



SMS spelling bee champ crowned

Jack Cook, left, won the school-wide spelling bee Dec. 17.

The eighth-grader correctly spelled “abridged” to win the title. Kayla John, right, was runner-up in the contest, which lasted 29 rounds and featured a total of 39 spellers from grades 5-8.

Cook advances to the upcoming Macomb County Regional Bee.

Pennies update

Mr. Pierce’s class led the Pennies from Heaven count as of Dec. 5, with a total of \$541.

Calendar

- **Jan. 2:** School resumes
- **Jan. 18:** End of 2nd Quarter
- **Jan. 27:** Open house for new families

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CHRISTMAS 2018

The Messenger

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ST. MARY MT. CLEMENS



A cherished time, no matter how you say it

BY ANGIE ITCHON

Many countries celebrate Christmas, but in very different ways. Here’s how people around the world say — and celebrate — “Merry Christmas”.

‘BUON NATALE’

In Italy, they celebrate

with the nativity crib scene. Children go outside singing wearing shepherd hats and sandals. Many children believe in Befana, a nice witch who leaves either coal or candy in a child’s socking.

Italians go to Midnight Mass, then eat an Italian cake called ‘Panettone’.

‘FROHE WEIHNACHTEN’

Christmas trees are important in Germany. These trees were first used by Germany in the late Middle Ages.

One small village in Germany, Oberammergau, has performed a passion play eve-

(Continued on page 7)



Photo courtesy of Gary Francis

Cruz Tomlan and Sofia Madonia take center stage during a Dec. 14 performance of the annual kindergarten pageant.

Pageants share poignant themes

BY KATELYN CATANA

St. Mary students performed two annual Christmas pageants recently.

The first- and second-grade pageant, “The Hopeless Camel,” was performed Dec. 7.

Set in the time of Jesus, the story features a cast of characters including Mary, Joseph, stable animals, and a narrator.

The production tells the story of “the Christmas Nativity, crossed with a loveable, hopeless camel who has no sense of direction and always gets lost,” said Ms. Walsh.

“After a series of adventures, the hopeless camel accidentally meets baby Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem and he becomes the happiest, most hopeful camel ever!” she added.

Students without acting parts also had a chance to share the stage as singers for the production.

On Dec. 14, the kindergarten performed “The Hoity-Toity Angel” in the school cafeteria.

The musical is about a beautiful but bratty angel who makes a terrible fuss until she meets the baby Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem.

Forensics event big on drama

BY AVA ESQUIVEL

Excitement was high for a forensics competition held earlier this month at St. Mary.

The big competition was held Dec. 8. There were three rounds. Each student was randomly assigned a number and performed in a room with one judge and other competitors.

Before the event, Hannah Cabal said the forensics team had been performing very well.

“We are all trying our best to get some more motions down, and memorize our last couple parts,” she said.

“I believe that the Forensics team has definitely improved since last year, and that we have an even larger chance of winning against St. Thecla, and the other schools,” said Mrs. Griffore, who directs the team along with Mrs. Sorgeloos.

The team has “been doing great,” Mrs. Sorgeloos said.

(Continued on page 2)

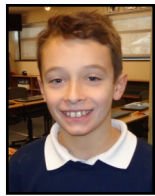


Student Spotlight: Nicholas Vaughn

Nicholas Vaughn is in Mrs. Venditto's fifth-grade class.

His favorite board game is "Apples to Apples," a judging game.

He has one brother and his name is Joey.



Nicholas likes Joey because he plays with him a lot.

His favorite TV show is "America's Got Talent" because it involves crazy tricks and acts. Nicholas' favorite movie is 'Jumanji,' which he described as cool and fun.

Nicholas plays baseball and will join the Macomb Cubs next year.

His idea of a perfect day is taking off school and going to Hawaii, where he would spend time on the beach, in hot tubs, and a restaurant called Star Noodle.

When Nicholas grows up he wants to be a 7th-grade teacher because he likes kids and really wants to teach them.

— Anthony Bommarito

Teacher Feature: Mr. Willard

Mr. Willard is the Technology teacher at St. Mary School, and also helps out on the playground during recess.

He is also the head of Newspaper Club. Mr. Willard gives members assignments and helps them with their work.

The meetings are on Thursdays and are held in the computer lab. Newspaper Club currently has about 16 members, each excited to write stories, do interviews and have a good time!

Mr. Willard is, like, the boss of kickball. He takes this

VERY seriously.

The fifth and sixth grade play kickball during Tuesday recess. Recently, he made sure a group was able to play when the field when another group started using the field for a different activity.

