FALL 2026

THE TORNADO CONNECTION

KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN



IHS Musicians Prepare For Holiday Concerts

BY ALLISON LACHENDRO, EDITOR

The musicians of Butler are preparing for their holiday concerts this December. Students in sixth through eighth grade have been practicing since the beginning of the school year and will continue working hard until their upcoming performances.

The BIHS Band will hold its concert on Tuesday, December 8, in the Butler Intermediate auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

The concert will include a wide variety of festive songs, including “Blizzard’s Fury,” “Stomping on the Housetop,” and “Santa’s Rocking Holiday Mix” performed by the sixth grade band, along with “Sleigh Ride,” “Hanukkah Holiday,” “Nuts and Crackers,” and “Son of Santa the Barbarian” performed by the seventh and eighth grade band. These 165 students have been working on their musical skills since the first week of school.

Mrs. Daubenspeck, the new Intermediate High School band teacher, believes music is important in students’ lives because it teaches perseverance, brings joy, and creates “a sense of belonging,” she said. She was inspired to become a band teacher by the amazing music teachers she had throughout high school, who encouraged her to pursue the same career. She explained that the different parts in a band come together to form something that is “like a giant puzzle.” She has been playing the flute since she was eight years old and fell in love with being part of a musical ensemble. She said the best parts of teaching are “getting to build connections with the students” and “watching them grow over the years.”

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Concerts

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Band students Cora Christoferetti and Carter Herold are both excellent examples of what hard work and perseverance can accomplish. According to Carter, music changed his life because “It made me more involved and I got to know more people.” He chose to play the trombone because his cousin played it, and he thought it would be cool to play the same instrument. Cora was inspired by her mom and chose the trombone because “it was the easiest one.”

The BIHS Orchestra will hold its concert on Thursday, December 10, in the Butler Intermediate auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

This concert will feature several rock-inspired songs, including the sixth grade favorite “Groove King Wenceslas” and the seventh and eighth grade favorite “Rest Ye Merry, Rock Ye Very.” Mrs. Black, the orchestra teacher, has a little over 200 students across all her classes, and they have all shown great dedication since the beginning of October. Mrs. Black selected all of the music and has been working on the songs herself since the end of April.

Mrs. Black has been teaching for twelve years and has enjoyed watching the orchestra grow throughout her career. Her favorite part of teaching has been “getting to see students have their ‘I can do it’ moment. Whether it’s during rehearsal or during the concert, each different student blooms at a different time.” She decided to become a music teacher when she realized that music needed to be a part of her life. After receiving encouragement from family and friends, she decided to attend college as a violin major.

Rylee Glazier and Jaden Schnur are two students who have shown particular dedication to orchestra throughout their years at BIHS. Rylee enjoys the learning experiences and connections that orchestra has given him. He plays the violin and chose the instrument because “violin has lots of songs you can play that are all diverse.” Unlike most, Jaden wasn't inspired by a specific person. Instead, he was motivated by “knowing that I can do something more than the average person.” His favorite song from the upcoming concert is “Rest Ye Merry, Rock Ye Very” because “it is very upbeat and fun.”

The next concert will feature the seventh and eighth grade chorus on Wednesday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m. Under the direction of Mrs. Tepper and Ms. Baptiste, these 110 students will perform several songs, including “A Jolly, Jingling Carol Medley,” a jazzy version of “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen,” a mashup of “The First Noel” and “Pachelbel’s Canon,” “Hanukkah Hanukkah,” “Here Comes the Snow,” a medley of “Happy Holidays” and “White Christmas,” and “In This Ancient House.”

Mrs. Tepper has performed on stage since she was three years old and began singing at age twelve. She believes music is important in students’ lives because “it uses both parts of the brain, and different things like language, history, English, and more.” For her, the holiday concert is about more than just performing. It is also an opportunity to get to know her students. Ms. Baptiste was inspired to sing because “it was always something my dad did, and my mom was always singing around the house.” She is especially excited about the upcoming holiday concert because of the different moods and styles the songs bring. In her opinion, “Being a music teacher is an experience full of joy, fun, laughter, and hardwork, but the best part is my students. My days are long when I don’t see them.”



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The final concert will take place on Thursday, December 17, at BIHS. This performance will feature the sixth grade chorus singing “We Need a Little Christmas,” along with a medley of “Hot Chocolate,” “Frosty the Snowman,” and “Suzie Snowflake.” These 130 students have been learning about collaboration, independence, leadership, and teamwork with Mrs. Erevia, who has been working with them on their songs since the first day of school.

Mrs. Erevia performed in theater throughout her childhood and loved singing on stage, but the main reason she became a teacher was the influence of her high school music teacher. Every year, she looks forward to seeing students show their hard work in front of an audience and witnessing how much they have improved since the beginning of the year. According to her, the job is “crazy in the best way possible.” She enjoys meeting all of her students, learning about each of them, and watching them grow. She also has an extraordinarily wide vocal range and can “sing anything you need me to,” she said.

