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Voices of Change Conference gives opportunities for **student voice**



Photos by Grace Cheney

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Copy Editor

GIGI ZAWISLAK
Field Reporter

Office of Achievement and Integration Coordinator, Eric Anderson explained, “Following George Floyd’s murder, Stillwater Schools district administration and staff received an Open Letter from a group of Black Alumni. The letter contained eight specific recommendations about the dire need to create more equitable learning environments. It emphasized cultural inclusion and respect.”

District administration then took the letter and collaborated with Equity Specialist Cornelius Rish to create the Voices of Change Conference. There, students express their concerns about problems at school.

The Voices of Change Conference fell on BLAST Week. BLAST week happens during the second week of February and is held in the auditorium.

The conference offered students a safe and open environment to express their perspectives. This year, the Voices of Change Conference had two rounds of conversation. Round one addresses climate and culture, increasing and retaining staff of color and speaking your truth. Topics listed in round two were student advocacy, mental health and bettering school communication.

Last year’s conference successfully led to a big mental health initiative. District leaders and

students from the Student Leadership Council began creating more resources for students struggling with mental health. They did so by hanging informational and help line posters around the school.

“I know last year I was in the mental health one and I think a lot of students got a lot from that, based on where the resources centers are.” President of Native American Student Alliance, Abby Speckman said.

The data collected from the Voices of Change Conference is analyzed by the Student Leadership Council. SLC then uses a Heatmap Voting system. With that, they pick out what the top 10 solutions out of 20 ideas from the conference are most impactful. Together SLC, district and building administration find strategic ways to implement said solutions.

“One of the purposes of the conference is to bring attention to the issues that students care about, in which we as adults may not be aware,” Rish explained. “It’s one thing to sit back and complain, but it’s another thing to then offer solutions and be a part of that solution.”

The Voices of Change conference has sparked the implementation of the Ethnic and Cultural Studies course and mental health initiatives. One example is Oakland Middle School staff receiving training to better address racial harm.

Students have an opportunity to have their voices heard and create change. The Voices of Change Conference has helped create a better cultural environment at a district-wide level.

Students make a **CHANGE** in school



Senior Aliyat Adedayo presents her groups ideas on the school’s mental health issues at the Voices of Change Conference. She talks about how it is very important to have access to resources and that an overwhelming amount of homework can play into student’s mental health.



Junior Angela Taylor announces her second group discussion topic. Her group discusses the schools communication issues and come up with ideas on how to make it better.



Sophomore Surraane Fufa and sophomore Grace Connors discuss their group’s solutions to better students’ mental health. One main idea they came up with was providing more resources and therapists for students to help support them with their mental health needs.



Sophomore Aiden Uglem helped facilitate discussion groups. He made sure everyone was placed in a discussion group and announced each speaker.

Photos by Grace Cheney

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE



PHOTO BY DANIEL ORTIZ

ALC moves to Oak Park building

DANIEL ORTIZ
Podcast Reporter

The Alternative Learning Center, ALC, has always had their little space to teach, near the language hallway. The place they use has its pros and cons, but recently they got the approval to move to a place where there are only pros; the ALC will mobilize to the former Oak Park Elementary School by the next school year.

ALC Principal Mary Ticiu said that right now the place is used as a community building, and that they will have a great and new space for their students to learn.



PHOTO BY KAYLEE KELLOGG

Students form "Adopt a Grand-

BROOKE DUBIEL
Podcast Reporter

KAYLEE KELLOGG
Graphics Editor

Junior Avery Adams, senior Bethany Piechowski and senior Hannah Herbert along with help from Pathways Coordinator Bob Manning and College and Career Center Coordinator Allison Schroeder have created a program called "Adopt a Grandparent." The program was created to have students help residents at Boutwells Landing with their technology needs, but has also been a great way for students to make connections with residents in the community.

Students bring diversity, inclusion through **BLAST**

GRACE SCHWOCH
Digital Graphics Editor

KENNEDY WILLIAMS
Podcast Reporter

"It creates a better community within the student body and that is really important for not only friendships, but building trust within your peers and administration," Iliana Balok, senior Student Council President, explained. BLAST is during Valentine's Day week to show the love of diversity in the school and bring all cultures in the student body together.

For the past 29 years, the high school has held the traditional BLAST week for the student body. Throughout the week, different activities are held to showcase different cultures and open up the school's eyes to the diversity in the community. By the end of the week, the goal is to make everyone feel as if they belong somewhere within the building by focusing on inclusion with everyone in the student body. Some events included rapper Nur-D, serenades from the choir, a student talent show and much more.

"It is a celebration of our students," Dusty Dennis, Student Council Advisor explained. "Groups all across the board to celebrate their passions and cultures."

During all four lunches, the Culture Fair took place on Monday in the gymnasium. Different groups from around the school including, BSU, NASA, ASU, ASL, and many more created a stand with different artifacts of their cultures and provided information to inform students about the background of their heritage. The Fair served the purpose to educate students on how many different cultures are within our school and showing the diversity of our student body.

"I want people to recognize that there are other cultures in the school and people from all around the world," Aliyat Adedayo, senior Student Council member, explained.

After a long 29 years, the students finally brought home the trophy. On Tuesday after school, the teachers took on the students in a co-ed basketball game. The game was a nail-biter with points going back and forth. However, the teachers could not keep the momentum and the students secured the win with just a few seconds left, beating the teachers



PHOTO BY JACK HIGGINS

Carnage the Executioner brings DJ on stage to beatbox. Carnage was one of many different activities and speakers brought in by student council for BLAST week.

by three points. To enter the game, spectators were required to bring \$3 or a non-perishable food item. All the proceeds raised go to the Stillwater food shelf to help those in need.

Rafferty Shaw, a junior student member, explained how the game was more than just a competitive match between teachers and students. "As a community, we need to continue to help and supply the food shelf so that people in need can continue to get the food and nutrition that is needed to survive."

On Friday, the Heritage Fashion Show was attended by students of every grade. Students strutted the runway in the auditorium for their peers to observe. They were clothed in different pieces from where their ancestors originated and what represented their culture. Students wore unique pieces from all over the world including Mexico, Ecuador, Nigeria, Scotland and more.



PHOTO BY JACK HIGGINS

Senior Alex Matchey inbounds the ball in the student-teacher basketball game. The students won the competition for the first time in 29 years.

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Counselor creates Community Closet

ELLIE DAHLSTROM
Podcast Reporter

Guidance counselor Becky Hopper and social worker Jenna Booher developed a donation center called Community Closet, in hopes to help students and families in need, with quick and convenient access to clothes, hygiene products and eventually food. The recently made "closet" is less of a closet and more of an organization. Hopper reached out with the idea and was met with an outstanding response of donations and excitement towards the idea.

"There wasn't really a plan at all, it happened really organically out of seeing a need," Hopper said.

Hopper wanted students to be able to obtain clothes in an emergency, and what better place than somewhere students are every day.

Hopper gave the example, "maybe a student stepped in a puddle and needs emergency shoes." In cases where students need a simple and convenient hand, Community Closet can provide one.

Community Closet is also an easy and

great way to give back to the school and community. Organizations like GoodWill are wonderful as well, but with the Community Closet students know that their clothes are going to someone who needs them, and it is free for people who need the items. Donating clothes is a simple way to give back to the community, while also helping the environment. The fashion industry is one of the main polluters of our Earth and Community Closet assures that your clothes do not end up in landfills, but rather with someone who needs them.

"If you are looking to donate or help out, we have needs in our building," Hopper said.

Booher and Hopper have noticed a stigma surrounding donations and when someone might need them. With the casual and convenient creation of Community Closet, they are hoping to decrease the stigma."

read more at
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new or gently used clothes to counselor Becky Hopper or the Gray Pony Center. To Help families of Stillwater get the essentials and stock up the Community Closet.

