

Maroon & White

“For a better Tennessee High”

Volume CIV, Issue II

Tennessee High School, Bristol, Tennessee

February 13, 2019



Firecracker Squad Lights up the Stage

Colby Bland & Taylor Harr

On January 11, 2019, the THS Firecracker Squad performed their dance routine in front of the entire student body for the first time.

Science Hill’s “Spirit Squad” and Dobyns-Bennett’s “Sparkle Squad” inspired THS to create its unique version of a CDC dance team.

In hopes of creating a similar opportunity for our CDC class, Mrs. Kirk was determined to implement a squad for Tennessee High as well. “It was something that the community really enjoyed, and the kids really enjoyed; I just thought we should bring that here,” Principal Kirk said.

The squad, composing mainly of the CDC class as well as the cheerleading team, first began the development of their dance in the summer of 2018.

In order to prepare for the performance, the cheerleading squad “started with the words first, then moved to motions,” said CDC coordinator Ms. Anderson. “They [the cheerleaders] partnered up with each student and walked them through it; it took months.”

The name “Firecracker Squad,” created by THS senior Haley Carter, fit perfectly with the squad’s walkout song: “Firework” by Katy Perry. Shortly following their entrance, cheerleader Alessa Miller begins the performance. Chanting “Tennessee, Vikings, go Big Maroon!” as the squad dances along.

“There are three cheers; they’re the actual Tennessee High cheers, but we modified them movement wise,” Anderson said. After the completion of these cheers, the squad then performs their synchronized dance.

Dancing along to the song “Can’t Stop the Feeling” by Justin Timberlake, the dancers clap, jump, and spin.

The Firecracker Squad will continue for years to come. “We will do a different routine and try to change it up every year,” Kirk said. “We want to utilize them in more situations, at more pep rallies. We want it to grow.”

“It has been really successful. I think everyone enjoys it so far,” Kirk said.

Tucker Couch: Making THS History

Meghan Bryant

Early Thursday Morning, February 7th, 2019, at the beginning of second period, students from all different classes made their way to the main hallway to send off a select few of Tennessee High School’s Aquavike swimmers to State.

It was chaotic in the hallway, everyone packed together like sardines. Even at the very beginning of the hall, we knew when the team was ready to march because of the roars. People were screaming, cheering on their fellow students enthusiastically. You could even hear our very own band playing. Little did we know, someone among the group was about to make Tennessee High

School History.

Tucker Couch, Tennessee High School junior, first began his swim story on the Sullins Academy swim team in 8th grade. That planted the seed that grew to become Tucker Couch excelling and breaking a Tennessee High record. Couch has dedicated hours and hours of his life to swim. During an average school week, he practices two hours each day.

In the beginning of his swimming career, Couch was not where he wanted to be. His times were higher than he’d like, and he knew he had to practice to perfect his skills. One way he enhances his abilities is through his mindset. During practice, Couch holds a one-track mind. He picks one thing he’d like to improve, and that’s all he thinks about. However, during competitions, he clears out all of his thoughts. Couch said he thinks about “going fast and giving 100 percent.”

One thing that Couch believes pushed him is his friendly rivalry with teammate: Sam Bender. “Every race this season we were neck and neck. The daily competition in practice pushed both of us to try harder.”

Luckily, just before his event, all of his nerves just washed away while he stretched. In the end, all of Tucker Couch’s hard work and dedication paid off. In the 100 breast, Couch made a groundbreaking time of 1:02.77. This broke Tennessee High School’s previous record, making history. However, this fact did not originally sink in to Couch. “At first I hadn’t even realized...that I dropped two seconds, and I was happy,” Couch said.

Swimming is extremely meaningful to Couch. It allows him to escape from the fast paced world of Tennessee High. “When you’re swimming, you don’t hear anyone

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else. You’re by yourself,” Couch said.

Couch still has one more year at Tennessee High. During that year, he plans to continue getting his time down. He wants to ensure that no one else will beat it. Despite being very skilled at breaststroke, he also wants to advance in other strokes and events. After high school, Couch isn’t completely sure what or where he wants to go. Nevertheless, swim will always remain a pivotal part of his life.



Sam Bender & Tucker Couch

Meet the 2019 Maroon & White Spring Staff

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A Date as Rare as Steak

Riley McCracken & Cameron Shelley

It is scientifically proven that the longer you gaze into someone’s eyes, the higher the love scale moves. About 50 years ago, Mark Grindstaff gazed into the eyes of Judy Stevens.

Grindstaff recalled how their Valentine’s Day traditions in high school differed from ours today.

Valentine’s Day then consisted of anonymous notes and gifts put in lockers, song dedications in

the school newspaper, and pizza dates, but now the holiday consists of shout outs on social media and flower bouquets.