Mr. Willard has been at St. Mary since 2010. (If you do the math that's eight



years.) When he was little, Mr. Willard didn't know what he wanted to be when he grew up. In high school, he started writing for the school paper and after graduating got a job as a journalist.

He worked in newspapers for a long time and then came

here to St. Mary to make his dream come true!

He teaches students coding, PowerPoint presentations, and more. His computer skills are very good.

But there are some things we don't know about him, like his middle name.

What we DO know is that his favorite color is blue, favorite animal is a shark, and he really likes his job.

What does he like about it? Mr. Willard said he likes getting students interested in technology and showing them new websites and other tools.

— By Abigail Farah

Finishing touches being made to new gym

BY JAMES ANDARY

The new gym is almost finished.

Mrs Miscavish said that it will be done in about 3-4 weeks, so we will have it for next year's volleyball team and a bit of this season's basketball. You can say that we're in the home stretch.

They are doing some last-minute things, like installing the scoreboard and putting in the bleachers.

"It's budget was \$2 million, and it is projected to be a bit under budget which is good." Mrs. Miscavish said.

There will be Basketball,



St. Mary teachers recently toured the new gym facility.

Instructional Basketball, and Volleyball will play in the gym as their home court or home gym. This will very much help the St. Mary's teams to not have to drive to other schools for home

games.

This sure is one of the biggest projects this school has done with kind donations to help build it. These very amiable donations are greatly appreciated.

Forensics

(Continued from page 1)

"Even though I wasn't here last year to see the team, I couldn't imagine them training harder, or doing better than they already are."

On Dec. 5, the team hosted a Parent Night that also served as a dress rehearsal. Forensics students were divided into different classrooms, and performed in front of parents. Each student performed twice, as the parents rotated into a different

room after the first round.

At the competition, first-place honors were earned by: Ava Schneider (two), Grace Gutmann, Ava Esquivel and Rita Yammine, and the multiple team of Kamryn Rastigue, Kayla Reynolds, Jack

Janusch, Thomas Simasko, and Joseph Banaszak.

All of the more than two dozen participants from St. Mary should be congratulated for their hard work in preparing for and performing at the event. Way to go!



Proboscis Monkey by JLplusAL (2006)
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This monkey 'nose' threat of extinction, unfortunately

BY JAMES ANDARY

This month's animal of the month is the proboscis monkey.

Its scientific name is *Nasalis larvatus*. Unfortunately they are endangered and their population is decreasing. Their estimated population is 7,000. The thing that is forcing them to be so endangered is habitat loss.

They can do some really cool stuff like jumping into the water from over 50 feet above ground, and it's nose can grow so long they have to move it over whenever it eats!

It lives in only one place which is an island in Asia called Borneo. To be specific, it lives in the rainforest near the water.

It has a few predators like clouded leopards, crocodiles, and habitat loss if it can avoid those it's average lifespan would be 15-20 years of age. It may be a funny looking animal but it is a very interesting one, too.

Deck the halls with these festive DIYs

BY AVA ESQUIVEL

Don't know how to decorate for Christmas? Well, here are some Christmas house decorating DIYs that will definitely give you a boost.

Need something shiny and sparkly that will catch somebody's eye? These are the ingredients and instructions to make hanging snowflakes: skinny popsicle sticks, blue glitter, any liquid glue, and some yarn (of any color). Once you have all the ingredients, stick the popsicle sticks in any snowflake shape you choose.

Carefully glue the ends of the popsicle stick so that each stick covers the other. Then, slowly drizzle the glue onto the parts of the sticks that you would like the glitter on. Pour the glitter over the glue. Wait until it dries, then use the yarn to hang the snowflake(s) anywhere around the house. Pretty, sparkly snowflakes wherever you choose!

For this next DIY, you will be making a Christmas Carpet! The ingredients needed include: a large one colored carpet (preferably white), any color glitter, and any liquid glue. First, you use



A few craft supplies and a little ingenuity can be used to create Christmas decorations like this popsicle-stick snowflake.

the liquid glue to outline any Christmas drawing that *you* enjoy. Then, once you have the liquid glue in your best Christmas drawing, then you pour the glitter onto the glue. When fully dried, put the beautiful carpet wherever you feel fits the piece.

Next, we will be making a Christmas wreath on a plate, (and, or) a bowl. For this particular craft, you will need: a bowl (and, or) plate, green paint (not washable), red paint (not washable), and if you want to spice it up a little, green (and, or) red glitter. To

start, grab the plate or bowl.

