



Read about the seventh Star Wars film on pg. 6

the Echo

See how our feature editors ranked Pixar movies on pg. 5



Illiana Christian High School

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Lansing, Illinois

Enthusiastic juniors observe American government 'Close-Up'

Victoria Sonowo

Reporter

Following an Illiana Tradition of over 30 years, the History Department sent six junior students to Washington, D.C., for the Close-Up program. From Nov. 26 to Dec. 6, juniors Collette Bower, Everett Buitter, Erik Detmar, Juliana Knot, Christian Pelke, and Caleb Last learned more about and discussed issues facing our federal government.

Bower said, "My sister did it previously and she loved it so much and she would always talk about it, so once I heard about it, I thought it would be a really cool opportunity to get to learn a lot and experience a lot of different things."

Close-Up takes a selection of students to Washington D.C. and for a week they are able to see various sites, meet people who work in the government, and share ideas with different students from all over the country with whom they share rooms and attend workshops.

History teacher Mr. Jeff White said, "Students are selected by first writing an essay as part of their application process. Then from the essays, we select the best and interview the students on their knowledge and aptitude of



Photo credit: Katie Whitmire

The Illiana Close-Up students circle around Rep. Pete Visclosky. He is the democratic representative from Indiana's 1st Congressional District.

government and current events. [Based on these interviews] we select those who attend."

While on the trip students are able to view various sites such as The Capitol, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Freder-

ick Douglass House, and various memorials. Students also attended the home church of George Washington, Christ Church.

Pelke said, "I really loved the Lincoln Memorial. It's

something that I've seen through the TV screen and in pictures, so actually seeing it in person was grand."

Detmar and Knot thought their experiences in Washington, D.C., were valuable and

would love to do it again if given the chance.

White has accompanied groups in the past. He said this year was special because of "the enthusiasm of the students who attended."

'Go-Club does Christmas' by focusing on school unity

Riley Goodwin

Reporter

This year Go-Club is hosting its first "Go-Club Does Christmas" project from Dec. 7 - Dec. 18 to create a sense of unity among Illiana students and the larger community.

For the past few years, Go-Club has encouraged homerooms to buy gifts for children in need. Those gifts were distributed through "My Joyful Heart."

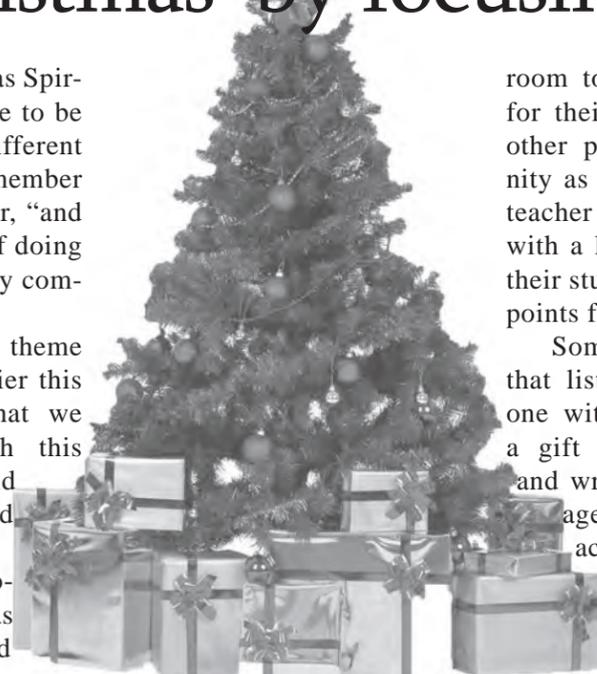
However, this year Go-Club decided to do something different.

"We decided to take ad-

vantage of the Christmas Spirit and encourage people to be giving and helpful in different ways," said Go-Club member and junior Isaiah Easter, "and there's no better way of doing that than a little friendly competition!"

"We had the sub theme of unity in chapel earlier this year and unity is what we wanted to accomplish this holiday season," said Go-Club member and junior Zion Baker.

The purpose of Go-Club Does Christmas was for the students and teachers in each home-



Source: inspirationseek.com

room to do acts of kindness for their fellow students and other people in the community as well. Each homeroom teacher was given a paper with a list of things they and their students could do to earn points for their homeroom.

Some of the things on that list were helping someone with homework, leaving a gift in someone's locker, and writing notes of encouragement to people. Each activity was worth a certain number of points, and if multiple students engaged in it, the number of points

were multiplied.

In order to receive points for their acts of kindness, the students had to take a picture to prove they did it and show it to their homeroom teacher. These acts of kindness allow students to get involved with not only their fellow classmates but also the community. The homeroom with the most points wins a breakfast with Mr. Boonstra.

"Doing something as small as baking brownies for the local police station gets students involved in their community" said Go-Club instructor Ms. Johnson.

Subways, senators, and selfies

If you know Mr. White, you know he hardly ever takes no for an answer, but this time he reluctantly had to. The school had sent me and seven other students on a trip to Washington D.C. to participate in a program called Close-Up. A highlight of this trip is meeting our senators, and it's something Close-Up representatives and Mr. White both tried arranging. Mr. White spent all morning making calls, trying to pull strings. We went as far as stalking the entrance of a senator's office for half an hour in the hope that the senator would walk past.



Collette Bouwer
News Editor

After multiple attempts, it was time to move on to the next thing scheduled. And even though Mr. White's persistence didn't get us to meet a senator, it did manage to sneak us on to the senate subway, five dinky open carts, each having two benches. He convinced an intern to let us ride the senate subway that is supposed to be reserved for people working there.

We received official little clips, and we had to go through security. Now, we had a group of nine, and security took forever. I got through towards the end, but I still managed to find an empty bench.

A moment later an older man, maybe in his 50's or 60's, dressed in a suit and tie, asked if he could sit with me. I decided I'd look really stupid if I didn't let the man who was actually supposed to be riding the subway have the seat, so I said of course with a smile.

I figured from his suit and tie that he worked there, so I asked with fake confidence and a smile, "What is your job here?"

He was sort of in a daze, reviewing his notes, so when I spoke his head quickly snapped up. He smiled and said in a southern accent, "I'm a senator."

I immediately fan girded. I was like a twelve year old at a One Direction concert or a five year old meeting her favorite princess at Disney world.

