

German students see 'Hansel and Gretel' opera in Chicago

Angelica Voyles

Reporter

On February 3, some of the German students took a trip to the Lyric Opera in Chicago to see “Hansel and Gretel” by Engelbert Humperdinck. Luke Fennema, German teacher, offered the extra credit opportunity for the students, who only needed to pay half of the ticket price (Parent in Education picked up the rest) and be available that Friday night.

Fennema promoted this trip as a “cultural enrichment opportunity”.

The opera is about the German fairytale, “Hansel and Gretel,” and it’s all in German. However, the opera company projected English

subtitles above the stage.

“One didn’t have to speak German to understand,” Fennema said. This is the third time Fennema has brought students to a German opera, and he said he loves to expose the students to opera.

Senior Aliza Nelson said that “it was great” and that the two hours of the opera flew by for her. She enjoyed seeing all the German students.

On the flip side, senior Jessi Roznowski, said “It was fun, but just a few parts were boring.” Roznowski said she was weirded out to see that grown-ups were playing the lead roles of the children. However, she said, “I would recommend it for extra credit.”



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Juniors Abby DeBlock and Maisy Vroom and sophomores Luke Jania and Max VanBeek settle in and wait for the production to begin.



Photo courtesy of Jeff DeVries

Court members Abby West and Cameron Evers hug and congratulate Audrey Yonkman after she is announced as this year’s Miss Illiana.

Vikings celebrate basketball game win, court coronations

Emily Bantsolas

Reporter

Illiana Christian High School’s homecoming week festivities closed with the homecoming game on Friday, Feb. 10 and the homecoming dance on Saturday, Feb. 11.

The ICHS boys’ varsity basketball team played the Calumet Christian Patriots and defeated them 62-35.

Junior Abbey Helmus, who attended the game, said, “Even though the game wasn’t much of a nail biter, it was still exciting. I always love to see the whole school come together and show support for our basketball team.”

The Loud Crowd theme for the night was green and white, following Friday’s dress up day theme of astronauts vs. aliens.

Before the game, students arrived early to find out which class won the spirit week competition. The seniors walked away with the victory with the sophomores close behind, followed by the juniors and the freshman.

The crowning of Mr. and Miss Illiana also took place before the varsity game. Out of the five senior girls and five senior boys on the homecoming court, Audrey Yonkman and Caden Buxton were honored with the title of Miss and Mr. Illiana.

The homecoming dance was held the following day and the theme

was “Out of this World.” The Arc was decorated with space theme decor and volunteers handed out glow sticks.

“The dance was a lot of fun,” Helmus said, “It was a great idea to hand out glow sticks too. They went well with the theme.”

Students dressed in formal attire for the homecoming dance, which was opposite to the fall dance where students were encouraged to wear something already owned.

Students were also permitted to bring pre-approved outside guests to the homecoming dance and had to purchase tickets beforehand.

The dance began at 7:30 and ended at 10:30. Doors were open to students at 7:00 for pictures.

Students reminded of pajama pants dress code violation

Kelsee Smit

Reporter

A recent reminder that pajama pants are not allowed under the dress code got a few students upset and led to the question about who sets dress code policy. The rules and guidelines of the dress code are decided by the School Board and enforced by the school administration. Rule number thirteen in the dress code section of the Illiana handbook says sleepwear is considered inappropriate for the school setting.

Mr. Davids, the Head of School, said, “To be able to wear pajama pants there must be specific permission from a teacher, such as Mrs. Roedas’s sewing class, or special days. Other than that, they are not permitted to be worn.”

The policy has been around since before 2000, and the latest announcement was “just a matter of enforcing it consistently” according to Davids. Part of the reason “no sleep-

wear” was created as a policy was to make the student body look nice and not like they just got out of bed.

Mr. Boonstra added part of the reason the restriction on pajama pants has been in the dress code all this time is that “it is considered too casual.” It is not because pajama pants are considered immodest but because they are too casual to wear in a school setting.

Senior Taylor Albert said, “I personally wouldn’t wear pajama pants on a normal day of school just because I feel like going to school is kind of like going to work in that you want to look somewhat professional. But I can definitely see why some people would wear pajama pants to be more comfortable at school.”

Senior Anneka Zylstra said, “I think the dress code is reasonable. I have never had any problems with it in my four years here, and if I feel the need to wear pajama pants I will just wear sweatpants.”

“...it is considered too casual.”

Principal Peter Boonstra

Finding out what makes reality TV so compelling

Reality TV is one of the least respected genres of entertainment and is even called “trash TV” by its critics. Despite the criticism, however, this genre continues to be one of the most popularly enjoyed. One of the most well-known reality TV shows, *The Bachelor*, has made 27 seasons since

2002 and has made roughly \$86 million in profit. What makes “trash TV” so enticing to its viewers? As someone who falls into the category of watching

more reality

TV than I would

like to admit, I

have felt its pull

firsthand. Here

are my four

reasons why

we will never escape the false reality of reality TV:

1. Reality TV is mindless

Reality TV is easy for its viewers to comprehend. Paying attention isn’t crucial to understanding the plots of reality TV. For me, mystery, action, and drama require too much attention. If you look away for a second, you may miss the clue necessary to solve the mystery. The beauty of reality TV is the lack of substance. You could start at episode 1 or episode 8 and likely understand the concept of the show to the same degree. It’s the perfect genre to watch while doing something else like cooking, cleaning, or getting ready to go out.

