

# Maroon & White

“For a better Tennessee High”

Volume CVII, Issue 5

Tennessee High School, Bristol, Tennessee

February 24th, 2023

## Local La Vie En Rose

By Hayden Arnett

The phone rang for Teddy on the only phone in the apartment complex. While Teddy was rushing up the stairs to answer the phone, Marie was rushing down the stairs to inform him of the call. The two met on the stairwell at the same time, and as Marie refers to it, it was “le coup de foudre”—love at first sight.

The story starts in the mid-1960s, when Teddy Toby was stationed as a medic in Paris and lived in a small downstairs apartment with his army comrades. In the apartment directly above him, Marie Christie-Bromet lived with her family of four, having been born and raised in France.

After their fateful meeting on the stairwell, the pair used their living situation to their advantage.

Neither of them spoke each other’s language, but they would communicate by using a dictionary, writing love letters in broken

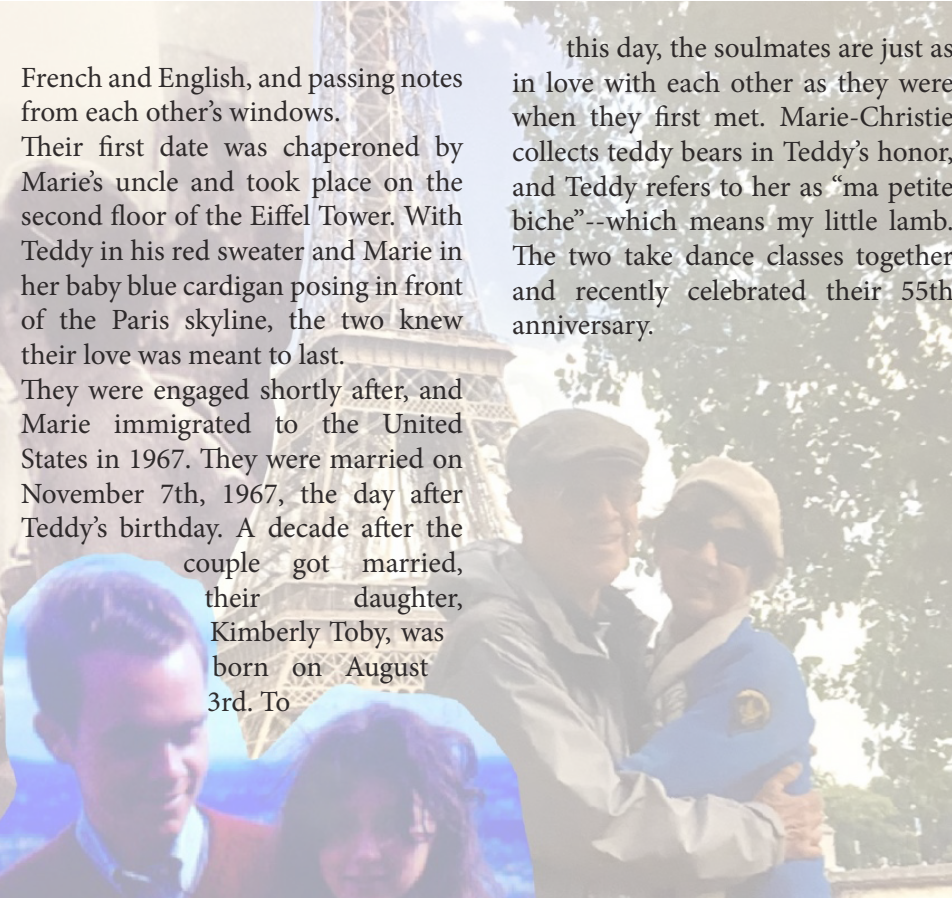
French and English, and passing notes from each other’s windows.

Their first date was chaperoned by Marie’s uncle and took place on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower. With Teddy in his red sweater and Marie in her baby blue cardigan posing in front of the Paris skyline, the two knew their love was meant to last.

They were engaged shortly after, and Marie immigrated to the United States in 1967. They were married on November 7th, 1967, the day after Teddy’s birthday. A decade after the

couple got married, their daughter, Kimberly Toby, was born on August 3rd. To

this day, the soulmates are just as in love with each other as they were when they first met. Marie-Christie collects teddy bears in Teddy’s honor, and Teddy refers to her as “ma petite biche”—which means my little lamb. The two take dance classes together and recently celebrated their 55th anniversary.



## Just A Music Credit?



By Caitlin Vining

To avoid music class in elementary school, all you had to do was join the BTCS band. Instead of sitting in boredom while half-paying attention to the keys on a staff, you could learn and play an instrument of your choice. It seemed easy enough; 9-year-old Shelby Vining thought so. Five years later she’s still in that band class, sitting in delight each fourth period with her closest friends.

