

THE BLOTTER

Dog Pound Group spreads Bulldog cheer

By Jack Moutardier & Rylan Schrink

Many schools have a student section, but few have the unification and reputation of the Dog Pound. For years the NAHS student section has thrived, but in the last year, the branding under the “Dog Pound,” has made going to events more than just watching. It has added an element of participation and unity for each student who takes the time of their day to show up and show out for the athletes.

“I really enjoy being a part of it, the branding of the Dog Pound has really become big, I love being a part of it,” name said.

Since the boys basketball team kicked off their season November 22 the Dog Pound has made its presence felt. Packing the stands at games such as the season opener against Clarksville and facing rival FC at their gym. The Dog Pound has also established a presence on social media; it also serves as a communication avenue to get everyone in the section wearing the same theme.

NAHS alumni and parent, Julie Garmon, has been the anchor to the success of the Dog Pound so far this year.

“We had what we called the cheer block, which was the student section,” Garmon said.

The start of the Dog Pound took a lot of thoughts and ideas from a number of hands.

“PTO President Kim Montgomery, my husband, Shawn Garmon, and I had discussed what we could do to help with the student section this year,” Garmon said. “We decided on getting a banner, matching shirts and a name to identify the NAHS student section.”

After the ideas, next was execution.

“We came up with the ‘Dog Pound’ and referenced images from the Cleveland Browns banner when having 323ink design it for us,” Garmon said. “We recommended the name to the student council and student section leaders. They were receptive; we ran with it and it really took off from there.”

Upon design, Garmon continued into other ideas of dog images to build the merchandise.

“I came across the Georgia Bulldogs head,” Garmon said. “I wanted to replicate the similar image and make it our own with the NA hat, it turned out great!”

Students, including senior Zakke Youell, have also played an important role.

“I’ve enjoyed helping out with what I can to make the Dog Pound the best it can be,” Youell said.

“I’ve enjoyed helping out with what I can to make the Dog Pound the best it can be!”

Zakke Youell, 12



Students wore black “Dog Pound” shirts to the home football where the Bulldogs defeated Jeffersonville 29-7.

Photos by Maria Faust

Throughout the fall sports seasons, senior Landon Kirk was a student section leader, but as a member of the basketball team, other students have had to step up in his place, including Youell. Other seniors such as Madison Mullis and Brayden Caswell have had a bigger role in the Dog Pound in the start of the basketball season.

“It is special to be a part of the Dog Pound and be involved,” Mullis said. “Especially during my senior year.”

Another element to making this endeavor work for students is acquiring funding.

“We made a sponsorship flyer and posted it on social media in July. I was able to get enough sponsorships from businesses and individuals to purchase about 300 [Dog

Pound] red shirts, then 300 [Dog Pound] black shirts,” Garmon said.

The shirts, as well as the design, were created by 323 ink. Students could purchase shirts at lunch time and games for \$5.

Garmon says with the additional funding shw was able to further facilitate Dog Pound festivities.

“We also were able to purchase themed items for football and soccer games as well,” Garmon said.

The Dog Pound supports more than just athletics. In November the group hosted a tailgate before the fall musical, *May We All*, where students ate food before attending the performance at a reduced student ticket price.

NAFCS teachers, staff receive pay raise

By Jeremiah Renner

The NAFCS School Board approved a pay raise in November for district employees. There was a consensus to provide an increase of \$2,200 minimum for certified staff and a \$.75 per hour increase for classified staff.

Negotiations began in August. The salary increase is not only meant to reward existing employees, but there is hope it will also attract and retain teaching talent across Southern Indiana. It is a win-win situation for both the educators and the students.

Certified staff includes employees whose position requires a license through the state board, such as teachers and counselors. Classified staff are hourly employees such as teaching assistants and office personnel.

English teacher Mrs. Tina Morton represents the high school on the bargaining team. Morton says she always tries to get input from teachers about what they would like to see in the next contract.

"I help go through that final number of the pay raise," Morton said. "The administration came with a contract and when we ran the numbers, we felt like we might be able to get just a little bit

more money and they agreed. We went from each year [employees] get a percentage of money based on your salary to a flat dollar amount. That way everyone gets the same raise every year regardless of your years of experience teaching, and in doing that it gives everybody just a little bit more money."

On average, the raise for certified staff is about 5.8%. The starting teacher salary in NAFCS is \$48,200 and the top salary is \$81,950.

"The first thing that we do for the bargain team is look to see how much money we have," Morton said. "It's a new formula that changes every year depending on what the state decides to do, so once the state legislation is set on the budget then we figure out what kind of money we have. We then look at how that can be split up, then it was just looking at what was important to us. We do a survey for teachers on things that they want and the top thing that came back this year was teacher raises."

Once the team agrees on the details the contract is offered to association members and voted upon.

"If I were to give advice on how to

"If I were to give advice on how to negotiate a pay raise, it would be to make sure that you also have a copy of all the data."

Mrs. Tina Morton
NAFCEA
HS Vice President

negotiate a pay raise is to make sure that you also have a copy of all the data," Morton said. "For us, though the teachers' association, we run our numbers through formulas and the association gives us tools to be able to do that and make sure that our numbers match what the district has."

As a building representative math teacher Mrs. Jackie Dillion helps facilitate questions after the numbers are negotiated. She also breaks down the details and helps NAHS faculty and staff members understand what is being offered.