GRAPHIC BY GRACE S.

Grace Weitzel wins award at GTCYS

CORAL LARIVIERE
Field Reporter

Senior violinist Grace Weitzel recently won the GTCYS (Greater Twin Cities Youth symphonies) playing a solo. This concerto competition award is extremely tough to win, especially at such a young age of 18. However, this is nothing new for Weitzel, as they have been winning various awards for years.

For the last 10 years, Weitzel has climbed their way up the ladder that is GTCYS. From joining as soon as they could, at the minimum age limit of eight years old to winning top-rank awards. Weitzel has grown up in GTCYS in aspects of age and music skills.

“They actually have seven orchestras, and I’ve been in six of them,” Weitzel explained “I actually started out in second chair violin in the bottom orchestra, and now I’m concertmaster of like the top orchestra, which is really cool for me.”

Weitzel made the decision to play violin and join orchestra in early elementary school. Of course, they did not know it at the time, but their life changed all thanks to a kindergarten field trip.

“In kindergarten, we had a field trip to the Minnesota Orchestra Hall,” Weitzel remembered “I think they let us try or touch the instruments, and I was thinking I was good at violin, so I went home and asked my mom if I could play, and she got me lessons.”

Due to the amount of talent and hard-worked skill that Weitzel has built over the last 10 years, a natural sense of leadership follows. It is both musical maturity, and pure dedication to the art of playing the violin.

Orchestra teacher Ryan Jensen described that at times, Weitzel is almost like a partner of his, leading and helping the orchestra class through a piece of music.

While Weitzel would argue that it is more important to put in the practice, it is undeniable that they also possess so much raw talent, that it can be hard to even categorize them into a group. The difference between talent and skill is important to know,



PHOTOS BY BAILEY HOLMES

Junior Grace Weitzel plays their violin and studies the music while in rehearsal with the Concert Orchestra. They earned the first chair spot and also continues their playing outside of school with the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony.

especially for people who do not feel like they are getting anywhere with their music, or new instrument players who may start comparing themselves to others like Weitzel.

“She is less than 1/10 of one percent of all violinists in the entire Midwest. The level she’s gotten to is really really cool to see, but it’s something that few people can actually achieve,” Jensen explained.

High school music students have

“She is less than 1/10 of one percent of all violinists in the entire Midwest. The level she’s gotten to is really really cool to see”

Ryan Jensen

a tough decision to make, especially in the last two years. After playing the violin for over half of their life, Weitzel now has to decide if their violin will continue on with them, or stay as a part of their school years.

They suddenly have to know the answer to the question “are you a student or a musician?”

“A year ago, I would definitely have said I’m a high schooler. But I just got done with my last audition literally last night, so that’s kind of made me feel more like I’m a musician,” Weitzel clarified.

“But being well rounded is an important thing for me, because I didn’t know I wanted to pursue music professionally until like junior year, so I definitely feel like I got that high school experience,” Weitzel added.

It is rather well known that music can capture a person’s soul; emotions start to flow along with the melody. This is why for centuries, musicians have been watched and listened to with amazement. In recent years, it has even been proven that people need music, as it has such a positive effect on brain chemistry. But throughout all of the time, music has involved three- the instrument, the performer, and the audience.

In this case, it is the violin, Grace Weitzel, and anyone who is lucky enough to catch a listen. However, everyone who gets to take in Weitzel playing the violin will feel as if the music will forever be in their ears.



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Engineering students work to design prosthetic for disabled dog Sadie

JADE AXEL
Podcast Reporter

Students in the engineering class started a project where they needed to design some type of prosthetic for a disabled dog. The students were free to make any design they wanted, then build it and test it on the dog. The project gives students an opportunity to deal with real-world engineering situations.

Students taking this class had the opportunity to use various materials like PVC, wood and anything else they thought would work. Materials varied depending on what type of prosthetic the students wanted to design. The students were also responsible for buying the materials they wanted to use. They had a lot of creative freedom with this project allowing them to get a great hands-on learning experience.

“My group designed a kind of wheelchair contraption. So we used PVC to build a frame for it and then we used two wheels,” junior Sam Young said.

The goal for this project was to try and make a successful design so the dog would be able to walk easier and be less tired. The problem came up when a para who works at the school brought up to engineering teacher Matt Howe that the dog was having trouble with being able to stand all day on her three legs. The dog came home every day extremely exhausted from having to walk around all day, she could not support her weight for that long of a time. When the idea was brought up Howe saw it as a perfect opportunity to give students a real-life hands-on experience in the engineering field.

“The goal of the project was to



Photo by Cathleen Costello

Engineering students get to know the disabled dog that they will make a prosthetic for. The students will later plan out and create a prototype for Sadie.

provide safety and support so she could walk because every time she would come home she would fall on her face and be exhausted from walking all day and from her arthritis, so we really wanted to support her front legs,” Young said.

A couple of years the dog was run over by a car and ended up having to get one of her front legs amputated because of this. This is not an uncommon thing though, over 1.2 million dogs are hit by cars every year in the United States alone, that's over 3,000 dogs a day. Luckily over 80% of the dogs survive with minor or less severe injuries.

“A couple of years ago, she was run over by a car, and she lost one of her front legs and because of that it

had to be amputated,” Young added.

Howe gave students complete creative freedom on this project to the students. They were allowed to choose which design they thought would work out best for the dog and have the best results like a wheelchair, peg leg, prosthetic, etc. Students were also responsible for going out and buying the materials they want to use for their design, most students used PVC pipes. Although some designs worked better than others most designs were successful at somewhat supporting the dog.

“I would definitely say there was one type of design that worked better than others. Our design worked better than most and it was like a wheelchair with double support,” Young said.

Howe wanted to assign a real-world problem to students for them to solve and get a good hands-on experience. Students could see if they really did like an engineering job or maybe it was not for them. Although the students still get a good learning experience with the other projects none of them have been like this. This project was different from other projects, they did not have to just design something on a computer and then do nothing with it, they got to make a design and bring it to life.

“I've felt a lot of projects we do or the work that students do isn't always authentic. It's not real-world. They're learning a lot of different things, but they're sitting at their computer and they're just designing things and then they don't actually get to make it,” Howe said.

These projects actually help the local community. According to Howe, these projects come up when someone in the community needs help with a project and contact him asking if the students can help. Companies also have reached out asking if the students can design something for them. Winter Fest held in downtown Stillwater reached out and asked if students could design the trophies to the winners of the event.

“So one of my big things with teaching is to find people win the community or companies or whoever is willing to work with us and have them come up with that our kids can be a part of because it just makes it that much more like a real-life experience,” Howe explained.

“Anytime I can come up with something that allows the kids to do hands-on stuff because I think the learning is that much more valuable when they're doing hands-on work because they get a chance to see it,” Howe added.

French Club spreads love this Valentine's Day

SONJA ANDERSON
Field Reporter

Vivre sans aimer n'est pas proprement vivre. “To live without loving is to not really live.” This is an important message the French Club is trying to spread this Valentine's Day with their student led community project.

The French Club, led by French teacher Jacqueline Parr and senior presidents Sara Norton and Ingrid Newquist, is making Valentine's Day cards for senior citizens at The Lakes nursing home in Stillwater. Their goal is to spread kindness



and remind the residents that everyone deserves to be loved.

“It's giving back and just putting love and kindness into people's day who might not have that love, or they do but they don't see their family a lot because they live in a nursing home. So, you know, I just wanted to spread kindness. You know, a lot of people who do live

in senior living homes, they've lost their spouse or they live their with their spouse. But they obviously can't live on their own, so it can be harder to feel love on those days. So I think it is a good way to re-



Graphics by Alison Keeler

mind them that there is still love,” Norton said.

