



Struggling to find that perfect gift? Our Arts editors have got you covered on page 6.

the Echo

There's two weeks of Christmas vacation... Read the Feature editors' suggestions for how to spend it on pages 4-5.



Illiana Christian High School

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Lansing, Illinois

Turkstra values health after appendix scare

Cassie Laninga
Reporter

Vice Principal AJ Turkstra had his appendix removed at 12 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 19, after hours of experiencing flu like symptoms and intense pain.

"On Thursday, we had an early release for a faculty in-service. Right around there, I started feeling like I was getting a stomachache with a nauseous feeling," said Turkstra.

All day Friday, the day of the Dodgeball Tournament at Trinity, Turkstra said it felt like the flu was coming, but nothing ever happened. He left school at 4:30 p.m. and got home at 5:00.

He was getting ready to go downstairs and play hockey with his kids when all of the sudden he felt a bolt of intense pain in his lower abdomen and hit the floor.

"I called for help," said Turkstra. "It was pretty intense." His wife took him to Saint Anthony's Hospital in Crown Point at 6:30, where he lay on the floor in the waiting room without pain medication until 7:30 p.m.

At 9:00 p.m., he was taken in for a CT scan.

"After the CT scan, it was clear that it was my appendix," said Turkstra. "My appendix had ruptured, and it was perforated."

At midnight, he went in for surgery, and by 1:30 a.m., it was over. By 2:30 a.m., Turkstra was awake and resting.

He slowly recovered over the next few days and eventually was able to eat and celebrate Thanksgiving. Turkstra said he learned from the experience.

"I learned that life is precious. Our bodies are fragile," said Turkstra. "It gave me a newfound respect for people who go through serious health issues and how helpless they might feel."



Photo by Juliana Knot

Left: Sophomore Regan Lyzenga writes a note of Christmas comfort in Mrs. Drost's homeroom.

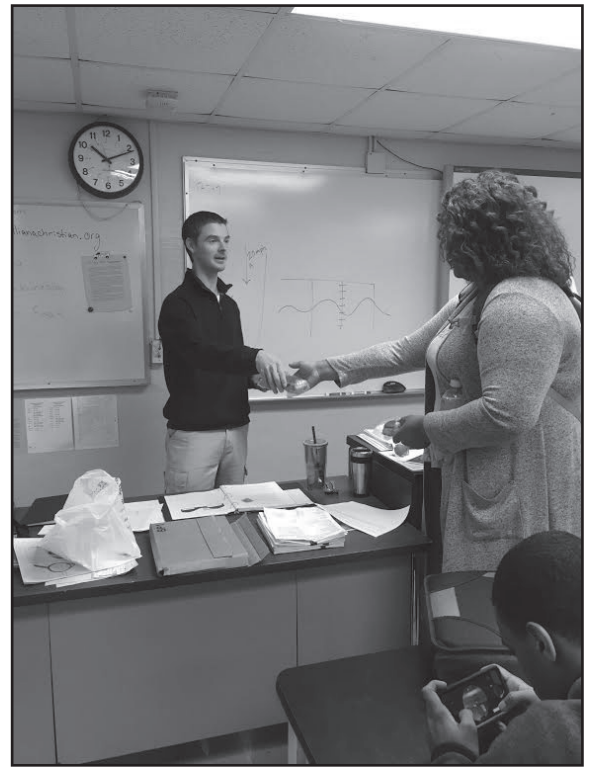


Photo by Collette Bouwer

Right: Junior Lauren Curtis gives Mr. Haan a chocolate donut to show her appreciation.

Go Club spreads Christmas cheer, encourages homerooms to love one another

Caleb Last
Reporter

GO Club is promoting showing God's love through the Christmas season through GO Club Does Christmas, where Illiana's homerooms show love and get rewarded in points. The homeroom with the most points will receive a catered breakfast with Mr. Peter Boonstra.

Senior Chistian Pelke said of the GO Club Does Christmas

program, "It's about doing tangible things during the Christmas season to prove Christ's love." Pelke, who was on GO Club last year as well as this year, added that the program was successful in its launch last year.

Ms. Johnson, one of the co-sponsors of GO Club, said that GO Club Does Christmas actually has two goals. The first is to make Christmas active for service. The second goal is to build the unity

of Illiana's homerooms. Johnson says that last year GO Club Does Christmas, the idea of co-sponsor Mrs. Bilyeu, really got kids excited.

Math teacher Mr. Lagerwey said that in his homeroom he had heard a lot of talk, and he is excited to see what comes of it. Lagerwey likes the program, since it could lead to habits of service.

Last year the homeroom that won the catered breakfast with

Boonstra was Mrs. Drost's homeroom, but the breakfast is not the goal of GO Club Does Christmas.

Two-year Go Club member Sophomore Hayley Smit said, "We do [Go Club Does Christmas] because we want to bring Christmas joy and cheer to everyone around the school. We feel that it's necessary to show the love of Christ not just to our friends, but to branch out and help out others who we would not necessarily talk to."

