



Students Celebrate The Opening of the Freeman Cafe

BY CHARLOTTE FRITZ

This November, the community celebrated the launch of the Freeman Cafe in the Student Commons. Zoey Nailor, a faculty member who manages the cafe, created the cafe's mission statement: "Recharge, replenish and revive." The cafe serves as a communal space for students and faculty to regain energy during the day.

Nailor shared that "the vision [for the cafe] was to be a restart for those who spend a lot of their time [at school]." She added that the cafe

serves to be "moreso a home away from home" and "a safe space."

Thus far, the cafe has fulfilled its mission in bringing patrons together in a friendly and collaborative environment.

While working together at the tables in the Student Commons, students frequently fuel themselves with the food and drink options. Additionally, the cafe has offered opportunities for students to get involved. Some Upper Schoolers have taken afternoon jobs working at the cafe.

"Scribbler" spoke to one student

who raised questions about the cost of the cafe's menu. Others wondered about the Panther Pantry and asked if it would return. Even though the Panther Pantry remains open, former employee Sophia Lekeufack '25 reported that the Freeman Cafe has somewhat replaced the pool lounge hotspot.

The cafe's extensive drink menu consists of many beverages including espresso shots, americanos, cafe lattes, caramel macchiatos, chai teas, matcha teas, hot chocolates, smoothies and refreshers.

Eliza Clessuras '26 shared that among the student body, "the iced caramel macchiato is a classic." Julia Rudick '26 agreed but added that her personal "favorite [drink] is an iced latte."

Although students order most frequently from the drink menu, the cafe also serves food such as croissants and waffles. The cafe even offers refrigerated options such as gatorades, fruit cups and pretzels.

So far, the Freeman Cafe has mostly proved itself to be a popular place for students to relax, unwind and recharge.

Due to two recent Netflix projects, however, the case is receiving renewed public discussion and scrutiny. "Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story" fictionalized the lead-up to and aftermath of the murders.

Subsequently, Netflix premiered "The Menendez Brothers," a documentary featuring exclusive interviews with the brothers.

Public outcry over the trial's handling intensifies as new evidence comes to light. "The New York Times" reported that in 2023, Roy Rosseló, a member of the boy band Menduo, accused Jose of sexual assault when Rosseló was a minor in New Jersey.

Additionally, a letter written by Erik to his cousin has emerged that references the abuse Erik says he endured.

"CBS News" reported, "Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón said the Menéndez murder case is being reviewed by his office, naming two new factors that prosecutors are looking at ahead of a court hearing next month."

This hearing, scheduled for January 30, could result in the release of Erik, now 53, and Lyle, 56, after three decades behind bars.

Students are divided on the Menendez case. Kayin Bejide '25 reported, "I think their sentence should be reduced because not enough emphasis was placed on how the abuse played into their crimes. Now the justice system looks more sympathetically at the effects of abuse."

In contrast, Soa Andriamananjara '25 stated, "I think the Netflix projects glorified them too much. While they did experience abuse at the hands of their parents, ultimately, they killed their parents, and I don't think that should be consumed as entertainment."

Regardless of the outcome, Bejide believed that "the Menendez case is a testament to how public outcry is playing an increasing role in judicial affairs."



photo by Isabelle Applebaum

Could the Menendez Brothers See an Early Release from Prison?

BY ISABELLE APPLEBAUM

Twenty seven years ago, Erik and Lyle Menendez were found guilty of first-degree murder of their parents Kitty and Jose Menendez.

The brothers were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Now, after spending decades be-

hind bars, the two brothers face the possibility of release.

During their initial trial, the defense emphasized the brothers' claims of years of emotional, physical and sexual abuse from their father and complicity from their mother.

The trial concluded with a deadlocked jury, unable to reach a decision and leading to a mistrial.

When the case was retried, the

brothers' defense faced significant limitations. According to "The New York Times," "the judge, Stanley M. Weisberg, prohibited their lawyers from using the 'abuse excuse,' essentially leaving only two options for jurors: an acquittal or a murder conviction. They went with the latter."

Thus, an 18-year-old Erik and a 21-year-old Lyle entered prison with the expectation never to leave.

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How Does Climate Change Affect Schools?

BY DOROTHY ANDAMA

According to the United Nations, climate change means long-term changes in temperature and weather that can cause hurricanes, drought, tornadoes, tropical cyclones and more.

While these changes can occur naturally, human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, produce greenhouse gases. These gases act as a blanket around the Earth, trapping heat and raising temperatures.

According to “U.S. News and World Report,” since 2003, two-thirds of all emergency school closures in the state of California have been due to wildfires.

According to “The New York Times,” in Puerto Rico, more than 250 public schools were closed after Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Maryland, on the other hand, has fewer extreme weather events that damage infrastructure, and the Maryland Board of Education has classes, commissions and standards for how schools can best work with the environment.

Over 400 million students have experienced school closures due to extreme weather events.

According to the World Bank,

about 65% of young people in eight different countries believe their futures are at risk unless they acquire green skills.