Sophomore Dominick Belmont, a first year member of the club, is looking forward to the idea of giving back to the community.

“I think it's a good way to just have some fun making something homemade, but it's also really nice for the seniors we are sending cards to, so they can feel appreciated by the students,” Belmont said.

Parr is extremely proud of the leadership she has been seeing in her students and is looking forward to giving back to the community.

She said she hopes the French Club can “take away the values I hold and I would love to see them understand the importance of giving

back to the community and doing things for our community. Making someone else's day even though you don't know them. I think just knowing that they have the power to do that is great,” Parr said.

The project was created by Norton, who has a grandpa that lives at The Lakes senior living home. Every year, the French Club does a project to give back to the community, but they have lost connections to some of the places they used to volunteer with former presidents graduating. She is clearly very passionate about her leadership role in the club and said this project is one of the things she has looked forward to the most with this club because she values kindness and shows people that they are loved.

In addition to helping others, French Club has also created many new friendships among members and created a sense of community among students.

“I've seen a lot of friendships develop and form out of the club. It's also really fun to watch everybody learn something new about one of the French cultures that exist. And so it's kind of fun to watch everybody learn about the cultures, plural, that make up the French-speaking world. So that's kind of what we focus on, is more of those cultural pieces,” said Parr.

It's safe to say that the French Club understands what community means to them and hopes that others can learn from them as well.



Photos by Sonja Anderson

French Club students make Valentine's day cards at Thursday's meeting. They prepare to deliver them to the senior citizens at The Lakes nursing home in Stillwater.

Chris Engler strives to find ALS cure

MICHAEL FREDERICKS
Graphics Editor

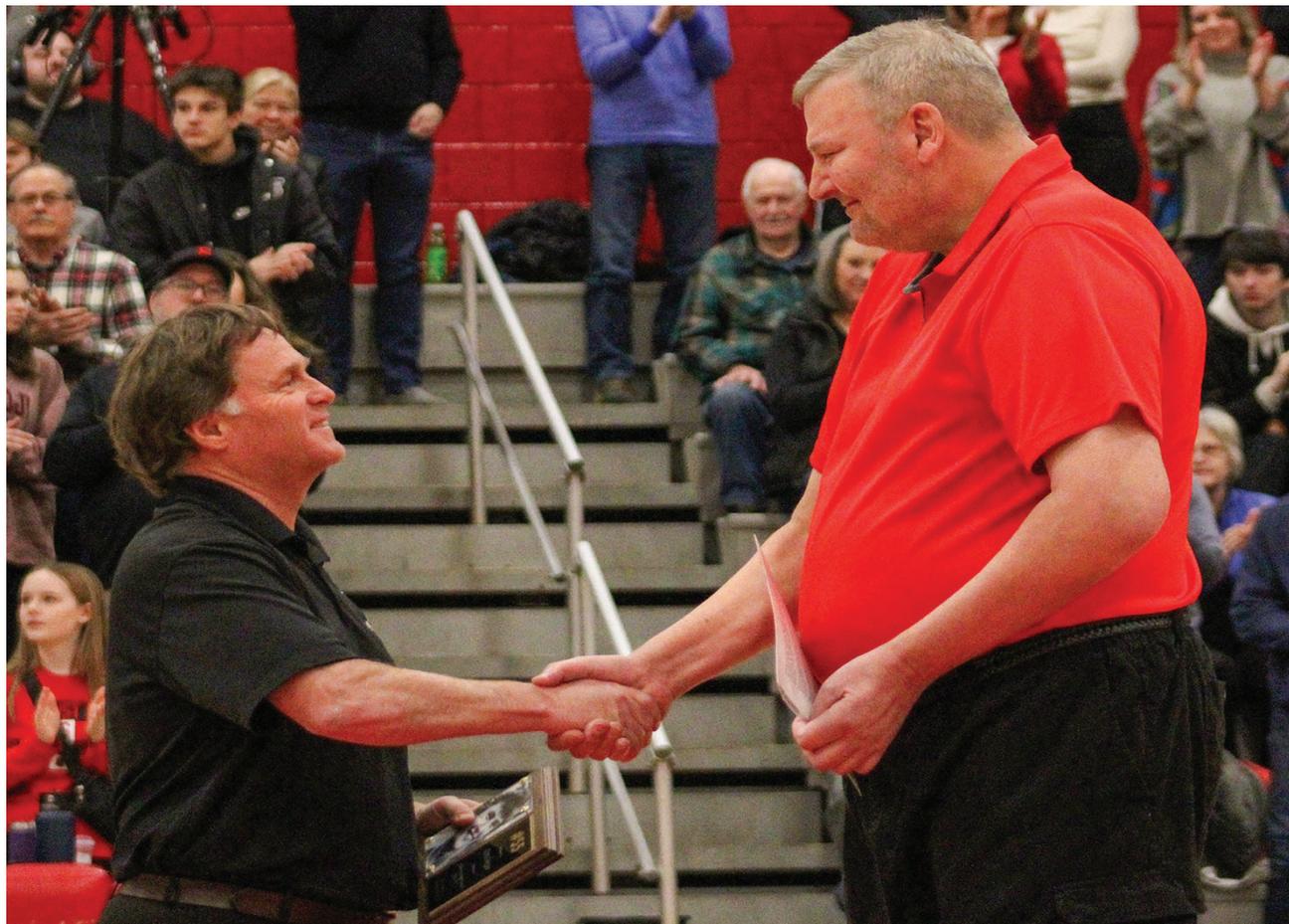
Bright white lights were lighting the walls of the doctor's office. The sounds of distant mumbling and the beeping of machines filled the room. Chris Engler anxiously waited in a soft chair beside his wife. He was waiting for the news that would change his life forever. The wood door swung open without a sound and revealed a doctor with a pile of papers and a grim look on his face. He slowly sat down, breathed deeply and said the words that Chris had been fearing. It is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Chris had ALS.

Twenty-two months ago, Chris was diagnosed with ALS, a condition that causes his nerves to start degenerating and cease to function. Though the news is life-changing, he has changed it for the better and started to raise money to find a cure for the deadly condition. Last December, he and the National Honors Society collaborated to help raise money for research that would hopefully find a cure for ALS.

"All they do is they go to work every day in the lab, trying to find cures or ways to heal ALS," Chris explained.

ALS has turned people's lives upside down with the impact it can cause to those afflicted with the condition. Each patient's diagnosis can be different and multiple types of ALS have been discovered. Life with ALS has been difficult to navigate. Basic motor skills can be lost and have caused a host of problems for patients. Since there was no cure found for ALS, though treatment can extend life, eventually patients have lost essential functions and passed away.

Chris explained how he is losing motor function and strength in his



Athletic Director Ricky Michel presents a plaque to Chris Engler at the boys varsity basketball game on Feb. 10. He received the honor of having his jersey number 55 being retired from the basketball program.

Photo by Jack Higgins

hands and arms. Chopping vegetables and cooking is now hard for him, which is hard for him because he loves cooking for his wife.

Though ALS made his life harder than he ever expected, Chris has found joy in the community around him. In 1974 he moved to Stillwa-

ter where he played basketball and graduated from what is now Stillwater Area High School. He went on to play professionally in the NBA for the Golden State Warriors and eventually the New Jersey Nets. He moved back to Stillwater and taught social studies along with practicing

law part-time. Chris made a massive impact on the Stillwater community.