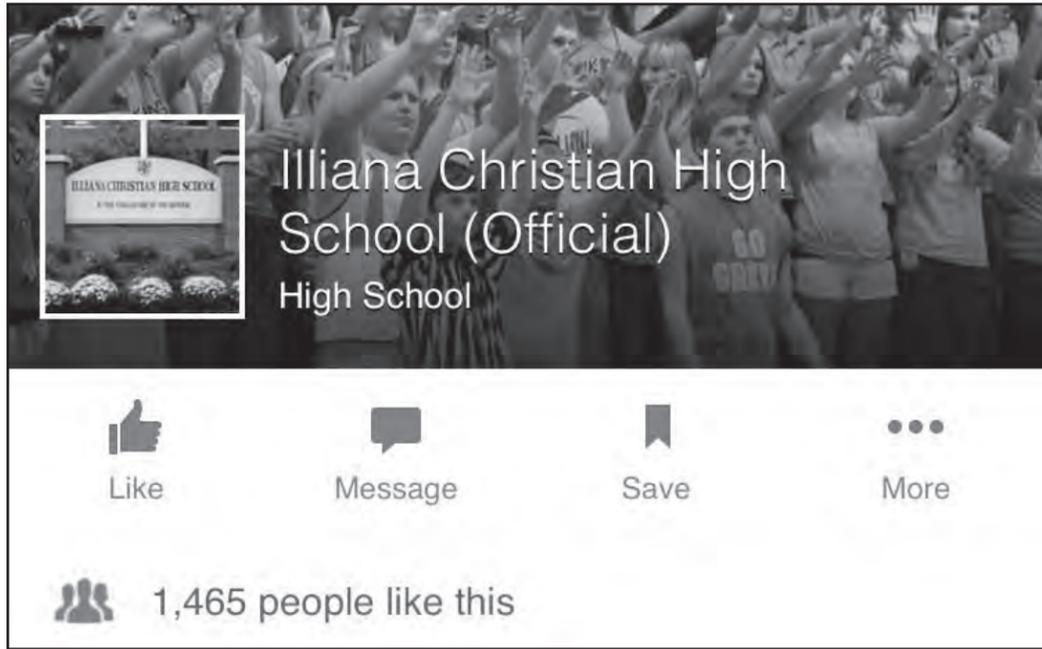
"Really?! That is so cool! What state are you from?" I immediately gushed.

Mr. White, in the cart behind us and never missing a photo op, flashed hand motions, signaling for me to ask for a picture. The senator said he would take a selfie once we got off. We proceeded to have a conversation for the next 45 seconds as we approached the capital. Once the subway stopped, he ran off to a debate about Obama Care after a quick selfie with me.

They say never talk to strangers, but after this incident, I would say always talk to strangers. After we tried so hard and failed, I stumbled over a senator when we least expected it.

Life has a funny way of doing that. I can try so hard for something, but I won't get it until I back off a bit. It's almost annoying how it happens. As I loosen my grip, everything falls into place—not always the place I hope, but it comes together. I think about freshman year homecoming and how terrified I was of not getting a date or the beginning of this year when I thought AP chemistry would be the death of me. Things didn't come together exactly as I wanted, but they came together. It was just a matter of how and when. Perhaps that should teach us, as Hamlet says, that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will."

And this time, it resulted in a selfie with Senator Perdue from Georgia even if the selfie wasn't exactly how I wanted it. Every time I see the picture, I cringe at the poor lighting and the awkward angle.



An image captured from Illiana Christian High School's Facebook page.

Illiana twitter trending

Beth Boonstra
Reporter

Ever since she started in June, the new Admissions Counselor, Elly Makowski, has played a large role in reviving Illiana's social media pages to help others hear about what's going on at Illiana. Makowski said, "I hope to tell the story of Illiana through social media... by featuring events, news, and pictures."

Illiana has had a Twitter and Facebook account for about 6 years according to Development Director Steve Holwerda. Holwerda said, "Andrew Knot was more consistent [than I] with Illiana news. Miss Makowski is good with [presenting] upcoming events and hap-

penings so that the Illiana community can get a better feel of what's happening at Illiana."

The Illiana Facebook page has gained 177 likes since Makowski started in June and the Twitter site is thriving with 228 followers and counting. Makowski said, "I post more often on Twitter because it requires more consistency and things are much faster."

Sophomore Andrew Feikema, one of the three members of the Marketing and Communications Club said, "I'm looking forward to working with Miss Makowski on an Instagram page soon."

Makowski said that the Marketing and Communi-

cations Club has also been helping her with the social media. "They help write Twitter posts... or take pictures for Facebook or Twitter." Makowski wanted to share that if there's anyone else out there who really loves tweeting or coming up with posts for social media, their help would be welcome. "They help me think of what's going on in the week," Makowski said.

Makowski said, "Our Twitter is targeted more towards our student audience and Facebook is mostly for parents and alumni."

"I'm really happy that she's doing this," said Holwerda. "As a younger person, she is a much better person to relate to the community."

Preview alluring prospective students

Lauren Curtis
Reporter

56 potential students and their parents came to Illiana's winter preview night on Thursday, Dec. 3, to get a taste of what really goes on at Illiana during the school day. Parents and their child/children observed different classes as teachers gave lessons or students did activities. The tours gave parents and potential students a little look inside Illiana's programs and classrooms. Some of the parents that came to preview night were very impressed with what Illiana had to offer.

"My daughter is into band... She got lit when she saw the jazz band program. No other school's band class did that for her, which makes me think

this is the school for her," said Matthew Wilkins, the father of a prospective student.

Just like him, some other parents were also very impressed with the programs Illiana had to offer. Some parents also loved Illiana's sense of "unity" as Latasha Jones, another parent, described it.

"As far as the student body is concerned, you all seemed to be unified in the classrooms. Not many schools are like that," Jones added. "Initially, the chance of my daughter going here was 0% because I know they're going to move [the campus], but now, after coming here and seeing what I've seen, I'm thinking about 50%."

Illiana's preview night was a success according to

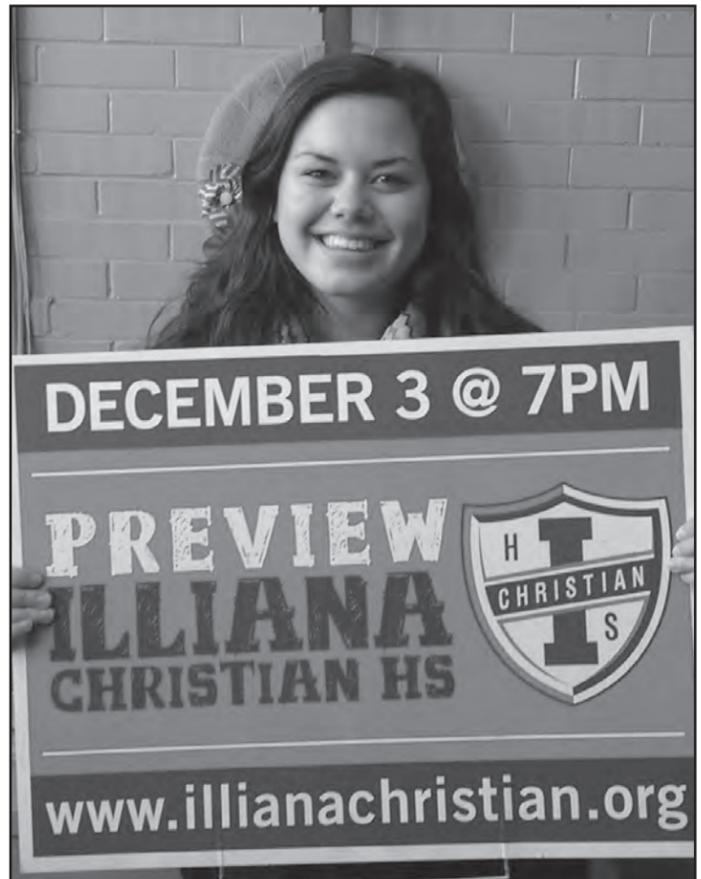


Photo by Elly Makowski

Senior Joanna Barrera holds up one of the signs used to advertise for the event.