German class tastes, hears, experiences German Culture

Second, third, and fourth year students explore the Goethe Institute and Christkindlmarkt in Daley Plaza

Josh Chancellor
Reporter

Illiana's German 2, 3, and 4 classes went on a field trip to the Goethe Institute and the Christkindlmarkt in downtown Chicago on Dec. 6.

Their speaker at the Goethe Institute, Joachim Hecker, was a native of Cologne, and he spoke German the entire time. Hecker is essentially a German version of Bill Nye, the Science Guy, and students did experiments with him during their visit.

For example, Hecker demon-

strated how different words can sound in the ears of the speaker versus the ears of an outside listener. Students would go on stage and he'd place on their heads a stethoscope attached to a speaker so that the audience could listen to a person's voice "from the inside."

Senior Juliana Knot, an AP German student, enjoyed the experience of conversing with a native German speaker. She also enjoyed the students next stop at the Christkindlmarkt.

"The greatest thing about the trip



Photo by Luke Fennema

Juniors Karli Petrarca, Rachel Batterman, Esther Lagerwey, Michelle VanKalker, and Stephanie VanDeel enjoy warm pretzels on a below freezing day in Daley Plaza.

was trying different German foods and visiting the market," Knot said.

She also noted how over her years of study, the language has become much easier for her to speak and understand.

"In the past, when we went to the Goethe Institute, I struggled to understand native speakers, but the last two years it has been easier," Knot added. "And other German 3 and 4 students

have said the same thing."

Senior Emma Mazrimas said, "I thought it was really interesting to see the market and to taste the food they had there, and see some of the German culture."

Sophomore Elizabeth DeYoung said, "I really liked the Goethe institute because they had a lot of hands on activities, and the speaker was really fun."

Barbie girl in harsh real world

Okay, girls. We have all had a Barbie doll, whether it was Barbie the Doctor or Barbie the Fashionista. Some of us may be too embarrassed to admit it, but I will- Barbie was my role model. I wanted to be

just like her, have 130 careers, have a wardrobe full of the latest fashions, have a big dream house (that's actually still a dream of mine), and most importantly have her BODY. Her body was everything,



Lauren Curtis
Co-Arts Editor

her long neck, those perfect thighs and her hips that are to die for. Growing up and slowly putting away the dolls, I found I was comparing myself to Barbie. "Why can't my hair be that long? Why won't my hips go in like that? How can I get a body like that?" It began getting so bad that I didn't even want to look in the mirror anymore because if I couldn't be as pretty as Barbie, I was ugly.

So I know what you're thinking "All that over a Barbie doll?" Yes, I admit now it was a little bit extreme, and I did get over Barbie. But once she was gone I was used to a pattern of self-destructive behavior. I began comparing myself to other models and celebrities. Although comparing myself to a real person might have been a little bit better, I slowly stopped loving myself. I felt like I was no good, and I wouldn't be any good until I looked like a goddess. It got so bad that I began asking my mom if I could get surgery. Liposuction, hip enlargement, Brazilian butt lifts, you name it. I wanted it all. Every time she denied me, I felt like she didn't want me to be as pretty as the other girls. I then became depressed because of who I was and I slowly let myself go.

Now that the sad part of the story is over, let's look at the positives. I've grown up and now I'm actually kind of proud of the young lady I've become. Trust me, I know I'm not a size double 00 like the models and I know I'll never have hips like Barbie, but now I see that none of that matters. I would like to tell you that the Bible helped me along my journey to self-love, but alas that is not the case. I had help, my friends and family showed me God through their actions of love and kindness. One of my best friends texted me every morning that I was beautiful and she would even say I was her WCW every week (Woman Crush Wednesday). I slowly started to stop looking at what was wrong with me and started looking at how I could improve myself.

I still struggle with self-love. It's something I'll probably never get over. But now I laugh at Barbie and how she looks. If I were actually shaped like her, I'm not sure I'd even be able to walk without falling over. Still, at one time I was so brainwashed by Barbie's beauty that I forgot to thank God for giving me mine.



Juniors Malik Evans and Zaria Cross help with Preview Illiana's newest feature: the Student Activity Fair.

Photo by Elly Macowski

Preview shows prospective students highlights of Illiana

Natalie Togtman
Reporter

Grant Gibson
Reporter

As the calendar turned to December, so did it Illiana's recruitment office officially turn its focus to next school year. 47 eighth-grade students from across the southern Chi-

cago suburbs visited ICHS that Thursday evening to see how the school might fit into their future.

Eighth graders and their families toured the school in small groups led by a teacher and one or two student council members. Other student council members served as helpers for eighth-graders, who might be lost or have a question.

ICHS test scores send mixed message

Emma Slings
Reporter

Maddie Holesinger
Reporter

ICHS bills itself as providing students bound for college with a top-notch academic experience, but do our test scores bear that out? In some ways they do, and in some ways they don't.

