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Madison Central

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Violet Daniels STAFF WRITER

n October 18, while Madison Central (MC) was preparing for the 2024 Homecoming Dance, the swim team was off in Tupelo preparing for something much bigger: their state championship. Throughout the year, the Aqua Jags train for their state meet in hopes of securing another tournament. A lot was at stake this year for the MC swim team. The MC girl's swim team has been the reigning champions for ten years, and the MC boy's swim team has held the title of champions for four years. This year, thanks to their hard work and lots of teamwork, the girls captured their eleventh win, and the boys gained their fifth win.

This win was not easy, and the team has been working towards this since their last state meet in 2023. Unlike other sports, swimming is in season all year. While the MC swim team only competes during the fall semester, most of the kids compete on club teams as well. These club teams allow student-athletes to increase their skill with practice and ensure they stay in the required habits to succeed. Clark Davis (11) stated, "Combined with our club practices, most of us get about ten hours of practice per week." These practices play a significant role in their ability to succeed. Without the countless hours of effort put in by the team, they would not be able to continue to call themselves the state champions.

This year, the MC swim team was much smaller than previous years; Omar Abdo (10) stated, "We knew

that we

had a big disadvantage because of our seniors leaving. We definitely had to push ourselves more and really strived to be better than the day before." Losing experienced seniors can impact team dynamics and confidence, but the remaining members are committed to stepping up their efforts. Luckily, the entire MC swim team is packed with hard-working students who are determined to maintain their winning streak. One of these athletes is Paisley Albritton (12), who has been on the team for three years. She said, "We kept our eyes on the prize, working harder every day and encouraging each other. We knew it would be a hard battle, but that is even more motivation to put in the work. Our coaches would constantly remind us of what we had ahead, so that also kept us in check, never to back down." Between club practices, school practices, and teamwork, the MC swim team has continued to dominate in their division.

The state swim meet was especially valuable for the seniors on the team. Not only was this their last school meet, but it was also an essential meet for college teams. Albritton stated, "I plan on swimming in college, and the state meet solidified that because it was one of the best meets I have had in a while. I believe that with more training and racing, my best swimming is ahead of me." One last meet for the seniors means one last time to show off their skills and abilities. All of the seniors on the team have been working hard for years, some even since middle school and their last state meet is the end of a monumental chapter. Isabelle Pike (12) stated, "This year, I really tried to take in every moment since I knew it would be my last time experiencing everything with this team." State can be a big moment for the seniors because it means saying goodbye to many memories and friends they have

> held for years. For some, senior year was just like any other; Courtney Cook (12) stated, "My senior year was not very different from my previous years, but I

definitely have gotten closer to teammates my this year, and I am so thankful for that." The MC swim team is not all about winning; it is also about cultivating friendships that will last for years. Every senior has special memories from the team, such as Jaden Davillier (12), who stated, "My favorite memory on the team is from my sophomore year when I got to

friend before he moved away." All of the seniors are glad they got to end the year with the best memory of bringing home the win. years after state, the whole team rides back on the bus together, but this year was different. Many of the team members rode home in their cars. This is because the state swim meet happened to fall on the same day as Madison Central's Homecoming dance, making the day extra hectic but still enjoyable. Elizabeth Pullen (11) stated, "Friday night in the hotel, the girls all did our fake nails together to get ready for Homecoming the next day." After a long day of hard work, the team had to quickly go from Tupelo to Madison in order to make it back in time for the dance. Carly Long (10) stated, "The transition was definitely crazy. I had to hurry to change after we took our team pictures at the meet, and then I did my hair and makeup during the car ride home." Despite working hard all day long to achieve their title of state champions, the swim team was still ready to party hard at Homecoming. Henry Largen (11) said, "Going straight from the state meet to Homecoming was kind of frustrating because we got there super late, but other than that, it was a fun night. You could call

state."

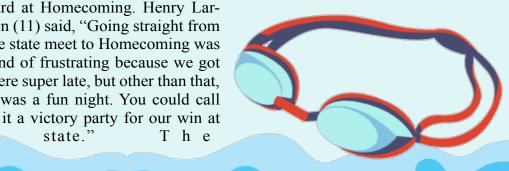
T h e

Above: The MC swim twim. swim with my best Photo submitted by Pam Davis

swim team thankwas ful for a memorable night full of chaos and fun. The

Madison Central swim team's journey to defend their state titles highlights the dedi-

cation, resilience, and camaraderie that defines this group of athletes. Their hard work throughout the year culminated in a victorious state meet, marking a proud moment for both the girl's and boys' teams. The blend of competitive spirit and celebration at Homecoming illustrates the balance they maintain between their athletic pursuits and social lives. As the seniors transition into the next chapter of their lives, they carry cherished memories and valuable lessons learned as part of this tight-knit team. This year's experiences solidified their legacy and strengthened the bonds that will last well beyond the pool.





Sports

Check out page 7 for information about the basketball and golf teams.



News

Take a look at page 2 for an article about the Menendez brothers.



Feature

Check out page 3 for information about the Madrigal Dinner.