In modern day, anonymous notes and gifts are more commonly heard of at the elementary school age and rare in high school, but back then it was the most popular way to express your feelings for someone.

Grindstaff recalled how his town did not have a florist, so many people did not get flowers, but instead they would dedicate songs to their valentine in the school newspaper “The Bulldog Bark.” He recalled how he dedicated the song “Hey Jude” by the Beatles to his date, Judy.

According to Grindstaff, Valentine’s Day dates in the 21st century are held to a much higher standard than they were 50 years ago. Today, a fancy date and jewelry is expected, but back then a simple trip to Pizza Inn and bowling would win you a “date as rare as steak.”

Although there are many differences in the traditions then and now, there were also some similarities, such as the kind thoughts that people put into gifts and the anticipation of trying to find a date before the big day arrives.

THS Aquavikes go to State

Jack Bartlett & Gracie Cunningham

This past weekend the THS Aquavikes competed at the state competition in the Vanderbilt Pool in Nashville, Tennessee. The Aquavikes took with them the largest team in years.

The 2019 State Team consisted of fourteen swimmers: seven men and seven women. Of the fourteen swimmers that went, this was the first time going state for nine of them.

Of the seven female swimmers, six swam at state for the first time, making this the largest female state team in over five years. THS Head Swim Coach Mary Johnson is especially proud of

her girls. “I am beyond excited to bring a girls’ team to state. This is the first time in the five years that I have been coaching that Tennessee High has had a girls team go to state.”



Unlike other sports, swimmers must individually qualify for state and then come together to compete in relays. The Aquavikes hit the ground running this past September with daily practices ranging from military style warm-up to miles of freestyle swimming.

Dedication is what Assistant Coach Patty Holden believes “pushed everyone over the edge.”

“This year especially, everyone has really given 110% all season,” Holden said.

Although events are swam individually, swimming is, in fact, a team sport. “Everyone is always pushing each other to swim faster in practice,” Johnson explained. “Swimming becomes more fun when one has teammates to push them.”

For many of those who attended state, this was their last swim meet. Senior and Girls’ Team Captain Hannah Powers will never forget her last meet. “It feels like the last ten years I have been swimming have led to this moment. I am finally seeing the results of all those 5 a.m. practices and painstakingly long swim meets. I will never forget the teammates that have helped me get to this moment or the lessons being a swimmer has taught me,” Powers said.

Preparing for Prom Early

Gabby Vain

Prom is a few months away, but the preparation takes months. Dresses, shoes, hair, makeup, tickets, and dinner are not overnight decisions, nor are they cheap.

Dresses are sold a lot of the time on social media for reduced prices and in good condition. You can look on multiple sites including Instagram, Facebook, Poshmark, and Amazon. There are online dress websites exclusively for formal events; some are Lulus, Windsor, Tobi, and others.

However, if you’re not certain about shopping online, the YWCA distributes used prom dresses for extremely cheap for a few days during the prom season.

More expensive but worth the pay are places like David’s Bridal, Bristol Bridal Station, Belmeade Formal Wear. These local spots have breathtaking styles for everyone.

Shoes can be found in cheaper places other than the high end stores. Target, Shoe Carnival, and Rack Room are affordable places to purchase cute shoes for both females and males.

Instead of spending more money then you need to by getting a professional to do hair and makeup, YouTube videos have

many options of hair and makeup styles. Family and friends who excel in either can be a big help as well.

For the prom meal, restaurants like Waffle House, Olive Garden, Cheddar’s, or Aubrey’s offer many different price points and seating areas for you and your friends.

If you are paying for yourself or yourself and a date, you can set aside extra money you may have in a “prom” jar so you don’t have to worry about all your purchases at once. Prom can be simply fun—with no stress—if you begin planning early and stick to a budget.

Interested in writing for the Maroon & White?

Pick up an application for the 2020 - 2021 staff in the THS Guidance office and turn in by February 22nd.

Student Testimonials:

“Maroon & White was by far my favorite class at THS. I’m so glad I came out of my comfort zone and applied my freshman year.”

“I am honored to have had the opportunity of joining M&W. I have grown as a writer, learned valuable lessons, and made many memories that is will always treasure.”

The Best Subs in Bristol

Cameron Shelley

Six inches of crispy bread, hot and melty ham and cheese, fresh crisp lettuce, the crunch of onion, and the slight tang of mayo mixed together in one perfect bite. Are you drooling yet? How do you get this in your mouth right now, you ask? This perfect concoction of ingredients can be found on a sub sandwich. Out of all the sub places in Bristol, only one can be the hero.

To be the subbiest of subs you must meet a certain criteria. Good bread to meat ratio, price-worthy, freshness, and tastiness. Obviously. I will be testing three

of Bristol’s sub joints: Zero’s, Subway, and Jersey Mikes. To keep an even playing field, all the subs were ordered the same: toasted white bread, ham, provolone cheese, lettuce, banana pepper, onion, and mayo. While none of the subs disappointed, a clear line was drawn between the best and the rest.