Chorus students Reagan Zanaglio and McKenzie Hill have also shown a lot of perseverance in their performances. Reagan enjoys being challenged in chorus and is most inspired by her teacher and friends. She also appreciates the connections she has made through chorus. McKenzie, on the other hand, enjoys singing the more angelic songs, such as “The First Noel.” She has been singing since she was four years old, and her passion for music has continued to grow.

With all the hard work, perseverance, and dedication these students have put in, they are ready to take the stage and share their holiday music with the community.



AI Course Offered Through History Classes

BY KELVIN MILLER



Artificial Intelligence is becoming a bigger part of everyday life, but do students know how to use it responsibly? At Butler Intermediate High School, Ms. Eckert is teaching a class to help IHS students understand AI and learn how to use it properly.

Ms. Eckert wanted to create the class because she believes it is important for students to understand AI and how to use it. She thinks AI can help students with their schoolwork, as long as it is not doing the work for them. She says it can be useful for coming up with ideas and fact-checking information.

Ms. Eckert believes students should not use AI to complete their assignments for them. While AI can be a helpful tool, she does not think it should be the final product. In her opinion, using AI becomes cheating when it does most of the work.

Her advice to students who are struggling to find resources is to open a new tab and start looking up websites. She said AI can be a great starting point for research. However, Ms. Eckert also believes students need to make sure the information AI provides is accurate. One of her biggest concerns with AI is that it does not always give correct information.

Ms. Eckert also shared that she recently read an article about scientists putting AI on an island to see what it would do. Surprisingly, the AI started playing games, similar to how a child might. This raised concerns for her about how AI could begin to think on its own. According to Ms. Eckert, people treat Artificial Intelligence like a "shiny new toy" without fully understanding what it is capable of. Her goal is to teach students how and when to use it responsibly.

A Day in the Life of a School Custodian

BY QUINN GOLDNER AND ELLA HUEY

“No matter what we ask him to do, he will always do it with a smile on his face. We have very nice conversations,” Mrs. Crissman commented. According to Mrs. Walker, “He is super shy and super sweet.” Mrs. Best added, “He is sweet, kind, and patient. He never complains, and he does great work. No matter how busy he is, he is always willing to help.” Who are they talking about? Mr. Kevin Blakley, our daytime custodian, of course!

Mr. Blakley has been working at Butler Area School District since 2014. He worked part-time at first and has been working full-time since 2017. Before Mr. Blakley started working at the Intermediate High School, he worked at the Junior High School and different elementary schools. He has spent most of his time as a custodian devoted to this school. According to Mr. Blakley, his favorite part about working at the IHS is knowing that there are good vibes going around when the students engage with each other. He also enjoys interacting with the students and staff members himself. When Mr. Blakley first started this job, it was completely new to him, but as he continued working throughout the years, he stated, “I got more accustomed to it.”



Even though it might seem like there is a place in the school that needs to be cleaned the most, there really isn’t. Everything needs to be cleaned. Mr. Blakley stated, “If you let it go, it gets worse.” Mr. Blakley knows that everywhere needs to be cleaned, but two areas are prioritized: the cafeterias and the restrooms. The cafeterias are consistently untidy because the students eat there and sometimes don’t realize how big of a mess they have made. The restrooms are another place that must be constantly cleaned because of how the students take care of them. Students often draw in the stalls, purposely clog toilets, don’t put the paper towels in the trash can, mess with the sinks, and splash water everywhere.

Mr. Blakley devotes most of his time in the morning to making sure that the school starts out clean, especially making sure that the entrances look immaculate because that is the first place everyone goes in the mornings.

Helping Mr. Blakley out doesn’t take much additional effort and saves a bunch of his time. If students could pick up after themselves and pick up any trash they might see, it would be a huge help to him. Students are always walking into clean rooms, so the rooms can also be clean when they walk out. Mr. Blakley understands that accidents happen, but he would also like it if students could just pick up after themselves.

Mr. Blakley almost always starts the day in the same way. He wakes up, feeds the dog, feeds himself, and then he is off to work. Mr. Blakley’s mornings are mostly devoted to making the school look wonderful. He starts at the entrances and goes from there. Sometimes Mr. Blakley doesn’t get a chance to eat his lunch, or his lunchtime is cut short because a different incident has come to his attention. He may have to stay extra time, depending on how much work needs to be done, and if someone calls off, then he will have to stay longer to make sure that there isn’t as much work to be done in the morning.

After a very long day of making the school look amazing, Mr. Blakley goes home to his labrador, Dexter J, whose nickname is Jay Jay, and his frog, Leap Frog. Mr. Blakley also enjoys working outside, so when he gets home, he likes to relax by doing yard work. He also loves riding his motorcycle or driving his car when it’s nice out.

Through his dedication and willingness to help, Mr. Blakley plays an important role in making IHS a clean and welcoming place for everyone, and his hard work deserves to be recognized and appreciated.