Use the Green paint to make a wreath on the outlines of the plate or bowl. Then, if you chose to have sparkles, pour them on the painted areas (they should stick). Wait about five or ten minutes for the paint to dry.

Next, use the red paint to paint a bow onto the bowl or dish. And if you chose sparkles, add those to the Red painted areas. Wait about five or ten minutes to dry.

Antique coin was a discovery to flip over

BY GABRIEL FISCHER

The coolest thing I ever found was in 2016 when we went to an antique festival up north.

There were so many stands with antiques from old matchbox cars to cool army helmets (that cost about \$1,000).

Finally I found a stand that got me interested. There was a man and in front of him was a huge tray with old coins in it. My mom asked how much they cost and he said \$5.



But the man said that a young fellow like me could pick four coins for free.

I was so excited! I picked the coolest ones I could find. The first two were from the 1970s and the third one was from the 1960s. I dug to the bottom of the tray and found one that looked RE-

ALLY old. The words were written in French and the date said 1596.

When we went home I put the coin in a small safe.



Don't forget about pets this Christmas

BY ALEXIS BYKS

Do you have a pet? If not, why not save a life and give one love by adopting one?

It is getting close to Christmas, and so many animals are still at shelters, many of which don't have enough money to help them.

So for Christmas, why not adopt a fuzzy bunny, a cute kitten, or a adorable puppy?! And don't go *buy* one, but adopt one instead! It really helps out, and the prices can really be small, or even free! Go to the Best Friends webpage (www.bestfriends.org), and scroll down until you find the holiday deals! Three of the deals I liked are listed here:

1. Looking for a senior dog or cat? All animals 8 years or older free!

2. Adopt a cat or dog with special needs for free!

3. Do you not have any other pets at home, and only want one? Good, because all single dogs and cats (single pets HAVE to be only ani-



mals in household) for free!

Now, say you have a pet (or pets) at home. Do you think of THEM at Christmas? Do you get THEM presents? Don't feel bad if you don't, but try getting them something like a new toy, treats, or even something as small as a new tag of their collar!

Don't know what to get? Go to Chewy.com! For dogs, there are things like Santa Dog Socks, to keep our dogs' feet warm while outside! Only \$8.99.

And for cats, there are Toy Variety packs, with 13 things! And it is only \$4.01! And you can find much, much more on Chewy, or even at your local Walmart!

Christmas Poem

By Abigail Farah

Mistletoe is everywhere
 What are you going to wear
 Hallmark movies kisses BARF!!
 Maybe you should get a scarf
 Santa's gone but what a sight
 Watch the sleigh fly through the night
 Presents and cookies in the bowl
 It's too bad all you got was coal.
 Cry all you want but hey look here,
 Better luck next year!

She's a grand old flag

BY JARED NADOLINSKI

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed an act establishing an official flag for the new nation.

The resolution stated: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new con-

stellation."

On Aug. 3, 1949, President Harry S. Truman officially declared June 14 as Flag Day.

The history of our flag is very fascinating. It has survived battles and wars across the country.

The beginning of the first American flag is unknown. Some historians believe it was designed by Francis Hopkinson and sewn by Betsy Ross.

Space Force proposal ready to boldly go forward

BY JARED NADOLINSKI

The United States Space Force is a newly proposed military branch that President Donald Trump announced during a meeting of the National Space Council in June.

If the proposal is approved, it will become the sixth armed forces branch, joining the Navy, Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and

Coast Guard.

As much as it sounds like the Space Force will be astronaut soldiers with blaster rifles, the reality is much more. Rather than sending troops into space, the Space Force will focus on national security and preserving the satellites and vehicles that are dedicated to international communications and observation.

Immediately following President Trump's announce-

ment in August, the Pentagon released a report that detailed some of the Department of Defense's immediate justification for creating the Space Force.

The U.S. government and military rely heavily on satellites for forecasting weather, collecting high-resolution images for intelligence and directing missiles with GPS satellites.



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HOBBY SHOP



If you seek a challenge, give baseball a swing

BY GABRIEL FISCHER

My favorite hobby of all is playing baseball. It's fun to play and you can score, run a lot and hit really far. It is also really fun when you can get people out, slide and win. It is an extreme challenge, and that is why it is fun.

I have been playing on a travel team called Baseball Utility for two years now. My first year, I was one of the best hitters on my team.

Right now, I am practicing and getting ready for the summer. I play in the 11U division and played on a wood bat league this fall.

In baseball, you need to be focused and ready for something to happen. You need to know what to do if the ball comes to you.