The ACT test, required by most colleges, is based on a 36 point scale. The national average for the ACT test is 20.1, Indiana's state average is 22.1 in 2014, and Illinois' average score is 20.7. Considering these averages, Illiana is faring pretty well with an average of 23.9 in 2015 and 23.1 in 2016. Lake Central High School in St. John, Indiana had an ACT average of 22.1 in 2014.

Principal points out goal is success for students, not bragging rights over rival schools

However, compared to the averages of our sister Christian schools, we are trailing by a hair. Timothy Christian has an average of 24.1 in 2016, and Chicago Christian's website shows a composite score of 23.6.

Another thing to consider in comparing academic experiences are the AP classes. Taking AP (Advanced Placement) classes better prepare students for taking the ACT, and for succeeding in college.

Illiana offers six AP classes which include Calculus, Chemistry, English, German, Government, and Spanish. Those classes are only available for juniors and seniors, however; and students must receive a B- grade in the pre-

Gillian Fiene, freshman student council member, said, "We're the people in the blue shirts people recognize to go to for help with anything."

The feedback from the visitors was positive.

"I got to see what it was really like and how teachers interact with their students," Kate Ohm of Crown Point Christian said. She also complimented the Illiana community, saying that all of the students seemed friendly and that the teachers were kind and lots of fun.

Illiana's teachers also asked their students to aid them in a mock-classrooms. Students who came to help out pretended to be in class so that the eighth-graders could observe a typical lesson. Some students just had a normal class period of note-taking or worksheet-completing, but other teachers used the night as an opportunity for their students to review. Some, like math teacher Mr. Dave Bosman, showed off technology at the same time. His students played Kahoot to review for a test.

"It breaks up the monotony of class," Bosman said. "It allows students to review information."

requisite course to enroll.

Timothy offers ten AP classes for juniors and seniors and one for sophomores, that being Human Geography. In addition to the AP classes Illiana offers, Timothy also offers US History, Biography, and Physics 1 & 2. However, they do not offer AP German or Chemistry as Illiana does. Timothy does not demand prerequisite courses before enrolling in an AP class. Instead enrollment is based on teacher recommendations, standardized test scores, and past grades.

Chicago Christian is slightly smaller than Illiana, but the school offers eight AP classes in spite of that fact, and they also begin to offer AP classes sophomore year.

Lake Central, being a public

Sports auction funds sports

Jo Mulder
Reporter

The Athletic Department held its 2nd annual auction on Nov. 29, raising \$67,000. Not all of the money went to the department. It was divided between our Loud Crowd and the Christian Aid Fund, which is designed to help families that cannot afford the expenses of Christian Education.

According to Boys Athletic Director Darren DeBoer the auction was successful. The department raised more money than last year. Last year's auction fell on the same day as a major snowstorm, causing fewer people to show up. DeBoer does think that the auction has the potential to raise even more money next year.

Volunteers and the Athletic Booster Club put in hours of time to plan and ready the auction. They sold dozens of donated items from pool tables to Cubs tickets. The auction itself was silent, so buyers placed their bids without an auctioneer shouting numbers.

The auction is one of two fund raisers for the department. The next one is the Pancake Pacer in April, 2017.

school with a much larger student body, has 25 AP courses available including Psychology and Micro-economics.

Of course, offering the classes means little unless students learn in them. In this area, ICHS outshines its competition. 63.1% of Lake Central students that took the AP exam scored a 3 or higher in 2015 and 71% of the Chicago Christian students that took it scored a 3 or higher in 2016. 83% of the Illiana Christian students that took the AP exam scored a 3 or higher in 2016.

Principal Peter Boonstra said, "What we're after isn't to beat other schools. What we're after is to make sure the students have the opportunity to succeed in an AP class."

"Hello goodness," goodbye old vending machines

Kendall Smith
Reporter

Two new vending machines stand tall in the gym lobby where they've been dispensing an array of new drinks from Gatorade to Mountain Dew energy drinks, from bottled water to Pure Leaf iced tea, since late November.

With the words "Hello, goodness" sprawled across their tops, the machines suggest that their contents are healthy, but not all students agree.

"The food selection is unhealthy" says senior Opy Akinbobuyi.

Others such as senior Ore

Osineye, however, welcome the addition. Osineye said, "They're okay, and at least they don't take my money [without giving product]"

The new machines, like the other vending machines in the building, do not belong to the school. Rather, they are placed here by vending machine companies. In ICHS's case, that means either Pepsi or Hometown Suburban Vending. Salesmen for the companies ask permission to place new machines, and the school can grant or deny permission. If the school grants permission, once students begin using it, the school gets a cut of the profit from the

company.

Not only is it relatively easy to just get a vending machine put in, but it is also quite easy to get them replaced.

"When I complain about a machine not giving out product, I get a new one," said Vice Principal AJ Turkstra. If the machine doesn't work, students are unhappy and both the school and the vending company are losing money.