2. It’s so versatile

If you are interested in what it’s like to be a model, then watch *America’s Next Top Model*. If you’re curious about living in extremely small living quarters, then watch *Tiny House Nation*. If you want to know what it’s like to build skyscrapers entirely out of Legos, watch *Lego Masters*. Cooking competitions, dating shows, survival challenges, and music shows are just a few types of shows in the reality genre. The vast spectrum of interests appeals to such a large group, making this genre popular with all types of people.

3. Reality TV gives insight into so many different lifestyles.

Seeing the lifestyle of a billionaire, chef, celebrity, athlete, or singer is made possible with reality TV. For example, the show *Dance Moms* is about the lifestyle of competitive dancers and what it takes to get to the next level of stardom. The show is about the dancers but is named after their moms because of their bold and competitive personalities which can cause some, more like a lot, of drama. I have never been a dancer, but this show tells me all about their experience. It shows the drama, time commitment, success, and community that come with the experience. *Master Chef* is another show that gives perspective into a different lifestyle than my own. I enjoy cooking, but I am humbled by the culinary geniuses who compete to be the next master chef. Whatever questions you have about a profession, personality, talent, or lifestyle can be answered, to some degree, by reality TV.

4. The ridiculousness is entertaining

Reality TV likely gets its bad rep from some of the ridiculous, yet creative, shows that have been produced. The show *Wipeout* takes contestants and puts them through strange physical challenges where they have to avoid “wiping out” and falling into a pit of water or mud. This show ran for 7 seasons due to its pure entertainment value. So many other reality shows can fall into the pure ridiculousness category, but many of them can’t be denied as entertaining.

Reality TV may not ever be the most respected genre, but its critics cannot deny its attractiveness. People have been captivated by this genre for years, and I don’t see it going away anytime soon, even if some people, such as Mr. DeVries, might wish it would.



Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

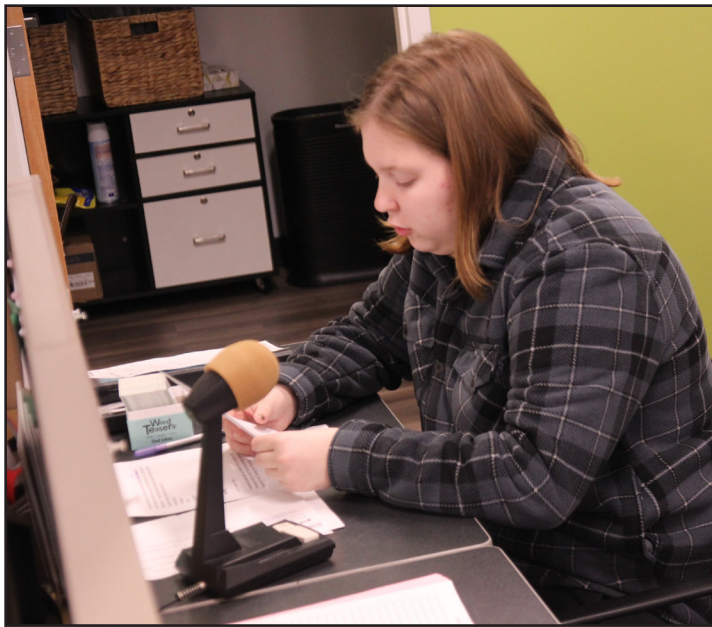


Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior Jessica Roznowski does morning announcements.

Say ‘Hello’ to new voices of Illiana

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Reporter

At Illiana there have been new voices on the intercom during morning announcements for the past few weeks. These new “Voices of Illiana” are seniors Hailey Montalvo and Jessica Roznowski, who stepped forward a couple weeks ago when Mr. Boonstra asked for students who were interested in doing the morning announcements.

Roznowski said, “I first heard about becoming a Voice of Illiana through the intercom during announcements, and I thought, hey, that might be interesting.”

Saying the morning announcements can be a stressful job but the two senior girls have taken on the job expeditiously. The new Voices of Illiana like having the opportunity to say the morning announcements because they can enlighten the

school about important information and upcoming events.

Roznowski said, “I do like saying morning announcements but doing it for the first time was a little awkward because Mr. Boonstra is kind of just sitting right there watching you, but it is really fun.”

Montalvo said, “It’s fun doing the morning announcements; it’s just something I always wanted to do since freshman year.”

There is still an opportunity for more students to say the morning announcements. Becoming a Voice of Illiana can be a great way to practice public speaking while helping students know what will happen in the upcoming days.

Montalvo said, “My favorite part of doing the morning announcements is that it helps me get ready for the day since I know the announcements and it helps me know how to plan my day.”

Administration clarifies condtions that lead to snow days

Danielle Rancifer

News Editor

Although the idea of a snow day may seem like a no-brainer, Illiana Principal Peter Boonstra reveals that the decision may not be as simple as one would think. Boonstra explained that many elements go into the decision to declare a snow day.

“There is no simple formula for when I call a snow day,” Boonstra said. “There are factors such as the temperature, the snow on the ground, were we expecting the

storm, [and] have the roads been cleared.”

Boonstra added that calling for a snow day isn’t just his decision, but he talks with other Christian schools in the area, as well as Head of School Lance Davids and head custodian Duane Kamstra, who is in charge of the bus schedule.

