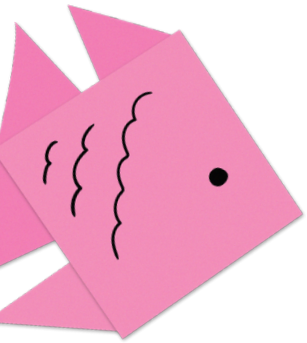
How to Make a Custom Dog Bed Frame

*Only use for **small** dogs
*Credit to the art teacher

1. Get a good-size custom box.
2. Cut one of the shorter sides out.
3. Carve the flaps into any shape you want.
4. Color however you want.
5. Done







How to Make Custom Stickers

*Credit to the art teacher

1. Make a design on paper.
2. Get parchment paper.
3. Get a piece of tape and stick it to the parchment.
4. Put the piece of paper on the parchment, then stick a piece of tape on the sticker.

The History of Women's History Month

By Lily

When you think of March—what's the first thing that comes to mind? Maybe it's St. Patrick's Day and shamrocks, Pi Day, or even National Potato Chip Day! But there's another important part of these 31 days that deserves our attention: Women's History Month. A time to commemorate the accomplishments, discoveries, contributions, and perseverance of women throughout history that have shaped our world to what it is today.

National Women's Day

On March 8th of 1908, 15,000 female garment workers, including a large percentage of immigrants, marched through the Lower East Side of New York City to Union Square, demanding better wages, working conditions, and the right to vote. A year later in 1909, the Socialist Party of America declared the first National Women's Day. But not everyone was satisfied—in 1910, socialist Clara Zetkin proposed spreading the celebration beyond the US at an International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, Denmark. At the meeting, 100 women from seventeen countries had gathered, and her idea was unanimously agreed upon.

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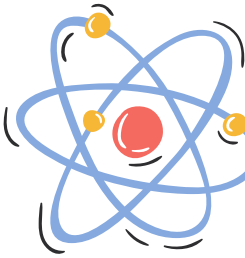
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Share a fun fact you would like featured in the next issue *here*!

Biology Fun Facts

By Lily



- The brain is only about 2% of our total body weight, yet it uses up 1/5 of all our energy (300-500 calories)
- Thinking burns calories. Intense mental effort uses up more glocuse. In a typical day, the brain uses up 320 calories
- The brain is the only organ in the human body that can't feel pain. Though it can process pain signals from other parts of the body, it lacks pain receptors in its tissue. Headaches are actually a result of blood vessels and nerves in your head hurting.
- The DNA of one cell unraveled is approximately 1.2 miles long. All the DNA in the human body, when laid out, is equal to 120 billion miles, double the diameter of the solar system.



Comic

By Mateo

Name: Mateo Date: 1/8/25

Comic Strip Story

Go Jarek



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The History of Women's History Month

continued



International Women's Day

The first celebration of International Women's Day took place soon after in 1911, and was observed in Austria, Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland. Despite proposing the idea, Zetkin didn't actually have a fixed date in mind for International Women's Day. Female activism in Russia lit the match: In 1917, starting on Sunday, February 23rd, (according to the Julian Calendar, which the country used at this time,) Russian women initiated a strike in which they demanded "bread and peace." On the fourth day of the protest, the Tsar was forced to abdicate the throne, and the replacement interim government granted women the right to vote. In the Gregorian Calendar that the majority of the world uses today, the first day of the strike fell on the 8th of March, and ever since then, the traditional date has held strong.

It took another three years later, in 1920, for women in the US to finally get the long-awaited right to vote from the Nineteenth Amendment. Throughout the second half of the century, the United Nations started joining the celebration, making International Women's Day an official observance in 1975. By 1996, they had added a theme to each year, with that first one being, "Celebrating the past, Planning for the Future."

National Women's History Week

But not all women were happy with just a day…In 1978, the people of the Education Task Force of Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, upset with the absence of women's history in the K-12 curriculum, wanted to celebrate women's accomplishments and contributions to American history, society, and culture beyond the one single date. Led by Santa Rosa schoolteacher Molly Murphy McGregor, the commission planned a weeklong Women's History Week celebration in the area occurring in the week of March 8th, coinciding with the already existing International Women's Day. The group delivered presentations at several schools throughout California's Sonoma County, organizing a parade in downtown Santa Rosa, and creating a student essay contest profiling local women with hundreds of submissions.

