

DECK THE HALLS WITH LIGHTS AND GARLAND

Amanda Garcia

Staff Reporter

With Christmas right around the corner, families get into the holiday spirit by baking cookies, giving gifts, and decorating their homes and yards. Some families pride themselves by going to the extreme, spending hundreds of dollars on lights, greenery, artificial snow, and other decorations.

Two students from separate neighborhoods feel confident that their home rates highest when compared to others.

"On a scale of one-to-ten I would say that my house is a nine because my dad goes all out. We have lights everywhere: the top of the roof, the middle of the roof, lower on the gate, even on the porch. We incorporate wreaths and Christmas trees as well," Trevor Smith ('18) said.

Sydney Steele's ('17) family decorates not with the goal of impressing the neighborhood, but with the intention of making the family feel special.

"We don't have inflatables but we have over one thousand lights and we have five snowman in the yard, and twelve snowflake lights. We also put fake frost on the windows. We go all out every year because my family normally hosts dinner," Sydney said.

Major preparation is needed for a home to look as decorative as Trevor's.

"We reuse the lights we had from previous years, and it probably takes around half a day to finish our whole house. We started Sunday morning and got done around 9p.m. In my family we all have to help out with decorating," Trevor said.

Sydney's family concentrates on the exterior of their home when preparing for the Christmas holidays.

"The outside takes a long time because all of the lights. This whole process takes around two weeks for us to complete," Sydney said.

Trevor's move to his new larger home gave his family motivation to decorate to the extreme.

"When we got a bigger house about six years ago we started going all out. My dad always says we aren't going to go all out this year, and an hour later we have all the lights on our house," Trevor said.

Although Sydney and Trevor live in separate neighborhoods, both families enjoy going all out with the Christmas decorations so their homes can look spectacular for the upcoming Christmas holiday.

As the fall season comes to an end and the winter season rolls in theme parks begin to plan events to celebrate the beloved Christmas holiday. The popular theme park known as Busch Gardens hosts an elaborate celebration for the Christmas season. To glisten and bring holiday cheer, more than six million lights hang throughout the park in preparation for Christmas Town.

Busch Gardens' Christmas Town began on November 28th and continues until December 31st. This year, park officials plan to deck out Pantopia, the newest area of the park. Pantopia's

decorations include brand new jewel-toned lantern stars and a gigantic LED light star to bring Christmas joy to visitors. In addition, Egypt introduces ancient Christmas traditions to help celebrate the season. Park officials plan on morphing the area into the town of Bethlehem to take part in telling the story of the Three Kings.

"I think it's awesome that they have something new and entertaining for visitors instead of the same thing every year," Emily Reed ('18)

A distinctive reason why normal attendees go to Christmas Town includes the tradition of fifteen thousand square feet of artificial snow. However, the park plans on breaking the tradition and removing the manufactured snow from the list of activities

"I personally think Busch Gardens should keep the snow. It is the closest thing Florida will ever get to snow. They might be losing money though," said Delaney Georgantas ('18).

Besides the visual changes to Christmas Town, Busch Gardens made one welcomed change, also. For the past several years, visitors needed a separate ticket purchased in order to attend the

festivities. This year, annual pass members may attend by using their pass for admission without purchasing a single

"I think it's good that they're starting to put passes to good use. I think Busch Gardens is losing customers so that could be another reason why they're letting annual pass members use their pass to get in," said Reed.

The joy of looking at Christmas lights, drinking hot chocolate, and spending time with loved ones still remain on the list for Christmas Town visitors. Despite the changes Busch Gardens made to the annual event, millions of

lights and catchy carols still entertain park goers, but in a completely different way.



Photo provided by Busch Gardens. More information on Christmas Town can be found on their website.

A mist today keeps the doctor away

Sarah Nagy

Staff Reporter

Influenza remains an issue throughout America, causing 36,000 fatalities each year. To prevent the spread of the flu, Healthy Schools LLC provided local schools with complimentary vaccinations for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Instead of the typical flu shot, Healthy Schools administered a nasal mist that serves the same purpose. The Florida Department of Health in Pasco County instituted the program, called "Teach Flu a Lesson." This timely solution made it easier for parents financially, and Healthy

Schools offered the vaccinations for free.

The vaccinations occurred on November 13th. The process for obtaining the vaccination was rather straightforward, consisting of just a consent form with a parent signature, and then returned to a teacher.

The nasal mist, known as the FluMist, gets sprayed into the nose to prevent the spread of the flu, without the use of needles. The FluMist contains a strand of the live virus to boost immunity in case someone comes in contact with the virus again. Receiving the

vaccine decreases the chances of catching the virus.

> Pasco County Schools partnered with Healthy Schools LLC, and implemented this free vaccine, as they think it is best for the well being of Pasco County students and staff. According to the Pasco County Schools website, the single best way to prevent the seasonal flu requires people to receive a flu vaccination, whether it be a shot, or the FluMist. Students willing to protect themselves from the potentially fatal virus received the FluMist, or a flu shot from their doctor or pharmacy.



Shannon Connors ('15) recieves the FluMist during 2nd period from a trained nurse to protect herself against the flu.

Editorial Policy

Published seven times a school year, the student newspaper of J.W. Mitchell High School is a public forum with its student editorial board making all the decisions concerning its contents. Unsigned editorials express the views of the majority of the edito-

Letters to the editor are welcomed and will be published as space allows. Letters must be signed, although the staff may withhold the name upon request. The paper reserves the right to edit letters for grammar and clarity, and all letters are subject to laws governing obscenity, libel, privacy and disruption of the school process, as are all contents of the

Opinions of letters are not necessarily those of the staff nor should any opinion expressed in a public forum be constructed as the opinion or policy of the school administration, unless attributed.