If something happens in the field that you can not control (like the field conditions or the umpire), it is ok. But if you make a mistake that you can control, then it is your fault.

When you get back out on the field you need to forget about what happened and then focus on what is going to happen next. Now I play as a second baseman and am one of the best hitters on my team. I like being second base because you get a lot of action and because you get a lot of throws to first base and shortstop. Now that is my favorite hobby.

Gratitude starts from within

BY RITA YAMMINE

If you're still looking for a New Year's resolution, becoming a more grateful person is a good one.

So how do you show more gratitude? Wow, that's a big question. First, you have to feel remorse for being greedy. If not, your vow is totally empty.

And in order to achieve true gratefulness, you must ask yourself why you feel the need to change. There might be a reason within a reason! So, it's always good to look deeper when going through a change of heart.

Now that you understand what's going to happen, you're already halfway there! Next, you have to turn your words into actions. The

first step now is to just be kinder. If someone asks you to help them out, be thoughtful and pitch in. Eventually, it will sink in and you will ask them if they need help before they ask you!

This develops one's sense of compassion and actually boosts sympathy and less unsatisfied thoughts. Also, it's always good to practice those phrases like, "Happy to help," and "My pleasure." Because when you say those phrases that put a smile on people's faces, it brightens up their day.

I'm not saying that you should be a "people pleaser", but if sadness is contagious, then positivity should be, too. And remember: If trouble comes your way, God is always here!

Time to get bowled over by popcorn

BY GABRIEL FISCHER

Each year, people in the United States observe National Popcorn Day on Jan. 19. Popcorn lovers celebrate such flavors as caramel corn, ranch, white cheddar, Texas toast, cheese, and more.

Popcorn started becoming popular in the United States in the 1800s, when people would pop the kernels on their stove. But the crazy thing is that people have discovered remnants of popcorn from as early as 3600 B.C.!



Popcorn became even more popular when Charles Cretors made a popcorn machine with steam. Soon, there were horse-drawn wagons carrying the invention in the streets of Chicago in the 1890s. At that time, Louise

Ruckleim added peanuts and molasses to popcorn, and it soon became Cracker Jack!

The connection between Cracker Jack and baseball began in 1908, when Jack Norworth and Albert Von Tilzler wrote "Take Me out to the Ballgame," including the line: "Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack/I don't care if I never get back."

Today, Americans eat 13 billion quarts of popcorn a year. These days, most popcorn is produced in the U.S., especially in Alaska.

Video gamers share their favorite titles

BY CADEN SILER

Did you know that there are 912 million gamers worldwide?

This year, Americans will spend more than \$82 billion on video games, and a projected \$86.3 billion in 2019.

James Andary said that unlike many gamers, Fortnite

isn't his favorite title.

"It's old and it's getting boring," said James, who added that if he had to choose a favorite, it would be "MLB: The Show 18".

"It keeps me updated with the sports I love," he said.

Alexis Byks' favorite game is Roblox.

"I can talk to people all

over the world!" she said, adding that Roblox has a lot of good, fun games to play.

Ryan Baughman said his favorite video game is "Star Wars Battlefront 2" because he is a huge Star Wars fan.

"I like how the game pulls you in, so you feel like you're in the game," he said.



Brother, brother, brother: Life with older siblings

BY ERICA JOHNSON

Life with much older siblings is an adventure! People say that being the youngest is an advantage. In my opinion that's true. I am the youngest in my family. I have three older brothers, which leaves me to be the only girl in my family besides my Mom. I have learned a lot from my brothers.

My oldest brother is great at talking me into good things. For instance when I was not sure on if I should go to a sports camp at another school during the summer. He helped me think about the pros and cons and after that I decided to go to

the camp.

When your brothers come home for the holidays it seems that you get a joyful feeling inside of you! Since all my brothers have come home for the holidays I felt the joyful feeling on Dec.13th! Having older siblings is my favorite thing!

Another thing is that they are a lot smarter than you sometimes which I have experienced before! They can help you with homework or other tasks you might need help doing.

One thing I have noticed from my 11 years being here is that they are very protective of you! A few weeks ago when I

went to my aunt's house with my family and extended family, they were talking about how my brothers are very protective of me. We also talked about the sixth grade dance which was very funny because my brothers and cousins were sharing very funny stories! Along with other very funny memories!

Lastly older siblings teach you new things. They can also give you a heads up on new things that you are going to try. I like it when you get teachers that your older siblings have had before!

That is why older siblings are an adventure and are fun to have!