NEWSWORTHY

Illnesses Strike the Seasen

Sheridan Burke STAFF WRITER

It is officially that time of year again. The time of year when student absences rise, coughs go around, and doctor visits are frequent. Many know this period as the cold and flu season. This 2024 season came with widespread bacterial outbreaks in grocery stores and major food chains.

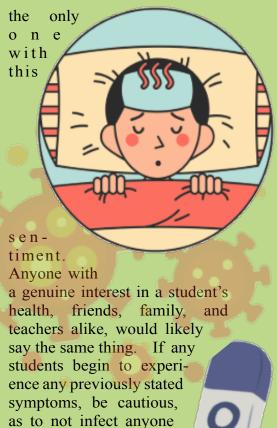
As early as the months of July and August 2024, popular deli meat companies have issued major recalls for a wide variety of meat products on the basis of listeria contamination. For context, listeria is a bacteria commonly found in soil,



cessing of meat and dairy products. Listeria infection is not likely to affect healthy people, but it can be serious and/or fatal for individuals above the age of 65 or pregnant. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Boar's Head listeria outbreaks have led to over 60 people being hospitalized and at least 11 confirmed deaths. The Department of Agriculture investigated the source and found black mold, bugs and other health code violations in one Virginia factory. The factory has since been closed permanently. As unsanitary practices in the United States (U.S.), the standard Federal Drug Administration recalls are nothing new. Recent recalls, from waffles to deli meats, are linked to the incorrect disclosure of allergens on packaged foods, not bacteria.

On the topic of foodborne illnesses, the stomach bug and many other illnesses are going around Madison Central (MC), and they are affecting both students and teachers alike. Thomas Pound (10), who recently recovered from the flu, weighed in, "I got the flu over Thanksgiving break." Pound said. "I do not know where I got it, but for the most part, it went away on its own." When asked about his symptoms, however, Pound said he experienced the virus quite unusually. "I did not even realize that I had the flu. I

thought I had a simple cold. I had some headaches and a cough. Really, I just thought the Chicago weather had my immune system acting up." However, not every sick student has the fortune to catch a cold during a week-long break from school. "Recently, I have had to spend the second week in December making up work, including tests, essays, and homework assignments, because I got covid and bronchitis over Thanksgiving break and into the first week of school," said Dylan Thomas (12). When students have to miss school because of sickness, there's usually the added makeup work needed to be done on top of the students recovery. Thomas said, "I always made sure to stay in touch with my teachers because they were able to work with me on extended due dates and test make ups that took a good bit of weight off my own shoulders. I highly recommend staying active on canvas." When asked to advise students on their health in accordance with their studies, Thomas recommended, "Students should not be afraid to take a few days off school. It can be intimidating, especially in high school, but it's not worth the toll on you or others staying in school. Taking care of yourself while sick is so important. The more time you give yourself to recover, the quicker and easier the recovery process will be." Thomas is not



else. Do not underesti-

mate the power of hand

washing. According to

the CDC, studies have

shown that frequent

hand washing can help

prevent up to 30 per-

cent of illnesses. Dur-

ing this sick season,

the Madison Cen-

tral Uproar advises

students to keep

clean, keep healthy,

and to stay safe.

NEWS MEET
UPDATE

THE LEADING BROTHERS

Jenny Nguyen CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF

In the late 1980s, a notorious, brutal murder case went international in the famous Beverly Hills, California. Erik and Lyle Menendez were sentenced for life without the possibility of parole after the murder of their parents, Jose and Kitty Menendez. While this case was settled in 1996 with a guilty verdict, recent trends on social media have raised attention to the brothers and have questioned whether their case was fair.

It was believed that in 1989 the brothers killed their parents in their Beverly Hills mansion over greed with the intent to eventually inherit the fortune from their entertainment executive father. However, the defendant's plea was far deeper and psychological to lead to murder. While the brothers could have run away or reported to the authorities, research and interrogation found traces emotional and physidone by cal abuse



and negligence from the mother that stopped them from going public. Many observers sympathize with Erik and Lyle as the young, bonded brothers that had to go to separate prisons.

The renewed interest in the Menendez brother's case is mainly due to the influence on social media platforms like Tik-Tok. On the app, some content creators review historical cases such as the Menendez brothers and gain the interest of many viewers through a complex story. Bree Smith (11) said, "After I saw the case on TikTok, I got really interested and watched the new documentary about them to learn more." Like Smith, many others go down the same rabbit hole of research to satisfy their interest and bring more knowledge to the platform. A new show, Monsters, was based on the true facts and what-ifs of this case after the recent rise in popularity with millions online. This show only added more fuel to the fire as people who were not born during the trial period got to experience and watch what it was actually like.