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BPA prepares for State competition in March

SYDNEY RODD
Layout Editor-In-Chief

The Business Professionals of America (BPA) chapter will head to State in March. The club received many awards at Regionals on Jan. 21. Almost every student who competed at Regionals qualified for State in at least one category. Members are now spending time reviewing feedback from Regionals to improve their performance and possibly qualify for Nationals.

BPA is an organization that helps students better understand the business world. It works to help students become leaders and discover their passions. BPA members accomplish goals of professionalism, self-improvement, cooperation and career development.

"The business world isn't nine to five like people picture like it was in the '70s," senior Abbey Kovalak explained. "It's more of an active learning place and somewhere to have fun and grow and use skills that you didn't realize you had."

Students compete in Workplace Skills Assessment Program events. The event has over 90 categories under six assessment areas. Time is put into creating presentations, analyzing accounts and more. There are specific requirements for each category, and some are split into different skill levels.

"It's not hardcore business like you'd think it would be," senior Philip Eviston said. "We have competitions in the medical field, in coding and computer science. There are video and photography-related competitions. BPA has more than you'd think."

Students in BPA are working to improve their work to prepare for State. Based on the critiques received, students will adjust their work to make it stronger. There is less work to be completed after

Regionals, but students will always have room for improvement.

Sophomore Grace Conners explained the work after Regionals as taking the critiques and redoing parts of presentations. She added that between Regionals and State, there is not as much time needed to be put into competition.

BPA has a club aspect outside of competitions that are mainly student-led. Students are involved in the community in a variety of different ways that can help better themselves as future business professionals. They also participate in other club activities such as team bonding and planning fundraisers.

"Between Regionals and State it's a lot of competition prep, but we still do team bonding," Conners said. "We're going to do resume building and we're going to talk about professionalism in general, which is really important."

Members of the chapter qualified for Nationals in 2022, which was held in Dallas, TX. Nationals is highly selective, and students are hoping to qualify and compete at the highest level.

Eviston explained that in 2022 "almost all of our members qualified for Nationals. And we're hoping to see a similar result this year."



Sophomore Matthew Eviston, junior MARRISA FASICK and sophomore GRACE CONNERS, at their leadership meeting. At this session, they presented ideas to the club for future events.

Photo by Ava Biederman



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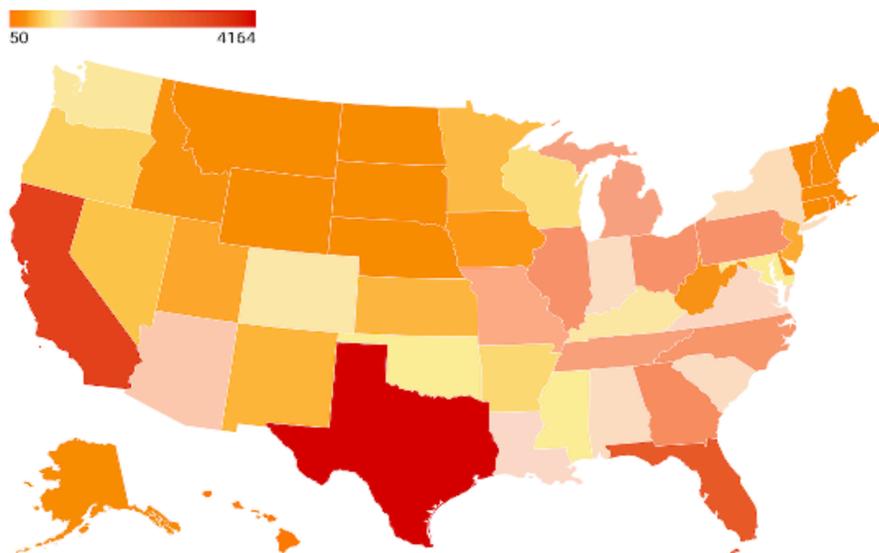
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LIVE

BREAKING NEWS

Conversation surrounding gun violence and mass shootings have risen due to the increased rate of gun death/injuries. There are many opposing views around this subject, but the majority agrees that this is a problem. Due to silence on this subject in the past, many solutions are being brought to the surface on how to help change this tragic norm.

Gun Deaths Per State In 2019



Map: Allie Schlacel • Source: CDC • Created with Datawrapper

Mass shootings increase at an alarming rate

LEO WHITLEY
Podcast Reporter

Mass shootings are popping up everywhere in America, and it is hard to keep track. With new shootings daily, different motives and locations, but similar guns, it makes it hard to understand what is happening. Mass shootings keep occurring at an alarming rate, yet nothing is preventing them.

In 2022 alone, there were around 600 mass shootings in just the U.S. That is almost two mass shootings every day. That is only mass shootings and does not account for other gun related killings. While there is no official way to say what constitutes a mass shooting, sources such as CNN and the Gun Violence Archive consider a mass shooting one where four or more people are shot, excluding the shooter. The fact that so many shootings continue without anything major being done to prevent it is a shame.

"It goes down to the fact that the people in power are not doing enough to try and solve this," junior Chloe Carlson said.

Over 50 school shootings

in which students have been killed or injured in 2022. There have been more than 50 school shootings last year, which is hard to believe. There have been over 300 shootings incidents on school or campus grounds in 2022. 2022, has been the most dangerous year for teens and under in 40 years. School shootings are not the only way children experience gun violence, a 14-year-old girl was shot watching fireworks outside of her home in St. Louis less than an hour after the new year, and became the first child shot in the U.S. in 2023. There have been more than 6,000 children killed or injured by gun violence in 2023 according to the Gun Violence Archive.

"Why would a teenager need a gun? A lot of school shooters are just teenagers with automatic weapons," Carlson said.

Many have heard about the mass shooting in L.A. in January, or the Uvalde school shooting. Shootings today are very desensitized, because they happen so often. If shootings are occurring daily, and people are getting used to hearing headlines about many people dying in clubs and schools then why

would the news cover it?

Not long ago the news of a shooting was everywhere, and everyone was talking about it. There are so many shootings most do not even get news coverage. Nine children were shot at a gas station in Georgia, and no one heard about it. News media does not cover shootings like they used to, which makes sense because no one is interested in it anymore. It is too normalized.

"Nobody hears about shootings anymore because they happen so often, to cover them all would be impossible," junior Matthew Shettle said.

Handguns are most commonly used in mass shootings. Being cheap and easier to conceal it is no wonder why handguns are so common. While handguns are the most commonly used, the deadliest mass shootings such as Las Vegas Strip and Pulse Nightclub where more than 40 people died in each, all were done by the usage of automatic rifles with quick-reload capabilities, high capacity, and heavy modifications. A lot of the shootings with the highest death tolls have gunmen, which

used these powerful man-killing-designed weapons.

While many officials and politicians are looking to ban automatic rifles and modifications for them, most deaths are from handguns, and raises the question if banning just automatic rifles would really be enough to solve this problem.

"It's not just automatic weapons. It's also smaller guns and handguns that are causing a lot of damage and kill a lot of people," junior Alex Then said.

During the Uvalde school shooting, law enforcement had failed numerous times to follow their active shooter protocols and training, and made multiple poor leadership decisions during their stand. This raises a question of whether law enforcement has the training or systemic morale to handle these situations, however this question actually goes deeper. While handling an active shooter is a complex, those in power also need to do their part in preventing these events. There is only so much law enforcement is able to do.

President Joe Biden originally claimed during his

campaign various things such as holding gun manufacturers responsible, and removing weapons designed for war from the streets, and continuously challenging the National Rifle Association or NRA.

"It's the government officials who have the real effect," Shettle said.