Ideas for the gamer on your gift shopping list

BY ADAM HODGES

Welcome to the Video Game Gift Guide section in the school paper. Here are some recommendations for video games that you could put on your Christmas list, or as a gift.

1. Right now, the most popular video game is Fortnite. Now you have definitely heard of it, since it's the most popular video game. And although it is dying out, it is still the most popular video game, so this is definitely recommended for a gift

2. One video game that was really popular, but died out about two years ago, and is getting more popular again, is Minecraft. In my opinion, Minecraft is a REALLY fun game, and if you play it, or you want to play it, you would probably think so, too. So this one is definitely recommended.

3. Now this one I definitely think you have heard

FACT: Fortnite has made over \$1 billion.

of this one, and it is called Roblox. In this game you can play user-generated games or make your own game. You can also design your avatar the way you would like, and if you buy ROBUX, the money on Roblox, you can get even more stuff for your avatar. And this is definitely a recommendation.

4. I know you have heard of this one, it's called Super Mario 3D World. Now in this game, you can play as Mario, Luigi, Toad, Peach, and a bonus character that you have to unlock, Rosalina. But in this Mario game you don't try to save Princess Peach, you try to save these pixie things from Bowser. And there are also four or five bonus worlds so you can keep playing. So this is definitely a recommendation.

The original Christmas story was Jesus' birth

BY ADAM HODGES

One normal day a woman was visited by an angel named Gabriel.

The angel said "Do not be afraid, I have come to ask you to be the mother of the son of God, and you must name him Jesus."

Mary answered, "I would be honored to."

Mary went to go tell Joseph, who did not believe it. Then later that night, Joseph had a dream, and it was where angel Gabriel was telling him the same thing he told Mary, "Do not be afraid, I have come to ask you to be the father of the son of God, and you must name him Jesus."

Then he woke up and said out loud, "Yes, Lord, I accept."

The next morning, he went out to go tell Mary about his dream, and also something else, that he had to go to his hometown Bethlehem for a city count. But Mary could not walk because she was pregnant with the baby Jesus, so she rode on a donkey that carried her all the way to Bethlehem.

Once they got to Bethlehem it was late at night, and they could not find a place to stay, but one kind man let them stay at his stable, and there Jesus was born. A shepherd and three Kings came and all the animals crowded around him, and that's how Jesus was born.





Sixth grade rocks — and studies them

BY ALEXIS BYKS

This is for the week of Dec.3 through Dec.7. In 6th grade, we are learning about rocks, or to be more clear igneous rocks, metamorphic rocks, and sedimentary rocks. We are focusing on Igneous rocks right now. We are also working on dividing decimals by decimals. It's kind of hard, but not to hard. Across the hall in Mrs. Kroha's class, we are doing a writing project called "Elf for Hire", where we act as if we are elves, writing a resume. We give three reasons why we want to be hired. In Religion, we are working on a Jesse Tree. Every day, we color our ornament, cut it out, glue it to our tree, and then read the passage in the bible for each day. In Social Studies, we are learning about the 5 rulers of Mesopotamia, a small city-state by the Fertile Crescent. Finally, we can't forget D.A.R.E!

(Continued on page 10)

Christmas

(Continued from page 1)

ry 10 years, starting in 1634. This famous German play stages Jesus' passion. German children believe in Weihnachtsmann, or Christmas Man. He also looks a lot like Santa Claus and brings gifts to children. Germany is also known for their Christmas Markets.

'MERRY CHRISTMAS!'

In England, kids believe in

As Michigan Day arrives, appreciate what this pleasant peninsula provides

BY ANGIE ITCHON

National Michigan Day is on January 18. Michigan became the 26th state on January 26,1837.

This state is known for many things, including cherries, automobile industry, and the Great Lakes. It is also the only state in the country to have an upper peninsula and a lower peninsula. Michigan's capital is Lansing, but the biggest city in the state is Detroit.

Our state's name comes from the Ojibwe word *mishigamaa*, meaning "large water" or "large lake." Michigan is the 10th most populous state and 11th most extensive area.

Many sports legends either played for Detroit pro teams or Michigan colleges, or were born in Michigan, including Sergei Fedorov, Kirk Gibson, Ted Lindsay, Isiah Thomas, Steve Yzerman, Barry Sanders, Ty Cobb, Gordie Howe, Tom Brady, Derek Jeter, and Joe Louis. Detroit has four professional sports teams: the Lions, Tigers, Pistons, and Red Wings.