Furthermore, the recent documentaries and podcasts have re-examined this case with a more modern per-

with a more modern perspective. They portray the Menendez brothers as the victims of severe abuse with an unfair trial. Ever since this topic has gone viral, new evidence has surfaced and give the brothers another chance at life outside bars. Elizabeth Walker (12) stated, "A letter was found in a storage room written months be-



Above: On the left is Lyle Menendez and right is Erik Menendez. Photo courtesy by New York Times.

fore the murder from Erik to his cousin, Andy Cano. In the letter, Erik discussed multiple topics of the holiday season and then wrote evidence of complaining to Cano about the abuse. This letter can change the outcome of an appeal since previously Cano did not have enough evidence to convince the court with his testimony." Unfortunately, Cano is no longer alive to confirm the contents of this letter, but it will be taken into account. Along with this letter, a former Menudo boy band member, Roy Rosselló came forth to speak on his experience with Jose as traumatizing and abusive. Rosselló claims that his time

aims that during his time i n Menudo o , Jose would assault him while drugged. Bjay Worthy (12) said, "I think it is horrible to have someone go through this treatment in the entertainment industry; however, it is not

uncommon. It should be considered that Jose was not a good person and capable of inflicting the same assault upon his kids." The majority believe that on this trial, the brothers should get a lessened sentence after 35 years in prison and new evidence.

Because of the media and new awareness of the case, a new trial was petitioned and the Menendez brothers were set to have another trial on November 26, 2024. However, the judges and newly appointed district attorney postponed the trial to have more time to review the case in January of 2025. Most hope that the brothers will be reunited after being separated for decades.



FEATURE

Celebrating in December.

Amy Page STAFF WRITER

December, uring people from all over the globe that come from many different cultures and religions unite in celebration for a multitude of winter holidays. Whether one personally celebrates them or not, recognizing the cultural or religious origins of these holidays is important to understanding people's diverse traditions. Holidays such as Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa are among some of the most celebrated winter holidays and are a huge part of around the culture world. Hanukkah is gious cela reliebration originating from Ju-

ism and celebrates a great miracle. According to tradition, a very limited quantity of olive oil was used to light the menorah in the newly rededicated holy temple, and it miraculously lasted eight days. Jewish people celebrate this miracle by marking off eight days in the winter season in remembrance of it. Christmas is a Christian religious holiday that centers around the birth of the Christian messiah, Jesus Christ. According to the Christian Bible, Jesus was born to the world as a gift from God in a mere stable to simple parents. Christmas serves as a major Christian holiday and is a pivotal part of the religious identity. Lastly, Kwanzaa is a traditional African holiday centered around the year's harvest. Founded by activist Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa is a celebration that combines all the harvest festivals from all around Africa into one. Morality and family are the main pillars of the holiday along with celebrating a bountiful harvest. All these holidays from around the world are important to tradition and commemorated in many different ways. When asked about her family's Hanukkah celebration Liv Milan (12) said, "To celebrate Hanukkah, we light the menorah every night and say the Hebrew blessing that goes with it. A Tradition we have is that each family

member lights candles on alternating nights." Religious tradition merges with family tradition through lighting the menorah and through other aspects of Hanukkah. Jewish recipes such as latkes and kugel are passed down through families and enjoyed during celebrations to uphold Christmas is chartradition. acterized by church ceremonies, exchanging gifts, and spending time with loved ones. Isabella Weems (10) said this about her Christmas decorating habits, "For my family we have a lot of nativity scenes and tall green Christmas trees with homemade ornaments." Spending time decorating while surrounded with friends and family is a major component of the Christmas holiday. Maggie McKenzie (11) was asked about her favorite aspect of Christmas she said, "My favorite aspect of Christmas is how much of it is focused on the meaning of the season with your friends and family." McKenzie's testimony demonstrates how Christmas along with other holidays bring people together. Because of Kwanzaa's emphasis on unity, it, like Christmas, encourages good nature towards loved ones. Kwanzaa is known for having great feasts of the year's harvest to celebrate the bounty. Homemade gifts called zawadi encourage children to put work to hand- craft grow their presents. Also, a seven branched candelabra called kinara lit for every night of the Kwanzaa celebration and each candle represents a different principle. Families and discuss the principles and find ways to implement them into their While lives. customs and traditions that occur during the holiday season may vary vastly they do have some things in common: the importance of family, unity and love is a universal constant in almost all these holidays. The winter season is truly an amazing time to acknowledge people's differences but to also unite in all the similarities. So, no matter what holiday one finds themselves partaking in this December, k n o w there is always love and kindness at the center of it.



ASTING V

Dylan Thomas CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF

adrigal Dinner is an annual Christmas choir concert. At this event the audience is immersed into a renaissance style Christmas celebration with the Madrigal choir group acting as both the nobles and the entertainment. The Madrigals perform acapella Renaissance Christmas music, and the theater class students get casted in a play that will be performed throughout the event. As the Madrigals sing and the actors act, a three-course meal is served to the audience members. The main meal is a buffet style dinner catered Georgia Blue. the This year concert will be held Decem-7 t w o with perfor-

mances, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The Madrigals is an advanced choir group with only 26 members. This group sings at all choir concerts and are often requested to sing at the capital and at other special venues, but their main performance is Madrigal Dinner. During the concert, the Madrigal's act as a group of noblemen and women with a King and a Queen. The King and Queen are Madrigal members that were voted on by the rest of the Madrigals. This year the King is James Parmley (12), and the Queen is Saralyn Teasley (12). Teasley was honored to be crowned the Queen for Madrigal Dinner,

especially considering she has wanted to be the Queen ever since she was in fifth grade. "I always look forward to Madrigal Dinner, but I am especially excited to sit on the Madrigal

Queen's

throne," said Teasley. However, before the dinner itself, plenty of work must happen in preparation. For instance, the Madrigals and their parents have to prepare the cafeteria by decorating Christmas trees, setting up the stage, and putting out the furniture. The Madrigals also participate in an event called runouts where they take a day out of school to travel across the metro area to perform their prepared Christmas songs for a multitude of people.