Moreover, 60% of these students feel they need to receive adequate education about climate change in school. Each additional year of education increases climate awareness by nearly 9% based on findings from 96 countries.

The future of education is threatened by climate change. Experts feel schools must invest in infrastructure that can withstand climate impacts, which increases costs for renovation.

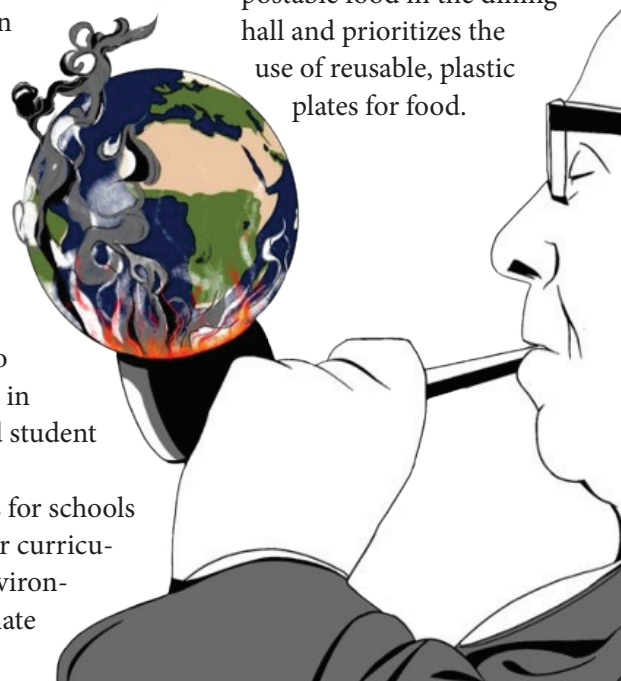
Wealthier districts are able to adapt more easily than their lower-income counterparts, so a widening of the gap in education quality and student achievement occurs.

Recommendations for schools include updating their curriculums and learning environments to include climate change topics that focus on environmental

education and sustainability. It is also important to use remote learning during emergencies to ensure that education can continue safely and without interruption.

By understanding prevalent environmental issues, individuals and communities can take meaningful steps to build resilience and promote sustainability in education.

Holton has taken many steps to promote sustainability. Particularly, the school has switched to primarily using LED lights, composts compostable food in the dining hall and prioritizes the use of reusable, plastic plates for food.



art by Emme Poole

President Elect Trump Appoints Members of his Cabinet

BY KATE RUDGE

Immediately following President-Elect Donald Trump’s victory in the 2024 presidential election, names of potential cabinet members were released and discussed in the media. The members of a presidential cabinet are very influential figures as they head 15 executive departments. The job of the cabinet is to advise the president on each member’s respective departments. The president’s picks are not definite, however, as the Senate must confirm the position.

In the last few weeks, Trump has announced his appointments for almost every cabinet position in his upcoming term.

Trump appointed Pam Bondi as attorney general, which oversees the Justice Department. Bondi was nominated after Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz dropped out of the position just weeks after Trump announced Gaetz as his pick. Bondi, the Florida attorney general from 2011 to 2019, was

also a part of Trump’s defense team during his first impeachment trial.

Trump appointed Pete Hegseth, a current Fox News commentator and former major in the Army National Guard, as Defense Secretary. Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) recalled to “The Washington Post” having “good discussions” with Hegseth while Senator Jon Fetterman (D-PA) became the first senator to meet with Hegseth.

For Secretary of State, a position highly involved in foreign affairs, Florida Senator Marco Rubio holds the appointment.

Rubio has held his seat since 2011 and has supported Trump on numerous occasions. He was even on the shortlist of Trump’s vice presidential picks.

For Treasury Secretary, a role that makes advisements on international and domestic financial policies and oversees the economy, Trump appointed former hedge fund CEO Scott Bessent. In the past, Bessent has supported Trump’s tax cut and

tariff agenda. To “USA Today,” Sen. Chuck Grassley stated, “I had a very good meeting with him. I didn’t know much about him before.” Some Democrats, such as Sens. Cory Booker and Ron Wyden are going into cabinet pick meetings with an open mind. Booker remarked, “I’m not saying no on anybody. I’m gonna give everybody a thorough vetting.”

Controversially, RFK Jr. holds the appointment of Secretary of Health and Human Services, a department that oversees public health and disease prevention.

Previously, Kennedy had spread anti-vaccine sentiments and misinformation regarding their safety. Trump’s initial FDA commissioner opposed Kennedy’s stance and said that his plans to cut vaccinations will “cost lives in this country.”

Senator Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) seemed to be in full support of Kennedy after their meeting on Capitol Hill. Mullin claimed to “AP” “The more you talk to him, the more

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he explains it, the more you like him,” Mullin said. On the other hand, former Vice President Mike Pence has encouraged Republicans to not confirm Kennedy due to his record of support for abortion rights.

It remains to be seen if all of Trump’s picks will be confirmed in the Senate.

His choices reflect a blend of political allies, private-sector figures, and controversial appointments, signaling a potential continuation of his administration’s earlier approaches while introducing new dynamics.