"I was very pleased with the raise," Dillion said. "It's probably the best we've seen in a long time and it's kind of nice that instead of waiting for the full amount (because normally it's like a certain percentage); we got more front loaded this year. This year was a lot bigger of a move, although next year will kind of be more of the standard move."

NAFCS's average salary is a little under \$56,000, while surrounding school districts north are averaging a few thousand dollars more.

"I know when we pulled our base level salary up to \$40,000 it made it seem more appealing than other districts but then other districts then started trying to

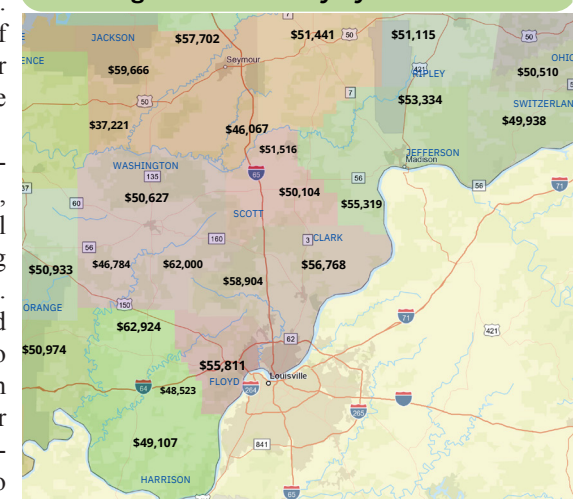
model," Dillion said.

The bargaining team not only negotiates salary, but other benefits like insurance contributions, sick days, and personal days.

"One of the biggest things I would say that came out of there was the way that maternity leave works," Dillion said. "Originally we were only allowed to take six weeks, which is like medical leave for after you have a baby, and those were the only days we were allowed to use. After that everything had to be unpaid, but now, they have it you can take the full 12 weeks of FMLA, which basically keeps our job for us for a while."

Employees have already begun to receive the new compensation.

Average Teacher Salary by School District



**2023-2024
Blotter Staff**

Crimson Baker
Charlie Bott
Kaytlin Cahill
Autumn Gullett

Tj Hardin
Ela Kays
Isabella Kelly
Stella Klaus

Jack Moutardier
Jeremiah Renner
Nicole Richert
Rylan Schrink

Keerah Turner
Christina Faulkner
Adviser

Inspirational Ink

Students and staff share the ‘why’ behind long-lasting pieces of art on their bodies

By Autumn Gullett

Thirty-two percent of Americans have at least one tattoo. This number has increased steadily in recent decades, rising from 21 percent in 2012 and 16 percent in 2006, according to a 2023 Pew Research Center survey. Tattoos have become a way for all people to show their creative mind and show what means most to them.

“I think tattoos are definitely more normalized, especially at most jobs nowadays,” senior Julia Logsdon said. “You used to have to cover them up by wearing long sleeves, but now you can have them showing as long as they are not considered offensive”

Logsdon has been getting creative line work and shows her creative side within her tattoos like coraline, flowers and cats.

Not only is there an uprise in people getting tattoos, but also people giving tattoos. The tattoo industry has become so heavily populated, there are tattoo shops all around town and advertised all over social media platforms.

The increasing popularity of tattoos has led to a boom in two industries—those who give them and those who remove them. The global tattoo market was valued at \$1.89 billion in 2022 and

is expected to grow from \$2 billion this year to \$3.92 billion by 2030, according to *Forbes*.

“I think social media has made it more common and socially acceptable to get tattoos. I also think it’s become more common to get tattoos that hold no meaning as well as ones that do have special meaning,” senior Kallen Beals said.

Beals started his tattoo journey by getting a memorial piece after a close loved one of his passed away.

In 2023 trends such like patch work, back/spine tattoos, big leg tattoos are all over social media

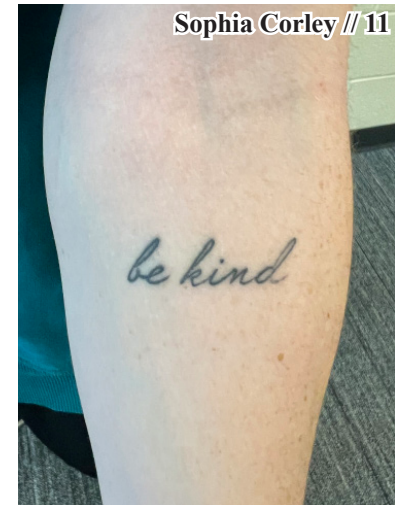
Last year, there was a rise in abstract styles and ‘90s-inspired designs, including “tramp stamps,” but in 2023, the tattoo trends to watch include realistic styles, finger tattoos, and more according to Pop Sugar.

“My favorite style of tattoos are minimalistic or fine line tattoos because I like the fine lines and how simple they are and how pretty they look, plus the needle is much smaller and doesn’t hurt as much,” Logsdon said.

High school students are in on the tattoo trend. Studies have shown that an estimated 10-23 percent of adolescents have tattoos and 27-42 percent have



Julia Logsdon // 12



Sophia Corley // 11



Kallen Beals // 12

body piercings. Among high school students who don’t already have a tattoo, more than 50 percent said they are interested in getting one, according to Hopkins Medicine.