The call is not always easy to make because it involves balancing two different priorities. Boonstra said that overall he has a “high interest in safety but also in valuing days in school.”

5 tips for steering clear of colds

Korina Johnson

Reporter

Flu season hits its peak during January and February. One place where the flu rapidly spreads is at schools. However, the CDC suggests good habits everyone should follow in order to avoid getting the flu and to stay healthy during these months.

1. Clean your hands

Washing your hands with soap and water regularly each day will prevent you from getting sick from various germs. If soap and water aren’t available, then using an alcohol-based hand rub will do the trick.

2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

People always touch their eyes and face without thinking twice about it. However, this is an easy way for bacteria to spread since you are constantly touching things other people have

touched and then bringing germs directly to points of entry for your body.

3. Avoid close contact

Whether you yourself are sick or someone else is sick you should always avoid being in someone’s personal space.

4. Cover your mouth and nose

Flu viruses mainly spread by droplets when people cough or sneeze. By covering your mouth and nose with a tissue, it will help prevent those around you from becoming sick.

5. Make sure things are clean

You should clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tabletops, doorknobs, and chairs. Whether at work, school, or home, making sure commonly touched items are clean is an easy way to decrease the spread of germs.

Math team ‘adds’ up wins



Photo courtesy of Rob Lagerwey

Math team celebrates their victories at the Lemont Invitational.

Marissa Krause

Reporter

Illiana Christian’s math team, competing in its only tournament of the year, placed 12th out of 20 schools at the Lemont High School Mathletes Invitational in January.

Over 400 students from those 20 schools competed, Illiana being the smallest and only school from Indiana participating. Mr. Lagerwey, the team’s head coach said, “Math team competitions were much bigger in Illinois. For example, our conference had math competitions. More importantly, Illinois had sectional competitions leading to state competitions with four divisions depending upon the size of your school.”

Lagerwey finds the team’s 12th place respectable. The sophomore team, consisting of

Katherine Bonnema, Levi Christoffels, Isaac Gorter, Raelyn Sederstrom, and Levi Sliemers, came in 3rd in the geometry competition, and Ryan Smith and Ryan Sederstrom placed 5th in the two-person team.

Lagerwey has been coaching the math team for 29 years, the last eleven years serving as head coach.

“I will miss coaching the math team,” he said. “It was fun to work on challenging problems with students who are curious about math and who love learning new and more efficient approaches to various mathematical situations.”

Assistant coach Mr. Doug Gorter is “excited to continue the tradition” by taking Lagerwey’s place after serving as assistant for the last eleven years. The team is still on the lookout for a new assistant coach for next year.

Kroese dips toes in Illiana waters, decides to stay



Student teacher Sarah Kroese teaches Mrs Lagerwey’s Bible class. Photo by Danielle Rancier

Kelsee Smit
Reporter

Ms. Sarah Kroese is a Trinity Christian College student who has been working as a student teacher at Illiana for the past few weeks and who will be joining Illiana’s staff next fall. Right now she is co-teaching with Mrs. Emily Hillegonds and Mrs. Mary Lagerwey but will soon be fully taking over their freshman English and Bible classes. Kroese said she absolutely loves working with Hillegonds and Lagerwey. She added, “They have a lot of experience and I have been able to glean a lot of that.

Mrs. Hillegonds can make citations fun and Mrs. Lagerwey is always energetic and I want to be like that when I am a teacher as well.” Previously Kroese has student-taught at Chicago Christian, Independence Public Middle School, and a brief time at an elementary school. Kroese will be graduating from Trinity in May. Hillegonds said, “I would say she does a great job. She has a lot of patience with kids which is really important, and she teaches the freshman, which can be a challenge in itself, but she has been doing a great job. She is very organized and is very passionate about teaching.”

Homeroom sponsorships for Pathway to Jesus students off to slow start

Only one of four homerooms have met their commitment so far

Sophia Oostema

Reporter

The homeroom’s of Illiana Christian High School continue to raise money for their Pathway to Jesus sponsor child. Every year, every Illiana homeroom is asked to raise \$420 for their Pathway to Jesus child. Each class is given a child from the Dominican Republic whose family needs financial support for Christian schooling. Some homerooms just split the cost and bring in money, while others decide to be a little more creative. For example, several homerooms hosted bake sales this year, including Ms. Top and Mr. Kamphuis’s classrooms. Grace Van Ek, a junior in Ms. Top’s homeroom, stated

that everyone had a choice to either bring in money or work the bake sale. Mr. Jeff DeVries’s homeroom elected to simply give the money. DeVries said, “I like that my students want to give. Generosity is a virtue that we learn by practicing it, and in learning to give generously, we discover God’s blessing.” Throughout the year the Pathway to Jesus children send cards, letters, and pictures to Illiana to show their gratitude. The children share facts about themselves and share prayer requests. Kathy West, Administrative Assistant, stated that Illiana has raised about \$4,500 this year. So far, only about seven of the twenty-seven homerooms have raised all of their money.

Van Ek said, “It feels good to know that we are helping someone who is not as fortunate as us.”