These cabinet selections could shape the trajectory of key issues such as national security, economic policy, healthcare and public services in the years to come.

Second Year of Third-Grade Buddy Program Proves a Success

BY BLAIR GREENSPAN

Holton teaches students from third to 12th grade, but how do students with a large age gap stay connected? The Third Grade Buddy Program brings together the oldest and youngest Panthers.

This endeavor partners seniors and third graders for regular bonding activities.

Penny B. Evins, head of school, created the program in the summer of 2023.

Evins shared that her son and daughter inspired her. They both attended independent schools that had the buddy program. When she discovered that Holton did not have a comparable program, she felt inclined to execute the idea.

Evins stated, “The reason why [the buddy program] is so important is that I have found that the earliest learners look up to the seniors.” On the flip-side, she feels that doing activities with younger students encourages seniors “to become more thoughtful and to become better role models.”

The program offers a myriad of bonding opportunities for seniors

and third graders. Grade 12 Dean Shay Squeglia explained, “Seniors are there to greet their new buddies on the first day of school and get together four to five times a year.”

Along with welcoming the third graders to their new school this year, the seniors and their buddies did a fall activity which included eating donuts, drinking apple cider and doing crafts together.

Ella Ross '25 stated that she “loves the program.” She enjoys spending time with her buddy. Ross mentioned, “Every time I see her, she gives me a huge hug.”

Kennedy Hall '25 said that her favorite part of the program was that she “could take the time to notice beautiful things that [she] would not normally see without a child’s eye.”

Evins believes that the Third Grade Buddy Program’s mission of bringing

together the seniors and third graders has been successful because of the discussions she has overheard from the seniors.

She shared that the buddy program being mentioned in conversations proves that “the program fits the school’s identity.”

Evins also fondly remembers watching the classes of 2024 and 2033 doing yoga together as part of the

meetups.

She finds that both “everyday moments and the scheduled activities are important.”

Squeglia, impressed by the program’s success, remarked, “Before winter break, we plan to do hot cocoa and cookie decorating together.”

Bringing together Panthers with 10-year age gaps has proven to successfully strengthen the community.



Seniors spend time with their third grade buddy. Photo courtesy of Holton Communications.

OPINION: Senior Parking Should Be Official

BY MIRA WISSMAN

At the end of sophomore year, when I first made the journey to the security desk to ask for my campus parking tag,

I had never felt more grown-up.

I

hap-

them that yes, I was officially becoming a campus driver.

The number of bus rides I had left with Operator Wayne were dwindling down, and fresh out of the Maryland

Motor Vehicle Administration

My first day of driving to school, my mom waved to my sister and me anxiously as we took off down the street and blasted “Hamilton” music. I couldn’t contain my excitement.

When I reached campus, however, I was met with immediate anxiety. Where was I to park?

All around me, I watched juniors and seniors hop out of their cars comfortably.

I was a tiny, amateur fish in a big sea of experienced drivers. It was eerily similar to reliving my first day of freshman year.

With time, I learned the rules of the lot: no parking in the spots closest to the theater lobby doors, as those were reserved for seniors, no parking in the main lot taken up by visitors and absolutely no taking time to back into a spot when an upperclassman was waiting for me.

I quickly caught on, and I learned to accept the rules as Holton culture.

Much to my surprise, halfway through junior year, I had a shocking moment of realization when Upper School Biology teacher Lisa Craig

told members of Representative Assembly that in reality, there was no such thing as “senior parking.”

In fact, she said that the parking rules were just a construct created by members of the senior class years ago and that rule had simply stuck.

At that moment, I felt angry. Why was I allowing seniors to speed by me and get the better spot each day?

I soon realized, however, that seniors should be given this priority officially.

Someone must get those nice, bougie spots, so why not make it easy and assign those places to seniors, the ones who have waited three years for their moment of comfort?

The benefit to making senior parking officially official is that at some point or another everyone’s turn to walk only 10 feet into school will come around. It’s not ideal for the underclassmen, but we’ve all had to do it.

Let’s make senior parking a real thing. Okay, I admit I may be biased as a senior, but come on... Let’s worship our seniors before they’re gone!



pily flaunted my paperwork to my classmates to show

tration center, I was ready to be in the driver’s seat.

Associate Head of School Barbara Eghan Comes to Holton With the Goal of “Get[ting] to Know the Community”

BY ELLA HENDERSON

As students walk to the cafeteria on their way to lunch, many have noticed that the former school store has been transformed into the office of new Associate Head of School Barbara Eghan.

Many students are curious to



learn more about who this addition is and what she does.

Before coming to Holton, Eghan worked at Georgetown Day School for about 10 years. She said that Holton was “the right opportunity at the right time.”

She explained, “After 10 years following many different paths of leadership at [her] previous school” she was ready to “harness all of that experience in a different role.”

While Eghan had never worked at a single-gender school before, she

described how inspiring it is to see a school full of hardworking female students and remarked, “There are just so many different ways to be here and so

many things to be here, and I find that tremendously empowering and inspiring.”