Butler Athletes Finish Fall Season Strong

BY JULIA NORONHA

As fall sports come to a close, Butler's athletes have plenty to be proud of. From football and cross country to boys and girls soccer and girls volleyball, each team put in hard work and made improvements throughout the season.

The football team had a successful year and worked hard to finish the season strong. Assistant coach Mr. Fraser believes one of the biggest things the team needs to work on is its attitude. “Players need to believe in themselves and what they can accomplish while also learning to work together as a team,” he said. Football can teach players how to get along with others, even those they might not normally get along with. According to Coach Fraser, some important qualities of successful football athletes include “discipline, intelligence, and coachability.”

This is Coach Fraser's second year with the football team. He said he wanted to coach because he wanted to "give back to the future generation like my coaches did for me." Coach Fraser loves his players and feels very blessed to work with them. He believes they just need to continue working together. His advice for sixth graders interested in joining the team next year is: “Stay active, whether that means lifting weights with the football team or participating in another sport.”

Thaydein Shott, a seventh grade football player, thinks one thing the team needs to improve is staying focused. His advice for sixth graders interested in joining next year is to stay disciplined and always try their hardest. One area where he thought the team improved throughout the season was tackling. One of the best things about being on the team, according to Thaydein, is “getting to spend time with others, make friends, and improve at the sport.”



Cross country also had a good year, with the girls performing slightly better than the boys and individual results standing out more than the overall team results. One thing the team needs to work on is running on bigger hills. At away meets, some courses have steeper hills, especially at NA. Compared to other schools, Butler has a smaller cross country team, with a little over 20 runners, while other schools usually have around 30. Important physical skills for cross country include endurance and cardiovascular fitness. Coach Kauffman's strongest athletes also share important non-physical qualities, such as cheering for their teammates and being happy for others' success. When asked how her team compared to other schools, seventh grade runner Aria Harcar said, "There's definitely some good teams out there. We tried to stay competitive."

This is Mrs. Kauffman's first year coaching cross country, but she has been coaching track for approximately ten years. She hopes to continue coaching next year, although she is retiring on June 4 of this school year. "Regardless of the sport, I think everybody should be involved in an after school activity," Coach Kauffman said.

Aria joined the team because she loves distance running. She said the best part of being on the team was getting to meet new people and being part of a team. Her advice for sixth graders interested in joining is simple: "Do cross country; it's fun."

Girls soccer played well this season. Most of the players were seventh graders, which made some games challenging because many of their opponents had mostly eighth graders. Important skills for playing soccer include shooting, passing, recognizing when to attack and defend, and knowing when to come together as a team. One thing the team hopes to improve is keeping possession of the ball so they can create more opportunities to attack.

Mr. Leyland has coached for ten years, and this was his final year coaching girls soccer. Next season, Coach Behrens, the new gym teacher and girls soccer coach, will take on a bigger role with the team. Coach Leyland has been coaching since

he was 16 years old. He enjoyed his first experience coaching, so he decided to continue. His advice for sixth graders interested in joining girls soccer is: "Find a way to play year round and find the best coach you can to help you improve."

Johanna Angert is one of Butler's soccer players. She started playing because her older cousin played soccer. When comparing her team to other schools, she felt they were somewhere in the middle. "We definitely were better than some of them, but some were more connected than us," Johanna said. Some things she thinks the team needs to work on are teamwork and communication. Throughout the season, the team improved its passing skills and developed stronger friendships.



Boys soccer also had a great season, although the team still has some things to work on, especially shooting. According to Coach Wolford, “Sometimes players make mental mistakes during games, and it can be difficult to move on and focus on the next play, but we improved as the season continued.” The team finished with a winning record, and its final game ended in a victory.

This is Coach Wolford’s first year coaching for the district, but he has previous experience with other teams. He plans to continue coaching and building his coaching experience in future years. His advice for sixth graders interested in joining boys soccer next year is: “Work on the little things, such as developing good technique, improving first touches, and practicing shooting drills.”

Owen Bergbigler is a member of the boys soccer team. He joined because he had played soccer before and thought it would be fun to be part of the school team. At the beginning of the season, he felt the team mainly needed to improve its communication and ball movement. By the end of the season, however, the players had started to click. Owen said one of the best things about being on the team was getting to travel to different places. His advice for sixth graders interested in joining next year is to "try your hardest and don't give up."

Girls volleyball had a good season, although many of the teams they played had club volleyball players. Some things the team needs to work on are peppering, communicating, and working together. Peppering is an exercise in which two players bump and set the ball back and forth to keep it in the air. The team made improvements from the beginning of the season to the end. Important volleyball skills include passing the ball to a target, serving, and communicating with teammates.

Coach Hegedus is one of the girls volleyball coaches. This is her first year coaching girls volleyball, but she previously coached boys volleyball for four years. Her advice for sixth grade girls interested in trying out next year is to focus on "working together as a team and being determined and disciplined."