Poetry Foundation trip inspires creative writing students

Lucas VanderWoude
Arts Editor

Illiana’s Creative Writing Class took a field trip to the Poetry Foundation in Chicago on Feb. 7 to practice students’ writing skills. During the visit, the students took pictures of random words around the building, formed poems with them, and read them aloud to the rest of the class. After this, they attended a workshop about odes, and wrote their own ode or anti-ode about a topic of their choice. While

the students were reciting their odes, Mrs. Hillegonds and the other educators at the Poetry Foundation listened to them as they read. “It was a very educational experience,” said Janna Van Belle, a junior in the class. “The teacher helped us out with a lot of our poems.” Mrs. Hillegonds, the teacher of the class, has been taking students on the trip the past four times she has taught the class. “It’s always good to have students hear about poetry from another perspective,” she said.



A group of juniors dress up for green and white day. Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Spirit week ‘Out of this world’

Tristen Bell
Reporter

For the entirety of Homecoming week (Feb. 6-10), both students and faculty participated in Illiana’s annual Spirit Week and Viking Games, a week-long celebration and competition between classes for the right to have that class’s year written on the Spirit Flag.. Each day of Spirit Week had a certain attire or item the students were allowed to wear and bring if they wanted to participate. Student Council created and promoted this year’s homecoming theme, “Out of This World,” a space theme that spawned many space puns. For the first day of the week, which was titled Lift

Off, students were to bring anything but a backpack to carry their books. Students showed up with kayaks, piano benches, shopping carts, and even siblings to act as backpacks for the day. The second day, inspired by the film Space Jam, featured students wearing jerseys from any type of sport. The third day was called Clone Wars, based on Star Wars: The Clone Wars, and students were to find a friend(s) with whom they dressed alike. “I liked Kayla Bosman’s and Mr. DeVries’s outfits. Especially the wig that he wore,” said Bella Wright, a sophomore. The fourth day was called Galaxy Wars and students were to represent their grade by wearing the

color assigned to them. And the last day was called Astronauts vs. Aliens in which students could wear white to represent an astronaut, or green to represent an alien. The annual Viking games featured a variety of goofy games, from water balloon relays to blindfolded roller desk races. The sophomore class took first place in the Viking Games on Friday, but at homecoming, Mr. Davids announced that the senior class had gathered the most points throughout the week and hence captured the Spirit Flag for the second year in a row. “[I thought that the Astronauts vs. Aliens day] felt like it was the most fun and colorful,” said Kate Santeport, a sophomore.

People behind your paper

Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

The Echo staff currently consists of sixteen members, all serving different purposes. An important yet sometimes under appreciated part of the staff is the reporters. The reporters are first-year journalism students whose only job is to investigate and report. They don't generally choose their stories, topics, or interests; they are assigned their stories by the editors and advisor and their job is to research their topic, interview necessary people, and write the stories given.

The editors take on a larger role in creating the paper, but they have also served as reporters previously. They take the same responsibility as reporters by completing stories before assigned deadlines, but

they have a larger margin of creative freedom. Editors meet together to help develop story ideas, and they also pick what stories interest them most to write about.

Whereas the reporter's job is finished after turning in their monthly stories, the editors' duties continue. Editors get to choose what section they are most interested in editing between sports, news, feature, and arts and leisure before the school year begins and they are responsible for completing their pages each month. They must arrange stories, images, and bylines on their assigned page, seeking to do so in a way that is stylish to catch the eye and that is easy for a reader to navigate. They also use a punch list, a list of style rules, to reduce the number of potential errors and to make

sure all eight pages look uniform.

The editor-in-chief takes on all the responsibilities of the reporters, the editors, and even more as the head editor of the paper. This person, Grace Jania this year, is responsible for formatting the first and last pages of the paper, all while making sure all the other editors' pages are complete and follow the punch list. This job takes the most work and normally is assigned to an editor that has the most experience and reliability.

Finally, the advisor of the Echo oversees all production and teaches reporters and editors how to make the paper. The advisor approves story ideas, teaches reporters how to write, helps editors with formatting, and also works with the editor-in-chief to clean



Photo courtesy of Jeff DeVries

Advisor, Jeff DeVries, helps reporters learn the basics of journalism.

up any mistakes left by the editors. Getting on the Echo staff is as simple as signing up for the journalism 1 class. It is a full-year class that equips students with the basic skills they need to become an editor such as how to write news stories and

headlines, how to conduct an interview, how to use Photoshop and InDesign, and how to edit a page. For anyone interested in writing, talking to people, or graphic designing, the Echo is a perfect place to use and grow those skill sets.

How Illiana's Echo lands in your hands



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Sports editors, Kailyda Anderson and Kyla Bennett, work together to create February's page.

Cameron Evers

Feature Editor

Now that you know the different roles required to make the Echo, you can learn more about the monthly process from start to finish:

Brainstorming

Editors and reporters start each paper with a brainstorming session. They come up with hard news topics such as upcoming events, holidays, and sporting events. They also have to decide on some soft news

stories such as trends, traditions, rivalries, and anything relevant to report on. The topic of the editorial is also determined during these brainstorming sessions. The editorial is found on the back of the paper and it is written by one editor to voice the opinion of all of the staff. Jeff DeVries, the advisor of the Echo, helps contribute ideas and eventually approves the stories the staff will proceed with.