As associate head of school, Eghan explained that she serves as a “hub and a point of connection for many different parts of the school.”

She oversees academic leadership, including division heads, the academic dean, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion board and the director of Global Programs.

Eghan said she is “excited to bring the...schoolwide systems lens to... harness the strength of all these [programs] and work in concert to really build the strength and the excellence of the school.”

For most of her life, Eghan attended public schools but switched to an independent school in ninth grade. She explained that for a “shy, quiet, reserved child,” a small classroom setting was where she found her voice.

Eghan knew she wanted to be an educator but did not know exactly what she wanted to do or where she wanted to end up until reconnecting with an admissions counselor from

her high school.

In her first years as an educator, Eghan worked in admissions for the Groton School in Massachusetts.

She said that ever since then she has been “a deeply committed school person, looking to find ways to create equitable access to our schools” as well as ensuring families and students have “equitable access to really high-quality experiences.”

In her first trimester as associate head of school, Eghan has aimed to get to know the community by dedicating much of her time to meeting with faculty and staff from all different areas of the school.

She hopes to continue to find the “common threads that make [Holton] so great” as well as the “priorities that are emerging...within our own communities and articulating where we still have room to grow.”

In just her first couple of months, Eghan has made a mark at Holton, and students are excited to see what she will continue to accomplish as a member of the community.

From Volunteer Firefighter to Facilities Manager, Nate Wilson Ensures the Community’s Safety on a Daily Basis

BY CINDY MIAO

We’ve all been hit with an unexpected, blaring fire alarm during class. Most of us have been shushed for talking during a fire drill, asked a parent to enter Holton through the main doors instead of the side entrance, and experienced the scary, prolonged lockdown drill two years ago. Despite these seemingly frustrating situations, we must remember that a slight inconvenience on our side as students goes a long way to protect the health and safety of the community in unexpected emergencies.

Although Thanksgiving has passed, there is always time to be grateful for the members of our community, especially those who work hard behind the scenes to bolster the amazing education we receive as students. One prime example is our wonderful security team, directing traffic in the mornings and afternoons, no matter the weather, and consistently greeting us with a smile at the front desk.

A prominent member of our se-

curity team is Nate Wilson, facilities manager for Campus Safety. Prior to his current job, he served as a volunteer firefighter for 24 years and was with the Frederick County Sheriff’s Office as a judicial operations supervisor overseeing court security operations at the Frederick County, MD courthouse.

Having joined the Holton staff in June 2019, he said that he was drawn to “the wonderful community, of course, and beautiful campus.”

Have you ever wondered what members of the security team do while we learn in class? Wilson said, “It changes every day, and I enjoy that about any career path in public safety. Every day at Holton does begin and end with traffic and carpool. Those are a given. The in-between is filled with campus patrols, checking on all of our technology such as cameras and door locks, attending events meetings, making keys for employees, responding to calls for anything someone may need us for and a lot more.”

It is clear that Holton’s success is

dependent on hard-working staff like him.

Wilson stated that he most cherishes “the students and faculty/staff that [he has] the honor to work with on a daily basis.”

In order to help him keep everyone at school safe, he reminded the community, “If you see something, say something. Don’t ever hesitate to ask security if you are unsure about something you see on campus. We are here to help.”

As

trimester two begins and we focus on cramming for tests before winter break, let us remember to thank the members of our security team who spend their days supporting our safety.



Director of Fine and Performing Arts Felicia Swoope is a Former Entertainment Attorney, later Recognized her True Dream

BY TALIA WISSMAN

Felicia Swoope, the director of Fine and Performing Arts (FPA) since the 2023-2024 school year, has already proven to play a crucial role in the community.

Although she works in education now, Swoope comes from a background of intense dance study and work.

Growing up, she never had plans of dancing professionally. After dancing in college, she moved to Los Angeles with the plan to work as an entertainment attorney.

After some time in L.A, she realized her true dream was to dance professionally and moved to New York to attend New York University's renowned Tisch

School of
Fol-
low-



the Arts. ing that period, she danced with smaller companies and then moved to teaching. She taught dance to students for many years and even produced a dance showcase.

When Swoope came to Holton for a tour and interview, she immediately felt welcomed.

One of her first impressions was the large "Holton Arts" sign that can be seen from the parking lot, and she immediately appreciated the message.

Walking through the main doors, she felt "embraced" by Security Guard Dave Hawkins, who was sitting at the front desk.

Later, a senior took her on a tour of the school.

Swoope said this student "dazzled her" and from that moment on, she knew Holton was a "magical place." Since join-

ing the community, Swoope has been pleasantly surprised by the unique closeness of the community.

She appreciates how there is always someone at school who is open and willing to answer questions.

Additionally, she loves that the students are supportive of each other, particularly in the arts. Her favorite part of her job is the people: the students, FPA team and the administrative team.

Swoope has appreciated the opportunity to work with students; since teaching dance, she has enjoyed any time she gets to spend with students because she sees the future in them.

Overall, Swoope's goal is to expose students to the arts and give them opportunities to succeed.

She encourages showing students arts through performances, professionals and showcases inside and outside of Holton.