Mental health has had a severe effect on our society in recent years. After the entire COVID-19 pandemic, many people already struggling with mental health have deteriorated further. Some of these shooters have been diagnosed with mental health complications. The idea that many shooters and mass murders are people suffering from psychosis or schizophrenia is actually a false claim. Studies done by the Columbia University Department of Psychiatry have actually found that only about 5% of shootings have been committed due to a shooter with severe mental illness. Only about 25% of these shooters have been diagnosed with neurological illnesses as well. These realizations shed light on the fact that mental illness may not be the contributing factor of this large

uprise in shootings.

"Mental health isn't the only reason these shootings keep happening," Carlson said.

The entirety of the Second Amendment has always been a touchy subject. Some people believe people shouldn't be allowed to own any firearms at all, some believe almost all weapons should be legal. One of the biggest debates regarding the uprising in shootings and gun violence in general relates to the Second Amendment and whether or not it should be updated. Many facts state that the states with looser gun laws and controls also have higher rates in mass shootings and gun related incidents. Also the original argument for the right to keep weapons doesn't relate to the now extremely dangerous and advanced weapons.

Read more on www.ponyexpress.com

Legislators push to ban assault rifles

PAIGE VAN DYUNE
Broadcast Editor

Legislators are facing pressure to ban assault rifles. With a rising number of shootings, the push is crucial. Following the two mass shootings in California this past January, President Joe Biden renewed a call for Congress to pass legislation banning assault rifles.

"We've seen all of the damage that can be done with them from school shootings to other public shootings," sophomore Abigail Jungmann said.

In the two California shootings, there were 19 casualties. The urgency of these laws is becoming more apparent with the count of shootings increasing.

In the United States there have been over 50 mass shootings this year. Although much blood has been shed, the ban has little chance of passing the Republican-controlled House of Representatives or the Senate. The White House is building off

strong public support to further propel stricter gun safety laws. This is pressuring Congress into changing their thinking.

"I think your ability to own a gun is in the Constitution. But, the Constitution also does say 'a well regulated militia.' So, people forget the word 'regulated.'"

-Brady Hannigan

Many people against stricter gun laws believe gun ownership is a privilege not to be taken away.

The impact on the firearm industry if an assault rifle ban were to happen would depend on a lot of factors. The ban could only ban a few specific guns leaving the industry not as affected. But if there were many types banned the impact would depend on the willingness of the industry to adapt and find new markets.

"The ban probably wouldn't stop the industry

as a whole. There are a lot of guns that can be used for hunting and other activities," junior Marissa Fasick added.

Guns used for hunting and sport are not assault rifles. Guns that are needed for serious hunters will remain available. All in all the ban will help more than it will hurt.

There are alternative solutions to decrease gun violence that could be sought out. Possible solutions include stricter background checks, red flag laws, more mental health resources, stricter enforcement and more.

"Maybe putting a limit on accessibility to assault rifles on a day to day basis. There's other places where you have to store it in your locker or you have to be a part of a gun club," Hannigan added.

If new laws are put in place, it will help prevent those with mental health issues, criminal records, and other setbacks from obtaining a gun.

Gun violence is the leading cause of death in the U.S.. More must be done to restrict and stop the harm assault rifles create in the United States.

Gun violence rates per country
Data by World Population Review

United States: 37,040

Russia: 2,480

Australia: 241

China: 1,126



In the United States, four people fall victim to gun violence every hour.

Information by teamenough.org



Current lockdown protocols raise questions

JASMINE L. ALLISON
Social Media Editor-in-Chief

As lockdowns in schools have become a regular occurrence in schools across the country, students have known the school lockdown protocols since early elementary school. While most lockdowns do not end in severe violence, there is always a slim chance they will. In those cases, current lockdown procedures in America are outdated and inadequate. Lockdown procedures must be revised to protect students and staff from gun violence.

Active shooter events in schools have been on the rise ever since the Columbine

school shooting in 1999, with over 300 between then and 2023. The FBI defines an active shooter event as "one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area." Other infamous shootings, such as the Virginia Tech, Red Lake, Sandy Hook, Parkland, and Uvalde, have caused students and teachers to become paranoid during a lockdown.

The experience of students during a lockdown is a scary one. Because of the prevalence of gun violence in schools, many students' immediate assumption when being put into a lockdown is that there is an active shooter in the building. In 2022, an incident at Stillwa-

ter Area High School occurred where an intruder entered the building, and law enforcement did not know if they were armed. The building was promptly put on lockdown.

"I wasn't panicking for some reason, and that normally happens," senior Sophia Furhmann said. "I'm normally the first one who's in tears and freaking out, but I wasn't."

The experience of a lockdown is not the same for every person. Because of the varying infrastructure of the school, those who are located outside of a typical classroom have a different experience. People in the cafeteria or gyms are not in an already-enclosed space and must seek shelter in the case of

a lockdown.

Angie Ryan, gym and health teacher, explained that when she is in the gym, she has access to the storage rooms and will move her class there in case of a lockdown. However, during the incident last year, she was in the weight room, and the police told her not to move her class out of the weight room. She had to move her class to the center of the room in case the glass was shattered and sprayed everywhere.

Administrators in the building call when to go into and come out of a lockdown and be the coordinators. Principal Robert Bach explained that his job is to "manage most of the events with law enforcement. If

it's an actual event, [administrators] cede authority over to law enforcement as soon as they wind up arriving."

The procedures and their issues

From a very young age, children are told what to do in the case of a fire. If there is a fire in the building but not in the immediate area, evacuate to the nearest exit and get far away from the building. If there is a fire in the immediate area, stay low, avoid the smoke and find a safe exit. If they catch fire, stop, drop, and roll to put the fire out. Children are taught various adaptable strategies to react to this dangerous situation. That is not the case for active shooter events.

Children are taught that their only option as a response to someone trying to gun them down is to hide in a corner with the lights off and remain quiet. Lieutenant Joe Hendry, an expert consultant to the Ohio Department of Homeland Security for civilian response to Active Shooter Incidents, asked himself the same question in ALICE Training Institute: The Origins of Lockdown.

Read more on www.ponyexpress.com

Conversations around gun violence increase due to the rising rate of mass shootings

Pony Express News

Students play in Battle of the Bands

REECE BASTYR
Social Media Editor

P.J. SMITH
Photography Editor

A high school musician's dreams, Battle of the Bands. On Feb. 17, six bands faced off head to head at. The focus was mainly on having fun rather than winning.

Others people's energy is something that we feed off of all day long. It maintains social homeostasis and without it, one loses confidence. The same goes for when performing if the crowd is not giving that energy one cannot feed off of it and that is what a band lives for.

"It matters so much. That's the biggest thing I worry about," senior Ruairi McAllister explained how the crowd's energy affects his band.

Performers want to be a part of something that is positive and live for a bigger thing. The bands competing this year are all about having fun, just going out, and giving their best performance.

"Last year, I convinced all the bands to hug before, then the rest of the bands wanted to all be friends after," McAllister said about last year's Battle of the Bands.

Being nervous is something that as a performer one must have control over. Not getting distracted by the possibly hundreds of people and freezing on the stage. Sometimes nerves take over and the audience can tell when they are playing with a little less confidence. That takes experience, something Skuzz worked on over the summer playing in several different venues giving them



PHOTO BY BAILEY HOLMES

Junior Annabelle Lewis sings while fellow junior Genna Moss stands behind playing the guitar in Battle of the Bands competition. They are members of the band "1969 HomeCroft" and performed last year as well.

a "confidence boost" going into this year's competition.

"Last year was our first show, so the nerves were high," senior Logan Reimann Skuzz's main singer said.

"We want the audience to dance with us because that creates an environment for everyone to go crazy," McAllister said. Having friends listening to your music is special and when people are loving it creates a "big community that no one would want to leave."

Last year's winners, as well as other bands from last year's Battle of the Bands will be participating again this year. Skuzz received second place last year and have been practicing hard playing in a lot of shows outside of school. This year anything can happen and the fans will be cheering until the music stops.