Sometimes, as was the case with the addition of our newest machines, the vending companies decide independently to wheel in newer model machines just to keep the product flowing and the customers happy.



Photo courtesy of foodengineeringmag.com



The We the People team competed in the Everett-Dirksen Federal Courthouse in Chicago on Dec. 2.

Club argues for “blessings of liberty” at We the People competition in Chicago

Tessa Buiter
Reporter

Members of Illiana’s We the People team competed against ten other schools on Friday, Dec. 2, in Chicago; they presented arguments on different political issues tied to the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Led by history teacher Mr. Jeff White, We the People meets during Tuesday/Thursday clubs and one day a week after school. Students do research and write on political issues where they later present in groups in front of judges who then ask questions.

All fall semester, students work on different topics, using various textbooks and other sources as references. At the actual competition, there were seven units, three of which Illiana participated in, and one of which ICHS won. Students had four minutes to read a question on an area they had researched, then judges spent six minutes questioning them.

After the competition, We the People toured the city. For freshman Ethan Verhagen, lunch at the Berghoff Cafe was a highlight.

Senior Everett Buiter said the club would welcome more students because “we need more people to

talk on the issues.” He says the competition offers a good place to voice an opinion because it’s during the questions that students can insert their own views.

When asked about what he is most excited for, sophomore Austin Parks said, “Learning more about the Constitution and being open to current events and discussion.”

The level of competitions vary. Some of the schools that placed higher will travel to Washington D.C. The size of groups also varies. Some schools had more than twenty participants and some, like Illiana, had fewer than ten.

New TVs to fill hallways with announcements, pictures

Liz VanDrunen
Reporter

Illiana will install five new television screens around the school in order to show pictures and give announcements; the installation should be finished by the end of December.

The idea came from Mr. AJ Turkstra, the vice principal and Mr. Jack Rudenga, the technology coordinator at Illiana. They began to think about installing screens around three years ago, but because of cost the idea was put on hold.

Right now they are displaying mostly photos of the student body, but they will soon also include announcements.

Mr. Rudenga recently found a program that would allow the school to go online and easily make changes and add more information on the screens, said Turkstra.

“This is also only a

one-time payment unlike other programs that require a monthly subscription,” Turkstra said. “[The new program] is why the televisions are coming into place this year.”

The Admissions committee supported this idea and agreed that they wanted to have at least one TV up before Illiana’s Preview Night and all of them before the winter sports season, when there is a lot of people in the building. There will be four 40” TV’s and one 60” TV, placed around the school, including the front hall and the gym lobby.

There have been mixed feelings on the new TV’s from the students. While some find them informational and important, others find them unnecessary.

Junior Maddie DeYoung was part of the latter group, saying, “at this point, I think the money could’ve been put towards something more practical.”

Close Up tours Washington DC



1. During the week, students visited various historical sites. Here Kyle Zuidema and Jesse Hoekstra get put in the stocks at Colonial Williamsburg.

Beth Boonstra- “Historical sites such as Colonial Williamsburg and Ford’s Theater were interesting because suddenly the history seems real.”

2. Students visited several monuments including the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial pictured here.

Esther Lagerwey- “I learned that the history of ... how people acted earlier on really shapes what we see in America now. What Martin Luther King Jr. did helped to shape what citizens can do to help their voices be heard.”

Charles Buiter- “The Air Force monument was really cool because I’m thinking about joining the Air Force. I learned that the most deaths in the military have been in the Air Force.”

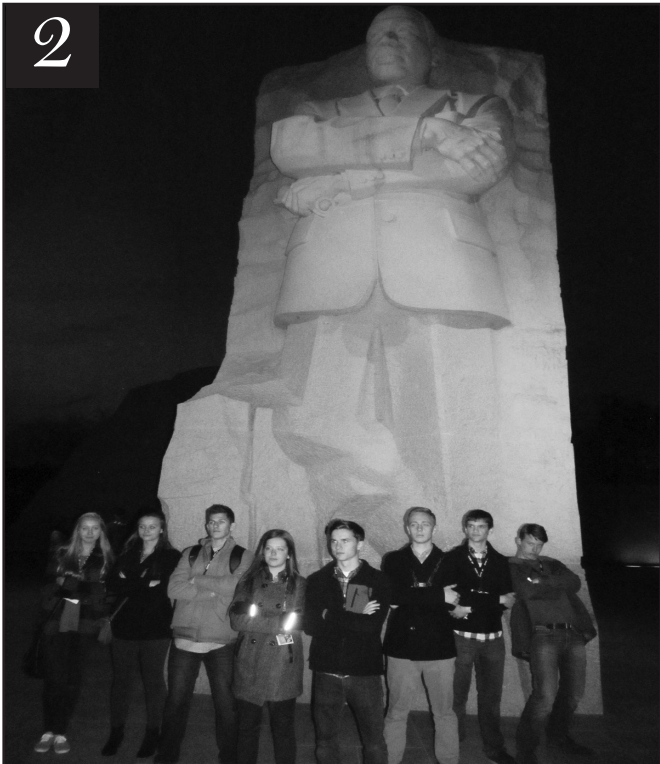
3. Students were also given the opportunity to tour ABC7 News and speak with reporters.