She also hopes to help any students who wish to bring their artistry to the next level.

The community anticipates seeing what Swoope will continue to bring to the Performing Arts Department.

Director of Dining Services Jay Keller Works to Ensure that "Students Receive a Wide Variety of Healthy and Nutritious Foods"

BY UMA GHOSAL

Students rave about Meriwether Godsey Dining for its delicious butter chicken, tortellini and grilled cheese.

But who makes it all happen? We see the staff serving us behind the counter or refilling the bagel station, but one of the crucial parts to keep this system running smoothly is played by Director of Dining Services Jay Keller. He described his position as being "in charge of everything related to food. That includes lunch, snacks, catering and Freeman Cafe."

He explained, "I came here in 2013, 11 years ago. I came here from Gallaudet University. It's a deaf university so quite a change, but I wanted to work in a day school."

Giving insight into his extensive background in the food industry, Keller stated, "I went to culinary school in my 30s, but as soon as I started having kids I didn't want to work in the restaurant industry. This

job provides better work-life balance."

Regarding the unique nature of Holton and its students, Keller noted, "The kids always surprise me by being more adventurous eaters. Sometimes we'll put something out there as a one-off, but the kids like it so much it becomes a regular."

He provided an example when he stated, "We weren't sure at first how the kids would react to the butter chicken, but now it's more popular than the chicken nuggets." Keller offered a further sentiment on his years at Holton. He has most cherished "having a lot of freedom over what we make. We can directly react with the comment box and implement your opinions into our decisions. We also don't work weekends, which is rare in this industry, and I like being able to spend the holidays with my family."

Ultimately, Keller's work in managing our dining services may go unnoticed by most. But under his supervision, Holton students receive a wide variety of healthy and nutri-

tious foods.

The community thanks Keller for his dedication to providing the

community with delicious meals on a daily basis.



“Dancing With the Stars” Season 33 Captivates Student Body

BY LILY HIBEY

“Dancing With the Stars” (“DWTS”), a television series that began in 2005, features professional dancers paired with celebrities training weekly to perform a variety of ballroom dances. At least one couple is eliminated each episode before the finale, where the final contestants compete for the coveted mirrorball trophy.

Season 33 of “DWTS,” which premiered on September 17, was a success for a number of reasons. Particularly, social media contributed greatly to this season’s popularity. During rehearsals, nearly all contestants posted TikToks (whether of dancing, making skits or soliciting votes), which kept viewers across all platforms engaged. Additionally, several rumored romances arose between the show’s featured couples such as Brooks Nader and

Gleb Savchenko. Fans quickly became obsessed with their relationship on and off the screen.

Season 33 came to a close on November 26 with an exciting three-hour finale. According to “Deadline,” 6.36 million people tuned in to watch—a 16% increase from last year’s viewer count and the highest Live+Same Day total since Season 29 of the show. The finalists included Super Bowl champion Danny Amendola, Olympic rugby player Ilona Maher, Disney actress Chandler Kinney, “Bachelor” star Joey Graziadei and pommel horse legend Stephen Nedorosic. Presenting one redemption and one freestyle dance, the couples performed live one last time.

At the end of the night, Graziadei and his professional dance partner Jenna Johnson were crowned the champions; Maher and professional dancer Alan Bersten came in second.

Like millions of fans across the

country, students were engaged in the show. Merritt Feldner ’27 remarked, “I have been watching ‘DWTS’ since elementary school, and this was one of the best seasons yet. This season, I was rooting for Joey because I knew him from ‘The Bachelor,’ but Chandler definitely was the best dancer and deserved the mirrorball.”

Tabitha Cutler ’27 agreed and said that she was “shocked” when Maher got second place because “Chandler’s dances were far better than Ilona’s.”

Mia Estevez-Breton ’27 said that she was elated that Graziadei and Johnson won because “they improved the most and developed great stage presence.”

Although Season 33 has concluded, “DWTS” has announced a new tour for 2025.

On January 9, fans in the area can watch the pros perform at the Lyric Baltimore arena. Students should race to get their tickets!

OPINION: College Football is Better Than The NFL

BY CAROLINE PETERSON

The superiority debate between college football vs. the NFL has been going on since 1920, the first year that both leagues co-existed. In my opinion, while both leagues have their pros and cons, there are numerous reasons why college football is better than the NFL.

I think a big reason why college football trumps the NFL is because the games are played on campus. On Saturdays, you can go to any big state school in the country, and enthusiasm there is unmatched. From tailgates to the hilarious signs students make in the hopes of being shown on the College GameDay show, the energy that college football brings is undeniable. The amount of school spirit that college football fosters allows for these schools to have a strong sense of community and pride. Additionally, the games are also more unpredictable than NFL games, so they are more fun to watch. Unlike the NFL, where teams maintain the same ranking throughout the season, college football rankings change on a weekly basis due to the fluctuating aspects of the game.