The first sub tested was from Zero’s on Virginia Ave, past Food City. The reasonable price of \$4.50 allowed me to overlook the small size of this 6-inch sub. The contents of the sub were tasty and well placed so you got a little bit of everything in each bite, but the toasted- more like burnt- bread over-powered the sandwich. I questioned the freshness of the sub when the ham tasted similar to the prepackaged ham I have in my refrigerator. Overall, the price

of this sub sandwich is good for a cheap meal, but you definitely are not paying for quality.

The second sub tested was from Subway, this sub chain can be found nationwide. In fact, there are five in Bristol alone. The price of this 6-inch sub was only \$3.75! Unlike Zero’s, this sub was toasted perfectly with an added crunch that is necessary for a delicious experience. The ingredients were positioned perfectly so I got a perfect bite every time, but unfortunately it was missing the taste of fresh ingredients. In this case, the sandwich was totally worth the price if I want a quick, cheap meal. This was overall the best-priced sub but not the freshest.

Finally, we come to Jersey Mikes. This sub had the best meat-to-bread-to-lettuce ratio out of all

the subs. Although I paid a little more, \$6.55, the quality of the sandwich is well above Zero’s and Subway’s. One thing that might be disappointing is that Jersey Mike offers only “grilled” and not “toasted” subs. In my opinion, the grilled is so much better than the toasted because the cheese melts perfectly into the ham and the edges of the ham are crispy and juicy. This was overall the best sub sandwich in all aspects when I don’t mind paying a little bit more.



The Best Chocolate

Aidan Carter

When you think of Valentine’s Day, what comes to mind? Spending time with your true love, buying flowers, and even delicious treats. It would be nice to know what the best things to purchase for your significant other would be. Look no further than this list of exquisite and tasty chocolate treats.

First, I bring to you probably the most popular and well-known chocolate. Hershey’s. Honestly, you can’t go wrong with a good ole Hershey’s chocolate bar. Hershey’s has been around for a very long period and has always been a nationwide favorite, and I can see why. The delicious and smooth milk chocolate has a way of melting in your mouth. It is a very distinct form of chocolate that you can pick out of almost any other kinds. This one is very original and is a purchase you can’t go wrong with, but Hershey’s isn’t the best.

Next on my list is Dove. This is one of my all-time favorite chocolates. Unlike Hershey’s, Dove chocolate is much softer, smoother, and sweeter in your mouth. I find Dove to also have more of a milkier taste than others, which I prefer. While other chocolates have a darker taste, dove is sweeter and more enjoyable, and if you are careful when you tear into a piece, you are rewarded with an inspirational quote printed on the wrapper. Dove is close, but it’s not the best of the best.

The best and last chocolate on the list is Ghirardelli. This is easily the best chocolate, and for many reasons. Similar to Dove, Ghirardelli has a very soft and smooth texture. It is sweeter and milkier than the others. Here is where it takes the lead. This chocolate company puts delicious things such as caramel in the middle of their chocolate squares. There are many more options offered by this brand of chocolate, so it is definitely the best and your number one purchase for Valentine’s Day.

Curl up with a film this Valentine’s Day

Mary Huffard

Valentine’s Day is celebrated all over the country. In the past, it has often been celebrated with a date night, chocolates, flowers, or maybe a dance. Why not celebrate it with a movie? A wonderful movie to celebrate Valentine’s Day, or just any day, is “Sixteen Candles” by John Hughes. This 1984 movie has a perfect balance of comedy and romance. Samantha Baker (played by Molly Ringwald) has just turned sixteen. Her family—lost in her older sister’s wedding plans—forgets her birthday.

The movie is about her trying to figure out her love life, juggling the problems in her family, having her whole family stay at her house, and going through all the crazy high school dra-

ma. She falls for a senior named Jake Ryan (played by Michael Schoeffling). Sadly, he doesn’t even know she exists. However, a freshmen “geek” (played by Anthony Michael Hall) falls for her.

The film “Sixteen Candles” sounds a little like an adolescent raunchy movie, but John Hughes shows how teenagers are really feeling. Once they get past their hormonal mood swings and spontaneous decisions, you learn that they are just lost in all the high school drama, and all they need is a friend to help guide them through it. Despite all of the insensitive (and perhaps racially offensive) humor, the film wonderfully shows the timeless struggle that all high school kids face.

Overall, the film is a very well written, comical, and relatable film for all ages. It is available on DVD and even Netflix. I highly recommend it for a fun but thoughtful glance at conflicts teens still share today.

Top 10 BEST Pick-Up Lines

Kaitlin Rice

If you don’t want to spend another Valentine’s Day alone, you’re going to need some solid pick-up lines.