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Dec. 2014 | The Hoofbeat

Scott's

Thoughts

On political issues

facing the nation:

Q: Are Republicans on a solid path for

success for the next several years/

A: The Republicans are in a great deal of trouble if they do not expand

their minority vote. Blacks vote over

90%, currently, for Democrats, across

the country. Hispanics and Asians

are around 70%. The only minority group Republicans do well with is

Cubans, and that's only older Cubans

now. Younger Cubans have become

Every minority group is voting against

Q: How can you tell the difference

between a Democrat and Republicans? A: The best way to tell if you're a Republican or Democrat is how close

you live to your neighbor. If you have

you and next to you because you're

in an apartment, you're probably a democrat. If your neighbors are a mile

Republican. If you live in New York and

there's upwards of 500 people living

in your building, do you want your neighbor kid to have a gun that he

shoots practice with? If you live here,

your 12-year-old neighbor kid is able to

shoot a gun? It's just a totally different

[points to Wyoming] do you care if

ntervention should be allowed.

2016 Presidential Race?
A: Presidential elections for 2016

started about 11:00 p.m. that night.

The Republicans are pointing out

words, Hillary went and campaigned

Q: Why is Hillary having such a hard

She's not as popular as you think.

time gaining support this time?

A: She thinks she made a mistake

in 2008 by not running as a historic

candidate; "I'm the First Woman" was not the theme of her election.

The theme was "Vote for me; I'm the

most qualified." Obama ran as "This

is a historic election and you have

the chance to elect the first African

American president." Now, the Hillary

campaign has changed their strategy;

candidate, and the hope is, that it will

she's going to run as the historic

motivate Democrats

n a bunch of states, but it didn't help.

away or further, you're probably a

neighbors above you and below

more Democrat than Republican.

Republicans right now.

By Chrissy Couture

Prism prep

Staff Reporter

Intricate pieces of music fashioned by multiple sections of individual students create the sound of the JWMHS band.

All band members spend two or more hours after school at mandatory practices, and some players go home to perfect their craft, and help others as well.

"Î've been practicing my basics a lot more like my scales. I want to go into music education, so I've been helping a lot of the freshmen with theirs as well," Ashley Alaire ('15) said.

The band participates in many events, concerts and even performances to earn their grades. MPA (music performance assessment) represents one of the graded performances and just happened recently.

"We went to MPA which evaluates us for how well that we have done and we got straight superiors, which is like the highest ranking, so I was really proud," Kelsie Howell ('15) said.

Every year the band hosts a concert called Prism, held at the Center for the Arts at River Ridge High School. The Prism concert features all of the different sections in band, and even recent graduates contribute to the performance.

ated last year named Logan and every year he composes a percussion ensemble for us to play. He's play this year to put on his college profile," Alaire said.

two sections play the same thing

that the bands will read [early].

"We have a student who gradugoing to be composing one for us to

Prism exemplifies an overall unique concert performance. No in one night, so something unique always occurs. The band also prepares very early in advance so that each band member performs their

"We start pulling a lot of pieces One year we had the oboe section play "I'm Yours" by Jason Maraz,

Briana Acevedo ('16) leads the marching band during a clap-out before an away football game.

so we'll always have really interesting stuff," said Howell.

With the honorable scores from the MPA and the dedication put into the Prism concert this year, the band prepared for an excellent event. This year Prism will be held for two nights: Friday, December 12th at 7 p.m. and Saturday, December 13th at 7 p.m. at the River Ridge Performing Arts Center.

Splitting up Sunshine

Katy White

Staff Reporter

A proposal made by several city commissioners in South Miami to divide Florida into two separate states brought about debate and discussion. The commissioners say Tallahassee refuses to take notice of the issues they face, and that this brought them to desire the split. Officials such as Vice Mayor Walter Harris publicly said that climate change and safety issues led them to creating the proposal.

The state line would be north of

nindset of how much government Orange, Polk, Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, making these counties part of the new state, known as South Florida. Pasco Q: How does this election affect the County, as well as counties further north, would remain in the state of Florida. The proposal must be approved by officials in each county and Florida's state legislature for it places that Obama went, places that to take full effect and officially split Hillary went. The first comment I saw was "Hillary has no coattails." In other the state. Ms. Orrego (FAC) explains that

this split affects not just Floridians, but the whole country as well. She finds the division unlikely. "Other states like Colorado have wanted to do the same thing pre-

viously as well. It hasn't happened and I don't think it will to Florida. It will have to be an approved measure, not just by the Florida state legislature but by the congress as well. I don't see that really happening, to be honest," Orrego said.

Safety issues and climate change led those in Miami to think that this issue caused more urgency than they first thought.

"I think we should address whether or not climate change is a legitimate issue. I think research would suggest that it is, and I think that Washington is also divided

over this. It's a very controversial topic and it's not going to help us in the long run. The first step would be addressing climate change or global warming, then maybe ad-

dress Miami," Orrego said. If the split occurred, colleges such as UF and FSU stay in Florida, meaning students in South Florida would need to pay out-ofstate tuition to go to these colleges. Students in Pasco would pay out-of-state tuition to attend USF and UCF. Ms. Orrego knows the negative impact this news would

"I don't think we should hurt

Florida's students over this. You guys come first and foremost," Orrego said.

Although unlikely, the possibility of a split Florida creates discussion among the people of the state and even the country. The proposal now heads to the governments of the counties in what would become South Florida. However, a new state cannot be created without the approval of the Florida Congress.



Photo provided by MyNews13.com

Holiday celebrations around the world

Staff Reporter

As the holiday season approaches, different celebrations occur around the world. In other countries, people celebrate the Christmas season in a variety of ways and even on different days from the United States. Tora Brandstrom ('16)

traditionally celebrates Christmas with her family in Sweden.

"We put up the tree the 19th or 20th of December and celebrate Christmas on the 24th not the 25th," Brandstrom said.