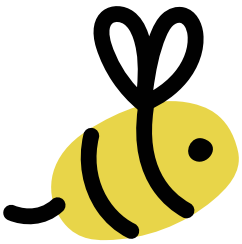
Despite the 1978 celebration being created as a one-time event, the next year, communities all across the United States took up the torch, initiating their own women's history celebrations. In July of that year, historian Gerda Lerner organized a 15-day conference concerning women's history that was funded by the Women's Action Alliance and Smithsonian Institution. Following the event, women's activists and historians started collaborating in the fight for a National Women's History Week. In February of 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation, declaring the week of March 2-8 of that year as National Women's History Week. Congress approved the action on August 4th, 1981, and continued to pass resolutions every year recognizing the weeklong celebration, leading schools and women organizations across the US to host their own celebrations.

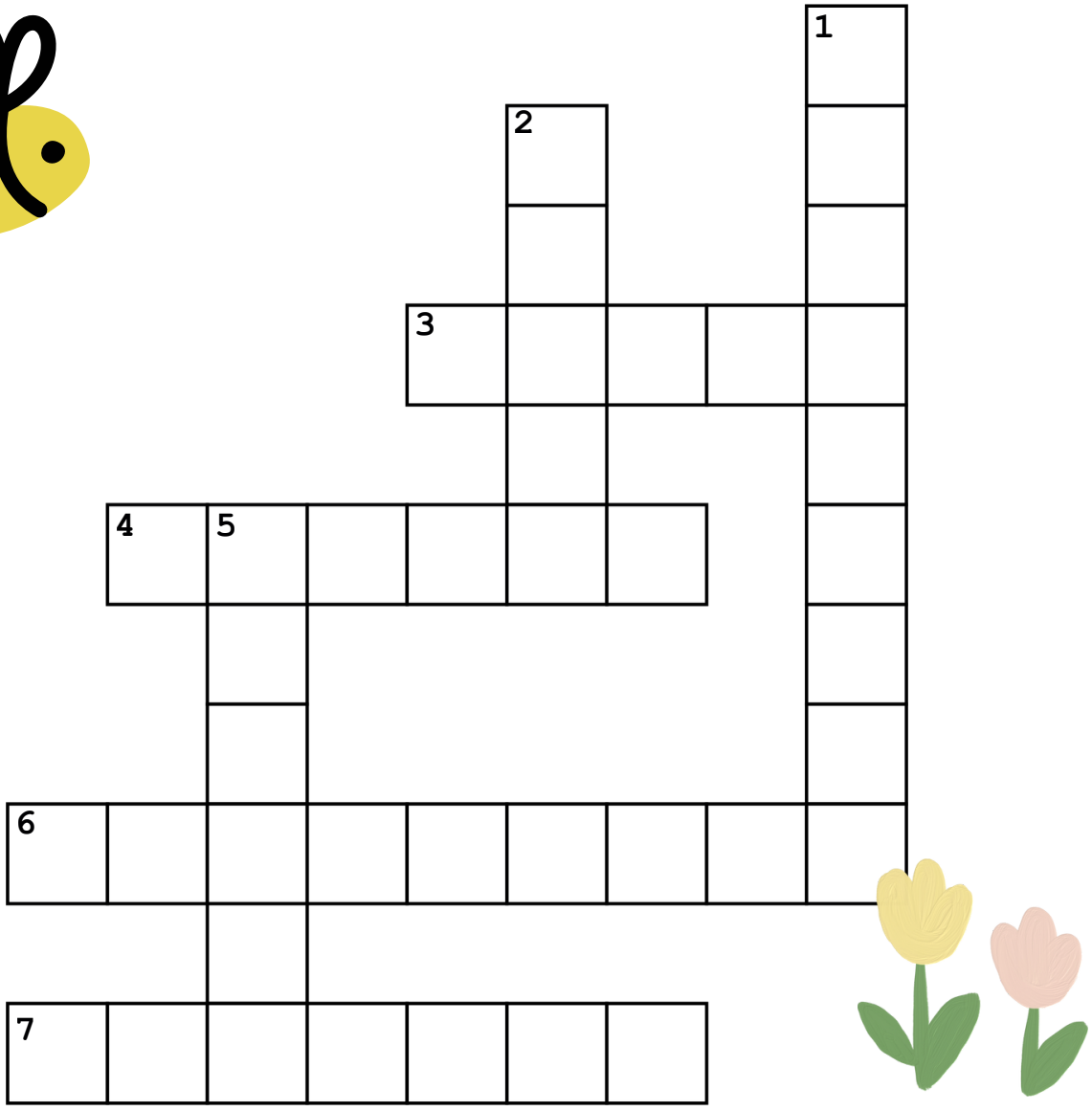
National Women's History Month

In 1987, the National Women's History Project pushed Congress to proclaim March 1987 as "Women's History Month," and ever since the following year, Congress and the President have issued resolutions and proclamations recognizing the nationwide, month-long observance. Since garment factory workers laid the groundwork for National Women's Day in 1908, it's taken eighty years for National Women's History Month to come about. So next time you write the date in March, remember the years of sacrifice, and the fight that still continues to this day, for women's rights.

Crossword Puzzle

By Lily





Across

3. National bird of eight countries, including the US

4. This season starts with the vernal equinox

6. Protagonist of Legally Blonde

7. Country where the Copenhagen International Conference for Working Women was held

Down

1. Seasonal _____ (achoo!)

2. Only organ that doesn't feel pain

5. One of the leading seasonal allergens

Editorial

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" At some point or another, we've all heard this question before. For many, it brings back countless memories of childhood, when as elementary schoolchildren, we were expected to have a small inclination of our life goals, or dreams for our future job. In the past decade, our generation has grown up in a society with ways of life, norms, and challenges that people of previous generations never had to experience: a constant access to technology, widespread social media use, and artificial intelligence in schools and the job market, to name a few.