- 1) You better call life alert because I’ve fallen for you, and I can’t get up!
- 2) Do you like raisins? How do you feel about a date?
- 3) On a scale of 1 to 10, you’re a 9 and I’m the 1 you need.
- 4) Are you a parking ticket? Because you have fine written all over you.
- 5) You look like you could use a little vitamin me.
- 6) Are you a photographer? Because I can picture you and me together.
- 7) Are you a magician? Because when I look at you, everyone else disappears.
- 8) If I could rearrange the alphabet, I would put “U” and “I” together.
- 9) Are you the Bristol sign? Because you light up my life.
- 10) My name isn’t Sully, but you can be my Boo.

Webb of Life

Bryson Seymour & Dawson Willis

Eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Drinking three bottles of water.

Many of you might deem this to be trivial in your day-to-day lives, but to Christian Webb, it makes the difference between a win or a loss during a game.

Webb has been playing basketball for almost 15 years, starting when he was just four years of age.

When asked if he plays for the enjoyment or to maintain the pattern his siblings have set, he gladly responded with, “I enjoy playing basketball. I don’t know what I’d be doing if I didn’t play basketball.”

Webb enjoys the competition of playing against people better than him because it makes his eventual triumph all the more satisfying.

Webb considers the relationship between his teammates and him to be “jovial” when off the court, but “cutthroat” while on the court.

He feels that all the coaches that he’s encountered along the way—Coach Witcher, Broyles, Phillips, and Sproles—have helped turn him into the dominating athlete he is today.

His achievement of 1000 points that he earned earlier this year was, to summarize his words, only achievable with the help of his teammates.

His dreams for after high school include attending ETSU, UTC, or one of a few smaller colleges who have been scouting him for their basketball team.

Christian feels that his motivation for continuing basketball all the way through high school and college lies within himself rather than from the pressure of succeeding a family of athletes.

Lynleigh’s Big Future

Aidan Carter & Camille Flaherty

This past year has been somewhat of a down year for THS, but the Vikings have a promising core of young players along with the lone senior, Lynleigh Rhodes. Rhodes has guided the young Viking squad by providing experience and a spark for her team.

In the 2018-2019 season, the senior guard has been huge for the Vikings. So far, Rhodes has averaged 10.4 points per game, 4.5 rebounds, 2.3 steals, and 2.2 assists. She has recently committed to Southwest Virginia Community College (SWCC) to continue her academic and basketball career.

Rhodes has been a two-year starter and was first off the bench her sophomore year for the Lady Vikings, giving her the captain role on this very young team.

She has led a team of mostly sophomores and some juniors who are quickly earning experience like she once did.

Rhodes has suited up in many, many games for the Lady Vikes and has managed to wear the same hair style for every single varsity game.

Rhodes is very excited about college and is most looking forward to a new start. She is also excited to meet different people at Southwest and form new friendships along the way.

One thing that is important to Rhodes is that SWCC is not too far from home. Southwest Virginia Community College is a smaller college and provides an intimate setting that she enjoys. This way she can be more involved with her peers and teachers during her college experience.

Bassett’s campaign is going strong

Kaitlin Rice & Kayla Rupe

Alie Bassett, a Tennessee High junior, has raised half of her goal of \$15,000 for her Queen of Hearts run, with plans to raise the other half in the coming month by having a brunch at Alona’s Cafe, selling baked goods, and possibly hosting a swim event.

Bassett has raised “about half” of her \$15,000 goal through her

selling of baked goods. “I’m supposed to raise the most money this month, so if I can gain what I have now, then I’ll get there,” Bassett said.

Bassett organized a successful brunch “based off of donations” at Alona’s Cafe on February 3.

There is a possible swim meet in the works between the Tennessee High swim team and another sports team from Tennessee High in order to raise even more money for Bassett’s campaign.

February, which is the last month of Bassett’s campaign, will show if Bassett is successful in reaching her lofty goal of \$15, 000.

All of the money raised in Bassett’s Queen of Hearts campaign will be benefiting the American Heart Association, which educates the community on heart diseases and other conditions.

Although Bassett has no association with anyone at the American Heart Association, this campaign has taught Bassett multiple skills that are crucial in life. “It’s taught

me how to go up to people and ask for money, which is a good skill to have. It has also taught me how to be more involved in the community, and reach out to businesses.”



All State with a Side of Fryes

Meghan Bryant & Mary Huffard

All throughout the halls of THS, students are qualifying for state in their chosen sports. However, state qualifications aren’t just for sports; they extend to our very own choir.

Tennessee High School Junior Allie Frye has been singing in choirs since her late freshman year. However, singing has always had a distinct effect on her life.

Singing and music allow her to express her emotions in a way that she couldn’t otherwise.

“It’s a universal language. Everyone feels when they listen to music,” Frye said.