Aurelie Drignon ('16) celebrates and enjoys traditional dishes with her family in France.

"On the 29th we eat dinner with the family and eat turkey, mashed potatoes and little pastries. For desert we eat an ice cream cake that can be vanilla or chocolate, and it's generally a Christmas food," Drignon said.

Just like Americans, the French enjoy competition for best decorations.

"The children decorate the Christmas tree, there are lights outside and there are a lot of contests to see which house has the best decorations," Drignon said.

> Although some traditions differ from the United States, Santa Claus remains recognized worldwide, yet goes by other names. In Sweden, children call him Tomten, short for Jultomten. In France, children wait for Père Noël.

Although holiday season celebrations may differ, family gatherings and traditions continue around the world



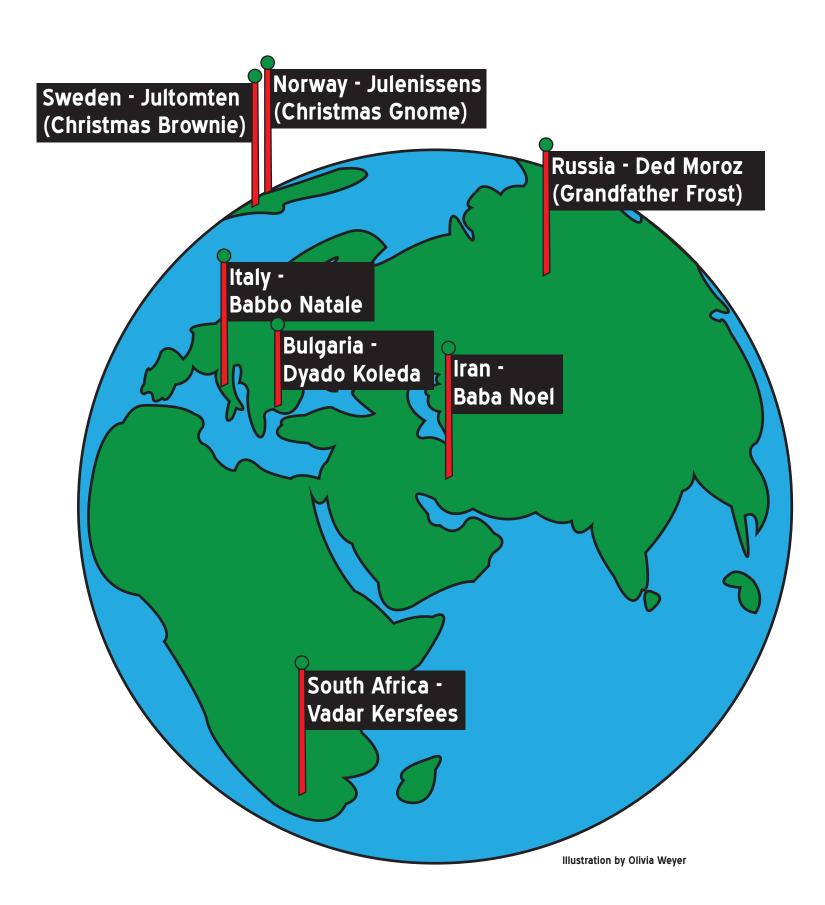
Photo by Sarah Nagy

throughout the month of

The children decorate the Christmas tree, there are lights outside and there are a lot of contests to see which house has the best decorations,"

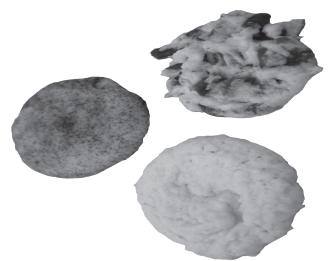
Aurelie Drignon ('16)

Here comes Santa Claus



Dec. 2014 | The Hoofbeat C</td

Cookies for Santa By Sam Burchick



Salted Caramel **Pretzel:**

- ³/₄ cups of dough
- 1/4 cups of Caramel chips
- ½ cups of crushed pretzels

Snicker doodle:

- 3/4 cups of dough
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cups of sugar - 2½ tsp. of cinnamon

extract (optional)

- 1 Cup (2 sticks) butter,

bowl.

- 1½ cups of granulated sugar

Sugar Cookie dough:

- 1 egg

softened

- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 ¾ cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon almond

Steps:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350F. Lightly spray pan with non-stick vegetable pan spray.
- 2) In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer until well blended. Beat in egg and extracts; mix well. Combine flour and salt; add to the butter mixture. Beat until well blended and until the mixture pulls away from the side of the
- 3) Divide the dough into 3/4 cups and put into separate bowls. Once into separate bowls add the different ingredients to make the different cookies.
- 4) Put into the oven and bake for about 15 minutes.
- 5) Take cookies out of the oven and let them cool for five to ten minutes.

Return of the red cups

Sophie Sajecki

Staff Reporter

Starbucks captures the winter season with their red cup seasonal drinks. Some of these signature hot beverages include the Gingerbread Latte, Eggnog Latte and the new Peppermint Mocha Latte, Chestnut Praline Latte and Caramel Brulee Latte.

With such a wide variety of flavors, most Starbucks visitors find a drink that tastes perfect for them. Of course, every Starbucks

drinker receives their hot drink in a red cup during the winter season.

"I like the Caramel Brule because it's sweet and it tastes like [winter]. It's just really good and I like sweet things,' Marcella Calabrese ('16) said.

Starbucks offers different drinks for every season, from spring to winter. Most drinkers usually prefer one unique option to another.

"Red cup season is my

favorite, other than pumpkin spice time," Katie Fitzpatrick ('18) said.

While warm drinks generally associate with the winter season and weather, not everyone orders something to keep their hands warm.

"I like the vanilla Frappuccino with java chips and caramel," Mikayla Flower ('18) said.