The Madrigals is not the only group that helps with Madrigal Dinner. The ninth grade choir members act as servers during the event. The freshmen spend the night getting guests their drinks and passing out the food courses. The show choir members also participate by helping set up the cafeteria and by cleaning up the cafeteria once Madrigal Dinner has finished. Some Madrigals themselves get to be in both the play and in the concert portion of the dinner because of their

participation in both the

theater class and in Madri-

gals. Aaron David (11)is one of four men in Madrigals, and he is playing a part in the acting portion of

the show. David

said, "I love getting to perform, so being able to have a role in both portions of the dinner is fantastic. However, figuring out the logistics of which role I will be participating in at a given time can be difficult." David is thankful to be a part of the Madrigals and Madrigal Dinner. New Madrigal members also have a lot to look forward to considering that they have never acted as a Madrigal singer for this event before. Sanika Janorkar (10) was very excited to be in Madrigal Dinner and has thoroughly enjoyed her experience with the Madrigals. Janorkar said this about her preparation for the dinner, "My class was in the process of memoriz-



Photo Courtesy of Andrea Wick.

ADRIG

ing and perfecting our music for the dinner. I could not wait to get to perform with the entire Madrigal group at our main event of the year." Madrigal Dinner takes a lot of work to get ready for it, and Janorkar was very grateful to the senior Madrigals for helping her and the newer members learn everything they needed to. Madrigal Dinner is a special event for the Madrigal group and highlights the members' artistic abilities, while also creating an opportunity for the audience to be immersed in a dine-in theater experience. Madrigal Dinner is an incredible experience to be a part of as both a guest and a performer.

FEATURE

Eli Lindsly STAFF WRITER

The VEX V5 Robotics Competition is an exciting international engineering event that many students from Madison Central (MC) participate in. This year's competition kicked off on October 29, featuring 36 teams from various high schools in Madison county. One MC team received the Judges' Award, recognizing their outstanding design, code, and note-book. Their dedication and perseverance throughout the event showcased effective communication, strong teamwork, and a professional attitude, setting a high standard for excellence.

The VEX V5 Robotics Competition High Stakes is played on a

field that is 12-ft wide and 12-ft long with two alliances. Alliances consist of two robots with there being two alliances one blue and one red competing in these thrilling matches. Each match begins with a fast-paced 15-second Autonomous Period, during which robots carry pre-programmed tasks. This is followed by a 1 minute and 45-second driver controlled period, here team members take full control of their robots. The goal is to outscore the opposing alliance by strategically placing rings on mobile goals, which are tall cylindrical stakes moving the goals to one's side of the field, and climbing a tall ladder like structure. As the matches unfold, excitement fills the air. Teams use various strategies, from precise ring placements to innovative climbing techniques, while adapting to the challenges posed by their opponents. Collabo-

effective communication between alliance partners helps maximize scoring opportunities and coordinate strategies. Each team aims for victory while showcasing their engineering skills and teamwork, all in hopes of advancing to the next round of this thrilling tournament. Michelle Robinson, one of the robotics mentors and a MC engineering teacher, noted, "All of the teams performed exceptionally well, demonstrating effective robots. However, there is still room for improvement in their autonomous capabilities and programming skills." She added, "The teams share ideas and support each other, and the establishment of leadership positions has encouraged individuals to step up and assist their fellow teams." The leadership positions offered have enabled more teams to get help. With a great start to the competition many are looking forward to what the future will hold for the

MC team and others like it.

The second-place team, 370z turbo charged, also displayed impressive skill and teamwork, and made a strong run to the finals. Team member Marshall Oshinsky (11) reflected on the competition, "We performed well and had a lot of fun. The high school teams provided great competition, and we realized we need to improve our alliance scouting and enhance our autonomous routines." The team Senior Citizens from Madison Central also excelled at the VEX V5 Robotics Competition High Stakes. When asked about their experience at the competition the team members claimed that it was exhilarating and were thrilled to receive the Judges' Award. The autonomous system performed well, despite facing challenges with the controllers. The team remarkably rebuilt our robot in just two weeks, developing a new design and program that met all the require-

tude highlights the "Senior Citizens" commitment to continuous improvement and their determination to achieve new heights in the world of robotics. Both teams exemplified the spirit of the competition, showcasing resilience, creativity, and a passion for robotics, setting a high standard for future tournaments.

In conclusion, the VEX V5 Robotics Competition provides students with a valuable opportunity to develop important skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and engineering. As they design and program their robots, they learn to tackle challenges creatively and work together effectively. This experience not only fosters innovation and resilience but also encourages students to share ideas and improve continuously. As they look ahead to future competitions, the lessons learned and connections made will inspire the teams to achieve even greater success in their engineering pursuits.



Jenny Nguyen

As the season of giving thanks arrives, students and staff at Madison Central High School (MC) leave for a week to relax, celebrate, and partake in festive activities with loved ones. From vacation plans to the infamous presidential turkey pardoning, the 2024 Thanksgiving has something in store for everyone.