Shelby is a freshman at Tennessee High School and has participated in band since fourth-grade, playing the alto saxophone.

Before Shelby, her mother, Holly Vining, led the Mighty Viking Band and the Pride of the Southland Band as assistant drum major. She played alongside current THS band director, David Semones—both made All-East each year. Mrs. Vining was the first female to be appointed a drum major position at the University of Tennessee, giving Shelby big shoes to fill.

Shelby decided to step up to this challenge, auditioning for All-East as a freshman with one of the most competitive instruments. This “all-star band”, as Mr. Semones calls it, is extremely competitive

with nearly 2,500 students who audition each year. Shelby tried out in front of six anonymous judges and was placed 7th out of all 9th and 10th graders who auditioned.

Waiting in anticipation, Shelby felt her phone go off, Mr. Semones called personally later to tell the news. Shelby Vining is now the first chair in the red band playing alto saxophone for 9th and 10th graders from across East Tennessee. A student from THS hasn’t been able to make All East for alto saxophone “in 5 years!” Shelby expressed. She has made her own history. Mr. Semones and Mrs. Vining both are

## What’s Inside

**“Viking Cheer Classic”**

**Page 2**

**“Search for the Supernatural”**

**Page 3**

**“The Only Good Thing About Valentine’s Day?”**

**Page 4**

**“TN High’s Voice Returns”**

**Page 5**

**“Introducing Smodin: Our AI Journalist”**

**Page 6**

**“Vikings Vocalize: Worst First Date Spot?”**

**Page 7**

extremely proud of Shelby and her accomplishment, Mr. Semones adding, “This is a huge honor for her.”

When she went back to her band class a few days later, Shelby received a letter. It was from the University of Tennessee Knoxville. This letter stated that she was invited to the Saxophone Honors Ensemble for UTK. Shelby has now suddenly stepped into the shoes of her mother, the Pride of the Southland Band, already seeking interest in the youngest Vining.

“Band used to be just a music credit for me” was how Shelby started this journey. But now she has “sparker [her] musical artistic ability.” Who knew the option to skip music class would lead to such a talent and love.



Meet the 2023  
Maroon &  
White Spring  
Staff

Senior Editor  
Nathaniel Morefield

Junior Editor  
Callie Eckley

Sophomore Editor  
Hayden Arnett

Journalists  
Piper Booher  
Caden Cartwright  
Kaylee Hamrick  
Anna Grace Hodges  
Avery Hommel  
Shayla Mccury  
Abby Morefield  
Smodin  
Kat Staton  
Caitlin Vining  
Joan Weddington  
Smodin

Layout Editor  
Halle Mullins

Business Managers  
Ryan Bunning  
Joseph Burriss

Art Director  
Joan Weddington

Advisor  
Mariel Story

Design Consultant  
Dereck Shipley  
"The Bearded One"

Making History: Viking Cheer Classic

By Callie Eckley

Tumbling, stunting, and dancing into this year's cheerleading competition season is none other than Tennessee High's new Gameday Competition team. This team will be competing at home in Viking Hall during the recently announced Viking Cheer Classic on April 15th, 2023. The Viking Cheer Classic is inviting teams from all over the area to compete in both Traditional and Gameday events, including co-ed and advanced divisions. Posted on the Tennessee High official cheerleading instagram

page, @ths\_cheerleading, you can find the list of team members, and located in the bio of the Viking Cheer Classic instagram, @vikingcheerclassic, is the website for more information. A member of the competition team, Camdyn Richards, states, "I'm excited to make a new tradition for Tennessee High, and to be a part of this important moment in history. Go Vikes!" Another member-Camdyn's sister-Kenna Richards, adds, "I'm excited to put our skills to the test." The Gameday category will involve a timed cheer with signs, poms, and

more. Within the Traditional category teams will compete routines to music with jumps, stunts, tumbling, and dance. Stands for college recruitment opportunities, concessions, food trucks, and merchandise will also be scattered throughout the event to provide athletes and guests with activities when waiting on performances. Assistant Coach Alessa Miller says, "This is an amazing opportunity for young athletes to get into a competitive setting and have some fun!" So come out and cheer on the THS competition cheerleading

Science Bowl Buzzes In



By Bree Eaton

In a room full of opposing teams—with only 5 seconds to answer each question—competitors hover over their buzzers. In this competition of not only smarts, but of swiftness, who is going to be the first to buzz in?

Moments like these are what Tennessee High's very own Science Bowl Team, sponsored by Mr. Reece and Mrs. Bittinger, have been preparing for. From after school practices, spanning their knowledge

over chemistry, physics, math, and biology, and even a miniature competition at Farragut High School, the team is readying themselves for the competition of the year in the Tennessee State Science Bowl. Junior member Pavitra Surma shares that she is "looking forward to competing and growing [her] STEM knowledge." Make sure to wish the team "Good Luck!" as they head to Knoxville, February 24th-25th.