Josh DeYoung- “It was nice getting to know the smaller group [of Illiana students] among the huge group at Close Up. We grew a lot closer as friends during our time there, because none of us really knew each other well beforehand.”

4. Students had the opportunity to meet with their representatives and see the roles that they play in the government.

Kyle Zuidema- “Going into the trip... I figured that conservative and liberal politician’s interactions were just a giant bloodbath, but after seeing politicians firsthand on Capitol Hill, I see there’s a lot more civility.”

Jesse Hoekstra- “We talked about eminent domain, and a lot of people from Utah were there. They had a lot of views about whether the government should be able to seize your property because they had a lot of family-owned farms.”



5. Students visited Arlington Cemetery for a day where they witnessed the Changing of the Guard ceremony.

Austin Clark- “You learn how effective you can be by talking to senators and their staff. They want to hear from you which is really cool.”

6. Mr. White, being students’ designated tour guide, provided his knowledge on various historical memorials.

Emma West- “This trip caused me to think more on my own and focus on the reasoning for choosing the opinions I have. Some of my opinions did change, and others I became more grounded in.”



Top 10 things to do over Christmas Break



Watch a Christmas movie by the fire and drink hot chocolate

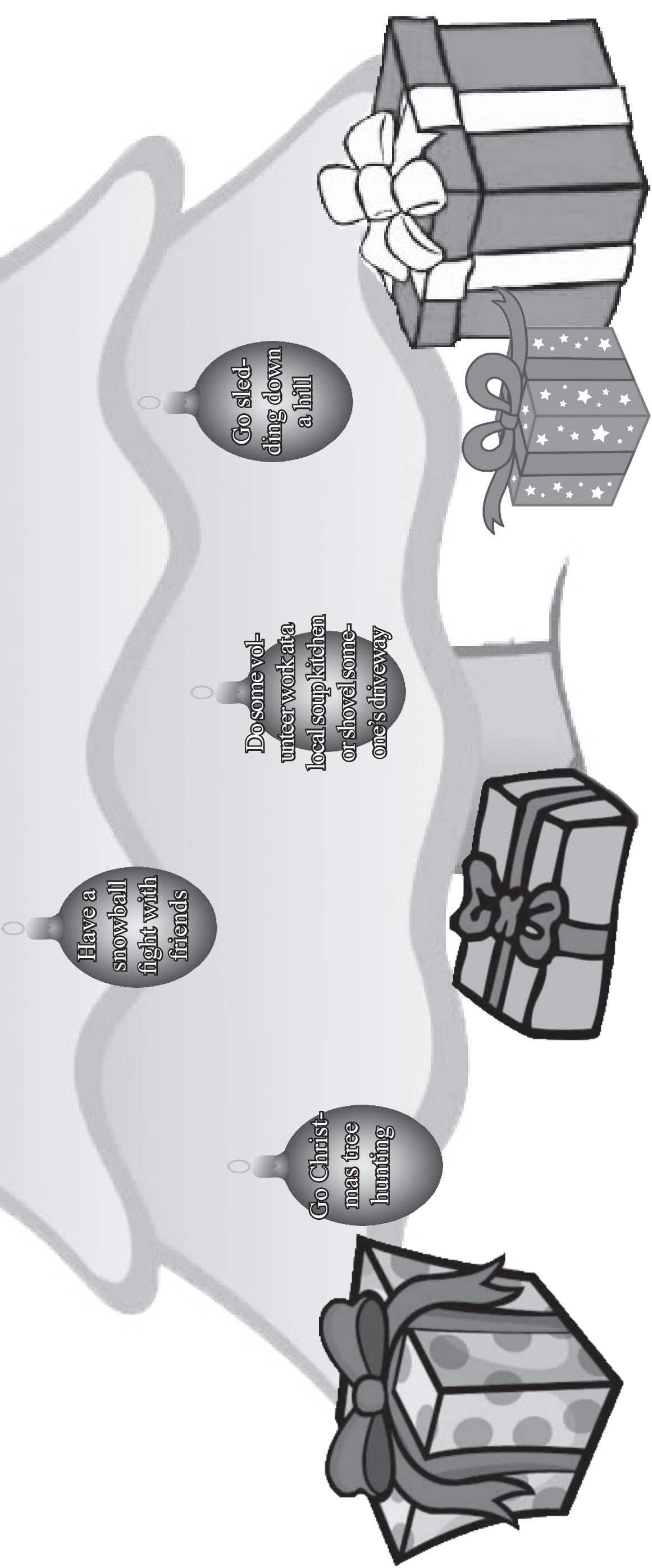
Plan a secret Santa with friends

Go snow-mobiling

Drive downtown and skate at Maggie Daley Park

Make Christmas cookies and gingerbread houses

Go hot tubbing and jump in the snow



Merry Christmas

The ultimate holiday gift guide

In the season of extra school work and holiday parties, it can be difficult to find the perfect gift for your loved one. To help you out, we have compiled a few gift ideas for each special person in your life, all under \$25! We hope this ultimate gift guide will ease your stress and inspire you to make this Christmas season memorable “for you and your kin.”