Not only the drinks keep customers coming back, the customer service at Starbucks satisfies visitors as well as the friendliness of staff, quality of drinks, and memories of the employees.

"I know a lot of people that work at Starbucks and they're really friendly and know my order right away," Gabrielle Stead ('15) said.

With so many locations in the area and with most Super Targets holding a store in each location, Starbucks

represents a quick and easy way to get a pick-me-up at

"I really like coffee and have to have caffeine. Starbucks is a quick way to get that," Morgan Carpentier ('17) said

The seasonal drinks cost between three and six dollars but once winter ends, the option for these drinks ends as well.

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Sammy Berberich University of Florida, Freshman 2014

Former students of Victoria Preparatory have attended the University of Florida, Tulane University, Florida State University, Harvard's Summer Program, University of Central Florida, University of South Florida and many more.

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High tea team time on campus

Photos provided by The NY Times

Caroline Weyer

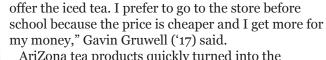
Lifestyles Layout Designer

A new beverage arrived in all of the commons recently. AriZona iced tea provides students with an alternative to water or soda during their school day. However, controversy arose with the price of the tea, which costs \$1.25 for an 11.5-ounce can.

"I feel that the price is fair because we have the luxury of buying the drink on campus, rather than having to stop by the store before school," Bailey Bodden ('17) said.

The convenience of purchasing the beverage at school aids students in tardiness to class because stopping at a store on the way no longer proves an issue. However those that enjoy other flavors of tea find both the price and options minimal.

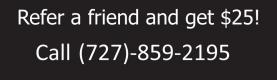
"My favorite flavor of AriZona is fruit punch, and at school they only



AriZona tea products quickly turned into the Starbucks for tea drinkers. The same obsession of obtaining a Starbucks drink before class proves a similar trend for AriZona buyers.

"I enjoy having an AriZona green tea before school as much as other girls like having a daily java chip frappe from Starbucks," Alexis Zegan ('17) said.

The appearance of AriZona tea in the vending machines sparked controversy among students. The drink was put in the vending machine to serve as an alternative to soda and water. Students that do not agree with the price go buy it at the store instead. Overall, the convenience of AriZona tea in the machines impacted students drink





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If you could redo freshman year, what would you do differently?

"When I procrastinated and ended up staying up the entire night, it was the worst experience. Don't put off projects because even if you can do it in one night, don't put yourself under that kind of pressure," - Madison Schafer ('15)

"Set aside a lot of time for any projects or assignments you might have to turn in. Study as much as you can," - Matthew Blackburn (15)

"I wouldn't have allowed myself to become so overwhelmed with everything! Utilizing study groups probably would have helped since discussing things with friends helps clarify things that weren't the easiest to understand," - Mansi Thaker ('15)

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RECAPPING BIG EVENTS IN 2014



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WINTER GAMES ARE HELD IN SOCHI, RUSSIA

FEBRUARY 2: PHILLIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN

SEPTEMBER 3C EBOLA SCARE IN DALLAS, TX



AUGUST 9 FERGUSON **PROTESTS BFGIN**



SEPTEMBER 4: JOAN RIVERS, COMEDIAN BEST KNOWN FOR HER RED CARPET INTERVIEWS AND TALK SHOWS DIES



FEBRUARY 17: THE TONIGHT SHOW STARRING JIMMY FALLON



MARCH 2: ELLEN DEGENERES POSTS THE OSCAR SELFIE THAT SHUT DOWN TWITTER

AUGUST 11: ROBIN WILLIAMS, COMEDY LEGEND AND STAR OF ICONIC MOVIES, DIES

FIFA WORLD CUP IN BRAZIL, **GERMANY** WINS

JUNE - JULY:

TIFA WORLD CUP Brasil

Photos provided by The NY Times

MARCH 8: MALAYSIAN AIRLINE FLIGHT 370 DISAPPEARS OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN

Chrialmaa Inee

ach household decorates their Christmas tree differently and can often be representative of that family. Some are quirky, others are traditional, and a few are in a category of their own. While the usual red and gold glass ornaments paired with silver garland look picture perfect in photos, some families like to take their own spin on their tree decorations. Ranging from sweet and family-oriented to completely covered from topper to stump

in shiny tinsel, each home has a tree specific to their aesthetic and atmosphere. Most do not stray too far from the traditional trees seen in movies and home decor shopping magazines, but some like to be different. It seems like everyone knows one person with three different trees scattered around the rooms of their house or that family who keeps a pristine white tree every year. No matter how a tree is decorated they can be a fun and expressive decoration in the home.



We put some lights at the top of the tree and it makes it look like [the angel's] dress is glowing."

- Grace Lopez (18)



It's crystal and lights up bright. I usually decorate it white, or some years, gold.
It's really pretty because once you look at it, your eyes start shining."

- Jocelyn Espinoza (17)



Every year we do different stuff on it.

This year I really want to get ornaments with pictures of Santa Claus in them."

- Maria Asanza (17)



"We do a different color scheme every year; last year it was different shades of gold and silver. This year, it'll probably be blue or red."

- Margaret Mooney (17)

llustrations by Olivia Wever

Brock's early season NBA rankings

I. NENPHIS GRIZZLIES - The dominant duo of Marc Gasol and Zach Randolph proved that this team contends with anybody in the league. Supplemental players Mike Conley and Courtney Lee sparked this team to an impressive early start. This team wins with defense and looks to swarm through the crowded Western Conference.

GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS - The Warriors shoot lights out on a nightly basis. Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson compete with the best backcourts in the NBA. Sudden stardom from Draymond Green and Marreese Speights make this team a nightmare matchup.

SAN ANTONIO SPURS - The defending champs started the season slowly and still look to find their groove. With the best coach in the game, Gregg Popovich sets this team up for playoff pushes every year. Spurs fans shouldn't worry about this team. Players like Tony Parker, Tim Duncan, and Manu Ginobili improve as the season go on.