Sadie Cousins and Zoe Merten are two members of the volleyball team. Sadie is in seventh grade, and Zoe is in eighth grade. Both players believe their team needs to improve communication and make sure everyone is willing to go after the ball. When Zoe first joined the team, she was excited, while Sadie felt more nervous when she made the team. Sadie joined because she thought volleyball would be fun and was interested in trying it. Zoe decided to join after enjoying playing volleyball in gym class.

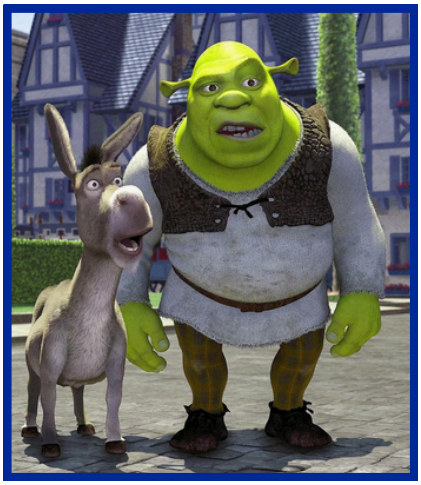
Butler should be proud of the accomplishments of its boys and girls fall sports teams. Each team worked hard and learned valuable lessons throughout the season. With these experiences behind them, the players can look forward to improving and building on their success next year.

Shrek the Musical Jr. Takes the Stage at the BIHS

BY MELIA STAGNARO, EDITOR

On November 24, the BIHS Drama Club will perform *Shrek the Musical Jr.* in the IHS auditorium at 3:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted at the door to support future productions.

The school's theater program has been an inspiration to many since it began. It teaches hard work, dedication, and confidence in a fun and creative way. The musicals performed over the years include *Willy Wonka Jr., Seussical Jr., Matilda Jr., Dear Edwina Jr., Alice in Wonderland Jr.*, and, this year, *Shrek the Musical Jr.* Both students and teachers involved dedicate hours of their time to rehearsing and performing for the community.



The director of the program, Mrs. Tepper, works long and hard with co-director Ms. Veltri to make these shows possible. She says the musicals take up much of her time, and she works on them "daily, seven days a week." Outside of rehearsals, she works on costumes and sets and studies blocking and music. Although this takes a lot of time, she believes it all pays off when she watches her students perform on stage. Her life would not be the same without the theater program. "Yes, I would have more time without it, but I would be really, really, really sad," she stated. She loves her students and hopes they gain confidence and experience from participating in the shows. Mrs. Tepper is excited to see how this production turns out and hopes the audience recognizes how much skill and effort the cast puts into their craft.

The director oversees a production, but the actors bring it to life. During rehearsals, students put a lot of heart into learning choreography, singing songs, and acting out scenes. They make room in their busy schedules for this extra commitment. The theater environment encourages them to work hard while still having fun, making the final product that much better. "My favorite part of being in a musical is the show in the end because it all pays off," says Cora Christoforetti, a student in the Drama Club. According to her, "Everyone puts in a lot of effort and it turns out great." Performing on stage can be frightening, but after hours of practice, the actors feel prepared and confident.

Shrek the Musical Jr. is a playful adaptation of the DreamWorks Animation movie that many people know and love. It is a unique show with a fun plotline and a dedicated cast and crew. Audience members of all ages can enjoy this lively production, brought to life by the school's theater community. We hope to see you at the show!

Behind the Scenes: Exploring New Interests Through E.S.P.

BY EMMA PODOBENSKY, EDITOR

The Enrichment Studies Program, or E.S.P., gives seventh and eighth grade students with strong academic performance the opportunity to explore subjects that interest them. From creating the school yearbook to learning about microorganisms, students can choose from a variety of classes, including Yearbook, TV and Video, Critical Thinking Lab, and Microbiology. Each course gives students a chance to learn new skills and explore their interests in a different way.

Mrs. Reinhold has worked with the Yearbook class for three years. Students are selected for the yearbook staff based on their applications. Mrs. Reinhold looks for applicants who show outstanding effort, are self-motivated, and work well with others. This is a great class for students who are interested in photography, have a positive outlook on the school community, and have strong organizational skills.

On a typical day in Yearbook, students come in and get to work on their assigned spreads. They take pictures, complete interviews, upload content, and much more. Early in the trimester, Mrs. Reinhold spends several days teaching students

how to take pictures, how to upload them using the program, and how to create layouts. The first trimester class also spends a lot of time brainstorming the yearbook theme and meeting with a graphic designer from the yearbook company to approve a cover design. "The students are a part of the process from start to finish. It is their book, and I want them to feel the ownership of it," Mrs. Reinhold said.





According to Mrs. Reinhold, students learn about "photography, design, precise writing, teamwork, and social skills" in Yearbook. The main goal of this E.S.P. is to create something that people can keep for a lifetime. "I still have my yearbooks from when I was in school, and my hope is that we create something that the current students can cherish for years," she said.