“As long as the student has permission from their parent or guardian then I don’t see an issue,” SAL Coordinator Mr. Antonio Grubbs said. “My parents would never have allowed it, but times and attitudes have changed a little.”

Grubbs is a father himself and a mentor to many students.

Ninety-two percent of U.S. adults with tattoos have no regrets about getting them, according to research done by Itnux. It is estimated that laser tattoo removal ranges from \$200-\$500 per treatment session for those who do regret their decision.

“Tattoos are PERMANENT,” Grubbs said. “Anything that has that definition needs some serious thought. What seems like a great idea at age 16 turns into regret at 35 and even worse at 50. Plus, your body and skin changes and so will the tattoos. All of my tattoos have significance in my life. My family, my faith and my military service. So I am good with them being

with me for the rest of my life. Make sure you can say the same before you decide to get it tatted on your skin.”

Some say getting a tattoo with a purpose at a young age will help keep the feeling of later regret out of the picture.

“I got my tattoo after my teammate and friend lost her battle with depression,” junior Sophia Corley said. “Her older sister, who is a great friend of mine, began making t-shirts with the saying ‘be kind’ in honor of her younger sister. The saying ‘be kind’ is a good reminder for everyone and it holds a special place in my heart as well and will never lose its meaning.”

A War Unfolding

The conflict continues between Israel and Palestine

By Ela Kays

As of December 5, more than 15,900 Palestinians, including 250 health workers, have been killed in Gaza, according to Reuters. These deaths are of innocent people whose homes were unexpectedly attacked and destroyed.

News of this conflict has been spread all across social media and news outlets since October 6. Supporters of Palestine have made petitions, on-line filters, and protests for Palestine. Some sources even consider the conflict to be a genocide, according to CCRJustice.

Sophomore Ava Taylor is a member of Model UN and has done a lot of studying on the matter and has strong opinions on how this war reflects to this generation.

“Our generation just has this sense of apathy about a lot of the conflicts that happen in different countries,” Taylor said. “But, they don’t realize that our country isn’t any different. I think it’s very important that we break this preconceived notion that this would never happen to us.”

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has existed back to the early 20th century, according to Aljazeera. The conflict started way back in the 1900s when Britain wanted to give Jewish Palestinians a home in the territory of the recently conquered Ottoman Empire, according to BBC. The land was lived in by the Jewish minority and Arab majority. When Britain claimed the land for Jewish Palestinians, the Arab majority opposed the idea.

In 1984, Jewish leaders took over and established the state of Israel, according to BBC. Fighting between Jewish and Arab

militias has increased over the years. After the establishment of Israel, Arab countries attacked. Palestinians fled and once the fighting ended, Israel took over the majority of the territory. Jordan, a country east of Israel, occupied the West Bank, a small chunk of land peacefully split by Jordanians and Israelis. While, Egypt stayed in Gaza, an even smaller piece of land in southwestern Israel.



During a war in 1967, Israel occupied eastern Jerusalem, as well as most of Gaza and the West Bank. Palestinians and their children stayed in Gaza, the West Bank, and surrounding countries. They were not allowed to return to any of their homes in Israel, because Israel

claimed it could threaten its existence as a Jewish state. Most of the world, including Israel, see all of Jerusalem, the borders of Gaza, and the West Bank as belonging to Israel. But, Palestinians say they own an eastern part of Jerusalem, hoping to make a future Palestinian state in their home.

Senior Rex Ba has felt that this war has changed a lot of the world.

“I think [the war] is very important in history, it shows the corruptness that basically gets swept under the rug,” Ba said. “We aren’t really being represented as people. It’s not something most people feel like they voted for.”

The main problem that started the conflict is around Hamas, an Islamist, people who emphasize the creation of Islamic states and rejection of non-Muslim influences, a group who strive for the destruction of Israel. It’s similarly known as a terrorist group in the UK and other places, accord-

ing to BBC. Hamas then won Palestine’s election and took control of Gaza and since then has fought numerous wars with Israel’s militia. Israel had narrowed their attacks to populated areas in Gaza as punishment for Hamas’ attacks on Israelis.

This conflict has now led to hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children’s deaths throughout Gaza, the homes most Palestinians had to live in after their homes in Israel were taken. Many of the places hit have been hospitals, schools, and protection centers made to help civilians avoid the bombings.

“I think, in the world, it just shows that you aren’t being represented like you thought you were,” Ba said. “It’s not a democracy like you thought it was. There are people who are above you that do not care about you.”

Social media has taken charge of this and posted endless amounts of videos, posts, filters, and petitions to call for a ceasefire throughout a multitude of social media to try and get help to the people suffering.

“You should advocate for yourself and for other people,” Taylor said. “A lot of what we were trying to do is advocate for Palestine, all the people whether it be Israelis or Palestinians we still need to advocate for every single person benignly affected by this.”

Donations are also a way to help people who are struggling because of this conflict.

Ena Sikes, a sophomore and a member of Model UN shares what she thinks is the best way to directly help the people being affected by this.

“I think donation is a big thing,” Sikes said. “Definitely any money that you can take of your own or even just like donating clothes and shoes just to give it to the kids there, because there’s literally kids, they’re on like street corners, and they have nothing. There’s orphanages there that are packed full.”

This conflict is still constantly changing.