Elly Makowski, Illiana's admissions counselor.

"The tour guides did a great job, the teachers did a great job teaching

Debate team focusing on scripture, Apologetics

Marissa Johnson
Reporter

On Nov. 13 and 14 the debate team had a tournament.

Sophomore Malik Evans competed in the tournament in the category Dramatic Interpretation. Dramatic Interpretation is based on a Bible verse. Evans had to choose a certain verse, recite it, and then speak on it for five minutes.

Evans said, "I spoke about [this question]: will following God's rule get you closer to God?"

Evans did not place in the category, but he said, "I didn't place because I wasn't as strong in that event. There were a lot of smarter kids and more homeschooled kids there." Evans added that he would try to practice more to be better.

Senior Autumn Wilson just joined Illiana's debate team, but she has been on a debate team since freshman year at another school. Wilson competed in the category Apologetics, and her question was "What is redemption?" Wilson worked in 1 Peter and looked at how spiritual redemption means that God redeems us from nothing and making us into something different.

Wilson placed sixth and said next time she would be more prepared and have a better understanding of scripture and where it [scripture] is."

in their classrooms, and over all people I talked to were just very enthusiastic about the opportunities here," said Makowski.

Biking the Lagerwey

Jake Olthoff

Reporter

Math teacher Robert Lagerwey turned 59-years-old this fall, but picture a much younger man, a college-aged Lagerwey riding a bicycle all over Alaska, or a 20-something Lagerwey riding on the Great Wall of China, or standing knee deep in the Atlantic Ocean hoisting his bike above his head in victory after riding from Oregon to Virginia.

Rob Lagerwey has always enjoyed the outdoors, including activities such as hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, and tennis, but biking is one of his favorite ways to enjoy God's creation. Lagerwey enjoys bike riding because it allows him to get exercise, it provides a challenge, and it lets him enjoy nature at a speed where he can actually see it.

"I've always had a passion for caring for the environment," Lagerwey said, "and biking is a good mode of transportation that does not pollute the environment."

Lagerwey's bike riding expeditions all started when he moved to Alaska with his older brother for a summer during college. Neither of them had a car, so they decided to ride bikes around town. Lagerwey's brother later got his master's degree in urban planning, specializing in bike and pedestrian transportation, and he became the pedestrian coordinator for the city of Seattle. That brother has helped to fuel Lagerwey's passion for biking.

Lagerwey's favorite biking memories include climbing to Logan Pass on the "Going to the Sun Highway" in Glacier National Park, biking with hundreds of bikers in

China, and seeing the Atlantic Ocean after riding from the Pacific. Lagerwey's first long ride was a 10 week tour of Europe in 1979 with two of his sisters and a brother-in-law.

Lagerwey has been fortunate enough to avoid any serious injuries while biking, besides riding over a patch of black ice once which caused him to fall and hurt his knee. His worst injury he has witnessed while biking occurred between Glacier National Park and the Canadian Rockies. He was biking next to a woman who hit a patch of gravel before the Canadian border; she broke her collarbone and was knocked out unconscious. The doctor told her that if she was not wearing a helmet, she would have died.

Lagerwey said, "Biking would be safer with more bike lanes and if helmets were required."



Photo courtesy of Robert Lagerwey
Lagerwey hoists his bike over his head, standing in the Atlantic Ocean after completing his long journey starting at the Pacific during the summer of 1982.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Chamber choir perform at Bethel Church on Thursday, Dec. 10.

Choirs, Bands spreading Christmas cheer, loud for all to hear

Cassie Iaconelli

Reporter

On Dec. 10 and 15, Ilhiana held Christmas concerts for the bands and choirs from 7:30 to 9 pm.

The band played a lot of Christmas music and had the crowd clapping and cheering.

Sophomore Malik Evans said that the concert went well for both bands, Symphonic and Wind Ensemble: "We both worked very hard on the songs and in the end we had a great show." The song he felt went the best was "Joyful Triumph".

Freshman Sidney Mathis

also thought that the concert went very well. "I feel like we needed more practice, but overall, it went pretty well." The song she thinks was performed the best was "Patapan", played by the combined bands.

Mathis said, "I don't have a favorite for Wind Ensemble because all the songs they did sounded amazing."

Senior Samantha Rubien thought the concert went decently but it could have been better. "It needed to be louder for certain parts, but other than that, it went pretty well." The song she liked the most was "O Holy Night."

Christkindlmarket, Goethe-Institut provide students realistic insight on German culture

Josh Smits

Reporter

On Dec. 16, German classes 2, 3, and 4 went downtown Chicago to Christkindlmarket and the Goethe-Institut.

Christkindlmarket is an open German Christmas market based of those one would see in Nuremberg, Germany. Small shelters

with red and white awnings and mostly manned by Germans sell food, drinks, ornaments, and other things in a square in the Daley Plaza park.

"It is a great opportunity to see a very realistic German Christmas Market," said German teacher Mr. Luke Fennema. "Chicago has one of the most realistic markets like [the Christmas

markets in Germany]."

Senior James Zandstra said about the Christkindlmarket, "Germans make really good roasted nuts."

Senior Nathan Dykstra and Fennema both said that their favorite part was the food.

After the Christkindlmarket, the German students made their way to the Goethe-Institut of Chicago. The Goethe-Institut is named after Johann Goethe, Germany's most famous poet and writer. The Goethe-Institut's goal is to promote German culture throughout other countries. The German students at the Goethe-Institut participated in many exercises with two native speakers, including a quiz about Germany.

Dykstra said his favorite part of the Goethe-Institut was "seeing how so many things we have in the U.S. are tied to Germany."