For instance, two weeks ago the unranked University of Florida beat Ole Miss (no. 10) with the result of Ole Miss not only dropping down four places in the national lineup but also blowing its shot at the national title. In the NFL, losing to a worse team would never result in such a dramatic change in rankings; I think this flexibility adds to the league’s excitement. Since players are generally less seasoned in college football compared to those in the NFL, there are more opportunities for players to make unexpected plays. In the 2013 Iron Bowl, after Alabama’s failed field goal, Auburn player Chris Davis ran the ball almost 100 yards and scored the final touchdown, securing Auburn’s victory.

Overall, I think that college football’s ability to foster community through school spirit, as well as the unpredictable nature of the game, makes college football far more appealing than the NFL.

Four Seniors Sign to Play Division I Athletics in College

BY SOPHIE FAMILI

Showcasing their dedication and accomplishments, four talented athletes from the Class of 2025 committed to play Division I sports. Foley Robertson, Elise Attiogbe, Loretta Talbott and Ella Moss have each made a memorable impact on the Holton-Arms athletics program.

Robertson will play soccer at Vanderbilt University. Her love for soccer began at age four and inspired her to pursue the sport at the collegiate level. She stated, “Soccer pushes me mentally, physically and emotionally. I love constantly working to improve while doing something I enjoy.” Robertson’s journey to commitment involved training daily, competing on weekends and staying patient throughout the recruiting process.

Reflecting on her time at Holton, she said, “Playing with my classmates and friends has been amazing, and Holton athletics always reminds me to have fun.”

Inspired by her older brother’s passion for the sport, Attiogbe began running in sixth grade. Now, she will join Marist College’s track and field team. “I wanted to see how far I could go and reach my full potential,” she explained. Attiogbe describes track as “essen-

tially a seven-day-a-week sport” that has shaped her work ethic.

As a four-year member and captain of the indoor and outdoor track teams, Attiogbe credited Holton athletics for preparing her for the next level and stated, “Having practices every day after school and meets every weekend with Holton has really prepared me for what I will be doing next year.”

Loretta Talbott will play soccer at the University of Virginia. After starting soccer and tennis at age five, Talbott chose to pursue soccer seriously. She reflected, “I knew I wanted to play D1 soccer after attending multiple college ID camps and feeling inspired by the players, wanting to become like them.”

Her preparation involved daily training, weekend tournaments and the motivation to be her best self as an athlete. As a varsity soccer captain, Talbott said, “Holton athletics has prepared me by giving me a great support system, with lots of supportive teammates and coaches motivating me on and off the

field.”

Three years after joining the crew team her freshman year, Moss will now row at Northeastern University. She shared, “I decided I wanted to go D1 because I love rowing and the friends I’ve made and it’s become such a big part of my life.”

Moss wanted to pursue rowing at a higher level as it “really helped [her] structure [her] schedule.” Speaking to her rowing career at Holton, Moss explained, “Holton athletics helped me because I received so much support from the coaches and [Athletic Director Graham Westerberg] and the whole program’s support helped me achieve my goal.”

The community anticipates seeing how the four talented seniors will contribute to their respective colleges’ athletic programs.



photo courtesy of Holton Communications

REVIEW: “Wicked” Proves its Enduring Power to Captivate”

BY ISABELLE APPLEBAUM

When I was seven, I performed “Popular” in my elementary school talent show with all the sparkle and confidence I could muster. A year later, I forced my mother to paint me green as I donned a black hat like Elphaba’s for Halloween. Even now, before a big test or stressful moment, I plug in my headphones and let the soaring notes of “El-

differing ideologies, ultimately shaping the paths that lead them to their iconic roles in the Land of Oz.

“Wicked: Part One” tells the first half of Elphaba and Glinda’s story. It premiered in theatres on November 22, after a long international press tour. It quickly became the highest-grossing movie of all time based on a Broadway musical. Popstar Ariana Grande steps into Glinda’s bubbly and glittering role while Broadway powerhouse Cynthia Erivo portrays

every number.

While I was thoroughly engaged for the entire two hours and 40 minutes of running time, the movie may drag for those not previously invested. Although I think the film being split into two parts will ultimately serve those looking for a faithful take on the source material, it does risk losing momentum and leaving viewers yearning for a more cohesive experience in a single sitting.

Additionally-

phie” remind me that I, too can “defy gravity.”

With “Wicked” woven into so many milestones of my life, the announcement of its adaptation into a movie was exciting and nerve-racking. How can a film captivate both longtime fans and a fresh audience discovering the story for the first time?

“Wicked” is based on Gregory Maguire’s 1995 novel “Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West.” It follows Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West, and Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, as they become close friends at Shiz University. Their friendship is tested as they navigate love, power and

the misunderstood El-

phaba. Unsurprisingly, I flocked to the theaters just a day after the premiere while I donned a pink sweater and ruby-red sneakers. The movie lived up to all of my expectations. It stayed incredibly faithful to the original Broadway musical while amplifying the characters I know and love in a huge, spectacular way. Oz is bright and beautiful, with colorful sets and large dance numbers.