This week-long Thanksgiving break is a perfect chance to recharge before the new year and exams. While some plan to stay home, enjoying family dinners and extra sleep, others head out of town for vacation. Jordan Fowler (12)

college campus. After that I went back to Madison to have a Thanksgiving feast with the rest of my family." With no homework to worry about, many students have time to plan and attend events with their loved ones. Kenzie Mc-Clellan (12) stated, "I went to my best friend's Friendsgiving and had fun. My friends and I brought different dishes to the party." This Holiday can be celebrated in any way with whomever one is close with.

Thanksgiving originated in 1621 when the pilgrims had a feast with Native Americans. The feast celebrated their first successful harvest after a hard year while everyone gave thanks to each other. Now a tradition, most people uphold this day every year on the fourth thursday of November with a table full of turkey, mashed potatoes,

pumpkin pie, and more. Ken Hackman (MC zoology teacher) said. "This Thanksgiving I had Ham and Turkey from both of the s i d e s

h a d

beans,

mashed

family. We also

dishes like green

cornbread dressing,

potatoes, pies." For others Thanksgiving is less about the food and more about the quality time spent with family such as watching football, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, or volunteering at local food banks to give others an even better holiday. Thanksgiving is all about coming together and sharing a meal with close ones to experience a memorable time like our ancestors did in the past.

One tradition that always gets attention is the president's turkey pardonning. Each year, the President of the United States spares the lives of two turkeys in a ceremony at the White house. This tradition dates bate to 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln gave mercy to his son's turkey that was set to be eaten. The turkey pardonning became an annual event in 1989 during George Bush's presidency and serves as a reminder for people to appreciate the whimsical

parts of American History. This year President Biden

spared a pair of lucky tur-

keys that were named Peach and Blossom: Delaware's state flower that symbolize

resil-

ience.

Aft e r this pardon, Peach and Blossom will live out their peaceful days at a Minnesota farm.

Whether it is through food, vacation, or community, Thanksgiving gives a moment to reflect on what one is grateful for. As the year wraps up, it is a great time to reminisce the smaller things in life like time



stayed at my dad's house in Louisiana and toured the LSU

said,

ENTERTAINMENT

Wicked Was Wicked

Thomas Pound STAFF WRITER

n November 22, Wicked graced the world with its release. With a stellar cast, and a \$145 million dollar budget, Universal's entrance into the musical-to-movie adaptation scene has been a stunning experience. Even with the setbacks around the production, scandals between the cast members, and online drama, Wicked had an overwhelming amount of anticipation surrounding it, and many could not wait to see it in theaters.

Wicked was announced in 2016 and was set to release in 2019, but multiple unfortunate setbacks caused it to have a delayed release. For instance, COVID-19 caused many major studios to halt filming for the safety and health of their actors. Then, after COVID-19 had regressed, the the Screen Actors Guild - American

Federation of Television and Ra-Art-

ists (SAG-AFTRA) strike occurred. In 2023, commenced a strike lasting several months in a response to the use of AI and unfair royalties for actors, as well as disputes over unionizing. Because of these setbacks, Wicked had been delayed by multiple years. This seemed to only create more anticipation surrounding its release though, since its fans have been teased for years about a release.

The movie's collaborations had also been a talking point. Many massive brand deals tailed the production with more releasing in the days leading up to the release of the movie. The collaborations reach across multiple kinds of products and audiences. From Shark Beauty to Build-a-Bear, Crocs t o Stanleys, the array of Wicked themed products is expan-

sive, and they all help

to showcase the incred-

ible scope of this movie.

The drama surrounding the movie seemed have almost gotten larger than the movie itself, at one point. Nan Kimble (10)

said that she had been made aware of a lot of the drama that came with Wicked's release. She said, "I thought that Cynthia's controversy surrounding AI and the poster was very interesting. It is one of the first issues with AI we have seen, since it is still so new." The issues with AI being used to create pictures of Grande and Erivo fighting weren't as talked about as the poster problem, but it was definitely the scarier issue. An AI picture created multiple news stories and fights that just didn't happen. Kimble also said that she was a big fan of Wicked. She has not seen the musical, but she has listened to the soundtrack, and she was very excited to see Wicked. In a way, the drama and controversies surrounding the movie helped to propel it

was good for][O 7L publicity, even Je, Black if some nega-TG. Listkess tive responses do stick in TZ. Coal the public's mind. The re-

into people's attentions. It

lease had been phenomenal, and many were excited while planning visits to the theater. The musical had already but because of the marketing and astounding popularity online, those who have not seen the musical or heard the entire soundtrack were buying tickets. Aaron David (11) said, "I am yet to see the musical or hear the songs, but it seems so good that I am going to go see it." He was very excited about the partnerships and he enjoyed a lot of the fun merchandise that was made for the movie. Musical fans also want to see the movie. Aliyah Cantrell (10) said, "I am going with friends, and I am super excited to see it. I have seen the musical, and I know the soundtrack. I really want to see what they have done with it." Both new and old fans alike are excited to see the release of such an influential story. Both social media