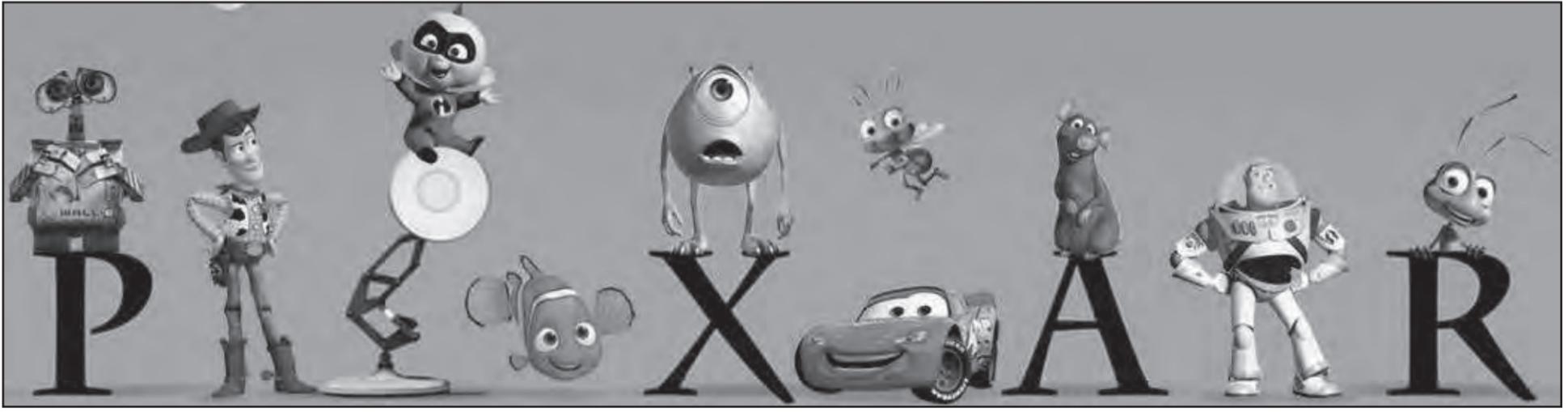
Junior Jack Barth said the Goethe-Institut was "a lot of fun, very interesting, culturally relevant."

Junior Juliana Knot said about the trip, "It was a really cool experience with a lot of culture...It's always nice hearing a native speaker talk because it helps teach you what kind of emphasis they put on words."



Photo by Luke Fennema

Students eat German soup, and other German foods around a table at the open market.



10. Ratatouille

This movie is about rats which, without actually seeing it, seems peculiar. If you take the time to watch, it has good content. The main plot is about a little rat following his dreams to become a chef. This is a great lesson to

teach viewers: follow your dreams. Although this movie has some great qualities, it also has its drawbacks. It doesn't keep your attention and the story line is more mature than what Pixar usually shows to a younger audience.



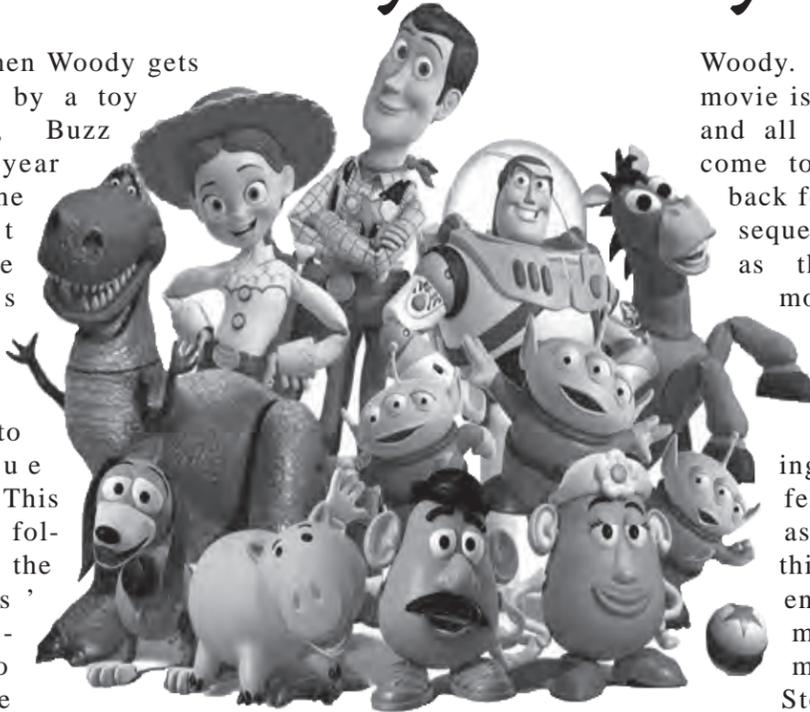
9. Inside Out

Inside Out is a fun way to portray how the brain works. It really touches your heart in the story line and teaches children the quality happiness. Overall it has one of the best overall messages Pixar has made: that you can find joy in every situation no matter

what. Although it does have all of these good qualities, it's nothing like the original Pixar movies we all know and love. It brings a different type of animation to the table, which is not what audiences really want. People don't like change and this Pixar movie decided to change it up.

8. Toy Story 2

When Woody gets stolen by a toy dealer, Buzz Light-year and the rest of the toys plan a mission to rescue him. This movie follows the toys' journey to rescue



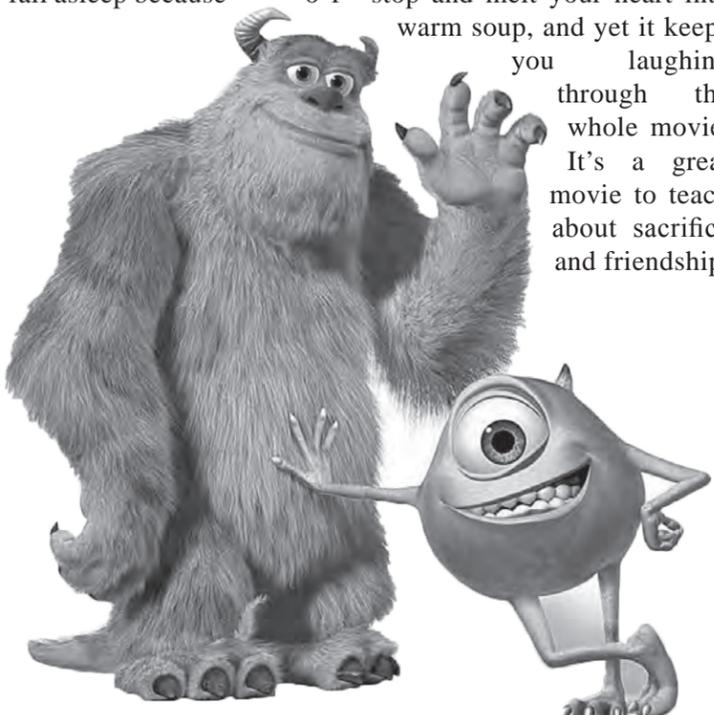
Woody. Even though this movie is a great adventure, and all the toys we have come to love have come back for another round, a sequel is never as good as the original. The movie has too much going on; the toys go all over the place and there's not really a resting place for heartfelt material. Putting aside these issues, this story keeps you entertained and makes you wanting more of the "Toy Story" adventures.