a. For the bookworm: Princess (\$7.99) Beautiful Chaos (\$12.01) Milk and Honey (\$8.99) Where the Words End and My Body Begins (\$14.93), amazon.com **b. For the fitness fanatic:** Manduka The Commuter Sling (\$16) manduka.com & Thermos Intak (\$8.72) amazon.com **c. For the fashion fiend:** cable knit infinity scarf (\$15.95), nordstrom.com & Maybelline Color Sensational in Possessed Plum (\$7.99), ulta.com **d. For the hot beverage lover:** Cocoa Gift Set (\$19.95) OR Teavana Joy Tea Set (\$19.95) Starbucks.com **e. For the stressed bestie:** Golden Wonder Bath Package (\$15.95), lushusa.com **f. For the movie guru:** funky chunky gift canister (\$10.40), funkychunkyinc.com & AMC gift card (optional price), target.com

TREND REPORT

Lauren Curtis
Co-Arts Editor

Joe Biden is trending right now, not so much for being Vice President, but for his depiction memes. He is portrayed as a hilarious, petty guy with something always up his sleeve. His funny (yet serious) faces add to the memes making them even funnier. In most of the memes, he is shown trying to undermine President-elect Donald Trump. In fact, he goes as far to call him “baby hands” and “Agent Orange.” He won’t even give Trump the White House wifi password!

Joe Biden takes over memes



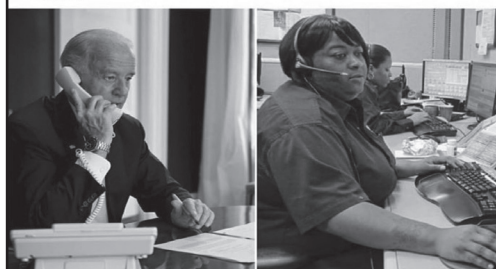
Jill Biden
@JillBidenVeep

Barack: Sign here, and here
Joe: And then the adoption is final & you and Michelle are my parents?
Barack: No, Joe

Biden: imma put mine up too



Dispatcher: 911, please state your emergency.
Biden: I'd like to report a home invasion.
Dispatcher: Can you describe the invader?
Biden: A large orange man with tiny hands.
Dispatcher: Joe, is this you again?
click



Photos courtesy of #JoeBidenMemes
at Instagram.com

Santa: im sending a truckload of coal to trump tower this year
Obama: joe is that you
Santa: ho ho ho, idk what you're talking about



MICHELLE: You asked him about the Home Alone traps?
JOE: Yup
MICHELLE: And changing the door knobs?
JOE: He said 'No' to that too.
MICHELLE: What about the ...
JOE (interrupting): He said no to everything.
They both pause, thinking
MICHELLE: Maybe we just should stop telling him,
JOE: You read my mind.

Biden: I'm not giving them the wifi password

Obama: Joe...

Biden: I said what I said





Photo Courtesy of Kristine Neumeyer

Freshman Kristine Neumeyer performs in Rochester, Minnesota at Regional Competition.

Neumeyer skates to glory

Kade Bouwer
Reporter

Illiana Freshmen and figure skater, Kristine Neumeyer, finished second at the Figure Skating Regionals in Rochester, Minnesota, while also winning her qualifying round. Kristine is enjoying success in the figure skating world lately, but the road to this spot wasn't easy. Neumeyer used to do gymnastics and got to level 8, but injuries cut her career in gymnastics short. (Level 8 is just two levels from going pro).

Neumeyer said, "I had a couple of injuries, but a foot/ankle injury ended my gymnastics career." As one career ended, however, another blossomed. Neumeyer turned to figure skating. "I liked watching [figure skating] in the Olympics when I was younger," Neumeyer said. "Also at Midwest they have ice skating and gymnastics so it made [the switch to figure skating] very convenient." After five years of gymnastics, she transitioned to figure skating around two and a half

years ago. Neumeyer said, "It was difficult the first time I got on the ice, but because I practiced all the time it became more natural." With help of her coach, Stephanie Peters, and a strenuous training schedule, she has risen through the ranks of figure skaters. Neumeyer trains before and after school on Mondays and on Fridays during the school weeks. She trains on Saturday as well. Peters said, "She is a hard worker and very determined. Her work ethic has helped her skating tremendously."