Art Club Returns

By Kacey Hamrick

The THS Art Club picks up their paint brushes to paint the halls of Tennessee High once again. Meetings will be conducted every Tuesday during Viking Time in room 2446. This new club seeks to provide a space for artists to create and showcase art outside of class. "We want to be the place where creative minds gather," says art teacher and club sponsor Mr. Graham. There is no requirement to

be artistically inclined. Club goals include community showcases, highlighting student artists, and taking over the spirit rock. The art club also has intentions of painting murals and establishing a showcase in front of the school. If you are interested in joining Art Club or have any questions or concerns, email Mr. Graham at graham@btcs.org, or attend a meeting as mentioned above.

The Struggle For  
The Gavel

By Ryan Bunning

The results of last year's national midterm elections were on display with the ceremonial Congressional swearing-ins at the beginning of this year, shifting the power balance on Capitol Hill. Democrats retained, even expanded, their majority in the US Senate giving them a 51-49 advantage after John Fetterman (D) won his close race in Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile in the House Chamber, Republicans took control. With a new party in charge comes a vote for a new House Speaker. This ritual typically involves a single election as the party often already has a popular preference for a speaker.

Such was not the case this time. It required a shocking 15 elections over many days to finally select Kevin McCarthy (R) of California's 20th District as House Speaker. In the first 14 elections, McCarthy was unable to receive the required majority of House votes due to opposition within his own party, most notably from Florida representative Matt Gaetz.

This was the first time in 100 years that it required more than a single election to pick a Speaker, and the longest contest for the position in 164 years



New Attractions on State  
Street

By Joseph Burriss

Looking out on State Street, you may notice several new businesses open this year. Among them is Pins & Friends, a new mini bowling alley and arcade. Walking in, you will find the arcade machines to your right consisting of all sorts of fun mini games. Continuing forward, the room opens up into a large, open area with several lanes of miniature duckpin bowling alleys to your right.

Or perhaps you're looking for some

new clothing, in which case Wiseman's Western and Work has you covered with denim jeans, baseball caps, cowboy hats, and everything your southern heart could desire. Maybe gift-giving is more up your alley, and you need some cards for a birthday, anniversary, or holiday from Holler House, a new gallery and retail space celebrating Appalachian artists. No matter your needs, there are plenty of new stores to discover, and plenty of things to do downtown this spring.

2023 Eastman Oratory Contest

By Anna Grace Hodges

Every February, Eastman hosts an oratory contest for highschoolers in the area. Each student is required to write a speech about an African American who has made an important contribution to STEAM- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math. Students are judged on their diction, tone, pronunciation, creativity, and nonverbal communication. This year, 40 students from Mrs. Story's fall semester AP English Language class competed. Only nine students landed in the top 15 and one placed fourth.

Ada Hylton, an 11th grader, chose to write her award winning speech about Margaret S. Collins. Collins was the first African American woman to earn a PhD in entomology. She did substantial research on termites, hence being dubbed the "Termite Lady". Hylton has always found insects fascinating, so when she found Collins, she knew she had to share her little-known story. Ada says, "It's very important to look deeper into people's stories because you might find something that inspires you."



## A Search for The Supernatural

By Halle Mullins

Ghosts and spirits roam the halls of our beloved Tennessee High, goes the legend. But is there any specific evidence to support these sightings? This is the question that members of the Tennessee High Ghost Hunting Club tried to answer in the dark hours of December 10th, 2022, when club members ventured into the creepiest and most mysterious corners of the school to investigate the supernatural claims. Though, they were not on their own. The East Tennessee Ghost Hunters Group, a group of ghost enthusiasts that investigate alleged hauntings in the East Tennessee area, supplied the tools and expertise needed for the investigation. Armed with “temperature readers” and “spirit boxes,” they investigated paranormal activity. Senior Kira McNutt was among the students

who took part in the ghost hunt. She was even able to capture some of the most convincing pieces of evidence found during the ghost hunt. She snapped a photo of a “ghost-like creature” in the library and heard “giggling sounds” coming from the English hallway. Kira describes these interactions to be “a bit overwhelming” but overall, she was “very happy to catch it”. The most noteworthy piece of evidence Kira alleged was that members of the ghost hunt “heard [the supernatural beings saying] something like ‘Friday night’ being repeated on the machines”. Kira believes this phrase is in relation to Friday night football games or the haunted tours that took place on the Friday night of the THS homecoming game. This instance led Ghost Hunting club members to a conclusion that “human interactions impact ghost