There are few ways to contact people and places in Gaza, so the media struggles to accurately cover the events happening. That’s why it’s so common to see social media posts because that’s one of the only ways to show what’s happening. Palestine and Israel have such a long, complicated conflict that has a lot more factors to it. Many people have taken it upon themselves to do their own research to continue to educate and inform people about a tragedy that still hasn’t ceased.

“It’s really important for us to learn to take a step back and just value what we have and value the person sitting next to us, because if this were to happen to us; none of us would know what to do if we lose our mom, or see friends dying just because they’re walking on the street,” Taylor said.



Name brand vs. dupes

Looking for a cheap alternative to overpriced luxury products? Students tell us about their experience with products from luxury brands, in addition to those who tried out the “dupes”

By Sara Miller & Lucy Quillo

Seniors Nora Meyer and Madison Mullis describe their experience using various on-brand products and whether they are worth it compared to their “dupes”.

“I got a pack of two smaller Stanley’s for \$50,” Mullis said.

She says the price of Stanley’s is reasonable considering the overall quality of the product. A Stanley duplicate or “dupe” can be found on Amazon for half the price of the name brand product.

Three social media influencers from Utah posted photos of the popular Stanley tumbler, sparking a movement

among teens. According to the *New York Times*, the global president of Stanley added that the product’s sales increased by 275 percent in 2021 compared with 2020.

“It was very worth it because it’s small enough to carry it everywhere, and it is also very cute, and keeps my water cold,” Mullis said.

All of the main qualities of a Stanley that seem to draw buyers in were considered and included in the making of the dead-ringer.

Another trendy brand that many consider to be expensive is Lululemon.

“I really like my Christmas Red Lululemon Define Zip up Jacket, it’s \$118,” Meyer said.

Meyer says she is happy with her purchase because of the great quality, but also wonders about the quality of dupes on the market. A zip-up that perfectly resembles the Define Jacket is

available on Amazon for \$40, and the price of other dupes goes significantly down from there, ranging from \$22-\$28.

Freshman Ava Quinn and junior Lauren Yowell wanted in on good quality products for a fraction of the price, so they purchased some popular discounted products in the “dupe” market.

“I have the Elf Halo Glow Blush Wand dupe; it was \$15, I do think getting the dupe was a better decision because it does the same thing for a cheaper price,” Yowell said.

Yowell is one of the many purchasers of the popular drug-store brand E.L.F.; the brand is notorious for its often release of copycat Charlotte Tilbury beauty products for a fraction of the price offered by the luxury brands.

“I love the dupe - it does an amazing job. It gives me the same glow,” Yowell said.

Yowell describes the similarity in product quality regarding the dupe and the on-brand product. The original Charlotte Tilbury Blush Wand can be found for the price of \$42, while Yowell found her strikingly similar product for almost \$30 less.

“I love the Elf Halo Glow.

ON-BRAND VS. DUPE

<p>Stanley Tumbler</p>  <p>\$50</p>	<p>Amazon Tumbler</p>  <p>\$25</p>
<p>Charlotte Tilbury Blush</p>  <p>\$42</p>	<p>Elf Halo Glow Blush</p>  <p>\$9</p>
<p>Charlotte Tilbury Flawless Filter Foundation</p>  <p>\$50</p>	<p>Elf Halo Glow Foundation</p>  <p>\$14</p>
<p>Lululemon Define Jacket</p>  <p>\$118</p>	<p>Amazon Basics</p>  <p>\$26</p>

It’s only \$14 which is significantly less than the name brand one,” Quinn said.

Quinn even went as far as to say the \$14 foundation she’s purchased on multiple occasions is better than the on-brand version currently on the market for \$50.

“I think it’s better than the real Charlotte Tilbury. I’ve bought it many times and I will continue to; I think it was a great decision,” Quinn said.

People everywhere are discovering dupes and how beneficial they are to saving money or keeping on track with a budget. Just like Yowell and Quinn, teens everywhere are searching for more affordable versions of their favorite products and brands.

“I do think getting the dupe was a better decision because it does the same thing for a cheaper price. I will be buying it again,” said Yowell.



Senior Maddi Mullis says she loves her green Stanley because of its durability.

It's the Most **Wasteful** Time of the Year

The holiday season brings cheer, but also a lot of waste

By Stella Klaus

It's Christmas morning, you run to the living room to see presents under your tree. You find the present with your name on it, rip apart the wrapping paper, throw it to the side, and tear the tape that's holding the box shut. You open the box, dig through the tissue paper that's covering the gift. Finally, you get to the gift - it's socks. Plain old white socks.

The holiday season is known for food, gifts, family, and decorations. What many people might not think about is the waste that comes with the season. According to the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), waste during the holidays increases between 25 and 43 percent. An easy way to help reduce this waste is to recycle, but environmental science teacher Deborah Haeberlin likes to save the paper and cardboard and use it in her fireplace.

"When we're looking at our carbon cycle the stuff that's coming just from trees and cardboard, they aren't locked in the carbon footprint like fossil fuels are. It is something that is still circulating because trees are still circulating carbon, but just burning those things is keeping the same stuff that's already in the air," Haeberlin said.

Lots of the waste around the holidays comes from wrapping and packaging. In fact, it's estimated that around 38,000 miles of ribbon is thrown out each year after Christmas, enough to wrap around the Earth, according to *Seaside Sustainability*.