Critical Thinking Lab is a new E.S.P. course added this year by Ms. McKinsey and Ms. Eckert. They came up with the idea for the course because it can be difficult for young people to tell the difference between true and false claims online. By providing students with a step-by-step process for evaluating sources and verifying online claims, the teachers hope to encourage them to think more critically about the information they see. According to Ms. McKinsey, the first trimester has gone very well, and students are learning a lot.

The course primarily uses the educational website Checkology to teach students how to evaluate media and recognize the difference between conspiracy theories and reliable information. Checkology is designed to help learners identify credible information, find reliable sources, and apply critical thinking to the media they encounter. Students are graded on the assignments included in Checkology. According to Ms. McKinsey, "Anyone who wants to avoid falling for conspiracies and false information would benefit from taking Critical Thinking Lab."

Mrs. Freehling teaches the new Microbiology E.S.P. class, where students learn about microorganisms, with a focus on bacteria, viruses, microbial diseases, and their treatments. Mrs. Freehling chose this course because she had conducted graduate research on the subject and wanted to give students an opportunity to learn something new that could help them in the future. The class participates in lab-based experiments that encourage students to think critically about the impact microorganisms have on society. "Some of the projects students complete in the class are building bacterial cells and viruses, using microscopes, and various lab activities," Mrs. Freehling said.



According to Mrs. Freehling, students find her course "challenging but rewarding." Because of the collaborative nature of the class, students also learn how to work well with people they might not normally interact with or get along with. One of the projects students are working on this year focuses on COVID-19.

Finally, Mr. Cochran teaches the always popular TV and Video E.S.P. class. He has been teaching this course for 15 years! A typical day involves students filming and editing their class projects. According to Mr. Cochran, "The students come up with their own creative video topics and run with it. Every day in TV and Video is busy." Students are graded on effort, special effects, timeliness, and focus.



In TV and Video, students learn about time management, creativity, and social skills. They take turns trying out different roles, including editor, actor, and camera operator. It is a great course for students to explore different forms of communication while improving their public speaking and collaboration skills.

Overall, the Enrichment Studies Program gives students the chance to discover new interests and learn in ways that go beyond their regular classes. Whether students are creating something for the school community or exploring a subject they have always been curious about, E.S.P. offers an opportunity to make learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

DC Trip a Hit With Eighth Grade Travelers

BY ISAAC DREHER AND CARTER SCHNUR

Eighth grade students attended Washington, DC field trip on November 14 and 15 this year, a Butler tradition for more than 60 years.

Ms. Jessica Carlson, a seventh grade history teacher, is the school sponsor for the Logan Tours Inc. trip, and she also serves as lead chaperone. Despite having helped with the trip for 13 years previously, this year is a tough one due to the passing of Mrs. Green, the owner of Logan Tours and the tour coordinator. Mrs Green's father, Cliff Logan, originally started the trips, then she took it over and "poured her heart and soul into it," according to Ms. Carlson. The company even does trips for adults. "Mrs. Green was an amazing person who fought against a very aggressive cancer for years. All she wanted to do was to provide an opportunity for young Butler students to experience history first hand and to have a great time doing it," Ms. Carlson said.

On the tour, the eighth graders visited the National Mall and the many memorials there, as well as Ford's Theater and Arlington Cemetery, and a select few presented a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In the evening, students enjoyed some free time at the Freedom Aquatics Center before heading to the hotel for the evening. On Sunday, the students also visited the National Zoo.

Ms. Carlson enjoys this trip because it provides an opportunity for some students whose families do not travel to experience DC. She went on this trip when she was in eighth grade, and she loved it. She admits that after all of these years, her biggest worry is always the weather because most of the activities take place outside.

Mrs. Neigh and Ms. Hegedus also chaperone the trip. Both teachers agreed that they never worry about the trip because it is so well organized and safe for the students. According to Mrs. Neigh, "I love chaperoning the trips because I have the chance to see students experience learning outside of the normal classroom setting. It's always so fun." Ms. Hegedus added, "And we get to spend time with our best friend, Mrs. Carlson." Because the trip is packed with so many great sights, they can't think of anything they would want to add to it. "I wish we had no school on Monday though because we are all so tired," Mrs. Neigh added.

Caden Pawlowicz attended the trip this year. "It was a longer bus ride, but we kept ourselves entertained," he said. He really enjoyed the monuments. Like other students, he agreed that the trip was a bit pricey, but they saw a lot of cool things so he understood.

Bryson King went on the trip to educate himself on different monuments, but most enjoyed just hanging out with his friends. He admitted that he was worried about the food, but he felt like there was plenty to eat and it was pretty decent. Mason Miller packed a bunch of snacks just in case. Mason felt like the DC trip was a much bigger deal than the seventh grade trip to Gettysburg, and he liked experiencing it with his friends. Like the others, Ethan Christley enjoyed the trip to DC. His favorite part was the White House because it was cool to see where the president lives.

Quinn Goldner had the honor of presenting the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, so there was no question which part of the trip was her favorite. "It was a little scary because everyone was staring at us, but I am so glad I was able to do it," she said. Overall, the students had a great time, and they hope that the tradition continues.