All of Frye’s time spent singing has led to her designation as a member of All State choir.

To achieve this accomplishment, she first had to tackle the hurdle that was All-East.

All-East required students to learn and memorize two pieces of music and perform them in front of judges. Next, students had to sight-read measures they had never heard or seen before.

Being put on the spot was very nerve-racking for her. The feelings of this intense contest brought high stress levels to Frye,

but she feels in the end it was worth it.

She is currently preparing for her All State screenings, which have a similar process to All East. She must sing her songs and prove herself in front of the judges to guarantee herself a spot in All State.

When asked how choir will affect her future, Frye said, “I have no idea where choir is going to play into my life in the future, but I’m excited to see what happens with it.”

However, choir isn’t all Frye does. She enjoys writing, theatre, and reading.

“Just your average book nerd” Frye said.

Matthew Dingus:



A Bittersweet Valentine’s

Meghan Bryant

It’s Valentine’s Day. Love is in the air, and everyone who isn’t lonely is sickeningly happy. Gifts are being exchanged left and right, everyone left wondering who got what. A common gift from one friend to another is a box of chocolates. However, I really wish my friends wouldn’t gift me one. It’s a really kind gesture, trust me. I’m not ungrateful, but they’re signing me up for complete and utter disappointment.

The boxes have pretty packaging. What more could you want than cute little puns and pictures of dinosaurs. “You make my heart jump” accompanies a cartoon rabbit. It’s adorable. However, once you open it, it’s a box of despair. Opening a box of chocolates is just like opening Pandora’s Box.

Only bad things will come from the box. It doesn’t even matter how much the chocolate box was. Whether it was \$2 or \$50, they all comprise the same thing: misery.

When you open the chocolate box, you see little chocolates arranged in a circle, or perhaps a square. If you’re really lucky, it’s a heart. The majority of chocolate boxes don’t contain a list of what’s inside the box. It’s just like playing a game of roulette. You have to go in blindly and rely on good fortune and luck to guide you. You’ll be expecting a plain chocolate, and you might end up with a mouth full of coconut or molasses. The chocolate flavors are absolutely ridiculous. Molasses chew? Pecan and English walnut cluster? Maple fudge? Who could ever think this was a good idea?

Firstly, chocolates with nuts are a huge problem. If you buy a chocolate bar with almonds in it, you know prior what you’re eating.

When you bite into a chocolate with nuts and you don’t know about it, it’s a cruel surprise. You expect something soft that your teeth sink in to, but that’s the last thing you get. Your teeth bite into it and then… “CRUNCH”.

Secondly, I eat chocolate to eat chocolate. Not to eat fruit! The worst type of fruit candies are the gooey, creamy ones. Unless you bite into it just right, it will ooze out and the filling will get EVERYWHERE. Also, do the manufacturers even know what strawberries taste like? Did no one take a bite and realize this resembles nothing in the natural world. The artificial taste is such a repulsive imitation that I could never like it. I would describe them akin to soap or perfume.

In the end, the perfect chocolates are the simple ones. The ones that are just chocolate. Unfortunately, you’ll be lucky if there is more than two in a box.

How the pineapple reinvented pizza

Damien Dillman

Pineapple...a sweet, savory and sugary fruit. Served in slices, dice and well nearly every possible shape you can think of. Served in salads, platters or even totally on its own. But wait, what if you happened to use pineapple as a... you guessed it. A TOPPING. You have heard of pineapple on pizza right? Most of the world’s population happens to hate it, well newsflash. I, Damien Dillman,

happen to love pineapple on pizza. Pizza is this amazing food that can be enjoyed with nearly any edible topping you can think of. Your generic toppings are pepperoni, bacon, chicken or just plain cheese, but sometimes you just have to sweeten up the perfect meal.

When you think of fruit on your pizza, you immediately turn your taste-buds away, right? This isn’t the case with me. Pizza is already this salty and savory food that has countless sensations to take you and your taste-buds on some crazy rides. But some of us happen to want to amp that up.

Imagine this: A cheesy, garlic-seasoned pizza topped with the best hickory-smoked ham you can find around. Then after all of that savory goodness, BAM. You add pineapple. This adds a sort of sweetness that is cooked into the pizza around said pineapples. It provides an amazing experience that has you wanting to come back for more. Pineapple on pizza is by far one of the best combinations I can possibly think of. It provides nothing but a positive experience. Unless you happen to have the popular opinion of saying ‘EW!’ and rejecting the idea completely. This is my unpopular opinion on pineapple on pizza.

Why it’s okay to be single on Valentine’s Day.

Caseh Pace

In the month of February, America gears towards one of its divisive holidays, Valentine’s Day. The “day of love” supposedly works only in the favor of couples while casting an annual omen on single people. However, this doesn’t have to be the case for more optimistic individuals who can hopefully reclaim this tradition for themselves. Instead of focusing on the romance tied to Valentine’s Day, singles have multiple ways to spend the day

appreciating themselves.