Michigan's automobile industry became very popular in the early 1900s, around the time Henry Ford made the assembly line to speed up production for his company. The assembly line became known all around the country, and other car companies started using it. In 2017, more than 1.7 million vehicles rolled off assembly plants in the Detroit area, where Ford, Chevrolet, and Cadillac have a heavy presence.

Michigan's history starts in the 16th centu-

'Father Christmas'. The British version of Santa Claus leaves presents in stockings or pillowcases. Instead of cookies and milk for Father Christmas, families leave out mince pies and brandy. For a feast, roasted turkey and vegetables are popular. Some popular desserts are Christmas pudding, Christmas cake, and trifles. British citizens have nativity plays and carol services.

'MALIGAYANG PASKO'

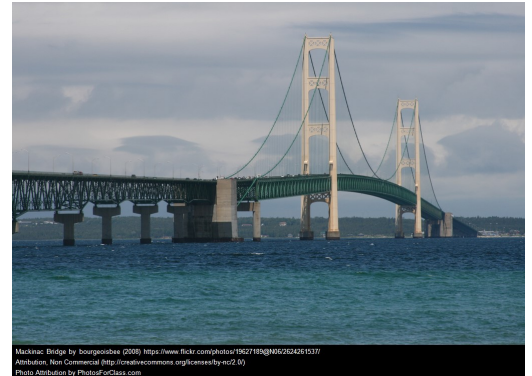
Christmas is the most important holiday in the Philippines because about 80% of

Filipinos are Catholic. One tradition in the Philippines is making a 'parol' -- a bamboo pole or frame with a lighted star lantern on it. The parol is the most popular Christmas decoration in the Philippines. On Christmas Eve, people go to Christmas Eve mass, which is followed by a midnight feast called Noche Buena. Kids believe in Santa Claus. A man named Santa R-Kayma Klaws actually dresses up like Santa and gives presents to the children. Merry Christmas

in Tagalog (Tagalog is the main language that people speak in the Philippines) is 'Maligayang Pasko'.

Christmas traditions vary around the world. You can hide a pickle on your Christmas tree, fun German tradition. The first one who finds the pickle supposedly has good luck for the upcoming year.

Buon Natale! Frohe Weihnachten! Feliz Navidad! Maligayang Pasko! Joyeux Noël! Merry Christmas!



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Selfies are no indication of true happiness

Dear Rita,
I am the popular kid. But every now and then I feel like I don't belong. It's a really depressing feeling. I hide it from my parents, which is why I'm talking to you. I hide it from my friends, because they would think I'm a loser and a wannabe.



Frankly, I don't know why I have this feeling. Do I not have something that I need, like happiness? I always thought I felt joy. Isn't that what being popular is all about? Being cute and taking selfies? At least, that's what my friends make it seem like. They make it seem like life is an adventure! My selfies say I'm an awesome, quirky tween. Is that who I am?

Jumbled Jeanie

Dear Jeanie,

The fact that you acknowledge your feelings is the first step towards the solution. If you're having doubts about your inner feelings, it might be time to rediscover who you truly are in a better, socially-welcoming environment.

If you try to discover who

you are based on your friends' opinions, you will not understand your full potential. Also, do not hide it from your parents. We are living in an age of opportunities, and lying and hiding limit those opportunities. True joy comes from developing one's sense of confidence and gratitude.

Confidence helps you to stay content and not to be so vulnerable when others try to bring you down. Gratefulness helps you be thankful in a world where greediness is everywhere.

"Selfie-syndrome" is a case where people often take their selfies to an extreme, where they often risk their life and dignity. The people that have this syndrome searched for their heart's desire in the wrong places, especially the secular media. Just remember: true joy comes from you!

Dear Rita,

One of my friend's loved ones recently died. I thought this death wouldn't affect her much, since she barely knew this person. However, when I saw her at school today, she gave me the cold shoulder!

I had already known her family member died, so I whispered to her, "He's in a better place now." But she just nodded quickly and

looked away. I know that handling a loss is hard, but she's been acting this way for some time now. I asked my mother if I should intervene, but my mom said she talked to my friend's mom already and that her mom said my friend's sad because her family is sad, too. But, I am still very worried. Should I be? Can you help me out?

Concerned Cerena

Dear Cerena,

First, her mom sounds like she knows that your friend is having a tough time dealing with the loss and most likely will take care of it. Second, praying is a really good way to keep your nerves under control, especially if you feel anxious. The fact that you're not pressuring her to talk or anything like that is a good sign.

Remember: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That means you shouldn't worry that your friendship is going to fall apart, or something like that. If it's a true friendship, you have nothing to worry about. I completely sympathize with your concerns and you are a very caring friend. Sometimes, it's not about fixing friendships; it's about caring for friendships.