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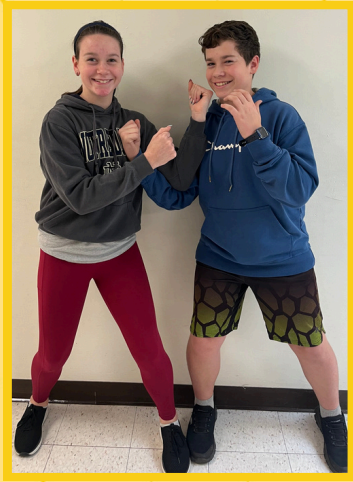
STUDENT SECTION

Sibling Battle 26-27

BY ELSIE GERHART, EDITOR

Lyndon and Blaz Collins

- "He would be hanging out with his friends."
- "Blaz couldn't live without his legos."
- "My favorite memory is when we played tag outside for a while."
- "He is very caring and supportive of me."



- "She would be at her friend's house because she is always there."
- "Lyndon couldn't live without her hair and makeup stuff."
- "My best memory with her is when we made waffle cookies in winter."
- "Her best trait is that she is loving."

Emily and Anna McKain

- "Anna would be at her friend's house."
- "Her dream job is to be a vet."
- "Her most used app is messages because she is always texting someone."
- "Anna is way messier than I am."



- "She would be at Ulta because she loves makeup."
- "Her dream job is to be a cosmetologist."
- "Emily's most used app is Roblox."
- "She is a lot cleaner than I am."

Catherine and Benjamin Martin

- "If he went missing I would look for him at his piano lessons."
- "Ben is more involved in music and picks it up faster."
- "He is very sarcastic and funny."
- "My favorite memory is when we made up games in a tree and played for hours."



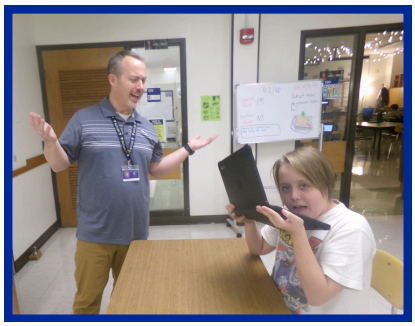
- "I would find her at our cousin's house because she is always there."
- "The biggest difference between us is I am a better runner and she is more flexible."
- "Catherine is creative because she always has good ideas."
- "My favorite memory is when I destroyed her Barbie house and she liked it."

What's the Weirdest Thing You Have Had to Tell a Class?

BY AVERY ANDERSON AND MADISON NORRIS

Middle school teachers know that no two days are the same, and sometimes, you never know what you will have to tell your class. IHS teachers shared some of the weirdest things they have had to say to their students and the stories behind them.

Mr. Hilderbrand, a sixth-grade science and history teacher, said the weirdest thing he has ever had to say to a student was, "Put the ribs away." He said a student pulled out barbecue ribs during class and started eating them while everyone was working. At the moment, he was shocked and "thought the student would get sauce on their paper." The class began laughing and asked the student if they could share. Mr. Hilderbrand has been teaching for 21 years, and this happened just five years ago.



Mr. McKinley, a sixth-grade math teacher, said some of the weirdest things he has ever had to say to his students include, "Do you usually poke your finger in someone else's food, lick the keyboard, eat candy you found on the ground, lick someone's hand, and burp in someone's face?" Mr. McKinley has been teaching for 27 years, and all of these things have happened during his time as a teacher. He said that when these things happened, he was shocked and disgusted, but the other students thought it was funny.

Mr. Jewart, a seventh-grade science teacher, said the weirdest thing he has ever had to say to a student was, "Put the toys away." This happened when students were playing with toys while they were supposed to be working. The whole class looked at the student and started laughing, but Mr. Jewart was shocked because, as he explained, "He looked over and there were toys all over the table." Mr. Jewart has been teaching for three years, and this happened about two years ago.

Mrs. Neigh, a seventh-grade math teacher, said one of the weirdest things she has ever had to say to her students was, "Everybody needs to put the baby dolls away." She had to say this because the class was about to take a test, and some students had squishy baby dolls out. When she said something about it, the class laughed hysterically. Mrs. Neigh said she "felt like I wanted to write a book to capture all these weird moments." She has been teaching for 15 years, and this happened during the current school year.

Ms. Carlson, a seventh-grade history teacher, said the weirdest thing she has ever had to say to a student was, “Please do not pet me.” She said she was wearing a faux fur vest and walking around the classroom when a student walked up and started petting her. When she called the student out, they walked away with their head down. The rest of the class started laughing and calling out the student’s name, but Ms. Carlson was confused and uncomfortable. Ms. Carlson has been teaching for 13 years, and this happened during her first year of teaching.