No one’s saying Valentine’s Day is a selfish holiday. However, it’s really only about showing your love for your significant other. When you’re single, this day could represent cherishing all the people you see on a daily basis. This wouldn’t necessarily mean buying gifts for every individual you come into contact with, rather just telling them their importance in your life. It’s a positive experience to “take a second” from your own life to appreciate those around you.

That was just one suggestion because one of the best things about the exclusion from this upcoming holiday is having a day with

no expectations. This day could potentially be a massive relief for anyone not having to “outdo” every single one of their peers with a grand romantic gesture. You can spend the celebration taking a “mental-health day” or spend the day doing absolutely nothing. One refreshing break could be the exact thing to get you towards your goals.

At the end of the day, this holiday is all about you. This day could be spent doing all of the things you want to do and no one knows you better than yourself. If this is a day you want to challenge yourself to get out of your comfort zone, invite a few friends to hang out. However, if this is a day best spent “off-the-grid” then turn off

Who gave you a column?

Jack Bartlett

Make Instagram casual again

The year is 2013. It is a sunny Saturday afternoon. None of your friends can drive, and no one’s parent is willing to bring them to your house to play Minecraft.

What do you do? Post on Instagram. You post a simple picture with the caption: #selfie #bored.

Flash forward to 2019. Every Instagram post has gone through four different sets of eyes for editing and the caption has been proofed best friend.

This is the reality for an overwhelming majority of THS students, but what is the solution? Make Instagram casual again! Want to post a picture? Just post it. Don’t have a witty caption? Who cares? 2019 is the year to make Instagram casual again.

What if people make fun of my post for being too “basic”? Lucky for the students of THS who are willing to step out and make their Instagram casual, THS has a zero tolerance policy on cyber bullying, and what is more satisfying then seeing a hater getting expelled?

In all seriousness, I cannot remember the last time I was wowed by an Instagram post, and at the end of the day, not caring what people think is cooler than any amount of likes.

your technology and live the day on your own schedule! This is a great vacation technique of “controlling your availability.”

In conclusion, this day is full of possibilities and now doesn’t exclude anybody.

If you’re seeking to spend a day reflecting on your own accomplishments, that’s perfect. If you’re wanting to take this holiday to surround yourself with loved ones, that’s excellent. If you’re striving to take “the day off,” that’s sublime. Do not spend the day worrying about a future you have no control over and admire the present.

Bristol Casino

Jack Bartlett & Lacey Robinson

Pro- Casino Jack Bartlett

Whether one is driving though Terra Hills or Apple Valley, front lawns are littered with signs either showing support of or distain for the potential Bristol Resort and Casino. Though a small fraction of the THS student body would actually be able to utilize the Casino aspect of the resort, the divide in Bristol has reached THS.

Regardless of the business, I believe that any large scale operation that is bringing jobs to the area should be welcomed with open arms. I personally feel that the Bristol Resort and Casino will not only bring more jobs to the area, but also bring supporters to other local businesses. In theory, Bristol has nothing to lose and everything to gain from this

development; considering all of the funding for the project is from local investors.

Although the project is still in the works, the Bristol Resort and Casino has a website full of information for the skeptics of the casino: “The resort is estimated to bring in 4,000,000 annual visitors to the area, exceeding 1 billion in annual income for the area, and totaling more than 4.5 billion in the first 5 years of operation.” The new Bristol Resort and Casino will be located in the former Bristol Mall, so not only is the project benefiting the economy, but it is also utilizing empty space in Bristol.

I believe that the operation to turn the dilapidated Bristol Mall into a multi-billion dollar business will help Bristol, Virginia in countless ways. The stakes are high, but we need to ante up and place our bets on Bristol.

Anti- Casino Lacey Robinson

Bristol, Virginia, is a quiet town in the western part of Virginia bordering the state line of Tennessee. Since 2014, Bristol, Tennessee, and Virginia have been growing economically from the major investment in the Pinnacle and the enlarging shopping center, The Falls, one year later. The next future development that has been a very controversial issue is the abandoned Bristol Mall in Bristol, Virginia. The plans to make it a casino and resort have brought upon many questions and concerns.

The casino and resort would cost roughly \$150 million, which is an extraordinary cost especially since Virginia had to put a hold on building The Falls due to the project landing the city in more

than \$50 million in debt. The developers should not be planning more development if they are still struggling to gain more revenue, especially with the cost being three times as much as their precious project.