4. Candy Cane 10. Menorah 9. Creativity 3, Stockings N. Rudolph IDEWEZ Z stinoson4.3 etnes J

created fans for the movie, and brand deals have skyrockawareness surroundpeople's large project that has finally been shown to the mass of fans awaiting its showcase. It has captured the attention and approval of critics. Its ambition and drive have been clear since the beginning, and the

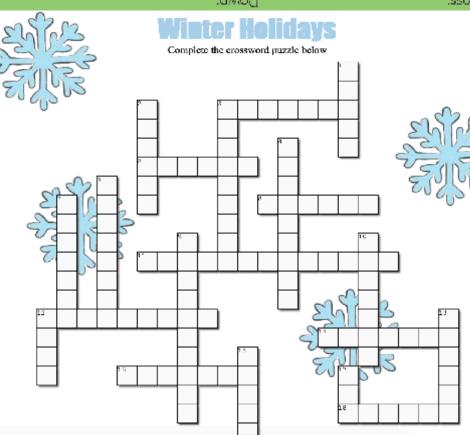
cast has persevered through many hiccups. Wicked is a monument of a movie, surviving constant threats and multiple controversies. It had a starstudded cast, and a director and art department who wanted to create something amazing. The movie's team truly wanted to create something special, something – wicked.

past

expectations.

Wicked was such a

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Across

- Frosty the
- Place of origin for Kwanzaa.
- The lead up to Christmas.
- Decorated evergreen topped with a star. Always roasting on an open fire.
- 14. A holiday that has 7 principles for 7 nights.
- Spin, ____, Spin!
- 18. Hanukkah- The Jewish festival of what?



Down

- He's making a list and checking it twice.
- Handmade gifts during Kwanzaa.
- Hung above the fireplace.
- 4. A red and white striped treat.
- 6. From me to you.
- 7. Who's the most famous reindeer of all?
- Principle represented by the last day of Kwanzaa.
- 10. A traditional Hanukkah candelabra.
- Christmas morning present for bad kids. Jewish fried potato pancake.
- Color of the first candle lit during Kwanzaa.
- 17. What lasted 8 days in Jewish tradition?

Making Christmas Special **

Hannah Evans STAFF WRITER

any get into the Christmas spirit November starts. To celebrate the coming of Christmas it is common to get under the covers and watch Christmas movies while drinking hot cocoa and eating cookies. Fan favorite Christmas movies such as the Nutcracker, How the Grinch Stole Christmas, The Polar Express, and Home Alone are often watched with close ones as the holidays approach.



w a y to bond together. Ansley Dye (11) said, "My favorite Christmas movie is Home Alone. I would watch it every year with my family and enjoy hot chocolate by the fireplace." Dye stated how watching a Christmas movie can feel more special doing it with family in her experience. Cameren Ward (12) also uses Christmas movies as a way to spend the holiday season with family. Ward said, "My favorite Christmas movie is Good Luck Charlie, It's Christmas. I loved the original show and was excited to find a Christmas spin-off. I watch this movie with my mom and my sister while enjoying hot cocoa and cookies." Ward says how a Disney Christmas movie was a way to spend time with her mom and sister.

Some families take it a step farther and wear matching pajamas. Scarlett Sullivan (10) said, "Holiday movie events with my family are some of my best

Christm a s memories. I can remember playing christmas movies while we all wore our matching pis and decorated our christmas tree. We do this every year, and I always look forward to it." Sullivan prefers to watch the movie Elf when it comes to the winter holidays. "My favorite Christmas movie growing up was definitely Elf. This movie is still my favorite because I can still enjoy it as I get older. Will Ferrel is very funny, and I loved watching him in the mall scene with the fake santa. This movie always gets me in the Christmas spirit mainly because it encompasses a lot of staple Christmas areas, items, and traditions." said Sullivan. The movie Elf included concepts such as the North Pole, Santa's Elves, Christmas in New York, Ice Skating, Snow ball fights, the Rockefeller

Christmas tree, and

more. Sullivan said how

likes to see Christmas traditions such as a snowy New York, Ice Skating, and Santa and his elves in the North Pole. While a warm heartfelt Christmas movie is always a great way to go, some like a hilarious Christmas movie. Funny Christmas movies include Home Alone, Christmas Chronicles, and Santa Claus. Clark Davis (11) said, "My favorite Christmas movie growing up was Christmas Vacation. It is still my favorite because it invokes the feelings of a traditional Christmas while being incredibly hilarious. My family always watches Christmas Vacation on Christmas Eve, so the movie gives me nostalgia and puts me in the holiday mood. Often, while

ies. Whether it's a funny or romance movie, watching with family and friends is a great way to spend the holiday

watching

would drink

hot coco made by

my dad." Davis stated how

he and his family like a hilar-

ious movie for Christmas.

ways to get into the Christ-

mas spirit, drink hot co-

coa, eating cookies and

watching Christms mov-

To sum up, the best

season.