"What I like to do when I wrap is use brown packaging paper instead of traditional gift wrap so then you can

draw on top of it and kind of decorate it for the person. Then you can keep the same wrapping paper for no matter what so it could be birthdays, it could be Christmas, whatever," art teacher Sarah Collins said.

Another aspect that creates a lot of waste is the packaging of gifts bought online. During COVID-19 online shopping grew and people continue to turn towards online shopping for presents especially around the holidays because of its convenience. According to the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), in 2022 over 87 million people shopped online during Black Friday and 77 million shopped online during Cyber Monday.

"I feel like sometimes when you order a lot online you sort of forget what you've ordered and you end up with more than you need, so there's something about being in person at a store that allows you to keep track of what you're purchasing a little easier than a shopping cart online," Collins said.

Packaging from online shopping creates a lot of waste, but that isn't even the worst part. A much higher percentage of items are returned when shopping online, \$816 billion worth of stuff was returned in 2022, according to NEEF. The shipping processes used for returning products accounts for 16 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year and many of these re-

turns ultimately end up in landfills because it ends up being cheaper for the companies.

Another Christmas staple that ends up in landfills are Christmas trees. Around 30 million live Christmas trees are sold in the US every year but around 45% of people actually prefer an artificial tree, according to NEEF. The chemical compounds used to make these artificial trees will oftentimes take thousands of years to break down.

"Even though people think, 'oh a real tree' you have to get rid of every year and you're cutting down a tree and all of this stuff, it's the fact that the fake trees just sit in wastelands and don't decompose," Collins said.

For someone to fully maximize the sustainability of their artificial tree they need to keep it for at least 20 years, according to NEEF. For some people this just isn't possible because many pre lit artificial trees lights go out and they opt for a nicer newer tree each year. Although many trees are cut down for live Christmas trees they are being replanted each year and there is more you

can do with your old live tree than an artificial tree that won't decompose.

"I know when I'm done I am going to feed it to my goats, but with an artificial tree I do see a lot of waste where people just want a nicer newer fancier one," Haeberlin said.

Nobody's Christmas tree is complete without twinkling lights to decorate it and many people add these lights to the outsides of their houses as well. Between the weeks of Thanksgiving and New Years light intensity is increased from 30 to 50 percent in the suburbs and the outskirts of major cities, according to NASA. This contributes to a lot of light pollution and energy usage in the US.

"For me the biggest waste is probably the lights because they tend to go out and that's what I have to purchase the most of," Haeberlin said.

Consider opting for a more sustainable Christmas this season by not taking a holiday from recycling, getting crafty with your decorations and gifts, and shopping from small businesses and in person.

A VERY CRAFTY CHRISTMAS



1. Homemade fridge magnets, or keychains.



2. Experience gifts like a vacation or daytrip somewhere.



3 creative ideas for the holiday season



3. Reuse old materials for wrapping like newspapers.

Where are the presents? Trucker shortage could cause delay in arrival of shipments

By Tj Hardin

Over the past 15 years, the trucking industry has faced one of the worst shortages of all industries. This could be bad for the holiday season as it could cause delivery to be delayed.

“My packages from stores like Shein have been taking forever,” junior Corinne Milligan said. “They usually take around two weeks, but recently they’ve been taking around three weeks to a month.”

The first driver shortage was reported in 2005 by the American Trucking Associations (ATA). Around that time, the shortage was only around 20,000 drivers. As of early 2023, there are 3.5 million truckers in the United States with a shortage of 80,000 drivers, according to CDL Jobs.

“I personally don’t have an issue with my delivery arrivals, but I know it’s getting worse,” sophomore Lincoln Stephens said. “The driver to order ratio is disproportionate, especially considering how many orders are being made with Christmas right around the corner.”

The issue with this, especially during the holiday season, is that the shortage messes with delivery times. Due to the shortage of drivers, the price of goods for consumers is going up, and there is now a delay in the delivery of the goods people like to order.

“My order prices have also gone up,” said Milligan. “I used to only pay anywhere between \$15 to \$20 for a pair of jeans online, and now I’ll look at the same ones I’ve already bought and they’re like \$25 now.”

Truck drivers experience a very expensive and intense training program, according to Risk Placement Services. Training courses costs around \$7,000 per driver, and a commercial license requires up to 160 hours of driving. There are scholarships that are available to trainees as well as company paid programs, but the six month to one year commitments these companies have would require trainees to stick with

a lower wage for at least half a year before signing to a different company for a higher wage. This often drives trainees away as well as the fact that it may require them to live away from home depending on

the company they sign to. Their starting wage is also a huge factor, as it starts out being a lot lower than the average \$53,000-60,000 they expect to make per year.

Another reason for the shortage is because of retirement. According to Fleet Ops, the average operating age of truckers is 46 years old while the average age for trainees is 35 years old. This causes an imbalance between the amount of truckers retiring and the amount being recruited. This issue is also being pushed further as there are laws barring truck drivers under the age of 21 from driving their commercial vehicle over state lines.

“A lot of the drivers are going on a strike for a pay raise,” senior Austin Paragin said. “I’ve heard they’re supposed to get paid a lot, but looking at the average annual wage it just doesn’t add up. They deserve to get paid a lot more.”