7. Monsters Inc.

"Monsters Inc." is relatable because everyone has once lay down to bed and been unable to fall asleep because

of the monsters in the closet. This movie puts a face on those silly childhood fears. It has time to stop and melt your heart into

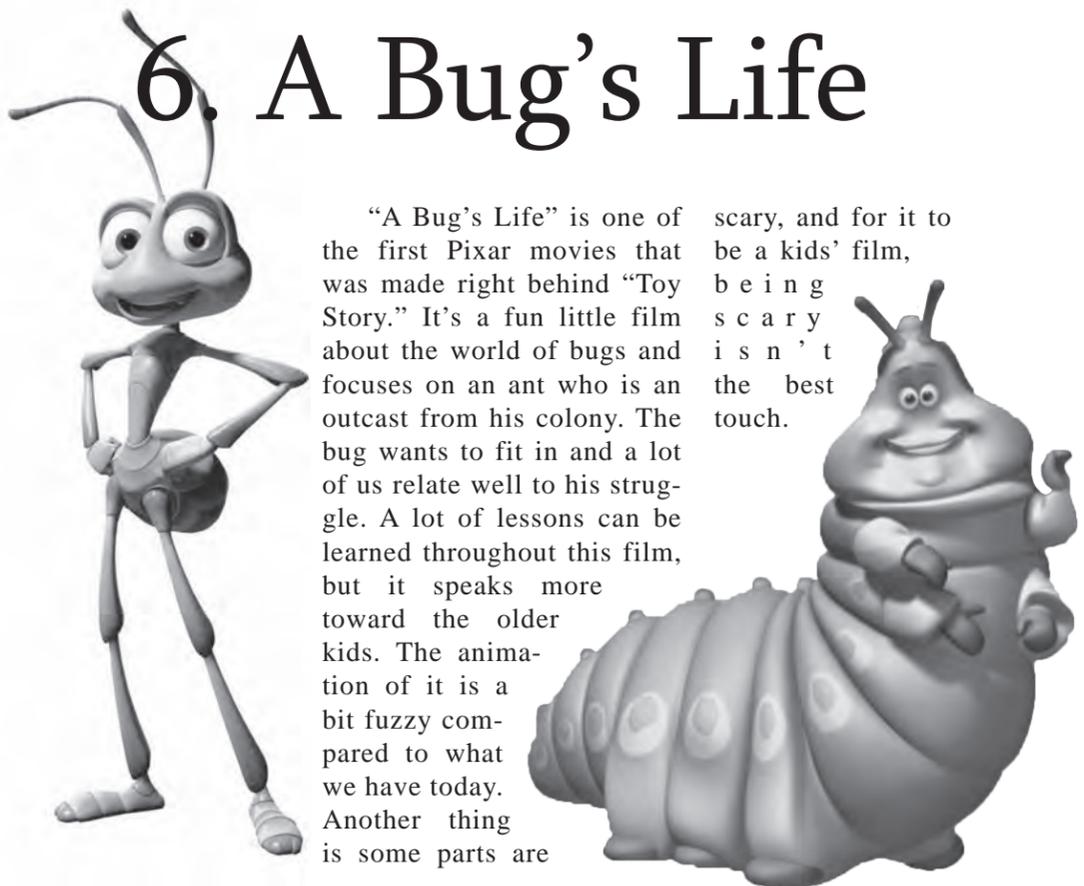
warm soup, and yet it keeps you laughing through the whole movie. It's a great movie to teach about sacrifice and friendship.



6. A Bug's Life

"A Bug's Life" is one of the first Pixar movies that was made right behind "Toy Story." It's a fun little film about the world of bugs and focuses on an ant who is an outcast from his colony. The bug wants to fit in and a lot of us relate well to his struggle. A lot of lessons can be learned throughout this film, but it speaks more toward the older kids. The animation of it is a bit fuzzy compared to what we have today. Another thing is some parts are

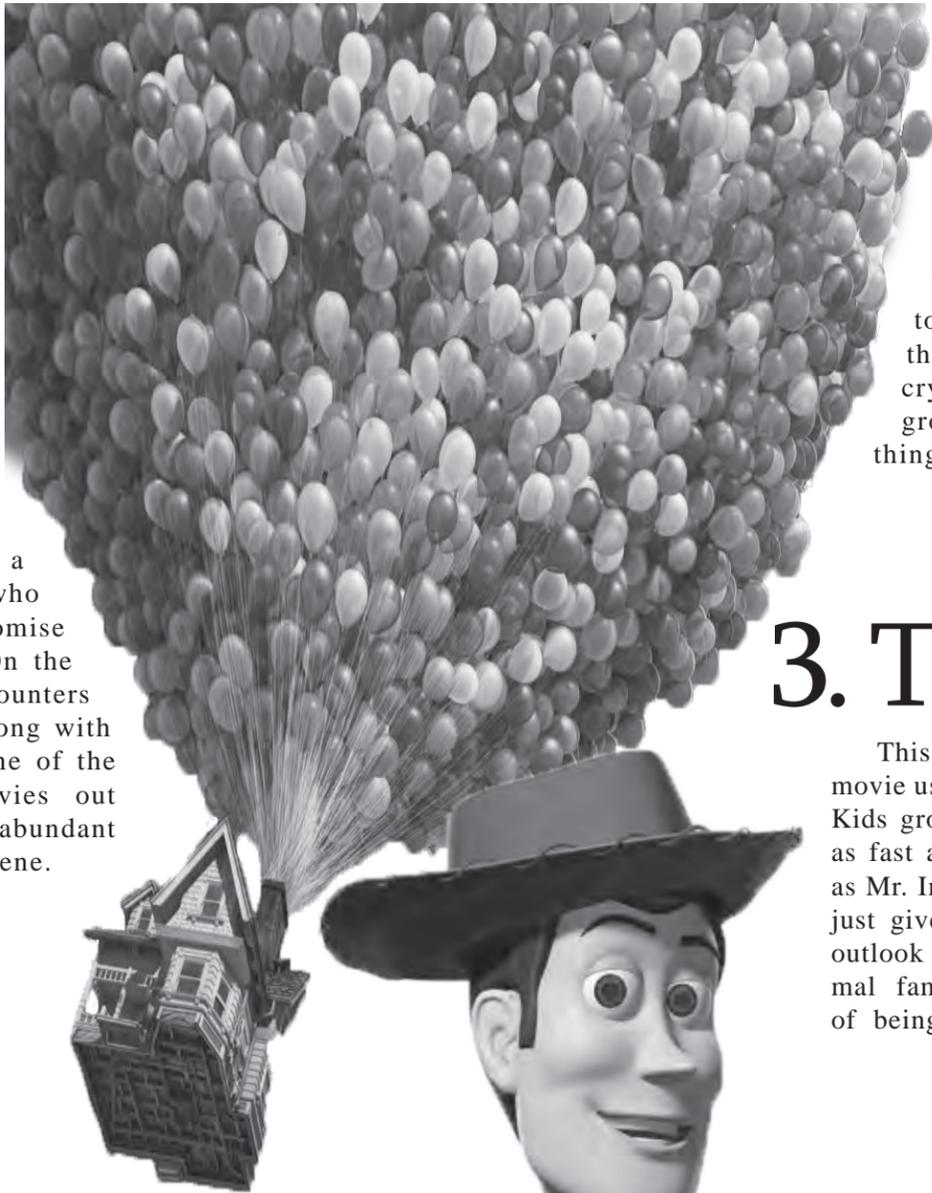
scary, and for it to be a kids' film, being scary isn't the best touch.