ENTERTAINMENT

Stars Touring the Country

Mattie Hodges

Then we think of musical stars on we often imagine the glitz and glamor of the stage, the roaring applause from fans, and the electrifying performances. However, there is much more to a tour than what meets the eye. The journey of musicians on tour is a blend of hard work, cama-



A star who has taken the world by storm, Olivia Rodrigo. Rodrigo is an artist that writes lyrics that her fans relate and connect to. She has quickly become one of the most influential artists of her generation. Rodrigo has been on tour for her album "Guts" since February 23, 2024, and the tour will end on July 1, 2025. Her tour has been nothing but a success. She has a captivating stage presence and interacts with her fans unlike any other pop – star. Ali Haile (10) said, "I went to her tour back in March in New Orleans and I have nothing bad to say about it. She is a fabulous artist with amazing songs. Her tour was so much fun because she was entertaining to watch and interacted with us tons, which kept me mesmerized." Rodrigo goes out of her way to make a genuine connection with her fans. Her authenticity has endeared her to millions.

Tyler, the Creator, born Tyler Gregory Okonma, has become a household name in the music industry. He made his music debut in 2007 and is still, to this day, a world-renowned star. Okonma first made waves as a founding member of the alternative, hip – hop collective Odd Future. Beyond music, Okonma has made significant strides in the fashion world with his brand, Golf Wang. Known for its bold colors and unique designs, Golf Wang has become a staple in the streetwear culture. Tyler the Creator will be going on tour in 2025, and his fans cannot wait. Tyler Stovall (12) said, "I have been able to see Tyler the Creator grow as an artist, and it has been such an honor. His music is different from all the other musicians I listen to and that is what I love about him." Tyler the Creator is more than just a musician; he's a cultural icon whose im-

pact on music, fashion, and art continues to inspire and challenge the status quo.

Sabrina Carpenter has come a long way since her early days on Disney Channel. Carpenter first captured the hearts of many as Maya Hart on the hit series "Girl Meets World." Many of her other talents extend far beyond acting. Carpenter is also a gifted singer and songwriter who has been making waves in the music industry. Betsy Ball (12) said, "I have known and loved Sabrina Carpenter since her early days on Girl Meets World. I grew up watching the show. Seeing where she is now is simply amazing. She has

much as an artist, and I have loved watching her

h e undeniable t a 1 -

e n drive, there is no telling how far she will go in the entertainment industry.

All these artists have put their name on the map by hard work and dedication. They are all loved by many and the world cannot wait to see where the fame takes them. It is clear to all that this is only the beginning for the stars.





EMEMBERING LIAM PAYNE

Madie Moseley STAFF WRITER

Payne, former One Direc-✓ tion band member, passed away on October 16, 2024. Payne was only 31 years old when he died from a fall off a balcony at the CasaSur Palermo hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The specific cause of death remains uncertain. Many fans made videos, as they shared their appreciation towards his work on the social media TikTok.

Payne was a part of a famous band, One Direction, from 2010-2016. One Direction was a British boy band formed through the talent show, The X Factor, in 2010. The group included artists Liam Payne, Niall Horan,

Harry

Styles, Zayn Malik, and Louis Tomlinson. The X Factor led the band to have international success: selling out stadiums around the world. The boys were everywhere throughout the early 2010's. Their faces were plastered on magazines, toys, merchandise, and TV. Emily Kay Kirk (11) said, "I remember in third grade at the book fair: I bought a One Direction poster with money that I was given for a book. I guess you could say I am a devoted fan. One Direction was an integral part of my childhood." One Direction was apart of many adults' childhoods.

One Direction released five studio albums: Up All Night, Take Me Home, Midnight Memories, Four, and Made in the A.M. Their music was relatable, catchy, and fun to listen to- many teenagers became supporting fans. Lanah Ball (10) said, "I love One Direction; because their songs are ones you can always listen to." The band split in 2016,

yet each singer

had a success-

ful solo career

the breakup. Payne released one studio album before his passing in 2024. Ryleigh Deer (11) said, "I feel like he brought everyone together. He was also, to me, the best vocalist of the group."His biggest hit was his 2019 song, Strip That Down. Payne also appeared as a featured artist on several songs. He was supposed to go on his first solo tour in Latin America in September 2023. He postponed it after being hospitalized with a kidney infection in August 2023. Kirk (11) said, "I found out Liam Payne died when I was at the nail salon. I heard some girls in the salon start yelling, 'no way', he was so young. I was so sad, but at least TikTok gave the situation a bit of light." Several band members have disclosed statements on Payne's tragic passing. Payne was not just a talented musician: additionally, he was on the reserve list for sprinting in the 2012 London Olympics.

One Direction has left a remarkable legacy. The group has influenced a new generation of boy bands.

Payne was a pivotal member

of One Direction's success;

he wrote many of their songs

and used his vocal abilities to help them blend perfectly. Fans will miss his perfect pitch and the chance of a One Direction reunion. One Direction released their first Instagram post, since 2016, writing a statement on how they much

loved Payne and how talented he was. One Direction members had their long awaited reunion at Payne's funeral.

Above: Liam Payne. Photo courtesy of Strike Magazine.

main tragic, yet his part with One Direction will always have a lasting impact on the world.



SPORTS

BALLING ON THE COURT

Harley Mcfadden STAFF WRITER

lthough football season has come to an end, basketball season has started. Both boys and girls junior varsity and varsity basketball teams at Madison Central have been preparing since the beginning of summer. They strive to put on their best performance for not only their fans, but also their coaches, family, and teammates. The athletes are

well prepared and excited to start off this season strong. Players hope to accomplish their goals through their passion while bonding with one another on the court.