Although initially skeptical of Grande’s ability to disappear into Glinda’s perky persona, I was entranced by her comedic take on the role. Erivo did an excellent job with the complexity and nuance of Elphaba. Her Broadway vocals shone in

ally, some nuance and depth get lost behind the spectacle of the large dance sequences and sweeping visuals. I wish Elphaba’s feelings of inadequacy, the danger to the animals of Oz, and the girls’ relationship were explored a little more thoroughly.

Ultimately, “Wicked: Part One” brought fresh perspectives and dazzling visuals while reminding me why I fell in love with the musical in the first place.

Watching it in the theater reignited the same emotions I felt as a kid performing “Popular” and dressing as Elphaba. Whether on stage or on screen, “Wicked” resonates with me as it proves its enduring power to captivate and inspire across mediums.

OPINION: “Gremlins” is the Best Holiday Movie due to “its Central Message”

BY SOFIA AQUINO

Watching Christmas movies by the glow of a kaleidoscopically lit tree is a cherished memory for families across the globe.

Many credit loving memories of bonding to the wide array of Christmas movies and culture displayed on their TV.

Yet, I’ve noticed a lack of genuineness in some households reveals underlying problems that have emerged in society over the decades.

This theme is at the heart of the greatest underground Christmas movie of all time: “The Gremlins.” Set in the snowy town of Kingston, the film follows Billy, a young man whose Christmas gift, a Mogwai named Gizmo, multiplies evil twins when its caretaking rules are broken. I watched the movie for the first time in elementary school.

What I find impactful is the effect this film had on my relationship with my mom.

When I was growing up, we would watch films together while eating junk food, laughing and bonding by the TV.

The reality of Christmas, though, often differs from the idealized “American Christmas.” Not every family is close or shares holidays.

This notion explains why I nominate “Gremlins” as the best holiday film. Mr. Peltzer didn’t give his son a Mogwai because it was at the top of Billy’s wishlist but because he was truly clueless about what his son needed.

The gift, while difficult to acquire, masks neglect, a mirror of how many parents prioritize consumerism over the true spirit of Christmas (bringing people together).

“Gremlins” reminds us that while parents feel pressured to show love through extravagant gifts, in fact, quality time matters most.

Along with its peculiar storyline and cinematography, I recommend this film for its central message: Not every Christmas is perfect, and true connection outweighs material gifts.

How do Students Feel About Gift-Giving During the Holidays?