Loud Crowd may fizzle at girls game

Haleigh Olthof
Reporter
Cate Peerbolte
Reporter

This year's Christmas-themed Loud Crowd game on December 16 will support the girls varsity basketball team instead of the boys varsity team, which had its last home game of the year on December 2, but for various reasons, the decision to have the event at the girls' game has received lackluster support. A few previous Loud Crowd games have supported the girls varsity team, but none have yet been Christmas-themed. The event will not include Praise Crowd or cheerleaders. The Pep Band may or may not perform. Deb Kamp, Loud Crowd

Board co-sponsor, said, "Sometimes I think you have to go with what the calendar gives you... If it was a wrestling match, we would do it for wrestling. If it was volleyball we would do it for volleyball. If it was girls we'd do it for girls; if it was boys we'd do it for boys." Tom Knapper, girls varsity basketball coach, said, "They have tried to have Loud Crowd games for the girls... It was whatever, but at least it's something." Lance Davids, Praise Crowd sponsor, said, "We scheduled the Christmas Praise Crowd before we knew about the game on the sixteenth." He added, "We would definitely host Praise Crowd after a girls game, it is just simply bad timing with the holiday." Cheerleading coach Carissa

Beezhold said, "I let [the cheerleaders] decide if they wanted to cheer at the game." "I talked to some of the girls basketball players about having cheerleaders for their game," said senior Laci Gibson. "They said that they wanted the cheerleaders to be in the Loud Crowd to make it bigger." Pat Menninga said she hasn't decided whether Pep Band will play for Friday's game and that band members' Christmas vacations may interfere: "I can't play with half a band," she said. Sophomore Seth Bouwer said he would not attend a Loud Crowd game for girls basketball. "The game wouldn't be as fun," he said. "It isn't as exciting or intense as a boys game."

Sports Briefs

Girls Basketball

Alex Wondaal
Reporter

Although there are only nine players, the Varsity women began the season steadily and have large goals thanks to speed and unity. They have a record of 6-4 and plan on steadily improving until they capture first place trophies at Conference and Sectionals according to senior center, Deborah Smith.

So far, highlights of the season include a 3-1 conference record and a series of wins boosting confidence. "We're a fast team who runs the floor well, gets fast breaks, and has great defense," said senior Eden Schipper.

Boys Basketball

Alex Wondaal
Reporter

The Varsity boys are off to a 5-2 start thanks to a strong senior-filled starting five. They recently had satisfying wins over Bishop Noll and Lincoln-Way Central and took second place at the Seneca tournament over Thanksgiving weekend. Ethan Beezhold said his favorite

part of the season so far was "seeing Sam Vree dunk four times and playing in front of the Loud Crowd. They're pretty good this year." Coached by Grant Sikkema, the team's main goal is to go further into the postseason than last year. That means winning regionals. Vree said in order for that to happen the team needs "more movement on offense and better shooting percentages."

Cheerleading

Jacob Thompson
Co-Sports Editor

The cheerleading team took part in its first competition on Saturday Dec. 3 and placed 7th out of 13 schools. This was a solid performance considering that their main flyer, Kaley Gutierrez, was injured with a concussion. The team

is looking forward to qualifying downstate this weekend shooting for a score of 70 points. "We did incredible at our first competition," said senior co-captain Jessica DeYoung. "Taking our circumstances into account and the injuries and the fact that Anna Lenting, the alternate flyer, had to step in and fill a roll she wasn't as familiar with, we did great."

Boys Wrestling

Luke Hillegonds
Co-Sports Editor

The varsity boys wrestling team has a record of 2-5 overall and a 5th place finish out of 14 teams at the Seneca Tournament. The team has seen major improvements from last year including the addition of multiple

freshman, bringing the number of wrestlers on the team to 15. Senior co-captain Jesse Ellis is 10-0 while junior co-captain Isaac Lyzenga is 9-1. Ellis took first place in the 145 weight class at the Seneca Tournament. Isaac also claimed 1st place in the 182 weight class and senior Noah Rogan finished 5th.

Male Athlete of the Month

Junior Isaac Lyzenga grew up wrestling his brothers. His father and brothers wrestled before him at Illiana. The junior is currently Illiana's second best wrestler. Freshman and sophomore year he was one match away from state. "I look forward to making it past sectionals for the first time," said Lyzenga. He looks forward to the rest of the season. "We have more wrestlers than last year, but still not as many as we want, but we have a solid core of guys that consistently perform well."



Female Athlete of the Month

Senior Jessica DeYoung has been cheering since 5th grade at Crown Point Christian. Her mom was one of the people to start the cheerleading program at CPC, and Jessica was able to cheer her 5th grade year with current co-captain Laci Gibson. Jessica talks about how over the years she has been able to progress her leadership skills and become more of an asset for the team. "Freshman year was a building year for me. I had to learn to take a back spot," said DeYoung. This year she is co-captain of Illiana's Varsity cheer team. "I'm looking forward to the competitions," said DeYoung. "We are shooting for a score of 70 to qualify for the state competition in January."