PHOTO BY BAILEY HOLMES

Junior Kendall Arsenault sings for the group "Bagel Hole" at Battle of the Bands. The band has newly formed and had a great performance where they took third place.

"We placed second last year and it kind of bothered me to be honest. It is what it is, We'll just place first this year," senior Elliott Johnson said.

All six bands are more than excited as they count down the days one by one until they are up on stage.

Most of the people going up want to have fun, they are going up to show off what they have and gain that valuable experience. There will only be one band that wins, but there will be six bands that will remember it forever.

St. Croix Collection expands youth interest

STELLA MCHUGH
Layout Editor

The St. Croix Collection is an extensive local resource of yearbooks, journals, German alien papers, maps and legal work. This collection is full of local history dating back to the mid-1800s. Most locally recorded or documented works can be found here. According to Stillwater Library.org, there are more than 55,000

photographs, postcards, documents, letters and oral history that make up the collection. This collection is a great resource for teens to learn more about their families and the history of where they live.

"Primary sources are very important in this capacity because while they reflect the biases of the time, nonetheless, they provide important context into how people understood their own world and the way

they were experiencing things and it really humanizes a lot of broader big picture narratives," junior Soren Peterson said.

Learning about history, specifically local history is crucial to understanding the present. However, important history is to understand, the way historical information is obtained can be limited to what is taught in school.

"There's hardly any teaching of what activity occurred in Stillwater and resources on history that we are still seeming to lack," junior Charlie Kern said.

This resource can help fill the gaps of what's not taught in school. It is great for personal research as well. Cami Anderson from the Stillwater Library explained that many people will come to the collection looking for photos of their historic homes. The resource is also easily accessible to the public.

"It's unique because there's not a lot of public libraries that have an archive within the building. So we have people that come in and they can just poke around whenever the library is open," Anderson explained.

As of now, the majority of people utilizing the collection are older or new families that just moved to town. However, Kern and Anderson believe it is important for more young people to use the collection.

"If there was an interest for teens to come in and use it that would be

amazing," Anderson said.

One way teens can use the collection is by researching families. The collection has yearbooks from SAHS with great photos of parents, grandparents, or even great-grandparents. It offers a unique look into a relative's life.

"My moms' side of the family has been in Stillwater for as long as I can remember. At least five generations," Kern said.

Another way the collection can be used by teens is as a research facility. The collection has unique pieces of history that cannot be found in school. For example, Kern is a member of the Native American student Alliance and is "planning on using the collection to research tribal land and photos" to further his knowledge of local tribal history.

With such a vast collection of history, the collection is an amazing resource for personal family research or school project material. Primary sources are key to understanding our history and should be utilized.

"[It's] remarkably interesting, and very cool. The problem with our communities is the fact that we've got all of these fantastic resources like the St. Croix collection, but there's really no way of communicating," Kern explained.

To check out the collection for yourself, it is located in the Stillwater area library is open and it is accessible whenever the library is open.

Some of the collections in the St. Croix Collection are...

- Stillwater People
- Historic Photographs
- Local History
- News Archives

GRAPHIC BY MAGGIE O'BRIEN

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Gymnastics team plans to continue their successful season this year

OLIVIA WILLIAMS Podcast Reporter

The girls gymnastics team is having a successful season this year. They have been competing all around the state and have won many meets. This team continues to amaze the spectators.

The team is close to beating the all-time high score for the high school of 151. The gymnastics team has a season-high of 146 and in the meet against Forest Lake on Feb. 2 they scored 144 and once again came out on top and won first place.

"We've been doing great with our season and we've been undefeated for the past two months and we are hoping to go to State and place," senior Anna Benson said.

Last year, they had a team of 19. They lost nine seniors after the season ended and now have a team of only 10. The team may be more tight-knit, the small team could be considered a problem, but the scores would say otherwise.

"A big weakness is the size of our team, which

is hard because we fill up every single spot. But we've pushed through again and again," Benson said.

They do not let these challenges get to them. They have shown they are relentless and passionate about their sport so challenges like the size of the team do not matter to them.

"We don't really get affected by small things from little mistakes that had happened prior to the next thing that you're doing."

Katelyn McDowell

"I think we are very persevering," junior Katelyn McDowell said. "We don't really get affected by small things from little mistakes that had happened prior to the next thing that you're doing."

With such a small team, the girls have grown very close to each other. Their closeness is shown by their constant support and hyping each other up.

The constant cheering and support allows junior Zoe Chase conquer her most difficult skill Chase said.

They are loud and make sure their presence is known wherever they go.

Benson said spectators can "expect to see a lot of positive attitudes and a lot of skills" when watching the team.

Another thing that the team excels at along with skill and positivity is knowing how to have fun. Even with the big changes from last season to this season, they never fail to make new and lasting memories for the freshmen all the way to the seniors.

"The bus rides home are always super fun," Benson said. "We always sing and dance and it's a fun experience."

One major reason they have been able to accomplish their astounding record is by "staying together as a team," Chase said.



Photo by Grace Cheney

Senior Olivia Carter gets ready to make a complex jump on the beam in her beam routine on Thursday Feb. 2. Carter places 3rd with her beam routine scoring an 8.85 beating out the girls on the Forest Lake team.

read more at
sahsponyexpress.com

Boys basketball lost Oil Can trophy game

PETER BANISTER Field Reporter

The boys basketball team fell to the White Bear Lake Bears 67-50 on Feb. 2 in a rematch for the Old Oil Can Championship.

Stillwater's rivalry against White Bear Lake has been going on since the 1920's when a home economics teacher crafted a trophy can and titled it the Old Oil Can for the basketball team. The rivalry was sparked because of how Stillwater and White Bear Lake are both railroad towns and were out of the city area in the early 1900's. The two cities had a railroad line connecting together to transport raw materials to and from St Paul. The trophy was just brought back this season after more than a half a century.

"It's supposed to represent the two towns work ethic," coach Brady Hannigan said.

Both cities were connected by railroad and geographically near water, which benefitted them agriculturally, so therefore the trophy represents the railroad that had connected Stillwater and

White Bear Lake along with all of the hard working people who fed into the imports into the city.

The game started off close, Stillwater trailing four points behind. This gap however was soon grew throughout the first half with Stillwater falling behind by almost 20 points by halftime. Stillwater's top player was on the bench for a good chunk of the first half which led the team to fall behind quickly.

"We kind of didn't really find an offensive rhythm, but we started getting it going in the second half. And, you know, it didn't turn out the way we wanted it to," senior Max Shikenjanski said.

Stillwater had shot a few three pointers, which helped them catch up in the second half, however it was not enough. Stillwater had too many turnovers and not enough rebounds.

"I'd say, focusing from the start on the little things that were asked to do from our coaches," Tanner Thomson said. In any game, communication with the coaches and other teammates is important and if those communication skills are not used, there is a risk of the team losing the game. Tanner had also mentioned that the trophy games are not taken as seriously as they should be as they are lower stakes than other games which lead to state. Motivation and communication are crucial in any sports game, if all players are engaged, chances of winning increase.



Photo by Jack Higgins

Junior Lake DeJongh goes up for a layup in the game versus White Bear Lake.

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sahsponyexpress.com

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AP course gets restricted in Florida

BAILEY HOLMES
Photographer

AP African American studies have been restricted by Florida's Department of Education after Governor DeSantis claimed that it is an unnecessary addition to education that promotes political ideologies. The College Board has been forced to attempt to make changes to the course so it can stay in schools. Subjects like Black feminism, the history of Black Lives Matter, the history of Black

obvious that he is doing this to gain his conservative structure and base to make them happier to get re-elected," lawyer Tom Shroeder said.