Christmas season is right around the corner. With the truck driver shortage, an issue for the season presents itself: Will the presents we’ve ordered get here before Christmas day? The decreasing amount of truck drivers will and already has caused a significant change in the time it takes to ship merchandise and other goods from warehouse to warehouse and eventually to a consumers doorstep.

“My packages haven’t been coming on time and it makes me hesitant,” junior Jayla Cooper, a self-proclaimed chronic online shopper, said. “Recently my packages have been coming in three days later than the expected delivery date and I’ve been struggling to buy things because they aren’t coming on time.”

As time moves on, the CDL is expecting the number of job openings in the trucking industry to double by 2030. There are around 3.5 million truckers available, yet there are 80,000 job openings. This begs the question, “how is there a shortage with that many truck drivers available?”



Wrapping up 2023

By Charlie Bott

Ever since 2016, Spotify Wrapped has come out consistently, year after year. The tracking used to make each person's Spotify wrapped is taken from January 1st to sometime mid-November.

Spotify Wrapped is a collection that is released in the last week of November and is personalized to each user. That's more than 574 million people. It summarizes what music and artists they listened to over the previous year, as well as an emotion that relates to their most listened to songs.

While other music streaming platforms such as Apple Music have made their own version of this end of year summary, none have truly lived up to the hype that Spotify Wrapped has created, according to TechCrunch.

TOP ARTISTS



"I get in the top percentages a lot," Huguley said. My top artist is AJR and I was in the top 0.005% of fans. Listening to them for a total of 14,453 minutes."



"I think it says a lot about the music I listen to," Porter said. "But not who I am as a person. I always look forward to seeing my top five music genres."



"My sister and school [is what got me into Spotify]," Cahill said. "I like to play music on Spotify, when studying and doing chores."

Spotify Wrapped is back!

SERENITY HUGULEY



Sophomore Serenity Huguley says she has had Spotify for five years. "I like the fact that it tracks everything I listen to, all of my data, and gives it back to me in a fun way at the end of the year," Huguley said. "It's creepy but it's fun so I honestly don't care."

Huguley says she listened to 32,748 minutes of music this year, with her top genre being pop

ZEDRIC PORTER



Junior Zedric Porter says he has had Spotify wrapped for four years. "I like the idea of Spotify Wrapped, I would love to have, like, a Spotify Wrapped for Netflix," Porter said.

Porter says he listened to 17,083 minutes of music this year, with his top genre being hip-hop

ISABELLA CAHILL



Freshman Isabella Cahill says she likes the Spotify Wrapped because she doesn't have to skip any songs. "I don't compare [my wrapped] because I wouldn't like to share my music," Cahill said, "I listen to country and no one really likes it so I just listen to it."

Cahill says she has had Spotify for five years



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The double standard in the business

Sexism affects female artists in the music industry

By **Crimson Baker**

Taylor Swift made history by breaking the record for most streamed country album by a woman in a single day on Spotify this year. Beyonce holds the record for most BET award nominations for an individual. Madonna is the highest grossing female touring artist, and so many more records have been broken by female artists.

Women have been making their mark on the music industry for decades, creating new standards and breaking all boundaries. The treatment towards them, though, doesn't demonstrate the respect they deserve.

Female musicians are consistently underestimated, mistreated and misrepresented despite the fact that they are constantly breaking all of these records. Women make up 67 percent of the music industry, according to *Entertainment Inquirer*, so why is this still such an issue?

Harassment, condescendence, double standards and their general achievements being questioned makes the music industry so much harder for female artists. It affects the content they write and produce songs about, the way that those songs are received by fans, what producers they can work with and how much support they have in general.

Eighty-one percent of women say navigating the music industry is harder for them than it is for men, according

to *The Egalitarian*.

Normal topics in songwriting, like relationships and breakups, are often looked down upon for women to write about, and they're given a tolerance limit on their careers based on if they write about it too often or for too long.

This means that often, the genuine talent and achievements of these artists is ignored and defaced, when this doesn't happen to male artists.

If you're not careful enough, the rest of your career will be defined by jokes about how no one wants to be the

topic of your next song, and all of your relationships will be defined by comments about what the album will sound like when you break up.

Nine in 10 respondents say that the music industry treats its professionals differently depending on their gender, according to *Entertainment Inquirer*.

The tolerance for men's mistakes is higher than it is for women. Men aren't as likely to be disliked or "canceled" over things like writing songs about

their exes, experiences in the industry, or current relationships as women are.

Female artists can be bad people, and do bad things, the problem is that they are so much more likely to be disliked over minor mistakes, and their every move is so much more likely to be psychoanalyzed.

And that's the thing; it's not just

their flaws that are obsessed over, they aren't allowed to be successful either.

When female artists rise to popularity, it becomes cool to hate them, even when they haven't

done anything to warrant it. And the hatred of these artists goes deeper than just their music, it extends to them as people.

There's no reason for artists' looks, body type or love life to be insulted when you're speaking about their art, yet that seems to be the go to every time complaints are made.

This is an issue in more than just the music industry, the success of women has always caused issues and

been ignored in history, but the music industry is a big example of the worst of it.

According to data from Spotify, based on a sample of five million subscribers, male users listened to 94.2 percent male artists, according to *The Miscellany News*.

No, this doesn't mean you aren't allowed to dislike female artists, or that listening to male artists is bad, or that every single disliked female artist is only disliked because they're a woman. I'm not saying that.