Playoff pandemonium

Brock Shively

Sports Layout Designer

The system that created chaos and brought fans and analysts distraught feeling exists no longer. The National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) previous system, called the **Bowl Championship Series** (BCS), analyzed all the teams in the nation in a computer based program with combined poll votes. The BCS system maintained flaws and the NCAA thought they needed to restructure the format. To take the place of the BCS, the NCAA originated the college football playoff to give the best four teams an opportunity to claim the ultimate prize.

"I like the idea of the playoff, but I wish there were more

teams," Ben Wagner ('16)

Instead of letting computers control the top teams in the country, the NCAA formed a committee with experience in the association. Notable names consist of Hall of Fame coach Barry Alvarez, Vice Chancellor Jeff Long, and former NCAA Executive Vice President Tom Jernstedt.

"The committee has done a good job, and I think they've been spot on with ranking teams," Ryan Penland ('16)

The final ranking of the top four teams consisted of Alabama, Oregon, Florida State, and Ohio State. The top four rankings changed four times in the first five weeks.

The pandemonium of the college football season created heated debates throughout fans and analysts.

> "I think Oregon is too high because I think they are going to lose [if] they make the playoff," Wagner said.

The committee also needed to judge the 21 other best teams to create their weekly top 25 rankings. This helped fans understand the outlook of what each team needed to do to get in contention for the playoff.

The reigning national champion Florida State Seminoles look to repeat as champs with another undefeated season. Time and time again the Seminoles trailed in games, but with

College Football Playoff Rankings







Supporting the Succaneers

second half rallies this

team stayed in contention for the title. Although the

only undefeated team, the

have been disrespected

year," Penland said

because of the bad media

in the playoff.

committee ranks them third

"I feel like the [Seminoles]

surrounding Jameis Winston

and the fact that they haven't

really played tough teams this

With the season coming

excitement for the new look

January 12, 2015 when teams

hit the gridiron to determine

to an abrupt end, fans see

the playoff arriving with

system. The talking ends

this season's champion.

Seminoles stand alone as the



room is covered in Bucs posters and old/new jerseys. I have been to games this season, each game I have been very disappointed by the Bucs.

I'll always be a fan because they've been my favorite team my whole life,' - Levi Oliveto ('15)

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Eat, sleep, cheer

Staff Reporter

With the football season reaching its end, cheerleading has only just begun. High school cheerleading goes beyond sideline cheering at football games, as they practice almost ten out of the twelve months of the year to get ready for competition season. In addition to cheering at football games, the cheerleaders lead the crowd at basketball games, too. Sideline cheering helps them prepare for competition season

The cheerleaders invest a great amount of time preparing for competitions, perfecting their jumps, stunts, and dance moves.

"We practice a lot. We have three practices a week and sometimes we have to practice on the weekends," Jillian Kirkpatrick ('16) said.

Competition season becomes a stressful time for the cheerleaders, as they must perform complicated routines in front of a panel of expert judges and screaming fans.

"My favorite part is probably once you get off the mat and you're relieved that it is over," Haiven Fivecoat ('15)

Just last year the varsity cheerleaders took second place in districts and regionals. This year they want to win all their competitions

and improve their position. The team looks to beat Sunlake, their toughest rival in the district.

"We go to four competitions: Best of Pasco, Cheer for a Cure, Regionals, and States," Fivecoat said.

Although cheerleaders remain best known for their cheering at football games, they also cheer on the basketball team to bring that win home. However, their greatest competition exists not on a track or a court, but on the mat.



"I think [practice is] really fair but [it's] also challenging. You're exceeding in your skills but it's also giving you the right challenges,"

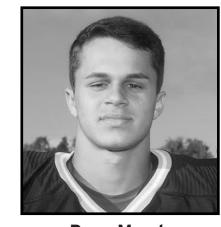
Mitchell Hot-Shots of the week



Kayla Widera: "I was kind of surprised because there were a lot of other people that were nominated who I thought would win, so I was proud I won."



Mackenzie Bennett: "I was shocked and thrilled at the same time. I couldn't believe I won because it wasn't just our school, it was all the schools in



Ryan Marsh: "It made me feel good, and the team will be great this year."



Shyanne Dove:

"I knew that this would help me get into a better school, and I thanked all the people who voted for me. I was shocked."

"Oh I'm a real die-hard fan. My - Carson Ingber ('15)

"No matter how bad they do



(Top) Lawrence Watt ('15) practicing layups before the game. (Bottom) The JV Boys Basketball team huddles to hear a pep talk from their

Shooting for success

Staff Reporter

Important components for boys and girls basketball to dominate and play a winning season this year include blood, sweat, tears, heart, and superstition.

"I always wear the same shoes before every game, always eat the same food before every game, always listen to the same songs before every game; I never change anything up," Lawrence Watt ('15) said.

From the not so weird to the super strange, these basketball players leave nothing to chance.

"Sounds weird, but I lick the bottom of my shoe [before every game]," Mason Castricone ('17) said.

The entire team participates in a tradition of their own, rather than individual superstition only taking place.

Important parts of any team sport involve not only working hard physically, but

also creating friendships with teammates. These off-court relationships ultimately help the team play better together come game time, especially when they serve as motivation.

"Just playing with everyone and getting to know everyone building those off-court relationships also. It builds friendships too," Alec Sherman ('18) said.

For some, family competition takes place as well. Following a big brother into the sport motivates John Paul Watt ('18).