These songs are Christmas classics

BY GAVIN GAYNOR

Christmas is my favorite time of year. It's the day Jesus was born. It's my birthday month, too. Also, it's a time to be happy and be with the people you love.

And then there's the music.

Christmas songs are my favorite and they make me feel energetic and excited for Christmas.

My most favorite song is "Jingle Bells", written by James Pierpont. It was first recorded in 1857. I like it because I think of Christmas when I hear it. Other songs I love hearing at this time of year are:

- I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas. I Like it because it is funny and it reminds me of santa and I wonder how he gets all of those presents all around the world, especially a hippopotamus.

- Twelve Days of Christmas. It reminds me of how people shop for toys for Christmas

- I'm Gettin' Nuttin' For Christmas. I like this song because I think sometimes that I'm gettin nuttin for Christmas.

Hallmark Christmas movies: Holiday cheer or holiday cheese?

BY ABIGAIL FARAH

Hallmark... Eww, right?

Not all kids agree. I do, but that's just me. Moms seem to get a good vibe off of Hallmark. Especially during Christmas. Here's how it normally works in a house: Mom watches Hallmark, Dad wants football, kids want anything BUT Hallmark.

Hallmark has lots of romantic (I don't like it either) movies for moms to watch.

Some moms like it for its happy endings, some like the whole story.

Believe it or not, some kids like Hallmark. They may like the romance, the comedy parts, or maybe they love it all. I personally watch it just to be able to snuggle up with my mom without my sisters bothering me.

If you've ever watched Hallmark, you know this: Hallmark plots can be very alike.

This is the main story for most of them: A couple gets together, a new guy shows up, the girl likes him, a kid comes along and inspires the girl, the couple breaks up, the new guy and the girl get together, they get married, they laugh, the kid does too, the end.

Maybe it IS corny. Maybe it IS good. There's no way to tell. They all have a slightly different story, but there's always a happy ending.



Snow days are a pretty great deal

BY GAVIN GAYNOR

Snow days are the best! You get the day off of school and get to play in a bunch of snow. The day also means you get to stay home and relax. I will tell you three reasons why it is so awesome!

Reason 1- No School

Some days of school are exciting and some are not, but to me snow days are a miracle. You don't need to do any homework, take tests, and you can be lazy.

Reason 2- Relaxing

You don't need to do anything. You can just sit around and be lazy. This reason is good because you don't need to get dressed, brush your hair, wake up early, eat a fast breakfast. You can just sit around, play video games, play in the snow and enjoy the day.

Reason 3- The Snow

The snow is the best part, because there is a lot of it, well sometimes. When there is a lot fresh fallen snow, you can have a snowball fight, build snow forts and snow men, make snow angels, go sledding and skiing. There are so many fun things to do in snow.

Be proud of your family heritage

BY AVA ESQUIVEL

Growing up, I've always embraced my six different cultures.

On my mother's side, I am Irish, Scottish, and German. On my father's side, I am French, Mexican, and Spanish.

I remember that when I was little, on most weekends, I would go to my paternal Grandma's house for a visit. She would always make us beans and tortillas for almost every meal. And she spoke Spanish when she was talking to my dad.

But the thing I remember

most is asking her to tell us stories of her childhood growing up as a Mexican.

Apparently, the thing that she remembered most was Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. Honestly, I've been very interested in that stuff for as long as I can remember. Sugar skulls, fancy foods, anything that she talked about always seemed like the most interesting thing in the world.

On my mom's side, well, I never had the chance to meet that grandma, for she passed away before I was born. My mom talks about her a lot, though. She always said how

she was so kind, and gorgeous, and how she was the kind of person who would be your best friend after talking to them for five minutes.

When my mom was my age (10), she had thick, naturally red hair like mine, an indication of our Irish heritage.

If anyone feels that they don't think they should share they're cultures, let me give you a tip: don't be afraid to be who you truly are, whether it's Mexican, like me, or something else that is totally different. Embrace who you are, and where you come from.



Real meaning of Christmas not found in most stores

BY NICHOLAS GORDAY

In the past, Christmas was all about Jesus' birth and being with your family.

Christmas' thought has changed a lot now. People think Christmas is about getting toys, but it is about Jesus.

While you are reading this, think about how you have seen Christmas in your mind, and how other people have seen it.

To me, it has been very sad to forget the real meaning

of Christmas, about putting toys first and leaving Jesus behind our things that are not urgent to have.