It means that the industry and the media handle famous women and men differently.

Calling out the harsh response to female artists and the general overflow of sexism in the music industry doesn't mean the men in the industry aren't talented, or shouldn't be liked. A system can be flawed and still have good participants.

The issue within the music industry is caused by the general system it was built on, and because it's such a large industry, it has a large impact on the way people deal with and respond to things.

Acknowledging that all of this is a problem is not an inherent insult to men. It doesn't mean that anyone who dislikes a female artist is bad, it doesn't mean that your favorite artist being male is bad and it doesn't mean that you can't critique female artists.



Blotter Policy

It is the policy of the New Albany-Floyd County School Board of Education that publications are established as forums for student expression and as voices in the free and honest discussion of issues and ideas. For purposes of this policy, "publications" shall include newspapers, yearbooks, magazines, and/or electronic and/or on-line media. Each medium is an instructional device for the teaching of writing, communication, design, leadership, and other journalistic skills and should provide full opportunity for students to inquire, questions and exchange ideas.

Student journalists will use the professional standards outlined in this policy to determine the content of student media, with the guidance and instruction of their faculty adviser. Content should reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent or controversy.

Embracing the unique culture of exchange students

By Isabella Kelly

With winter bringing the widely-celebrated holiday season of Christmas and long-established traditions, it is easy to pass over the holidays of people not in their home country. Exchange students, however, have unique holidays and traditions.

“Our most popular holiday is probably Carnival; it is like a big party,” Brazilian exchange student Milena Ceresar said. “It is huge in Sao Paulo and Salvador, we wear different costumes and go to some parades. It’s nice because we dance, sing and sometimes we go to the beach to commemorate others.”

Ceresar is from the state of Sao Paulo, the most populous state in the Americas. She came here on Academic Year in America (AYA), which is sponsored by the American Institute for Foreign Study, and gives J-1 visas. She learned about the program last year and hoped it would be an opportunity to improve her English. The holiday she describes, Carnival, is usually celebrated during Lent with sambodromo, a competition between samba music schools, and African-rooted parades, according to Rio Carnival.

“A [traditional] drink we have is caipirinha, where we use alcoholics, lime, and sugar cane,” Ceresar said. “Foods that we have includes feijoada, which is pork and black beans with rice. Another thing is brigadeiro, it is a candy where we use condensed milk, chocolate, and we make them into balls and put sprinkles.”

Brazilian food is rooted in both Portuguese and African cultures, although food varies from state to state. Caipirinha is Brazil’s national cocktail, and is said to have been invented as a response to the Spanish flu that ravaged the Americas in the 1900s, according to

G Adventures.

Another exchange student from Brazil who celebrates a different culture is Erico Mazzini from the state of Minas Gerais, who came on the CIEE program, which is federally tied.

“I would say [a big holiday here is] Festa Junina, it is a celebration in Brazil’s winter, which is July here,” Erico Mazzini said. “It’s a festival which is more tied to little farming communi-



Brazilian exchange student Milena Ceresar at a Carnival event in Brazil.

ties, who get together and celebrate Saint John’s Day. They have tons of food, music, and mini festivals.”

The festival he described, Festa Junina, is the second largest festival in Brazil only behind Carnival. There is an extensive tie to farming, as it celebrates the beginning of harvest and Catholic saints like Saint John, according to *Adventura do Brasil*.

Similar to the view that the United States is a melting pot, so is Brazil, with the many types of music they offer with influences from around the world.

“[Traditional music] I would say is probably bossa nova, which is like a

mix between samba and jazz,” Mazzini said. “It’s a really good type of music, and it mixes a lot of African and European traditions.”

Bossa nova highlights Brazil’s unique culture, and is an extremely important part of it. The term “bossa nova” means “new wave” in English and traditionally celebrates romance and beach culture, according to ABC and Brown. Some popular pioneering

sausage, which is widespread in Germany despite its origins in Bavaria, is traditionally eaten before church bells with sweet mustard and like what Kling said, pretzels, according to the United States Army.

“Another holiday, although it isn’t completely a holiday, is Oktoberfest,” the other German exchange student, Orestis Schloter, said. “It is a big tradition where Germans come together. There are rides, like a carnival, it is kind of similar to Harvest.”

Schloter is from Frankfurt, Germany, and also uses the CIEE program like Mazzini. Despite its name, the celebration Schloter describes is celebrated in September in Munich. It was traditionally a celebration of the wedding of the Ludwig I of Bavaria which was met with days of drinking and feasting, according to Time. The celebration has even drifted into the United States, like in Cincinnati and in nearby Louisville.

“There is a lot of German music culture like [the song] 99 Balloons,” Schloter said. “It is pretty big here too and I think it got popular in the 80s.”

Although traditionally people tend to think of German music as classical with artists such as Johann Bach, the music Schloter describes is more modern. The song is based in *neue deutsche welle*, a genre of originally West German music developed from post-punk. It describes balloons being mistaken for UFOs, a commentary on social life in East Germany, according to the American Songwriter. It is also one of many examples of German culture.

“If you’re used to your own culture, you don’t have a worldview,” Mazzini said. “Traveling to new places makes your mind acquire new traits and experiences, along with culture.”