Rating the beloved animators top 10 movies

5. Up

"Up" is mostly known as "a better love story than 'Twilight,'" and, yes, it most definitely is. The love shown in this inspiring movie earns its spot at number 5. It makes girls go "aww" and boys shed a tear. It's a story of an old man who tries to fulfill his promise to his dead wife. On the adventure he encounters many situations. Along with the journey, it is one of the funniest Pixar movies out there. Laughter is abundant in each and every scene.



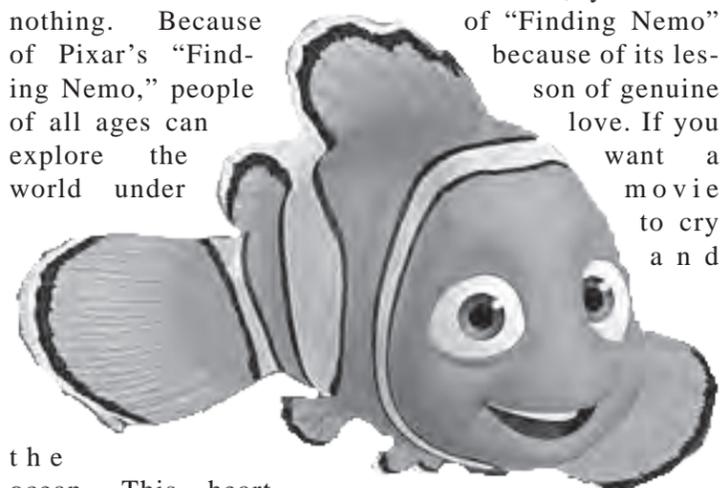
2. Finding Nemo

Under water is a magical place about which children know nothing. Because of Pixar's "Finding Nemo," people of all ages can explore the world under

the ocean. This heart-warming family movie takes kids on an adventure as Nemo, the clownfish, gets taken out of his

beloved home and away from his father Merlin. When you think of Pixar, you think of "Finding Nemo" because of its lesson of genuine love. If you want a movie to cry and

laugh and be touched by, "Finding Nemo" is the movie to watch.



4. Toy Story 3

The best threequel ever, by far. It was a great and heartfelt ending to a beloved series that made every man cry. It is a story about growing up, something that everyone has to deal with. From the first "Toy Story" to the last, the audience literally grew up with the characters in the film. It gives us a frightful look at growing up, but ends with the assurance that everything turns out okay.

3. The Incredibles

This is the first superhero movie usually every kid sees. Kids grow up wanting to be as fast as Dash or as strong as Mr. Incredible. The movie just gives you an enjoyable outlook at a somewhat normal family and the issues of being superheroes. Even though it's about super powers, in a sense the film is 100% realistic. Every family has problems, but you're still a family and so you get through them. This action movie has heart and gives the audience a great cliffhanger.



and #1... Toy Story

The very first Pixar movie out there that introduce a gun slinging cowboy and an adventurous space cadet. This movie started the animation renaissance by going above and beyond everyone's expectations. It gives every kid a joyful imagination on what their toys do behind their backs. All the creative characters in this flick, just make you smile. This movie is great for the family, it even entertains the teenage critics and the strict parents. The joy it brings within each and every one of our hearts, proves it deserves the number one spot.



STAR WARS: The Hype Awakens

Dalton Haven

Reporter

Darth Vader once said of Luke Skywalker, "The Force is strong with this one." He could just as easily have been speaking of the Dec. 18 opening of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," the most anticipated movie opening in years.

Many fans can hardly wait to see the new movie

to see if any of their theories about what might happen will actually be in this new movie.

Junior Kendall Smith hypothesizes that "Luke Skywalker will turn to the Dark side and give up all the Rebel intelligence that he knows."

Most of the theories swirl around Luke Skywalker, the hero of the first three movies, and whose image has been ab-

sent from all the trailers for the new film. Some popular theories online are that Luke is a hermit on a highly unpopulated planet where he becomes stronger in the Force. Another is that he becomes a new "Darth Vader" since a mask like Darth Vader's is shown in the trailer of the new movie.

Other lesser theories are that Jar Jar Binks has somehow become a Sith Lord, Darth Vader some-

how is still alive, and maybe, just maybe, Boba Fett is back for revenge.

Senior Trevor Schefers thinks that the young republic will have to face new Sith Lords, possibly having to blow up some huge starship so that the Galaxy will be safe from the Empire.

Sophomore Jared Trivette thinks that the Empire will take back control and the Rebels will have to fight harder.

A long time ago in a galaxy far away...

Kassidy Weemhoff

Arts Editor

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" premieres on Dec. 18 and is highly anticipated by obsessive Star Wars fans. Everyone knows Star Wars, right? Wrong. Let's delve a little deeper into the intergalactic realms of the film series.

The history of the most successful film merchandising franchise starts with the first film, "Star Wars" written by George Lucas and released in 1977. The movie became so big that it was known worldwide. The next two films, "The Empire Strikes Back", released in 1980, and "Return of the Jedi", released in 1983 also were well-liked. The first three movies make up the Star Wars trilogy. The prequel trilogy, released between 1999 and 2005, tell the story of Darth Vader, one of Hollywood's most iconic villains. These movies received more mixed reactions from the fanatics, but still had many captivated.

The hype does not stop there, though. The Star Wars expanded universe is made up of books, a TV series, computer and video games, and comic books.

It was when Disney bought out Lucasfilm that the three new films were announced. Now the ten year wait is over, and though the fans are tentative, their excitement rings clear through the media.

"Jedi because I fight for the good forces in the world. I believe I have fought against some Sith lords in my time...But I'm probably more of a moisture farmer than anything else."

-Mr. Kamphuis, teacher

"Jedi because you harness the good side of the Force. I believe it's stronger because I feel that the good side feeds on your love and good emotions and that your dark side feeds on fear and fear isn't as strong. I think the good can overcome the dark."

-Christian Pelke, junior

"Jedi knight...they're the good guys!"

-Dillon Herman, junior

Are you a Jedi knight or a Sith lord?

"Sith Lord because I want to take control of everything."

-Drew Smits, senior

"Sith because I like the color of their light sabers better."