Assigning stories

After the story topics are generated, the editors take their

pick at what stories they want to write. Editors can choose to write stories for their own pages, but they are not limited to that and can write stories for any of the eight pages. They have the freedom to pick whatever story interests them and they have knowledge about. Then the editors and advisor assign stories and word counts to the reporters with a set deadline.

Interviewing and reporting

The next step in the process is simply to start writing. Before writing can begin, reporters and editors must develop the central point of their story. What are they trying to convey? After a central point is developed they have to think about the who, what, when, where, why, and how points that must be answered in a news story. Then, if necessary, they must decide who is relevant to their story and then schedule an interview. After an interview is scheduled, the reporter/editor must prepare a list of questions to ask their source. By gathering necessary research and choosing diverse sources to interview, the reporter/editor should have enough information to write a well-rounded and complete news story while still being concise.

Editing

After stories are completed and turned in, editors can begin to format their pages.

The editing process allows editors to be creative and problem-solve as they try to fit pictures, stories, charts, graphs, and whatever else they find relevant all onto their pages. Editors have universal rules they must follow such as seeking contrast and balance, not placing headlines next to each other, choosing dominant elements such as images or headlines and Echo editors also must refer to their punch list to make sure all pages are uniform.

Printing and publication

After the pages are formatted, the advisor sends them off to be printed. The Echo is now available online and in print, and students receive a print copy on the last Friday of every month. The paper's circulation lands student work in front of roughly 1,000 people every month. On publication day, reporters and editors deliver the papers to every class and then spend the class period reading the paper and celebrating their hard work.

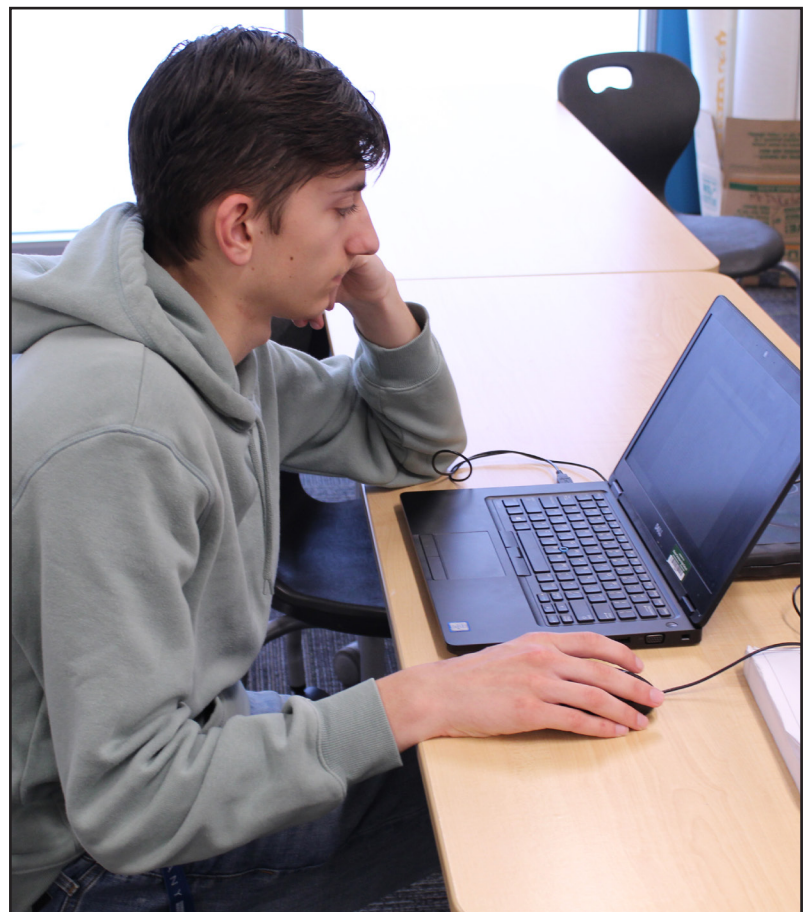


Photo by Jeff DeVries

Arts and Leisure editor, Lucas VanderWoude starts formatting this month's page.

What is trending?

Stanley Cups, Ugg boots, TikTok dupes dominate social media

Kailyda Anderson
Sports Editor

As 2023 opens, Stanley water bottles are ubiquitous. What makes them so special? Why are people buying it? How does it compare to other water bottles?



The Ugg ultra mini boots (shown above) and the Tasman slippers have been selling out for months as the brand's popularity continues to rise.

A Stanley starts off at \$30 and the price can go as high as \$50.

Junior Amanda Rozen-dal said, "I like the straw and I like that it can still fit in an average cup holder. I got it as a gift."

In 2019, a similar trend took off with the Hydro

Flask. The Hydro Flask company has annual revenue of about \$14 million per year. Now Stanley's sales are catching up, having increased by 275 percent in 2021. Stanley is now selling more bottles than either Hydro Flask or Camelbak.

Ugg boots are another hot trend. Ugg has been around since 1978, rising and falling in popularity at different times. Ugg has seemed able to make boots that go along with the aesthetic of every new trend. What's most popular right now are Ugg slippers. They sell for \$110 and come in four different colors.

Maisy Vroom said, "I got Ugg slippers for Christmas and they're the comfiest shoes I own. I wear them whenever I can."

Some of these trends get a boost from TikTok, where products can get a lot of attention quickly. Of course, some trends on TikTok are not about individual products but about how the social media app is used. One example is "dupes."