Changes have been made, athletes have been shaped, and coaches have worked hard, all leading up to this season. Maddox Singletary (10) said, "We work hard every day of the week and even practice on weekends often. We do everything in our power to lift each other up and make each other better every day. We are a family. As a team we do everything together, that goes from punishments to just hanging out. We all have one goal in mind: to bring home a state championship." This sport is not only about the athleticism but also the family and support that comes from it. The players work hard to achieve a common goal at the end of the season. Each game can lead to a long lasting career for each of the players. As the team grows together, they not only improve their performance but also build long lasting bonds.

> The players love the sport, for the people that surround them. Cheer and dance teams both contribute to the overall atmosphere of games. Basketball games provide opportunities for fans and family to come

support their friends, children, and peers without having to worry about weather the conditions or things as simple wristbands for tailgating. Brooke Highfill (12) said, "Although I enjoy cheering for the Jags on the football field, favorite my sport to cheer for

ketball Season.

The fast-paced entertainment keeps everyone on their toes and intrigued to come back for more games." Cheering creates an electrifying atmosphere and boosts the team's morale and performance. The energy from the cheerleaders and fans is contagious to the players, pushing them to work harder and to perform their best. This all fosters a strong sense of community and belonging among the fans as they come together to support the MCHS basketball teams. The crowd's support can make a significant difference in the outcome of the game and the overall spirit of the sport. Basketball remains a great way to promote

Above: Kody Smith in the middle. is coming up. Bas- Photo courtesy of Caroline Conner.

teamwork, communication, and passion. Each player brings unique skills and strengths to the court, which contributes to the overall success of the team. Effective communication and a shared vision are crucial in overcoming challenges and achievi n g

goals. The

collec-

tive effort

and deter-

mination

on the team lead to memorable victories and a rewarding experience for all players and coaches. The time spent leading up to all these games will pay off in hope of being victorious.



TTLING THE SCORE

Sheridan Burke STAFF WRITER

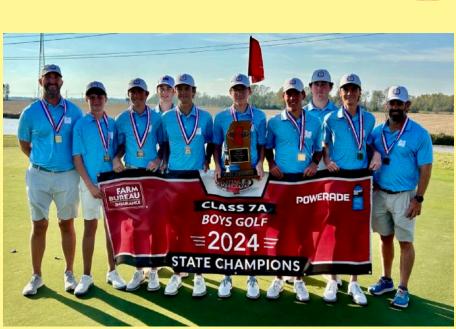
n October 29, the boys' varsity golf team were crowned Mississippi State Champions, winning by 10 strokes. A stroke is the number of swings it takes to get the ball into the hole. The lower number of swings is better. The girls' varsity golf team won district the championship by 26 strokes and were tied for third place at state.

According to Historic United Kingdom (UK), modern golf is a sport with origins from Scotland whose first records stem from sometime in the Middle Ages. Golf a full course has nine or 18 holes. For major tournaments, 18 holes are usually used. Players are al-

lowed to carry to 14 clubs in their bags and wear one glove for grip. The ultimate goal of the game is to attempt to complete the course in as few strokes as possible. Par is a term used to refer to whether the player is playing at the expected level. On par is good, while over par is not. Golf tournaments are typically completely silent as is shown on television. It is highly frowned upon for spectators or players to move a golf ball once it is in play. Now, one may imagine just what hurdles the team had to jump in order to become champions.

Throughout the 2024 golf season, according to Tucker Gutierrez (11), the golf team broke several school records. "I am very happy with the way the team played this year," Gutierrez expressed. "Golf is really hard and takes a lot of effort to be good at. In the summer or on the weekends when I do not have school, I normally practice anywhere from one to three hours, and then I might play the course which takes about three to four hours." Gutierrez joined the golf team because, "I started because my grandfather played, and he wanted me to try it out. When I tried it out, I enjoyed it, and gradubecame ally more interested in the sport over the next couple of years." The time put into this sport can build lasting memories. Mia Minchew (10)also joined the team and stated

"Golf is pretty hard and a huge time commitment." It is clear these jags agree that golf is a pretty difficult sport. Lady Jags Golf team Captain Lauren Heffington (12) weighed in, "I am beyond happy with how this team has played this year, as captain I could not be more proud of my team for giving everything they have and all their effort. I have also been blessed with the best coaches that have pushed me to stay with golf and to keep giving my all." When asked about advice for new golfers Heffington said, "If I had to give anyone advice



Above: The MC boys golf team. Photo submitted by Todd Beach.

about golf it would be, golf is an amazing sport that no matter your athletic ability anyone can do." Heffington hopes to encourage people to try golf, because they might just like it too.

Becoming a good golfer is hard work; becoming a state champion is even harder. The golf teams have shown hard work and dedication to their sport, and that paid off.









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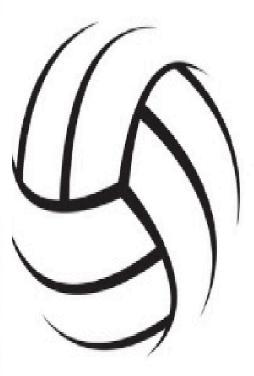
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