The kids talk about toys, and there are not many signs of Jesus when you walk in a store. Those are examples of how Christmas has lost its meaning.

Needs and wants are different, so the bottom line is we should put Jesus in the definition of Christmas and toys should be a secondary of the Christmas tradition.

Fourth grade regroups for mathematics

BY ERICA JOHNSON

For the week of Dec.3 - Dec.7, Mr. Pierce's class has been busy. In math they are currently learning how to multiply with regrouping. In science they are learning how animals adapt to the wild.

In English they are learning possessive nouns. In social studies they are studying the Southeastern States. In reading, they are tackling one of my favorite books, "Shiloh".

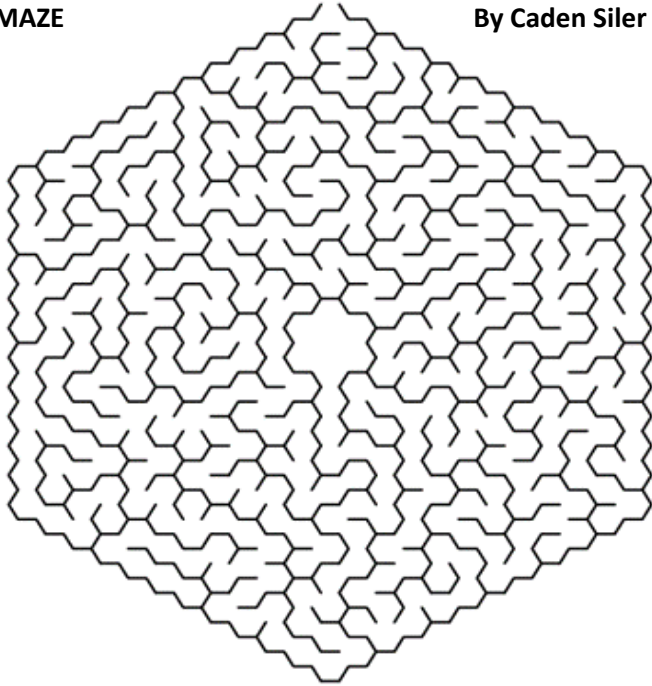
In vocabulary, they are defining chemistry words. Lastly in religion they are going over the Ten Commandments!

On top of all of this, they went on a field trip to the historical Crocker House a few weeks ago.



MAZE

By Caden Siler



6th Grade

(Continued from page 7)

D.A.R.E is a class you have to take in 6th grade, where a officer comes in every Thursday (starting December 6th) for 10 weeks. It is a very fun class where you learn to resist drugs and self abuse. These classes will be fun and easy. When we finish, or graduate, we get a party. As an extra, I asked some classmates what their favorite class is. "My favorite classes are Social Studies and math because" said Caden Siler.

For the week of 12/10 - 12/14. For this week, in math, we took a math test on multiplying, dividing, adding, and subtracting decimals. It had 20 questions. My friend James says the test was pretty easy. In science, we finished reading about sedimentary rocks, and soon we will start a crystal project. From what I know about it, we will be

making borax water in a cup and putting pipe-cleaners in a design, making a Christmas ornament. While we are talking about Mrs. Griffore's class, we will be having "Buddy the Elf Pancake Party" next week! We will be eating pancakes after pancakes after pancakes! Now across the hall, we are still working on the "Elf for Hire", and also a new project called, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Analysis" where we work out all the problems and solutions, man vs. man, man vs. self, etc..

In Social Studies we are learning about the Egyptians, Kushilites, and Ancient Israelites (Jews). In religion, we are still working on the Jesse Tree. This is your inside scoop on this week's 6th grade news!

There will be no news on 12/17 - 12/21 week because we are only have 3 days have school. Have a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

WORD SEARCH

By Katelyn Catana

W	I	N	T	E	R	L	J	F
D	E	C	I	U	M	P	T	E
C	S	N	O	P	D	M	K	A
S	H	H	E	H	T	A	R	T
X	N	I	N	O	L	I	U	G
E	L	O	S	F	Z	E	H	A
S	T	B	W	T	A	P	A	F
E	R	O	V	M	M	K	K	H
W	N	E	Y	Q	A	A	K	C
S	S	Y	W	W	H	N	S	T

Winter Wonderland

1. SNOWFLAKE
2. SNOWMAN
3. ICE
4. WINTER
5. CHRISTMAS



Christmas Acrostic

By Erica Johnson

Jesus is born on Christmas

On today we celebrate the birth

Yes, today we shall sing to Jesus.