COMPILED BY MIA ESTEVEZ-BRETON

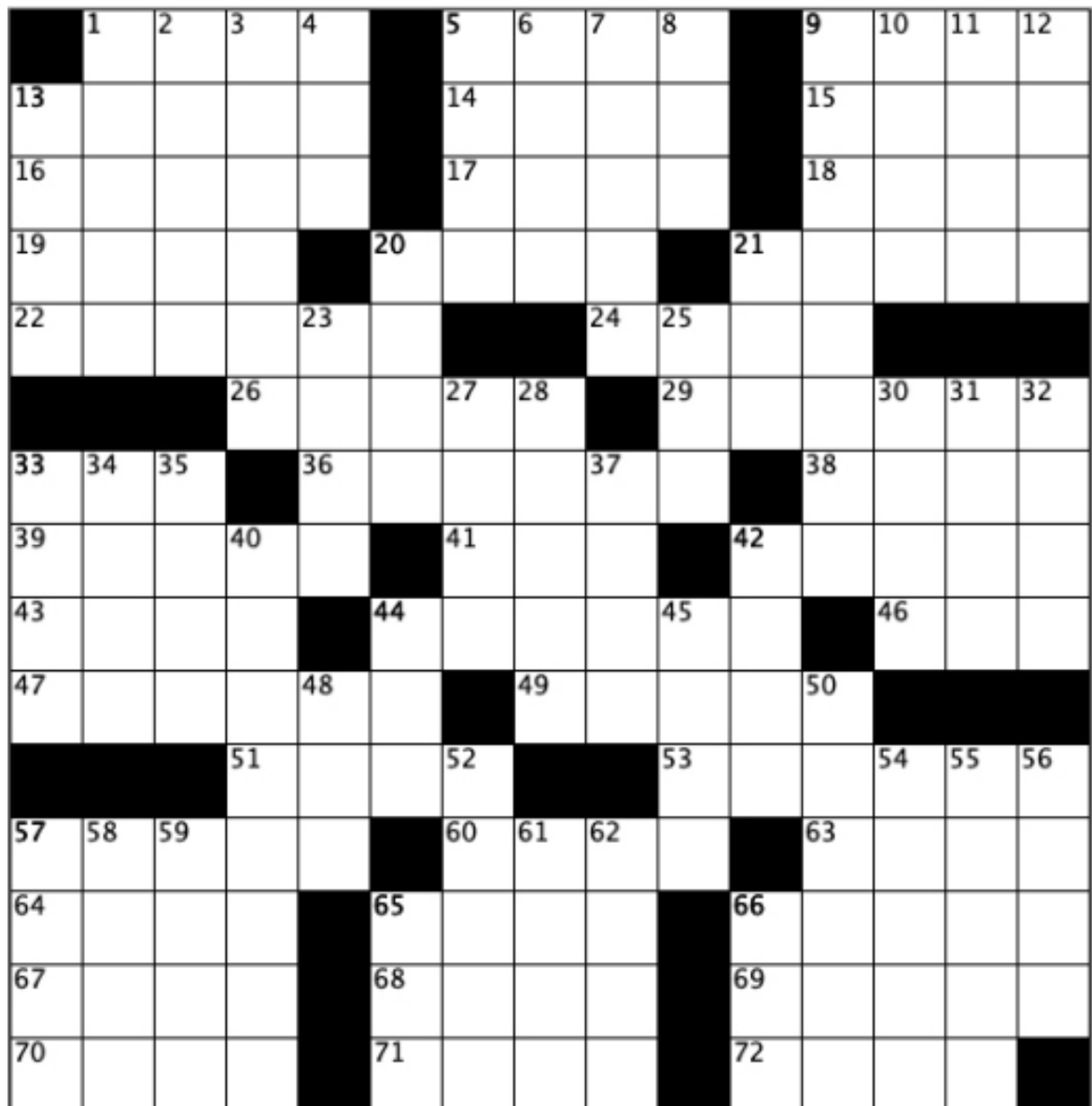


Across

1. Thing to do
5. Students perform Winter One ____
9. Goes with crafts
13. "On the Beach" writer Nevil
14. Not less
15. Broke
16. An impressive display
17. Go over an essay
18. Unofficial ticket seller
19. Tidy
20. Skirt length, perhaps
21. Harry Styles song "Sign of the ____"
22. Ctrl + D will do this
24. Keto or Paleo
26. Not salty
29. Opposite of effects
33. A Brit's mother
36. Ask to come
38. Truth or ____
39. Position properly
41. Swift's opening: "Welcome to the ____s Tour!"
42. Start
43. Alone
44. Finance upfront
46. Rudd's character: ____ Man
47. Seats in an art studio, perhaps
49. Amounts owed
51. Statistics
53. Follow the ____
57. "Moana" song featuring a singing crab
60. Scandal suffix
63. Relocate
64. Naked
65. Hook, ____ and sinker
66. Sleep ____, common sleeping disorder
67. Advanced senior science class, for short
68. An expression of grief, in Shakespearean terms
69. Fair hair
70. Babies often eat these mashed
71. Orion's ____
72. Concert piece that can't fail



CREATED BY CARLISLE WINN



Down

1. There's this many blind mice
2. Relating to the ear
3. There are 50 in the U.S.
4. List with the answers
5. Word often said at the end of a prayer
6. Learn how to ____ in any of Mr. Rivera's classes
7. Attempted
8. Ready, ____, go!
9. Stance, demeanor
10. Popular "Hamilton" song: "The ____ Where it Happened"

11. Not false
12. Gym-goer's unit
13. You can't get rid of it once you visit the beach
20. Shoe brand known for its durable, outdoor-focused sandals
21. A hot drink, or gossip
23. Bed size for one
25. Hot or over ____?
27. At any point
28. Fatigued
30. A long story, a heroic achievement
31. Female sportscaster Andrews

32. Folder you'll find in your email
33. A large number of objects crowded together
34. Many
35. "This is Us" actor Ventimiglia
37. Scotch is the trademark brand for this
40. "Oh my ____!"
42. Giga____ or mega____, units seen on computers, perchance
44. L.A. time zone
45. Having the skill or capability
48. Place down bricks
50. Taste-test, perchance

52. Able to move around, be flexible
54. One who gives
55. A happening
56. Apt anagram of D.E.A.R.
57. Popular social media platform, casually
58. Mega
59. Often depicted by a lightbulb
61. Obsessive
62. Try out
65. Dog variety that can be seen in chocolate or yellow variations
66. "It's easy as 1, 2, 3!"

55. Event
56. Read
57. Snap
58. Huge
59. Idea
60. Lay
61. Anal
62. Test
65. Lab

40. Goodness
42. Byte
44. Pst
45. Able
48. Lay
50. Sample
52. Agile
54. Donor

28. Tired
30. Saga
31. Erin
32. Sent
33. Mass
34. A lot
35. Millio
37. Tape

10. Room
11. True
12. Sets
13. Sand
20. Keen
21. Tea
23. Twin
25. Ice
27. Ever

3. States
4. Key
5. Amen
6. Code
7. Tried
8. Set
9. Atti-

69. Blond
70. Peas
71. Belt
72. Cert
DOWN:
1. Three
2. Aural

57. Shiny
60. Gate
63. Move
64. Nude
65. Lime
66. Apnea
67. Ages
68. Alas

42. Begin
43. Solo
44. Prepay
46. Ant
47. Stools
49. Debts
51. Data
53. Leader

24. Diet
26. Sweet
29. Causes
33. Mam
36. Invite
38. Dare
39. Align
41. Era

15. Tore
16. Array
17. Edit
18. Tout
19. Neat
20. Knee
21. Times
22. Delete

ANSWERS
ACROSS:
1. Task
5. Acts
9. Arts
13. Shute
14. More