"I really have to live up to Lawrence because he's been a good role model for me in basketball and he's committed to college. I probably have to live up to what he has done and maybe do better than

that," John Paul Watt said. Feeling confident about the upcoming season, players continue to push themselves

at practice and individually, always working on improving

"Last year obviously was our best year that we have ever had, but this year I think we'll still be really successful in what we do and we'll still have a great team and be able to compete with all the teams in our district and around Pasco County," Lawrence Watt said. With preseason games just

beginning and practice in full swing, players understand the need to avoid slacking off. "I've been working outside

of school on my ball handling and my dribbling and I have a hoop at my house so I just shoot around and work when I get home," Jordan Knight ('18) said.

> If the boys and girls basketball teams both stay focused on their current goals, they find themselves in the fast lane to victory and look towards a successful season.



DANIEL PAWUK

Designed by Shyanne Dove

The Hoofbeat | Dec. 2014

MOCKINGJAY - PART

Chrissy Couture Staff Reporter

> The familiar faces of Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence), Gale (Liam Hemsworth), Peeta (Josh Hutcherson), and President Snow (Donald Sutherland) filled the big screen with intensity on November 20. The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1 left audiences holding their breath in anticipation from start to finish. A muchawaited installment in The Hunger Games trilogy, Mockingjay – Part 1 picked up

After the clock arena began collapsing in Catching Fire, Katniss is rescued by Gale, Haymitch (Woody Harrelson), and the strangest of all, Plutarch (Philip Seymour Hoffman), successor to the game-maker Seneca Crane. This left fans with

right where Catching Fire left

**** - Don't miss it! ***

- Definitely worth it

★★★ - Go for it

★ ★ - If you have

extra cash ★ - Don't bother

more questions than ever; suspicion rose with Plutarch's role, and concern grew for Peeta's safety and whereabouts.

Mockingjay – Part 1 starts with Katniss screaming herself awake from a nightmare. She is in District 13, and since the end of the Quarter Quell, Panem will never be the same. The scenes from underground bunkers within District 13 are dark and heavy; the stressful mood of a growing revolution can be felt from rebel President Coin's urgent desire to make Katniss the symbol of the war to make her the Mockingjay. However, Katniss has an agenda of her own. She makes several requests before agreeing to be the Mockingjay: all of the victors from the Quarter Quell must be rescued at the earliest opportunity, Peeta must be granted immunity from any punishment from helping the

Capitol, and Prim can keep her

In addition to this list, fans of the book searched for something else. Who gets to kill President Snow? Katniss makes that her final demand in the book series, but so far that condition has not been brought up in the movie series. Fans expect it to appear in Mockingjay – Part 2, as it plays a pivotal role in the fate

of the war. Throughout the movie, fans see Katniss in positions of extreme vulnerability, as well as strength and spontaneity. Being unaware of Peeta's condition at the Capitol, except for the propaganda they force him to film, appears to torture Katniss. However, in moments of rebel spirit, she reminds viewers of how she reached this point: her quick wit and unwavering passion for what is just and humane.

Ultimately, Mockingjay

- Part 1 portrayed the true outrage of The Hunger Games and what they mean to Panem. There was less focus on the Gale-Peeta love-triangle because attention was drawn to the Capitol's oppression, murder, and bombing of innocent people, entire districts, and even hospitals. The movie series has been moving in this direction since The Hunger Games received backlash for straying from the plot and towards the relationship drama. Mockingjay – Part 1 is continuous in its intensity, and a definite success for fans.

The rebel cause is launched and the fate of Panem lies in the near future. A serious mood, high expectations for Katniss and President Snow, and avoidance of the love story make Mockingjay – Part 1 a must see in The Hunger Games trilogy. ****



District 8 nospital as the



Hey, hey, hey, hey!

Sarah Nagy Staff Reporter

The popularity of the already admired talk show host Jimmy Fallon skyrocketed with his recent transition to *The Tonight* Show on NBC. Fallon carried and even improves the legacy of the previous host, Jay Leno. *The Tonight Show starring* Jimmy Fallon serves as an entertainment getaway at 11:35 every weeknight.

In Fallon's segment called "Ew!", he and a guest star act as two stereotypical teenage girls that reply with "Ew!" to almost anything. He recently transformed the skit into a song featuring Will.I.Am. that made it to number 26 on Billboard. The song and music video reached 6 million views the first week, and took off from there. Although, appreciation for Jimmy does not only come from "Ew!".

"My favorite segment of his is the 'Ew!' I also really like the tweets he reads from fans that use the trending hashtag that he creates," Gabby Martin ('17) said.

Even before the high ratings of his goofy song, Jimmy Fallon was a late night icon whom fans love throughout America. He hosted *Late* Night with Jimmy Fallon prior to taking on the role of *The Tonight Show* host. His show remains similar except for the time slot.

"I'm so happy his show is on an hour earlier, now I can get an extra hour of sleep. I also love the Thank You notes that he does with complete sarcasm; it makes the show," Mackenzie Bennett ('16) said.

Fallon's house band, called The Roots, performed on his show as well. They

play background music for dramatic effects, walk on music for guests, theme music for his games/segments, as well as performs with musical guests. The band also gets involved in skits such as 'Freestyling with The Roots', 'Classroom Instruments', and the 'History of Rap' with Justin Timberlake

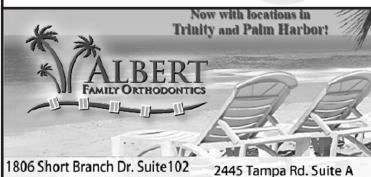
"The Roots are awesome. They give such a fun and comical feel to the show. Their music is great as well," Bennett said.

Fallon's fame grows each and every show he airs. With the popular "Ew!", the takeover of the Tonight Show, The Roots, and his segments, Fallon remains on the path to even greater success.

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Top Christmas binge movies By Chrissy Couture

Funny



Buddy: "First we'll make snow angels for two hours, then we'll go ice skating, then we'll eat a whole roll of Tollhouse cookie dough as fast as we can, and then we'll

- 1. Elf 2. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
- 3. Santa Clause series
- 4. Christmas with the Kranks
- 5. Deck the Halls

Throwbacks



Kris Kringle: "You better watch out. You better not cry, you better not pout. I'm telling you why. Because I came to town."