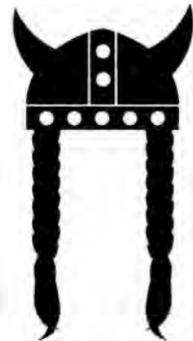
-Lauren Amatulli, sophomore

"I'm a Sith lord because I secretly believe that the Jedi are actually evil at heart and that the Sith know it all.

They seem powerful and strong and they're always a step ahead of the Jedi."

-Jordan Miller, sophomore

ASK VICKY VIKING



Boyfriend in pickle over present

Dear Vicky Viking,

Christmas can be such a great time for us to reflect on God's blessings to us and his grace towards us. However, often times I find myself stressed out about finding the right gift for everyone! I mean, I always seem to find something for aunts and uncles and grandparents, but this will be the first Christmas with my girlfriend, and I don't know what to get! Do I get something sappy and romantic? Or is a gift card a good way to go? What about the card-long and deep, or short and sweet? Vicky, I need your help!

Sincerely,

Stressed-Out Boyfriend

Dear Stressed-Out Boyfriend,

This is a difficult problem to address, but luckily for you I, Vicky Viking, am a pro gift-giver.

The key to getting your girlfriend a gift she will adore is effort, but don't overdo it. In order not to overwhelm your girlfriend, let me start by telling you what NOT to get:

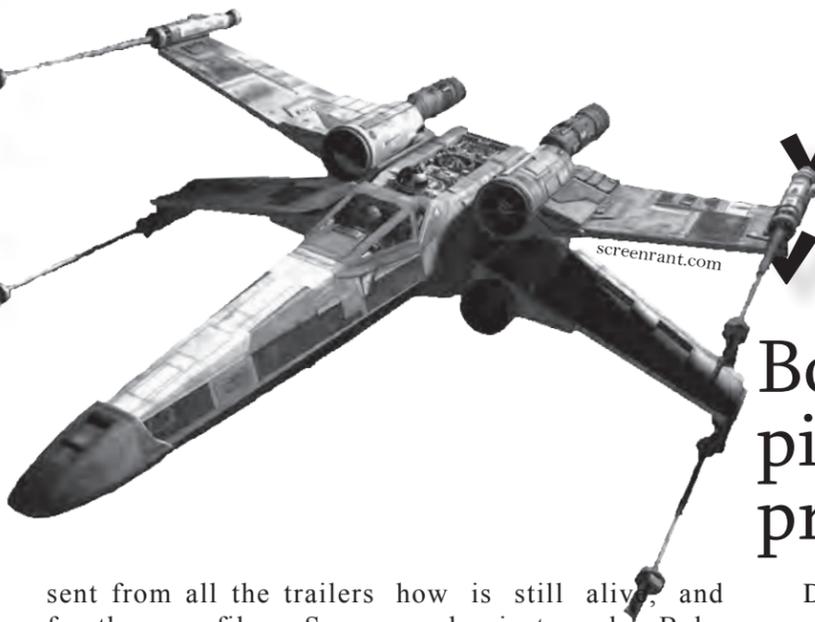
- a ten page letter on your obsession with her
- a CD filled with songs about your love, especially if they're performed by you
- a "she's mine" shirt, no further explanation necessary
- a photobook...of yourself
- one of those 4ft tall bears that she doesn't know what to do with but keeps anyways
- flowers, I mean how long will those last, three days?
- Justin Bieber's new album, it may stir up feelings of resentment towards you
- the video game you've been wanting; 9/10 times she doesn't love it as much as you do

But all jokes aside, I know this can be a really tough decision. My advice to you would be to go with a gift that shows you care. Maybe something that you picked up on that she didn't even realize you know about her. It could be something small like a box of her favorite candy, or something as big as tickets to her favorite band's concert. Just the fact that you took time to think about her and figure out what she enjoys will make her appreciative.

As for the card, I think you should do whatever you're comfortable with. Maybe you've been waiting for your chance to tell her how much you really like her. If that's the case, then write it out. Otherwise a simple "Merry Christmas!" will do just fine.

Above all, do not over think it. She will most likely be happy with whatever she gets just because it's from you. Also, she's probably torn over what to get you too. So don't let it worry you too much and enjoy yourself this Christmas!

Do you need advice? Contact Vicky at vickyvikingilliana@gmail.com or write a letter and turn it in to Mr. DeVries's mailbox located in the office. Thank you!



Girls varsity basketball jumps to strong start

Luke Hillegonds

Co-Sports Editor

The varsity girls basketball team has started off the year with a record of 6-3 and 2-0 record in conference.

The girls' first game was a great win over a tough opponent, Bloom, and the Gabby Kreykes believes that was their best win of the season so far.

The team is led by junior Gabby Kreykes who has played varsity her first three years. Kreykes said, "I wasn't really pleased with our performance at the Beecher Thanksgiving tournament, but recently we had a couple of good wins."

Junior Alyssa Murrin said, "All of our losses have been really close, and I think we could have won them if a couple things went our way. We could easily be 7-2, or even 8-1."

Senior Brittany Groen said, "We didn't have much chemistry at the beginning of the year, but we are really coming together nicely. I think that we will finish the year strong."



Photo by Deb Kamp

The Loud Crowd cheers at the varsity boys basketball game against Chicago Christian on Dec. 11 for the Christmas game.

Boys basketball falls short against CCHS

JP Peerbolte

Reporter

"Whenever we play Chicago Christian it's a good game," said Senior Jon Gibson before the game on December 11, and a good game it was. Unfortunately the boys varsity basketball team was unable to take the victory that Friday night.

Prior to the game junior

Jared Jonkman said, "We expect a high tempo, high intensity, close game."

The first quarter started with great intensity and was scoreless for the first minute-and-a-half. The Vikings and Knights looked evenly matched. The first quarter ended 6-8 with a Knight lead.

One of the most exciting points of the game was close to the end of the second quarter when, junior Ethan Beezhold

made a three point shot at the buzzer giving the Vikings a one point lead going into the third quarter, 23-22.

The fourth quarter started extremely loud with both the Illiana and Chicago Christian student sections at the tops of their lungs. The fourth quarter was a difficult fight. Senior Matthew Zandstra hit a three-pointer with 22 seconds left, but it wasn't enough for the Vikings

to take the lead.

"The hustle was there, but we were making mental mistakes," said senior Jon Gibson after the game.

After the loss the Vikings record was 6-3.

The team has a new head coach this year, Grant Sikkema.

"He brings lots of enthusiasm to practice and strives to make every player better," said Jared Jonkman.

Wrestling team looks to improve

Jacob Thompson

Co-Sports Editor

"I wasn't quite sure if we were even going to have a team this season," said junior Jesse Ellis. "But now we have ten guys and a win as a team under our belt. We are all feel-



Photo by Sara Bosman

Jesse Ellis pins down opponent on December 5th and later that day took first.

ing really confident."

The wrestling team had three members place individually in the thanksgiving tournament (Ellis winning the whole thing), and put away a win as a team. Although the team lacks numbers, they make up for it

in talent.