Ever heard of a dupe? Many dupe videos are trending with millions of views; they show people going into a store, picking up a product, comparing it to a similar one that a more



The 40 oz Stanley Quencher has quickly become a best selling water bottle

expensive company sells, and saying "dupe."

It's turned into a joke by now, but many influencers are comparing expensive products to drugstore products that almost do the same thing but sell for way cheaper. Now a lot of people are looking for "dupes" to try and save money, while getting almost the same quality as they would with the more expensive product.

Returning trends from 70s to 90s

Kailyda Anderson
Sports Editor

It's clear what is trending now, but what about trends from the 70s-90s that have made a comeback?

For example, mom jeans were very popular in the 1980s and early 90s, and then they became the butt of jokes even on Saturday Night Live, but for some reason in the last three years, they have made a tremendous comeback. Companies like Hollister, American Eagle, and Pac-sun sell a variety of mom jeans, and girls are loving it.

Sophomore Gianna Vukas said, "I bought my first pair of mom jeans a few years ago, and still buy them today. They're so cute and I love them."

Another clothing product making a comeback are blazers. Blazers were a must have in the 80s for both men and women, and now they are slowly making their way back into fashion. Many social media influencers have expressed their love for blazers, and never want them to go back out of style.

Some Illiana teachers have noticed trends that they experienced in their

high school years are making a return. Mr. Lance Davids, our Head of School, said, "I see a lot of crew-necks coming back into style".

Band Director Mrs. Rachel Monroe said, "I've definitely seen flare pants coming back, and butterfly clips too."

Even old TV shows are making a comeback. That 70s Show has made its way back onto everyone's screen, following a spin off of That 90s Show. NBC has also recently introduced "Night Court," a reboot of the popular sitcom from the 1980s.



Mrs. Rachel Monroe has seen a comeback in butterfly hair clips, a trend from the 90s.

Review: M3gan considers destructive power of technology



Photo courtesy of Fandango.com

Kayla Bosman

Reporter

Megan, the dancing robotic doll in “M3gan”, reached theaters last month and surprised a lot of adolescents with a good time. The movie, as anyone can see from the trailers, is down right wacky. People see it expecting it to be bad, then get slapped in the face with decent actors, good videography and a somewhat thought-provoking message lurking behind all of it.

Megan is an AI programmed animatronic doll that partners with Katie, helping her grieve her parents’ tragic death. Katie’s toy-maker Aunt Gemma, played by Allison Williams (previously seen in Jordan Peele’s *Get Out*), gives Katie

the doll after Gemma finds it hard to connect with Katie. Megan’s algorithm was made to improve and evolve to a child’s will, making her “the perfect toy.” After Megan finds out about Katie’s parents’ deaths, she forms an unhealthy connection with the child.

The doll Megan is played by Amie Donald wearing a doll-like mask that creates a realistic mannequin. Stylistically, she performs with an uncanny valley effect. This leads to the movie’s funniest quality, and its outlandish scenes personally made me wheeze with laughter while keeping an interest in the movie alive. Johnstone, a director from New Zealand, has made a reputation blending comedy and horror as he did previously in “Housebound.”

While similar mov-

ies with evil dolls (think Chucky or Annabelle) focus on revenge or on taking advantage of kids’ innocence to kill, “M3gan” is of a different breed. This film focuses on the effect of technology on children. There is no soul or supernatural element to this film at all; the doll is simply following an algorithm and doing what it was programmed to do. An algorithm that coddles the user, trying to meet her every need, and thereby desensitizing its user from the real world. It’s an extreme example of technology dehumanizing us, and it is a parable for lazy parents everywhere who are content to let iPhones and video games raise their children.

“M3gan” is rated PG-13 and has a running time of 1 hour and 42 minutes.

Illiana’s orchestra, band competes in ISSMA festival, wins gold for solo, ensemble

Lucas VanderWoude

Arts Editor

Illiana’s orchestra and several band students participated in the ISSMA District Solo and Ensemble Festival on Jan. 28 at Munster High School, with every Illiana participant winning a gold medal.

The Illiana orchestra collectively won a gold medal for the ensemble category, and 7 Illiana students won gold in the solo category- the wind ensemble members sophomores Brandon DeYoung and Levi Sliemers, and the orchestra members senior Emmery Kloosterman, juniors LauraLynn Corrales, Nolan Bouwman, and Elliot VanDerGriend, and freshman Luke Bouwman.

For the solo competition, the different types of instruments are divided into different rooms, and a

separate judge listens to each category.

“Playing in front of a professional musician is really nerve-racking,” said Sliemers, who played trombone in the solo competition.

This was the Illiana orchestra’s third time competing in the ISSMA competition and its second time advancing to the state competition, which will take place on Feb. 25.

Andy Anderson, the orchestra director, spoke about the musical piece that he chose for the orchestra to play at the competition (Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 3): “It strengthens weaker players because every player is required to succeed for the piece to work. This piece was worth it because it put all of the orchestra into a pressure situation, and they met the challenge and captured the style of the piece very well.”



Photo courtesy of facebook.com

The Illiana Orchestra grab a picture with director Andy Anderson at Munster High School where they won a gold medal for ensemble performance.