- 1. Santa Claus is Comin' to Town
- 2. Home Alone
- 3. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation
- 4. Rudolph's Shiny New Year
- 5. A Christmas Story

Sentimental



Maggie Andrews: "Honey, what's the matter?" Nathan Andrews: "Your heart. I just wanted to see if it was still beating."

- 1. The Christmas Shoes
- 2. Miracle on 34th Street
- 3. Disney's Christmas Carol
- 4. Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas
- 5. It's a Wonderful Life

Animated



Ghost of Christmas Past: "Hmph! Listen, Scrooge, if men were measured by kindness, you'd be no bigger than a speck of dust." Scrooge: [yawns] "Kindness is of little use in this world."

- 1. Mickey's Christmas Carol
- 2. Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!
- 3. The Polar Express
- 4. Frosty the Snowman
- 5. Arthur Christmas

Illustrations by Olivia Weyer





Lexi Michaud

Staff Reporter

Decorating homes, stores, and theme parks for the holidays remains a favorite tradition, so much so that some decorations appear earlier and earlier each year. While this may bring excitement for some, the practice of hanging wreaths, lights, and holly in November dampens the spirit of both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Although Howl O' Scream continued until November 1st, Busch Gardens started decorating their theme park with Christmas decorations before the zombies got

their last scare. Busch
Gardens defends their
early practice of displaying
Christmas decorations before
Thanksgiving because they
must be ready for Busch
Gardens Christmas Town.
Although decorations fill the
park early, the wonderland
lights appear on November
28th, the right time for
Christmas spirit.

Stores and shops in malls start selling decorations and ornaments early, allowing family and friends to find what they need before everything sells out.

Department of Health

states that only a qualified

patient may make a written

request for medication and

they must self-administer. Patients must be functional

enough to physically request

the treatment on their own.

The law and prevents family

As for the method itself, in

a physician-assisted death, a

members from making the

decision for them.

Black Friday arrives after Thanksgiving with hundreds of discounts, motivating shoppers to spend money as Christmas music beautifies the atmosphere. This frantic holiday activity takes away from the family time of Thanksgiving.

A few homes decorate for Christmas after Halloween as others decorate after Thanksgiving. Those that jump from Halloween straight to Christmas miss the joy that Thanksgiving decorations bring. Home décor for fall such as red, yellow, and orange leaves and the smell of autumn flowing around homes during November leads up to the excitement of the holidays.

The famous national tree in Washington, D.C. held its tree lighting on December 4th. However Rockefeller Center in New York City places their tree up in mid-November. Placing the tree up and decorating the city early ruins the fun of fall and Thanksgiving.

Stores, homes, theme parks, and cities break out their decorations earlier

and earlier each year. This practice detracts from family celebrations centered around Thanksgiving. In addition, the spirit of the Christmas season focuses too much on material goods. Keep the wreaths, trees and lights locked up until December 1st, so that the warmth of Christmas decorations may become more significant and bring greater joy.

Give me liberty at my death

Bailey Sassatelli
Staff Reporter

Terminally ill patients in three states found comfort in the fact that they could end their suffering, thanks to the Death with Dignity Act (DWDA). According to the Death with Dignity

to the Death with Dignity Act (DWDA). According to the Death with Dignity National Center, the DWDA lets patients already close to death to die in a quicker fashion. Not suicide, nor euthanasia, this act provides a possible option for patients when the pain from the illness becomes too much to bear. All states in the U.S. should adopt this law because it lets patients with terminal illnesses die through medication rather than their

Only three states

have enacted this law:
Washington, Vermont, and
Oregon, and only seven other
states have proposed the
adoption of the law. Created
specifically for terminally ill
patients within six months
of their death date, the law
in the Washington State

doctor normally prescribes
an oral dose of a barbiturate
(a drug that induces sleep),
large enough to kill the
patient.

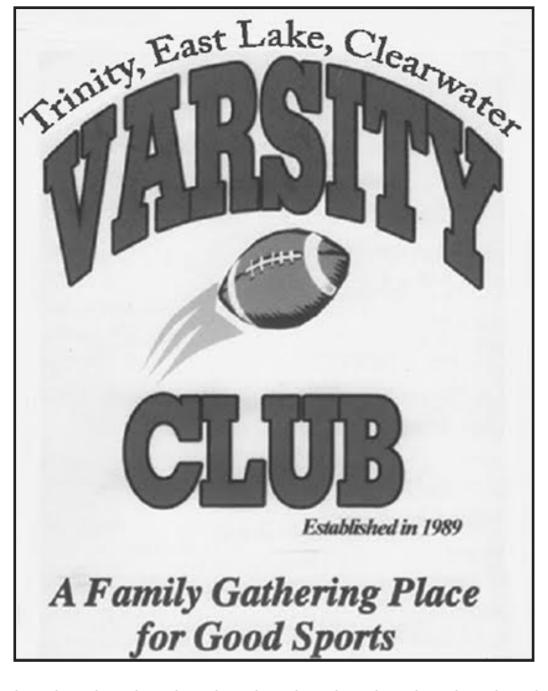
At this time, Florida only
has a few petitions floating
around the community but
has not put in an actual

At this time, Florida only has a few petitions floating around the community but has not put in an actual proposal for the adoption of the law, regardless of the multiple letters written to the Representatives of Florida as

well as the Governor.
The Death with Dignity Act

not only allows terminally ill patients with no chance of survival to end their suffering, but it also shortens the families' heartache because they are no longer forced to see their loved ones suffering. The DWDA not only should be an option for terminal ill patients in all states, but should also

become a law under the federal government so people do not have to move to die the way the want to. In all reality, everyone will die at some point and these patients just want to die from their own method rather than from their illness. Who is the government to deny them that right?