Shroeder is correct, and it is more than obvious that DeSantis is encouraging restrictions or a total ban of the course due to his extreme want to gain political power. It is likely that DeSantis will announce his presidential candidacy for the upcoming 2024 election, and he knows that in order to win he needs to start strategically catering to his conservative base.

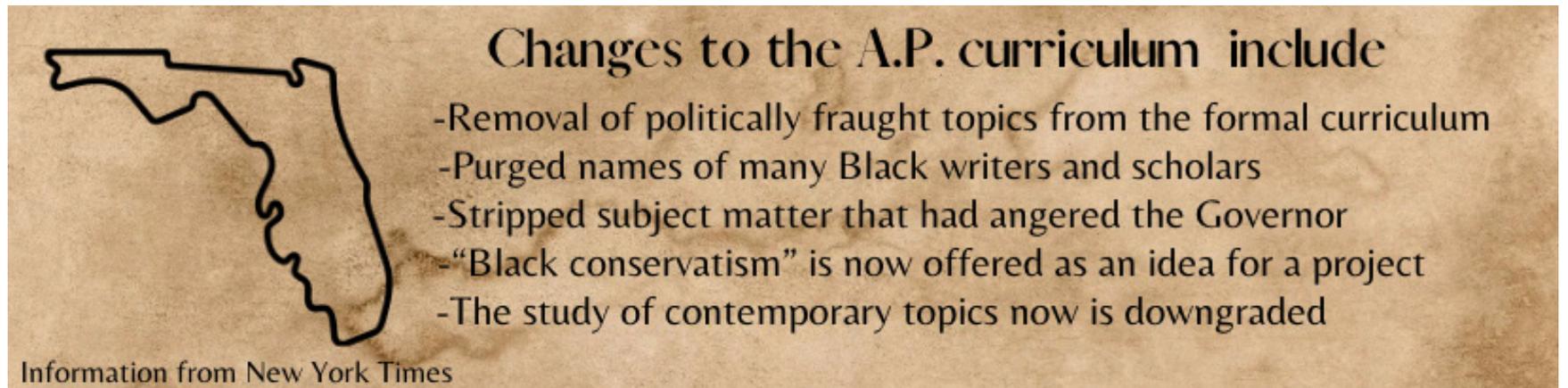
studies stems from the anti-woke movement, something that DeSantis has largely monopolized to gain Republican support. In political terms, being "woke" is simply someone who is conscious and educated about racial inequality and social injustices. Now, conservative politicians have turned the term around to use as a negative against progressives, and fuel to get what they believe to be critical race theory and LGBTQ+ teachings, removed from schools.

"I think they are afraid of the resis-

accurate as possible portrayal of history...It is about the good, the bad and the ugly," Gerard Coury, U.S. World History and AP Psychology teacher, explained.

"You do not have to agree with it, you do not have to like it. At the end of the day, we are not the same and you need to respect the differences and respect people's history. That is why I think history is such an important class," he added.

By trying to restrict and even ban important factual information from



Changes to the A.P. curriculum include

- Removal of politically fraught topics from the formal curriculum
- Purged names of many Black writers and scholars
- Stripped subject matter that had angered the Governor
- “Black conservatism” is now offered as an idea for a project
- The study of contemporary topics now is downgraded

Information from New York Times

Graphic by Belle Lapos

LGBTQ+ rights, and more have all been taken out. These are all vital to not just Black history, but United States history as well, and DeSantis using the course as political leverage is completely uncalled for.

The course introduced by College Board would be put into schools for the 2023-24 school year. The overall basis of it is to inform teens more about the history and experiences of Black Americans. Specifically, it includes topics like the Civil Rights movement, racial uplift, Black women's rights, the history of slavery/slave trade and early African kingdoms. Since it is an AP course, it is entirely optional and would be a great opportunity for students who are interested in those studies, and might want to study them in college as well. It is offered as a major in over 200 colleges and universities nationwide, so why does DeSantis feel a need to restrict it in high school?

"Purely political. It has become

Even though DeSantis is pushing the ban, the Department of Education in Florida was the one to make the official call. They were the ones to tell the College Board organization to revise the course, otherwise, it is getting taken off of the docket for the '23-'24 school year. And, because the College Board is more of a business than they are an educational company, they did exactly what the FL Department of Education wanted.

Abigail Yates, an AP Human Geography teacher, explained that taking away these types of classes really "dulls education about resistance," which can be very dangerous.

"For those people who might want to learn about it, it takes away their ability to do that. And for those people who might not, it only enforces the idea that you can just push stuff under the rug and not teach about it," she added.

The want of conservatives to get rid of courses like African American

tance and action that can come out of that, as well as equality and powerful movements," Yates explained. "I do think other governors will make a similar move because a big narrative right now is how schools are 'poisoning' the minds of Americans children, even though those politicians do not know exactly what is taught," she added.

That narrative and fear of resistance by Republican politicians is exactly why students in other conservative states are scared that the AP course will be banned in their areas too. Governors in North Dakota, Arkansas, Virginia and Mississippi have all expressed that they do not support the course and would like it to be out of their state, just based on what they have "overheard" about its curriculum.

"Every state has its standards, but at its very core you want to be able to explain why things are the way they are today, and you want to give an

African American studies, DeSantis and the Florida Department of Education is purposefully disrespecting an entire population's differences and past. The United States would not be how it is today without Black American History. DeSantis is so afraid of "poisoning" the minds of children through school, and fails to realize that by hiding key parts of history from a generation in order to spread his own political ideologies, he is the one doing the poisoning.

Learning about different experiences and ways of living does nothing but broaden perspectives and open minds. Teachers everywhere, including in Minnesota, have the opportunity to teach students that history can not be ignored or skewed and that all cultures and races need respect. High schoolers deserve to have the option to learn about whatever they want to, including African American history, and nobody should have the right to take that away.

Finals prepare students for their future

GARIN WARNER
Podcast Reporter

While finals week can be hard on students, they have an important impact, which students can only see in the long run.

Junior Lucas Hintze said in order to get good grades on a final there is a lot of studying involved, which comes with a lot of extra work and a lot of extra time. This puts more pressure on the body which causes stress.

it's the best way of showing progress because there are too many unnecessary factors that can get in the way of showing what you know, like stress or forgetting it or too much information over a period of time," junior Cole Handberg added.

one reason why teachers have either made finals easier or have not done them at all.

The final grade at the end of the year can come down to one final. Even if students have worked hard the whole semester and turned in

"I THINK THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY BUT DONT NEED TO BE TIMED"

-JUNIOR MONIQUE MICALLEF

"I DONT THINK THAT THEY ARE AS BAD AS PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE"

-JUNIOR SOREN PETERSON

"THEY ARE NOT NECESSARY AND DONT PREPARE US FOR THE FUTURE"

-JUNIOR GRACE CICHON

"I DO THINK THAT FINALS HAVE THEIR PLACE IN CERTAIN CLASSES"

-SOPHOMORE ZOE MELETIOU

Graphic by Belle Lapos

Some classes are wandering away from finals, but these types of tests are a beneficial way to prepare a student for college or whatever they do after high school.

"Since there are a lot of exams in college, preparing for tests now is a way for students to find good habits to make it easier to be prepared for big tests," math teacher Pete Hamilton, who teaches Algebra 3 at the high school, explained, "It starts to prepare kids for life at the next level."

"They are very stressful," Hintze said. Even though they can be tough, the stress from working really hard can improve memory and performance. This will help with more tests and activities in the future.

"We need to teach kids how to manage stress and deal with it," Hamilton added. This will not only help in school, but in everyday life.