What city planners are overlooking are the negative consequences such as crime, addiction, and bankruptcy a casino will bring. Casinos prey on people. All too often gambling hits those who can’t afford to pay back what they’ve lost, but yet casinos have found a way to prey upon these vulnerable citizens. Reputable studies show that up to 80 percent of money lost at American casinos comes from individuals in households earning less than \$50,000 per year. That statistic perfectly fits the Bristol demographic: our town’s average salary is \$35,000. As people come back and lose more money, they potentially could become homeless, adding numbers to a group that is already too high. The casino should not be built in order to help benefit our borderline cities.

Sports are more about mental toughness rather than physical toughness.

Emma Davis

Since the beginning of sports, people have associated it with physical ability, toughness, and skill. Most people have come to this assumption because of all the work that people put their body through, which, yes, builds one’s physical appearance a substantial amount. What some people do not understand is how people get the willpower to push their body as far as it can go. This takes consistency, perseverance, grit, passion, and determination. Anyone and

everyone (who is in decent health) has the ability to play sports. However, the much harder part of sports is overcoming the pressures, the will to quit, and failure.

I believe that in order for you to continue with a sport and be successful with it, you need to have the right mindset and be mentally tough. However, I am not the only one who thinks this. After the New England Patriots beat the Pittsburgh Steelers to go to the super bowl, Tom Brady was asked what makes his team so special. He replied simply by saying “mental toughness.” His simple statement means that pretty much the only reason that their team was having such a successful season was because they were all trained to be resilient. Having

mental toughness gave them an advantage over other teams.

Another example of how success in sports is more about mental toughness rather than physical talent is how mental toughness is considered “vital” to have success in sports. It has been considered so important that there is a whole branch of psychology that is focused on it. Sports psychology focuses on getting players to the right mindset to allow peak performance. Many sports psychologists find that the pressure of the sport gets to many players, lowering their performance and even causing them to quit.

Mental toughness is substantially harder to attain than physical strength. For many players or

athletes, it can take years to get themselves into the right mindset. Most people do not have the determination or willpower naturally, and they have to get it through mental training.

Many coaches try to have a “mind then body” approach on training their athletes. This is when coaches first get their athletes to have a positive attitude about sports. It is also how coaches ensure that the athletes have the fire and passion to play the sport and do their best in it. After they have made sure all the players are in the correct mindset for peak performance, they focus on the body.

I Need Sleep

Abby Stout

Students across the globe experience stress and exhaustion on a daily basis due to school, jobs, and extra-curricular activities. Working and school prepare us for our future, but do we really have the energy it takes to complete activities?

At 6:00 a.m. I wake up, go to school until 2:30 in the afternoon, and then go to my job from 4:00 to 10:00. This means I get home around 10:30. At that point, I still

have homework that must be done and completed by the next morning. This leads me to finally get in bed around 12:00 or 12:30. This is a dilemma many high schoolers face, and we have to do it all over again the next day, starting at 6:00 a.m.

My proposal to this situation would be that school start later in the day. If I had an extra hour or two of sleep each night, my grades, attitude, and perspective would improve. Many studies have shown that teenagers should average between eight and ten hours of sleep, but the reality is

that most of us only get between six and eight. If school started at 9:00, students would be more willing to get up and push themselves at school and face more challenges.

Other researchers have shown that extra sleep has immensely improved the attitudes of both students and employees. I personally believe that if BTCS allowed their students the extra hour and a half to rest each morning, they would have a much happier and focused student body on their hands.

Heart-Racing Activities to do on Valentine’s Day

Camille Flaherty

- 1) Vent at the Rage Room
- 2) Solve the Tri-Cities Escape Game
- 3) Sweat at CrossFit 423
- 4) Run at Sugar Hollow Park
- 5) Hike at Steele Creek Park
- 6) Head over to Just Jump at the Pinnacle
- 7) Watch a scary movie at the Marquee Cinema

“dont smile at me”

Annie Hayes

If you are a music lover, “dont smile at me” is an album that will have you feeling many different emotions. As you move down the song list, every song is a little different, but variety is definitely a good thing here.

The nine tracks on this album all have different, but somewhat deep messages and stories behind them, as long as you are willing to listen close enough. This is an album that you won’t get tired of.

If you don’t know of Billie Eilish, she is a 17 year-old singer who falls between categories of indie and pop music, and she does this all along with help from her

brother, Finneas. She had a breakthrough at the early age of 16 and has now had plenty of huge shows.

Vanity Fair magazine asked her the same question exactly a year apart: “What’s the most amount of people you’ve performed in front of?” A year ago, she noted that her largest crowd was about 500 people. When responding to the question this year, however, she reported that she performed in front of 40,000 people at Music Midtown, a 35,000 person difference in about a year.

I was just lucky enough to be at that show. Even better, there were only about ten people in front of me. That definitely falls into the top three experiences of my life. With 40,000 people behind me, I

could see her perfectly.

I waited four long, exhausting hours in front of the Cotton Club Stage, but how I felt while waiting was way less important to me than how I was going to feel. She was pretty much the only reason I really wanted to be at this festival.