New Year's Resolutions

Are they worth a second thought?

As the new year approaches, so does the creation of New Year's Resolutions. The false hope that change happens at 12:01 on January 1st and that everyone will improve with the coming year eventually dissipates by early February. New Year's Resolutions prove pointless and counterproductive year after year, and yet a majority of people fall prey to the hopeless goals despite the inevitable disappointment. As a staff, the Hoofbeat

agrees that the start of the new year is not the time to resolve things in life that one wishes to fix. Putting off goals and waiting until the new year to begin the changes only makes for procrastination until the last minute and often ends in failure anyway, so why wait and take that risk? When deciding to eat healthier, start going to the gym, or stop smoking, the Hoofbeat believes it better to start the process as soon as the problem gets identified.

If someone chooses to make a New Year's Resolution anyway and disregard how the staff feels towards the pointless goal, they might as well make it a reasonable one that they can achieve.

Start small with little accomplishments like waking up 10 minutes earlier for school or jogging an extra mile while working out instead of something out of reach. Big, extravagant plans like wanting to backpack across Europe during the summer only make it more difficult to meet those resolutions and result in lost hope and failed dreams.

As a whole, the Hoofbeat

believes that New Year's

themselves throughout the year instead of waiting until the new year starts. Hardly anyone feels different when the ball drops, so using New Year's Eve as an excuse to become a better person makes no sense.

Resolutions are often just for

show and do not accomplish

intended. If a change needs

to happen in someone's life,

they should work on bettering

the goal that the person







The Christmas season brings children hope each year with the appearance of Santa Claus. Often kids go the extra mile to make sure that when Santa Claus arrives, he gives out presents instead of coal. A child's fondness for Christmas often comes from their belief in Santa Claus. Allowing kids the pleasure of believing in Santa Claus remains an unwritten law of parenthood, and every parent must allow their child that pleasure.

Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas, represents the Christmas season and continually brings the idea of a holly jolly holiday. Little kids always get excited for a visit from Santa Claus, and during the season they remain on their best behavior, making sure they stay on the "nice list." Santa Claus helps kids get into the Christmas spirit and they may experience a better Christmas than children who know the truth about Santa.

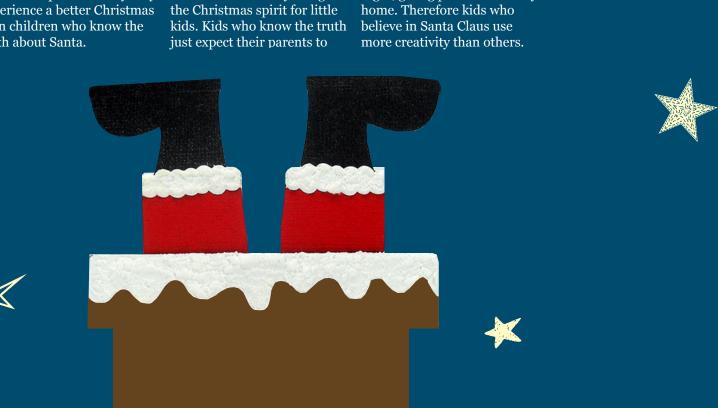
Kids who love Santa may wait very anxiously for his visit, normally leaving cookies and milk for him, and some even leave food for the reindeer. Kids like bragging about and showing off all their new toys, games, and other presents that they assume Santa delivered. Children get very exhilarated for Christmas, and believing in Santa Claus really brings the Christmas spirit for little kids. Kids who know the truth just expect their parents to

know what they want for Christmas and get it for them. The parents may not know what to get them and the kids get disappointed, so writing a list to Santa gets kids into the Christmas spirit.

Santa Claus also ignites kids' imagination from an early age. It requires imagination to believe that one man flies around the entire world in one night, giving presents to every home. Therefore kids who believe in Santa Claus use more creativity than others.

Taking away that belief from them at such a young age may restrict a child's imagination in the future.

During the Christmas season, kids get very eager for Santa's visit. Children enjoy the Christmas holiday based on the belief of Santa, and parents must allow their child the delight of assuming Santa



hor-hor-hor-hor-horible me

Emily Fowler Staff Reporter

Kids around the world look forward to Christmas each year, but not for the right reason. They anticipate <u>a fat man</u> dressed in a red suit to come and bring them presents. Sure, sharing and spreading the fictional symbol of Christmas creates a fun mood, but kids these days show trouble understanding the true meaning of the holidays. The commercialization of the holidays leads to the focus on material possessions.

With Santa, Christmastime loses religious meaning, and families spend less time with loved ones. Kids become spoiled and focus on gifts rather than the joy and warmth of the merry season.

Santa receives a bigger portion of the credit for Christmas cheer, which shows unfairness to the hardworking parents. Parents go out of their way to make their child's Christmas special and make them happy. As a result, kids lack appreciation towards

their parents as they show more toward the fictional character. Children stay concerned about remaining on the "nice list" of Santa rather than on their parents' good side for Christmas.

This Santa scam also sets children up for disappointment, leading them on for years about someone not in existence. This causes kids to doubt their parents in the future and they soon begin to wonder what other false information their parents share with them. Santa needs to remain just what he represents: a fictional character used to boost the spirit of Christmas.

Telling the truth about Santa frees adults from worry about guilt over the lies. Adults may prevent children's tears after finding out the falsehood of Santa, the one who they showed hope in each year. Sitting down with children to share the big news about make-believe Santa leads to no good. Santa brings

trouble and broken-hearts in children's futures. Siblings often spoil the "fun" anyways and tell their younger brother or sister the truth, and parents still remain in a bad place.

Kids do not need to know about Santa, nor do they need to believe that he exists. Parents should give themselves a gift this season, avoid the lie of Santa, and instead unwrap the truth.