Photo courtesy of visitsavannah.com

Review: Nothing Bundt Cakes bursting with options, flavor

Grace Jania

Editor-in-Chief

Nothing Bundt Cakes, a chain bakery and cake shop, has been around since February, 2019 at its Schererville location on Highway 41. The store sells bundt cakes in a variety of flavors and sizes, as well as party supplies and decorations.

When buying from the store, you have a generous selection of choices. First, you have to decide what size cake you want. Nothing Bundt Cakes offers normal bundt cakes (large, which can also be tiered, starting at \$29.00), “bundtlets” (small, personally for you, for \$5.50), and

“bundtinis” (much smaller, sold by the dozen, for \$27.00).

Next, it’s time to pick the flavor. The complete list, as of Feb. 1, 2023, is as follows: Lemon Raspberry (for a limited time), Red Velvet, Chocolate Chocolate Chip, White Chocolate Raspberry, Lemon, Strawberries & Cream, Snickerdoodle, Confetti, Carrot, Classic Vanilla, and Chocolate Chip Cookie (the only gluten free option available).

Recently I visited the shop to try the Confetti bundlet. I was skeptical about the amount of frosting on the cake; I thought there wouldn’t be enough buttercream frosting to properly

ration with each bite of cake, but it ended up being delicious just the way it was. The cake was extremely flavorful and I couldn’t get enough of the taste.

I didn’t eat the entire bundlet in one sitting, so I brought it home to store in my fridge until I got hungry again. With the cake being chilled a couple hours later, it tasted just as good, if not better, than when I bought it at the store.

This treat proved to be exceptional, and I believe that Nothing Bundt Cakes deserves more publicity. The only advice I would give to Nothing Bundt Cakes is that they should make a blueberry flavored cake. I would give my complete experience 5/5 stars.

Varsity girls finish basketball season near .500

Kyla Bennett
Sports Editor

Illiana's girls' basketball season ended on Feb. 3 with a 66-22 sectional loss to Andean. The team finished with an 11-12 record.

The girls have worked and played hard this season according to their coach, Denise VanRyn.

"God has put on my heart and has opened the door to be able to invest in female athletes while coaching basketball," said VanRyn. "I

never imagined years ago that I'd be coaching Varsity at Illiana, nor was I looking for it. God just paved the way and I'm following His lead."

Senior Faith VanRyn, daughter of coach VanRyn, mentioned that "the team stands out from other basketball teams because they always make sure to put God first by doing devotionals before every game."

The girls have won many games, and a highlight was beating their longtime ri-

vals Chicago Christian High School by 7 points in the final quarter.

The girls have learned to work hard and play hard as well. The team mentioned that some of their best memories were the Starbucks runs, bus rides, and hanging outside of practice. It's bittersweet that the season is over, and the seniors are graduating, but they will continue to build their friendship and are looking forward to seeing how the girls will play next year.



Photo courtesy of ???
The girls gather around Coach VanRyn to discuss strategy.

Vikings roll into post-season playing with strength, confidence

Kyla Bennett
Sports Editor

The boy's basketball team has rolledw through opponents this season, with a current record of 16-2.

Coach Tom Roozeboom is always looking for maximum effort from his players. Senior Mason Post said, "I appreciate Coach Boom because he doesn't allow minimum work from us and I can tell he truly cares about us."

Their hard work has led them to beating their rivals, Chicago Christian, with a score of 57-54. They also handily won the homecoming game against Calumet Christian. On Tuesday, Feb. 14, the team dropped a nail-biter to Marquette Catholic High School, 63-62.

"Our team really stands out from other teams because we know when there



Photo courtesy of Jeff Devries
Senior Zeke VanEssen drives to the hoop against Calumet Christian.

is a time to have fun and a time to work hard," said Post.

"One of the most memorable moments this season was having the whole

school cheer us on at the Loud Crowd games", said senior Luke VanEssen."

The team begins sectional play in state tournament next week Tuesday.

Antunez advances to wrestling regionals

Grace Jania
Editor-in-Chief

The boys wrestling team finished its season on Feb. 4 at regionals. Sophomore David Antunez placed third in sectionals on Jan. 28, moving on to regionals. Sophomore Gage Bambic placed as an alternate. Though none of the boys made it to state, the team is still practicing and doing off-season lifting.

Coach David DeBoer said that though the team is very young, "They got a lot of experience this year and learned how to work hard. I think I'm most proud of their perseverance through the year."

The boys spent the beginning of the season figuring things out, which brought them to the level they finished at, competing with other wrestlers of high levels.

With only a few returning wrestlers, Antunez said that he is looking forward to "[his] whole team improving and being way better than last year."

DeBoer said, "I'm very excited about the direction of the team. Our girls team is rapidly growing and so is our boys team. A young group of new wrestlers is always exciting because they learn better together and are the beginnings of a dangerous team."



Photo courtesy of David Antunez
Sophomore David Antunez (second from left) receives his 3rd place medal.

Male Athlete of the Month

Senior Cody DeJong has been a part of the Illiana basketball program all four years of his high school career. He has spent three years on the varsity team, starting his sophomore year. His team has had a successful season, currently sporting a record of 16-3.

Coach Tom Roozeboom called DeJong a "player who leads by example" and who "gives his all no matter what, whether it's in a game or practice."

Teammate and fellow senior Fritz Olthof says, "Cody is always someone you can count on. He is always on time for practice, and he works hard."