Finally, 5:30 rolled around, and her walkout song sparks up, and no other moment in my life made me feel so excited and happy. She sang every song on “dont smile at me” (including more singles) and every bit of those three minute portions became an amazing memory. She sounded just like she did in studio as she did live. Everything looked amazing---the stage, the animations on the screen, literally anything you could imagine was awesome.

I had been to another concert of one of my favorite artists, but I was too far away from the stage. I spent too much of my time watching the screen. If you missed Eilish’s Music Midtown performance this past fall, then you have a second chance when she performs in Nashville this June.



One for the Stars

Kayla Rupe

Smiles, laughter, and even some tears resulted after watching “La La Land” for the first time. Now I can understand why the musical was nominated for fourteen awards, walking away with six wins at the 2017 Oscars.

Damien Chazelle, writer and director, did a phenomenal job with this film. From the beautiful Los Angeles scenery to the fantastic singing and dancing, this movie truly hits the spot.

Without a doubt, Ryan Gosling

and Emma Stone contribute much to the success of the film. Their superb acting makes the movie truly believable.

La La Land is the love story of Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) and Mia (Emma Stone). Sebastian, a jazz pianist, aspires to one day own a jazz house of his own. Seeking an acting job, Mia works as a barista to movie stars. Coincidentally, Mia and Sebastian have three encounters that cause them to fall in love. Were these encounters random or was fate bringing them together for a reason? Under the glowing “City of Stars,” they work on pursuing their dreams while maintaining a stable rela-

tionship. Their complications take a toll on their relationship, making it hard to stay together while also doing what they love. Will their relationship succeed despite the obstacles in their relationship?

Thinking this would be like every other romance film, I did not have very high expectations for this movie. The first twenty minutes of the movie definitely proved me wrong. “La La Land” adds on to the basic love story aspect in movies by showing the troubles relationships can go through. Depicting this relationship as far from perfect is an enjoyable element shown in the movie.

I am not sure how I feel about the ending. They did not wrap up the love story of Sebastian and Mia up very well; they left the relationship separated yet still fulfilling their dreams.

Overall, I would rate La La Land as a 9/10. The music and dancing in the movie were unforgettable; the setting was also remarkable. The themes presented throughout increase the greatness of the film. Watching this movie can definitely lighten your mood and bring happiness. I would recommend this movie to anyone interested in a love story that is not the simple, basic romance film.

The Looks of Spring: 2019 Spring Fashion Trends Review

Taylor Harr

Just like the seasons, fashion trends change depending on the time of year. This spring, two ‘back in the day’ styles are seeing a comeback. According to Vogue, the top trends for spring include tie dye and neon colors.

So, what do I think about these returning styles? Personally, I have

mixed feelings about them.

Let’s start with tie dye. This fashion trend was especially big in the 70’s. It is undoubtedly a fun take on clothing and is seen as an aesthetic on social media. I like tie dye, I think it should be a staple in everyone’s closet at some point. However, I believe there is also a time and a place for tie dye. Spring is definitely the time for tie dye. The place, preferably outdoors. Activities such as hiking, swimming, walking downtown, and even going to the lake are ideal for wearing tie dye pieces. All in all, I like that the tie dye

trend is making a comeback.

So on to neon colors. This is definitely a trend that was huge in the 80’s. The bright colors of pink, green, orange, etc. scream that spring is here. Pastel colors were the norm last year, but this year is getting a brighter twist. I personally love this trend. It is playful, while also being very fashionable. Unlike tie dye, neon colors can be worn in any setting. The colors can be professional, when worn correctly, and even sporty.

Fashion trends are based on renewal cycles. This year, the 1970-

1980 trends are in the spotlight. Both are fun, refreshing, and stylish. I recommend grabbing these pieces before spring approaches so you can be prepared for the styles of spring 2019!



Meat Laura Graf

Jessica Cook & Lacey Robinson

Moving from one country to another can be a culinary challenge for anyone, but especially for Laura Graf.

Graf is an exchange student from Lower Saxony and is used to her father’s cooking from his restaurant Deutsche See. This usually persists of garden salads and more healthy food. On the other hand, Graf pointed out that her usual fare of garden salads and other healthy dishes contrast with America’s fast food diet of ham-

burgers and other greasy food.

According to Graf, “Americans are pickier” when it comes to hamburgers. Americans continually request no to have certain toppings not included on their burgers, but in Germany, people will more often eat burgers with everything on it.

As shocking as it is, Laura stated that she likes the popular Pal’s burgers better than the burgers in Germany. This is because they taste fresher.

In Germany, Laura says they have “very few fast food chains,” but here in America they are around every corner.

Colby Bland

Valentine's day essentials



happy Valentine's Day

FROM THE
MAROON & WHITE STAFF