In a world where the future seems so uncertain, it can be hard to decide what we want to do with our lives. Parents and schools want to make sure students and children are prepared for the challenges in store for them ahead, in this ever-changing world. But in their quest to prepare us, we've seen the growth of the societal pressure to "grow up faster." As written by *GOV.UK*, the official government website of the United Kingdom, "A survey of over 1,000 parents of all backgrounds has revealed that 88% think that children are under pressure to grow up too quickly." Kids of younger ages are expected to know what they want to be when they grow up. By age fourteen or fifteen, highshoolers are expected to begin planning for college and their future careers.

Parents, teachers, and schools districts want children to succeed. They equip students with the tools they need to thrive and do well in school, life, and beyond, even if that means introducing them to maturity earlier than expected. While it is good to prepare our next generation for the challenges of a world, many students, children, and parents alike report that their children seem overwhelmed and stressed with growing up faster. As Psychology Today writes, "Many parents and professionals alike are being warned today that hurrying children through childhood can have harmful effects. In a culture that stresses success, children are bombarded daily to grow up too quickly. Many psychologists believe that growing up too fast can have devastating effects."

If children are expected to deal with the stress of adulthood, they will also experience the troubles of adulthood: increased stress from trying to meet extreme expectations and low self-esteem that, when developed in early childhood, can be hard to lose in later years.

So what can we do about this? How do we prepare children and equip them with the skills to be successful, and teach them to be responsible contributors to society while still helping them enjoy their childhood? The first step would most likely be to start cultivating school and home environments where growth is valued over straight success, and failure is viewed as improvement for next time. Of course, not all changes happen overnight, but if we truly want to ensure a healthier generation that knows how to cope with the stress of life's challenges, exposing them to adulthood earlier isn't solving the problem.



Thank you for reading this issue of *Tiger Prints*, the official school newspaper of PVC! If you enjoyed it, make sure to check out some of our previous ones here.

Editor Lily
All pieces edited by Lily
Newspaper designed by Lily