Male Athlete of the Month

Sophomore David Antunez has been on the Illiana wrestling team for two years. This year, David placed third in sectionals, and was the only one on his team that qualified to move into regionals.

Long time wrestler and now captain of the team, Caleb Rozendal, said, "David is a talented wrestler. He is full of energy, hard working, and a joy to watch on the mat. He is an asset to our team."

Antunez said, "It feels good [to be able to represent my school] since I've been working hard and trying to get better."

Editorial

Learning to balance social responsibilities

Practicing balance in daily life is not nearly as easy as it sounds, especially when it comes to the balance between daily responsibilities and a healthy social life. Whether a person has a part time job, a dozen extracurriculars, mountains of homework, or all three, figuring how to handle all of that while still having a social life will definitely be a challenge.

Although finding this balance may consist of trial and error, it is absolutely crucial to find a midpoint that feels good. Getting too wrapped up in either side of the spectrum can cause you to lose sight of the whole picture. All work and no play leads to stress and burnout. All play and no work leads to problems for others who depend on a job being performed, and ultimately lead to a sense of purposelessness for the person shirking responsibility. Both work and play are crucial to human life, and they allow an individual to feel like a well-rounded person who is able to experience the freedom that comes with having a healthy social life as well as the fulfillment that comes

with completing tasks and reaching goals. Failure to gain balance in life can and will ultimately end up hurting a person. Getting totally consumed in work and responsibilities may seem like a good thing on paper, but it doesn't benefit the worker or the organization in which

thing a person can do for himself and for others is to just take a minute and find things that bring joy. Doing so gives a fresher and more exciting viewpoint on life, and reminds us that even though our responsibilities are important, they do not make up our whole world. On the other hand it is

gives our lives a sense of purpose and meaning. That truth is part of God's created design. To find balance, try in your daily life to set boundaries that allow you to have a productive work life. Think about only going out on certain days, not making plans until all of your work is finished, and continue to keep yourself accountable for the things you know you have to get done. Setting boundaries helps a person to work productively and to play meaningfully.

When you are able to find a balance in your life that allows you to have the best of both worlds, it can be such a great feeling. It allows you to feel productive and useful, while still being able to find comfort in so many of the activities you enjoy. Prioritizing what matters may look different for everyone, especially with the plethora of different activities and responsibilities, so don't compare someone's ability to handle different tasks and schedules to yours. As long as you stick with what works for you and strive for balance wherever you can, you can succeed in all aspects of life.

“Setting boundaries helps a person to work productively and to play meaningfully.”

the person works. When people focus solely on their work, academics, and even sports, they can miss out on important and enjoyable aspects of life. It also lets down family and friends. At the same time, not having a life away from work obligations can also cause burn out, reducing motivation and hurting even the workplace or extracurricular group the person sought to help. Sometimes the best

important to remind oneself that their only focus shouldn't just be “having a social life.” If a person only focuses on the fun aspects of life, it can lead her down a destructive path that leaves her unproductive and ineffectual. Failure to develop a vigorous work ethic as well as a vigorous social life results in falling behind and having to work even harder to catch back up. And ultimately, work is part of what

What is love?

The word “love” is something that is used often, but rarely understood. We can love street tacos, an expensive pair of shoes, or even a tv show. At the same time, the word love can be used to describe a deep feeling we have towards a person. There is absolutely no way you can love street tacos with the same type of love that you have for your spouse! So, what really is love?



Kyla Bennett
Co Sports Editor

According to dictionary.com, the word love is defined as an extreme affection towards someone or something. February is usually known as the month dedicated to love. We will most definitely hear this word being used a lot more. There isn't anything wrong with the word love, but there is something wrong with how people use the word. Think of the word love as a piece of tape. When you first use that piece of tape, it's very useful and holds what needs to be held together. The next few times you try to stick the tape to another object, it still might stick, but it is not as useful nor reliable, simply because it's been used so much. Eventually, the tape will no longer have any value to it because it's been stuck to multiple objects, and thereby lost all its adhesive property. This analogy is similar to the word love because once a person uses the word too much, it eventually loses its value.

Love is a commitment, not just a feeling. Yes, love is an emotion, but it is an overwhelming emotion that involves commitment. Many people get the word infatuation confused with the word love. Infatuation is an intense short-lived passion or admiration for someone or something. Though the words may seem very similar, there is quite a big difference between the two. Infatuation is being wildly attracted to that special boy or girl that you see walking down the hallways in school. Love is growing old with your husband or wife and still having the same love for him or her even if they were to make you upset. Love is sticking with your spouse even if your spouse gets diagnosed with a very dangerous disease that changes their appearance. Love is unconditional, meaning that whatever happens, there are no limits that will stop someone from loving that certain person or thing. Infatuation will eventually fade away. Love will endure.

From now on, before we say we are so in love with something, we should rephrase our words by saying, “I am infatuated with ____”. If you aren't sure whether you're infatuated or in love, just open your Bible and read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, which says, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” If what you had in mind does not align with all of these notions, then it's probably just infatuation.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Congratulations to seniors Caden Buxton and Audrey Yonkman, who were crowned Mr. and Miss Illiana 2023 on Feb. 10.

the Echo)))

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Sports

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Letters to the editor can be submitted to the advisor or sent to the school. All letters must be signed and must not exceed 250 words. They will be printed provided there is enough room and content is not offensive to the general public.

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