Mr. Jewart, a seventh-grade science teacher, said the weirdest thing he has ever had to say to a student was, “Put the toys away.” This happened when students were playing with toys while they were supposed to be working. The whole class looked at the student and started laughing, but Mr. Jewart was shocked because, as he explained, “He looked over and there were toys all over the table.” Mr. Jewart has been teaching for three years, and this happened about two years ago.



Mrs. Runco, a seventh-grade math teacher, said the weirdest thing she has ever had to say to a student was, “We do not eat paper.” One day, while she was in the in-school suspension room, a student pulled out a piece of paper and started eating it. When she said something about it, the student just kept eating. Mrs. Runco said she “couldn’t believe I was saying that.” She has been teaching for 24 years, and this happened 13 years ago.

Mr. Sciarro, an eighth-grade history teacher, said the weirdest thing he has ever had to tell his students was, “Stop zip tying your buddies’ jean loops to the desk.” This happened while the class was working on the three branches of government, and some boys were zip tying each other’s jean loops to their desks. Everyone thought it was funny, including Mr. Sciarro, and the whole class laughed. He has been teaching for 20 years, and this happened about 19 years ago.

Ms. Muench, an eighth-grade math teacher, said the weirdest thing she has ever had to say to her students was, “Why are we kicking a water bottle?” One day, she walked into the classroom and saw a group of students kicking a water bottle full of trash while getting ready to start fluency. When she called them out, they all picked up the water bottle and walked away. The rest of the class laughed and their jaws dropped, but Ms. Muench was shocked. This is her first year teaching, and this happened during the current school year.

Celebrity Look-Alikes

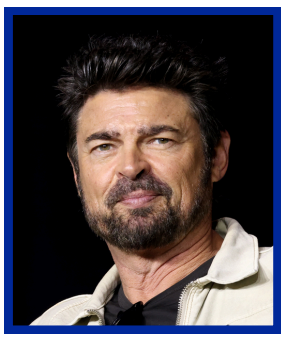
BY OWEN BERBIGLER AND CADEN PAWLOWICZ

Mrs. Behrens, an eighth grade history teacher, looks like Jennifer Aniston, the American actor best known for her work as Rachel Green in *Friends*.









Seventh grade history teacher Mr. Rock’s celebrity look-alike is Karl Urban, a New Zealand actor who acted in many famous movies and popular shows, such as *Star Trek* and *Lord of the Rings*.





Sixth grade teacher, Mr. Hilderbrand's celebrity look-alike is Jason Sudeikis, best known for his role as Ted Lasso.



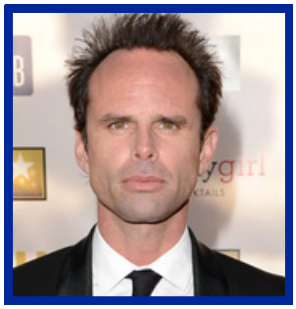


Mr. Jewell, a seventh grade ELA teacher, looks a lot like Chris Pratt, best known for his roles in *Jurassic Park* and *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

Hint: Danica's look-alike can be found in the seventh grade hallway, and Wes resembles someone down by the main school entrance.

Mr. Zihmer, a sixth grade history and science teacher, looks like Walter Goggins, an actor most recently known for roles in *White Lotus* and *Fallout*.





Now it's your turn! Who do these two celebrities look like?



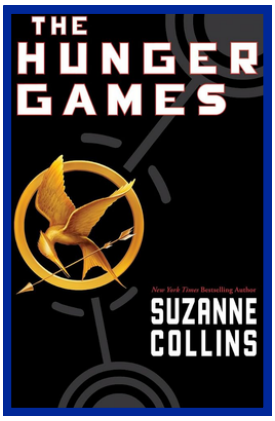
Danica McKellar is an American actress, mathematics writer, and education advocate best known for playing Winnie Cooper in *The Wonder Years*.



Wes Bergmann is an actor known for his work in the reality competition show, *The Challenge*.

A World of Books with Ms. Eckert

BY LIAM OLEXSAK AND BRANDT REEDER



From thrilling adventures and mysterious gardens to futuristic competitions and magical worlds, there is a book for everyone. Ms. Eckert, the school librarian, shared some insight into the books students enjoy, the books she loved growing up, and the books she enjoys reading today.

The most popular series checked out by students is *The Hunger Games*. This series takes place in the future, after a rebellion divides the United States into different districts. The new government creates the Hunger Games, a deadly competition designed to prevent another rebellion. The competition forces young people to fight against each other while trying to survive harsh conditions.

Ms. Eckert's favorite book growing up was *The Secret Garden*. It follows a girl who moves in with her relatives in England after her parents pass away. She discovers a hidden garden and teams up with other children to bring it back to life. The book shows how friendships and hard work can help people grow and change.



Today, Ms. Eckert's favorite books are those in the Percy Jackson series. The books follow a demigod on an exciting adventure filled with thrilling challenges. Ms. Eckert said she enjoys how the adventures are similar to gaming. The characters are constantly solving problems and working toward their goals.