Editorial

Reaching goal beats winning

We see it in babies fighting over toys. We see it in little kids, tapping the baseball off of a wobbly T in little league and then running as fast as they can to reach first base. We see it in teenagers fighting for the starting position on the basketball team, and we see it in adults trying to get promotions at work. Competition runs in our veins arguably as much as blood does.

“If you are not first, you are last” is said way too often. That phrase makes it seem as if you are not first, everything else is pointless. We need to realize, whether we win or lose, that winning is not always the most important thing.

We’ve been trained to stand firm in what we believe, but standing firm is different than shoving our opinion down our opponent’s throat. In fact, even that language—calling someone with whom we disagree our “opponent”—shows that we enter arguments not to uncover the truth but to win.

The point should be to find the truth, not to bury our opponent. Too

often, we go into discussions thinking our opinion is above everyone else’s. We get so stuck in our own mindset that we can’t see beyond our own interests. Instead of only considering our own opinions, we should try to learn from each other’s.

Abraham Lincoln is someone we can take a les-

spect in his decisions, so instead of easy answers, he found good ones.

Lincoln wanted voices to seek the truth, not to echo his ideas back to him. He wanted what the people actually thought instead of always getting thumbs up from everyone. And although cabinet members had contradictory opinions,

“Working together does not mean conforming. It means reaching the goal *together* is more important than winning *individually*.”

son from. When a president makes his cabinet, he usually tries to pick people who agree with him and his party. President Lincoln, however, didn’t follow this mold. He selected a group of rivals. His theory was that to be the best president he possibly could be, he should know all sides of the issues. With a cabinet with conflicting views, he didn’t get easy answers. It made him more circum-

stances had to work together.

Contradictory opinions make it easy to work against each other. Lincoln’s cabinet, however, learned to work together. They had to in order to accomplish their goals. They learned to pull together, in the same direction, despite their different views.

Working together does not mean conforming. It means reaching the goal *together* is more important

than winning *individually*.

Competition can be a good thing, but it stops being a good thing when it halts progress.

This doesn’t just apply in arguments. This applies to everything our competitive selves do. We try so hard to win that we lose sight of what’s important. We let the desire to win ruin things along the way, and, often, it is for selfish reasons. It’s for our own self-promotion.

We want to challenge the community this Christmas season. We want to challenge everyone to put aside their competitive nature at look at the heart of issues. Look at what they are arguing about or what it is that they are trying to win. Ask simple questions like: *Does this matter? Are the relationships I’m hurting less important than winning this argument? Am I reaching the goal?* If any of these answers are no, we think the argument really isn’t that important.

So, keep the goal in sight. Work together instead of against each other.

Seek good answers—not easy ones.

Cut away old, embrace change

It’s about this time of year when we all start to get a little restless. We’re trapped inside all day, there’s a deficit of Vitamin D and everything seems to fall into a mundane routine. Nothing is new. Nothing excites us. Nothing motivates us.

This was me nearing the end of last year. I was bored with life, with myself, with my friends, everything. Each day, as I dragged through life, I just didn’t feel like myself. I was experiencing a few difficult situations which involved some pretty big changes.

I realized that instead of allowing these pitfalls to make me miserable, I needed motivation. I needed to embrace change.

And that is exactly what I did. With a few snips of the scissors and one big needle, I felt like a new person. (No, I did not have plastic surgery if that’s what you were thinking.) I chopped my hair to just above my shoulders, dyed it a new color and got a nose piercing within the span of one week.

The decision got mixed reviews, but above all of that, I was happy. I felt like me. Suddenly, I had more motivation to do my homework, to perform well in class and to be a better friend. That much needed change cleared my head, allowing me to focus on what was important instead of wallowing in self-pity.

Now, this method may be a bit drastic for most people, which I understand, but I’m here to tell you that change is not only good, but necessary. And, in fact, change is inevitable.

So many people are terrified of change. The thought of going to college scares them so much, they will never talk about it. Or maybe the thought of trying something new pushes them away because they don’t want rejection. Or it might be that their life is stuck in habits and it would be way too much work to get it out. I think it’s time to mix it up a little.

The thing is, life is constantly moving, and it’s up to you to direct this movement in the way you want it to go. I’m not saying you can control everything that happens in your life because ultimately we need to trust God with that task. You are, however, able to control how you react to change.

Take the unavoidable changes of life and embrace them. You could start with something small like rearranging your room differently or picking up a new hobby, or you could step outside your comfort zone even more and join a fitness class at your local health center or apply for that internship or job you’ve always wanted. Add something fresh and invigorating into your life to wake you up.

When you have improved your own attitude and outlook on life, it will be easy for you to impact others. Change is scary, no doubt, but it’s ten times easier to deal with if you have a supportive group around you to get you through.

Whatever it is you’re going through right now, just know you are not the only one having a hard time in this season. Don’t get stuck in the difficult situations or exhausting relationships life throws at you. Instead, embrace change and be all the better for it.

And if all else fails, maybe it’s your turn to trim a few inches off.



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Merry Christmas



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