When finals week comes around, it is easy to forget something that was learned at the beginning of the year.

"It's a good way of showing comprehension... but I don't think

Revisiting information and refreshing a student's memory of a topic they have already learned is the most efficient way to seal the information in their head.

On the other hand, since finals are tests that cover the whole semester, it is easy to forget information that was learned in the beginning. Teachers could test the comprehension of students if there was an easier way to teach.

One who is not a good test taker will struggle with finals, while one who is a good test taker will excel. This is

all the work, a final could mess up a student's grade. Another reason some may think finals are bad is because the amount of stress can have effects on the body and mental health. The amount of stress finals week and the weeks prior cause, can make it the worst week of the year.

Finals can better improve a student's future; they can also add stress and anxiety to an already stressful time in the student's life. While some teachers are keeping the tests, others are evolving their curriculums to better suit their students.

EIC COLUMN



Pony Clapback

Maya Disher

The push for more mental health resources within schools has been an ongoing battle for students in Minnesota. Students have been pioneering this battle by coming up with mental health initiatives and solutions to this mental health crisis among teens today.

A report that came out in 2016 by the Center of Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, stated that Minnesota has the worst student-to-counselor ratio, 1:743, which is far off from the recommended 1:250. It is the law that schools must have at least one counselor on hand at all times. Since that report, for the past 6 years, that ratio has not moved. As of February 2022, reports have shown that current ratios stand at 1:734.

“I’m not quite surprised, honestly,” junior Avery Adams said. “Having friends from a lot of schools around here. I hear a lot about it and how they don’t feel supported within their school. But I just feel sad because that’s not how it should be.”

Adams is a student leader in the mental health initiative she started, Bring Change to Mind, along with initiatives she is an active member of, such as the Mental Health Coalition, Peer Helpers and Mental Health Forum.

[read more at
sahsponyexpress.com](http://sahsponyexpress.com)

Staff Editorial: Phones cause addictions in teens

PONY EXPRESS STAFF

Smartphones prove to be addicting for many people. Phones and social media strip people away from reality, keeping them out of touch with the world around them. In addition, addictions to smartphones have caused an increased risk of mental health issues, especially in young generations today.

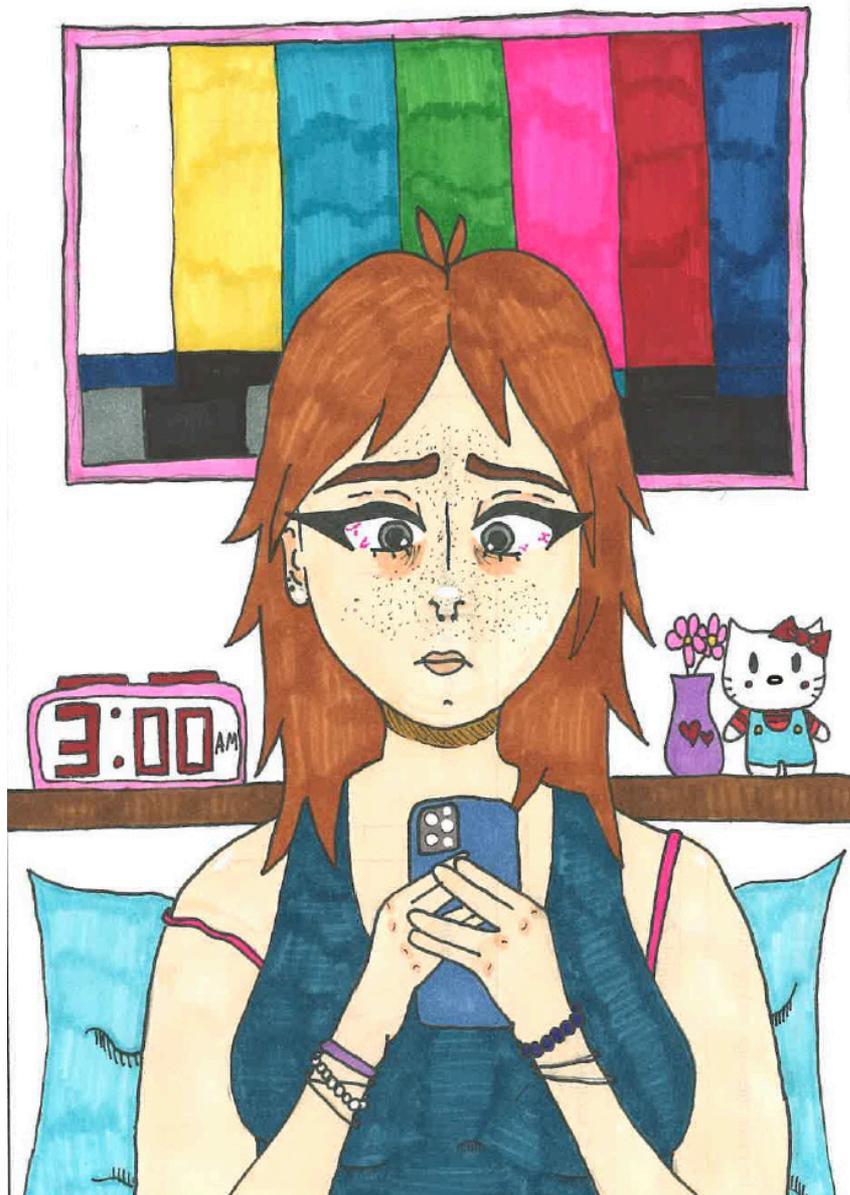
Smartphones suck people in with a constant bright screen, fun colors and new things happening every second. There is always something new to look at and engage with on smartphones. As a result, people stay glued to their phones all day. This increases people’s screen time, an average of eight to nine hours a day, not allowing time to focus on essential things. As a result, productivity has become immensely low, and laziness has taken over.

Senior Jasmine Alison, social media EIC, said that people “have a 12-plus hour screen time” but complain there is not enough time in a day.

People feel a sense of security with their smartphones. They have become society’s safety blanket. Losing a personal smartphone can feel like the end of the world to some, if not most. Most things people do these days revolve around a smartphone, especially posting on social media to show people how good one’s life is. Without that factor, people have no interest in doing things that may seem boring to society. The decrease in seeing people playing outside, reading a book, or simply enjoying the moment is saddening.

Staff agree that when they lose their phone, they get a sense of panic. They agreed they want their phones on them at all times.

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Editorial cartoon by Aubree Bigger

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PONIES CONTINUE IMPRESSIVE SEASON

The gymnastics team had a successful meet against Forest Lake on Feb. 2. The team scored 144 to win first place. The current season record is 146, which is close to the school's all-time record of 151.



TOP PHOTO: Junior Katelyn McDowell receives feedback from coach Dusty Dennis after her bar routine. McDowell placed third for her bar routine scoring an 8.5.

LEFT PHOTO: Senior Evelyn Johnson ends her routine with a complex pose on Feb. 2. Johnson places first with her floor routine scoring a 9.275.

LEFT PHOTO: Senior Olivia Carter finishes her floor routine with a dramatic pose. Carter placed second on her floor routine scoring 9.15, which contributed to her first place score in the All Arouds at a 36.1.



BELOW PHOTO: Junior Katelyn McDowell does a back walkover on the beam in her beam routine. McDowell got second place on beam with a score of 9.075, which contributed to Stillwater's win against Forest Lake.



ABOVE PHOTO: Senior Evelyn Johnson, juniors Katelyn McDowell and Zoe Chase and sophomore Libby Quast re-apply chalk on their hands as they prepare for their bar routines.

BELOW PHOTO: Senior Evelyn Johnson does a back handspring step out on the beam in her beam routine on Feb. 2. Johnson got first place for her beam routine scoring a 9.3.