From my bookshelf to yours

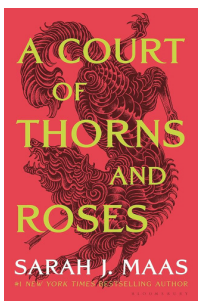
By Kaytlin Cahill

I've read books ever since I can remember and would always check out the same book in every school library I had access to. Whether it be a giant animal fact book or a cheesy romance that started me on a long reading journey, I've always been seen with a book in my backpack, hands, or my car. My room is also overflowing with books. You don't have to take my recommendations, but I highly recommend it. They are some really amazingly written books that deserve to be read.

A Court of Thorns and Roses

Written by Sarah J. Mass

Famously known as 'ACOTAR', *A Court of Thorns and Roses*, by Sarah J. Maas, is a story of a starving young girl who fights beasts to feed her poor family. She is presented with many tough challenges and decisions that may lead to hers as well as her friends and family's death. Without knowing, Freye kills a Fae and strikes a match inside her as well as across the wall, in Hybern. This book has real life issues as well as real, genuine reactions to these experiences and makes you feel as if you too were battling to death to save the one who swept you off your feet. Or have the wind cutting into your skin from the tops of cities and empires, with the speed of a mystic man who everyone believes to be the cruelest of the High Lords. This book is such a well written book and it is a five, almost six, book series that only gets better by the page. If you are looking for a fantasy book with romance and 'keep you on the

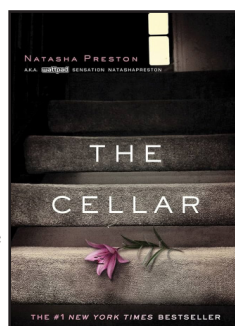


edge of your seat' type of book, this is the book for you. The series continues for five current books, and there is a sixth book coming out January 30th, 2024. It is a really amazing book and has so much great qualities that highlight it well. The main character, Freye, is confused and starved and takes chances all the time no matter the cost.

The Cellar

Written by Natasha Preston

The Cellar is an almost 400-page book that is about this girl named Summer Robinson who is like any other ordinary girl in high school until she walks alone to a party. As she is walking past a darkened field, a man takes his chance. She is kidnapped within a second. After being thrown into the back of a white van, she is taken to his home, and locked away in a cellar. One like no other. It is fully furnished with all of the necessary items and rooms to live in. Clover, the kidnapper, renames the girls and Summer's new name is Lily, who along with three other women, Rose, Poppy, and Violet who all try to fight back and escape. This book is a fast-paced page turner, plot twisting and made me unable to put it down. The main character is a very relatable person, and her thoughts of trying to escape and how to not lose her mind in these underground walls. She has realistic thoughts and has a realistic mindset over this real-life situation. I like how it covers how she deals with having to be in small quarters with her kidnapper. This book shows the realities of this horrible situation and how she deals with it. I would recommend this book to anyone who reads realistic fiction and realistic horror.



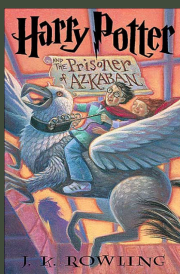
King of Battle and Blood

Written by Scarlett St. Clair

Another fantasy-romance-intertwined book is called *King of Battle and Blood*, by Scarlett St. Clair, about a princess named Isolde. To save herself as well as her kingdom from an ongoing, never-ending war, she is to marry the vampire king, Adrian Aleksandr Vasiliev. She despises him, and suffers the consequences and wrath of her own kingdom as they try to completely remove him from the map. Even if she too is wiped away. This is a fun, easy, quick read and is really good for an in between read to separate or buffer your next read. It can be read as a standalone, however, there is a second book that is just as long and pretty. This book was a nice and well written story that was extremely difficult to put down. It shows the real difficulties of falling in love with someone who your entire kingdom wants you to kill. I like how the author writes as well as how descriptive she is. Also, this book makes you think about how they will make this 'situationship' work. With everyone in her kingdom basically against her and her new husband. At first, Isolde hates him and plans to kill him in his sleep, then her kingdom tries to take both of them out and she feels betrayed. *King of Battle and Blood* is a really great book and I would 100% recommend it to anyone who loves fantasy-romance books with a really good plot that is easy to follow as well as to try and guess what happens next.



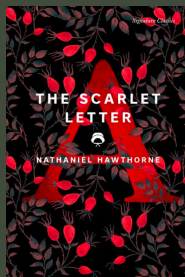
The Prisoner of Azkaban



"[However] my favorite book of that series is [Harry Potter and the Prisoner of] Azkaban. The reason why Azkaban is my favorite, even though it's not the best one, it connects everything. Then the whole world's connected at the last six or seven chapters of Azkaban."
-Mr. John Kaiser // Math



The Scarlet Letter

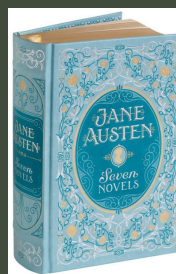


"The setting is in the 1600's, but we can still heavily relate to the themes and characters' attitudes in 2023. It is also an amazing piece of literature that changes each time I read it."

-Mrs. Tabitha Vincent // English



Anything Jane Austen



"It is so hard to answer that question since I live in a world of books but books by Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters have been at the top of my list since I first read them in high school. I love history and culture especially British and these authors started me on that journey."

-Mrs. Barbara Alexander // Librarian