Ms. Eckert also enjoys fantasy and science fiction books, especially those involving outer space. She likes books that transport her to new worlds. She also enjoys books by April Henry because of their suspense, unexpected scares, and fast-paced storylines.

Overall, Ms. Eckert's favorite books show that there is something for everyone at the library. Whether students enjoy adventures, magic, mysteries, or space, they can find a book that interests them.

Hallway Trivia

BY ARIANA WILLIAMS AND LAINEY BENDER, EDITOR

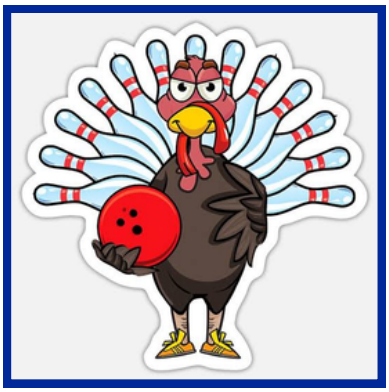


QUESTION: What was the first vegetable grown in space?
Josiah Abdulhafith: "Tomato"
Blake Daniel: "Carrot"
Mr. Leyland: "Potatoes"
Jacob Ponteous: "Um.. broccoli"
ANSWER: Potato

QUESTION: What planet is closest to the sun?
Makinley Bryan and Zivah Bartley: They named all the planets that they could think of other than Mercury.
Chad Hilliard and Walker Vardy: "Mars, Venus, Uranus."
Alexis Miller, Maliyah Rios, and Sage Seezox: "Mercury"
ANSWER: Mercury



QUESTION: What is the farthest planet from the sun?
Graham Hohn: "Umm... Pluto, not my answer, Jupiter, not my answer, Saturn."
Aaron Benjamin: "Moon"
Brooklyn Summerville: "Uranus"
Deacon Martin, Maksim Ungvarsky, Mason Miller, and Joseph Padilla: They all started to yell out, "Uranus, Mercury, Jupiter,Saturn, Egypt, Pluto, Ichiban, NEPTUNE!"
ANSWER: Neptune



QUESTION: What is it called when a bowler makes three strikes in a row?
Mikenna Lawson: "A turkey"
Kovu Pinnell: "I don't know... a chicken?"
Ashton Nicelli, Greyson Perry, and Austin Ritchie: "Turkey"
Graham Hohn: "Turkey. Dude, I'm so smart."
Makinley Bryan and Zivah Bartley: "Turkey"
ANSWER: Turkey



QUESTION: What is the longest river in the world?
Aaron Benjamin and Caleb Doverspike: "Uh, the longest river in the world is the Nile."
Brooklyn Summerville: "The Amazon River? Wait no, I mean the Nile."
Peyton Donaldson and Charlotte Cooper: "Bro, I don't know...the Nile?"
Ashton Nicelli, Greyson Perry, and Austin Ritchie: "Longest river in the world...Nile."
Alyssa Wagner and Eliana Rudy: "The Amazon River? No um, is it the Mississippi River? Oh, the Nile."
ANSWER: Nile



QUESTION: How many stripes are on the US flag?
Brooklyn Summerville: "50"
Mikenna Lawson: "11"
Austin Ritchie: "I was going to guess 8, but Greyson guessed 13 before me."
ANSWER: 13

Holiday Movie and Game Review

BY LIAM OLEXSAK AND BRANDT REEDER

As the holidays approach, many people prioritize spending time with friends and family. What better way to enjoy those gatherings than by watching a holiday movie or playing a board game? IHS students shared their go-to holiday movies and games. The most popular movies were *Home Alone* and *Home Alone 2*. The most popular games were Monopoly and Sorry.

Eighth grader Nolan Miller quickly named *Home Alone* as his favorite holiday movie because of its humor. His favorite board game is Monopoly because he thinks it is very fun. Liam Cosme agreed that *Home Alone* is very entertaining. The game he always plays with his aunt and uncle is Monopoly because they are very competitive. The last eighth grader was Deacon Martin. He enjoys *Ernest Saves Christmas* because he likes the storyline. His favorite game is chess. "It is hard and takes strategy," Deacon said.



Seventh grader Blake Diamond enjoys *A Christmas Story* because of its humor and realistic situations. He likes playing Sorry because he beats his family every time. Like Nolan and Liam, Hudson Smith always watches a *Home Alone* movie, but his favorite is *Home Alone 2*. "I really like that it is set in New York," he said. He enjoys playing Sorry because his little sister is not very good at it. The last seventh grader was Charlie Wellner. He also likes watching *Home Alone 2* because it is set in New York. His favorite game is Monopoly because it is fun and exciting.



Sixth graders have their own holiday favorites as well. Miles Hunt loves *Home Alone 2* because of its humor. He enjoys playing Uno with his family because it is fun. The second sixth grader is Arabell Thompson. She likes *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* because she has a plush toy that sings the song. Her go-to game is Spit because it is fast-paced and exciting.

Whatever you choose to do with family and friends this season, we hope you have a great time filled with warm memories!

The Fall 2026 Tornado Connection Staff