"I think I can speak for the whole team that our goal is to send as many individuals to state as possible," said Sophomore Isaac Lyzenga. "We just have to keep working hard as a team and pushing ourselves for the

Cheer team captures 4th at North Pole Invitational

Faith Mischka

Reporter

The cheer team captured 4th place at the North Pole Invitational at Lincoln-Way North High School on Saturday, Dec. 12.

The team was only .4 points away from beating rival Chicago Christian. To gain higher scores next time, the cheerleaders and their coaches are trying to make their stunts more difficult so that their routine can potentially score more points.

Junior Laci Gibson said, "To get a higher score, we need to

work on being cleaner. We also need higher tumbling scores."

The team is made up of veterans and newcomers, and all the girls are excited about their squad.

Junior Jessica DeYoung said, "We have a motto called F.A.C.E. that we created last year and kept for this season. It stands for Family, Attitude, Confidence, and Encouragement."

"My favorite thing about cheering is learning I can do things I'd never dreamt of," said freshman Haleigh Olthof. "Hitting a new skill makes the long hours of practice so worth it."

Male Athlete of the Month

Junior Jesse Ellis transferred to Illiana from Hammond Baptist his sophomore year. Last year as a sophomore wrestler he went 37-2 and received the 1st seed for the state tournament. However, he was not able to participate down state because of transferring rules.

This year Jesse has started the season strong oncewZ again. At the Seneca Tournament he won his weight class for the second year in a row.

Ellis started lifting more in the offseason and says he can notice a difference in his strength.

Ellis added, "This year I look to place in the top 3 down state, if not win it. I was disappointed last year when I couldn't compete down state, so this offseason I worked hard on strength and technique."



Female Athlete of the Month

Junior Alyssa Murrin is having a great start to her first full season on varsity basketball. Averaging 7 points per game, 3.6 assists, and 1.4 steals, Murrin's stats are, according to MaxPreps, exceeding almost all national averages. Ranked 95th in the state, Murrin has helped her team to a 6-2 start and 2-0 in the conference.

"This season has been really fun so far," Murrin says. "I'm excited to be starting and playing as well as I am."

Murrin had her standout game against Reed Custer, recording a double-double (11 points, 11 assists) and helping her team to a 57-47 win. With a season high of 14 points Murrin says she's excited for the rest of the season and how everyone will play.



Editorial

In season of fear let Christians stand for love

Donald Trump has made headlines in his run for the presidency by saying outlandish statements. But two of his recent statements rise far above outlandish. In fact, we find them downright dangerous. His proposals first to create a nationwide database to track American Muslims and, second, his proposal to ban Muslims from entering America are not just bad ideas, they are fundamentally un-American and evil.

As seen in San Bernardino a few weeks ago and Paris a month ago, the terrorist threat to our nation is real and dangerous, and we need to fight against terrorists at home and abroad. That fight is with terrorists, though, not Muslims. Donald Trump feeds off the fear many Americans are feeling, and he makes no distinction between terrorists and Muslims. Instead he deals with xenophobia and stereotypes.

Such shameful stereotyping has plagued America in the past. During World War II, Japanese Americans were

stereotyped as being spies for Japan, and the American government, backed by the majority of the American people, put them in internment camps. During the era of McCarthyism, the House Un-American Activities Committee declared various government workers, teachers,

“... Let love and respect be the trademark of our attitudes toward Muslims.”

journalists, and entertainers to be communist without any evidence. Their mere occupations “guaranteed” that they must be subversives. In each of these cases, later Americans look with shame at decisions the earlier Americans made out of ignorance and fear.

One of American’s founding principles is the guarantee of reli-

gious freedom. The pilgrims came to America to escape religious persecution. The Founding Fathers secured freedom of religion in the first amendment. How then can we suggest tracking or banning people based on their religion? We cross a dangerous line.

These ideas have

shown their ugly head before. Adolf Hitler took advantage of fear and instability in Germany to identify and track German Jews. Then it was gold stars; now it is a database. Trump’s proposal echoes fascism. It isolates and ostracizes an entire people group based on religion. The Constitution refutes that. The Bible refutes that. Donald Trump is killing

the very ideals he says he wants to make great.

Christians are called to love our neighbors, and the parable of the Good Samaritan casts a pretty wide net for who fits that definition. The fear that Trump is using to drive his campaign leaves no room for love. It pits neighbor against neighbor. It locks people in their homes, afraid of who’s across the street. It tracks and labels and blacklists. It doesn’t build community; it destroys it.

Both as Americans and as Christians let’s live up to our ideals. As Americans, let’s defend the rights of others to exercise their religion freely. As Christians let love and respect be the trademark of our attitudes towards Muslims. Prayer for others, including the refugees, might be a good place to start.

So this Christmas, let’s not let fear dictate our view of others. As the song says, “They’ll know we are Christians by our...” Not by our fear, not by our databases, not by our deportations, but by our love.

An escape from St. Turk

’Twas the last class before Christmas when all through the school Every student was stirring, just tired of rules The teachers were putting their lessons to rest Waiting patiently to leave and go home and nest. The upstairs was stuffy, and reeked of BO; The sentiment was clear: all

wanted to go. The clock dragged slowly, with seconds like tar With minutes like turtles, break seemed very far When outside the window, snow started to fall Almost driving the classrooms straight up the wall.

“Away from window! We still aren’t quite done!” Said the teacher “It’s still not time to run” The students all glared at the new-fallen snow And decided that they’d rather sit on death row Than endure another moment of delaying vacation To think about participles or linear equations The staff buzzed the office, “We must let them out!”

“They might overthrow us; we’re having our doubts.”



Juliana Knot
Co-editor in chief



When Vice Principal Turkstra said, “Teachers, no fear!”

“A lovely Turk’s Topic will soothe all their ears.”

The intercom buzzed on with scratches and squeaks,

The students then knew the next five minutes were bleak.

Their faces filled with exasperation and dread. “I really want earbuds,” a brave student said. “Illiana!” Turk said. “We must settle down!”

“You students are acting exactly like clowns.”

But Turkstra was overpowered with all of their noise.

Things were getting loud in Lansing, Illinois. No teacher had ever seen this sort of loud insurrection-

Chicago Christian started taking notes for their cheering section.

The volume was climbing, decibel by decibel, But then all of it was broken, with the ringing of the bell.

The students cleared out in two minutes flat: No one even wanted to hang around and chat. Mr. Turkstra watched them leave with tears in his eyes,

“I couldn’t finish my Turk’s Topic. I just might cry.”

A janitor walked up and gave his arm a whack. “It’s only two weeks. You know they’ll be back.”

Since Turk couldn’t finish, I might as well try: Merry Christmas to all and to all: goodbye!



the Echo)))

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Editorial Cartoon)))



The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at theillianaecho@gmail.com