interactions.” While ghost hunts like these can be interesting ways to learn more about the haunted history of buildings with real equipment, this practice has been controversial for Tennessee High. Many do not share the affinity for ghosts that members of the Ghost Hunting club possess. While Kira alleges that she has always had “encounters with ghosts” and might even have a special connection with the spirits she has interacted with, many do not believe in the validity of searches like this or believe that it would bring the school unwanted attention. These fears were assuaged by the ghost hunting club by ensuring professionalism and reverent curiosity. The ghost hunt took place after school hours and had a professional group and teacher present for the entire process. Another way members of the ghost hunting club are striving

to make ghost hunts like these positive for Tennessee High is that they are determined to “always be respectful and not provoke the spirit”. They do this by maintaining friendly attitudes towards the spirits rather than fear. With these findings, the ghost hunting club will be compiling a report of their experiences. Information like this can finally answer the questions students may have about whether a chill they feel through the hallway is Agnes walking past or just the AC kicking on. However, the most important thing to remember is that these spirits should be treated with respect and innocent curiosity. This is because, if they do exist, they were simply students just like us; they just decided to stick around for a while.

## Untold Story of The Green Book

By Kacey Hamrick

“There will be a day sometime in the near future when this guide will not have to be published. That is when we as a race will have equal rights and privileges in the United States” penned Harlem postman, Victor Hugo Green, in his very first edition of the Green Book, written in 1936. The Green Book was an annual guidebook that aimed to assist African-American motorists in their travels throughout the United States during the Jim Crow era. In the early to mid-1900s, African-Americans did not enjoy the same privileges that white Americans did. Though

racial discrimination and poverty limited their access to automobiles, the burgeoning African-American middle class purchased them as soon as they could— mainly to avoid systemic oppression faced on public transportation. Once these motorists hit the road, they soon realized that along the way they would face refusal of service, unnecessary arrests, and the potentially deadly threat of sundown towns. To combat this, Green wrote the first Green Book. Using his connections as a postman, he worked to find businesses that were notoriously friendly and accepting of African-Americans to

compile into a published manifesto. Bristol was the home to several of these Green Book sites, including but not limited to: the Arthur D. Henderson Tourist Home, Morocco Tavern, Morrocco Hotel and Grill, Palace Hotel, and the Mrs. Margaret C. Brown Tourist Home. All have since been demolished excluding the Margaret C. Brown Tourist Home, which stands today on the same street as Slater Center, the former African-American school turned community center. During an interview with our librarian, Mrs. Silvers, I discovered that after the showing of the Smithsonian documentary “The

Green Book: Guide To Freedom” at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, local historians hoped to purchase the house to be turned into a museum or national landmark. Unfortunately, they soon discovered that the property was purchased by a real estate developer in 2022 for just \$32,000. The cost to recover the property would be exorbitant. Fear began to grow around the potential demolition of the house, but the real estate developer plans to instead renovate it and make it into a rental property. So, this piece of national history will stand for generations to come.

## For When Time Gets Away From Us: The Poetry of Jesse Graves

By Nathaniel Morefield

In his poem “Elegy,” ETSU resident poet Dr. Jesse Graves longs for the purity of a moment, long-since passed. It’s frustrating that often the most beautiful places in life can seem mundane in the thick of them, without the clarity of retrospection. The poem describes a relatively uneventful day. With nothing more than a day with his brother, exchanging stories, sharing a meal, and taking in the scenery, no one could blame him for letting some of the details slip through the cracks. I wonder how he might’ve acted differently though, being sure to take in every moment at its fullest breadth, had he known how limited his time with his brother would be. Graves grew up in a small town in Union County, Tennessee. His mom has stayed in his childhood home, and

he still visits from time to time. His family has been there for generations, and he finds something spiritual in that sanctuary. This scenery in East Tennessee has always created a landscape for the stories he tells through poetry. “In a Familiar City” creates a lush vision of his appreciation for the beauty in our everyday world. He makes clear in the poem though, that he is at odds, in some sense, with the world on this. The city is a figure indifferent to his passionate wonderment. Maybe it’s just a struggle that all artists must deal with: the unrequited love of the beauty within the ordinary. “Reading Late,” tells of the moving love story he and his wife have written together. “Lasting love is about paying close attention,” Graves said. “Which is interestingly like writing. Writers

tend to be good at noticing things.” It’s a poem “about the widening of the canvas and finding yourself more through that,” he continued. The pages of the story continue to unravel; and as he says in the poem, “The main characters grow steadily beyond our grasp.” It seems like time moves faster than we can keep up with. The present feels just beyond grasp and the daunting impossibility of appreciating the importance of each passing moment only fills me with increasingly more dread for the next. Days, months, and years can go by, and I blink, only to realize I hardly noticed. Maybe I wasn’t paying close enough attention, but there’s no real solution to this struggle with time. It has always been Graves’ main theme in his work, yet he still feels he hasn’t quite articulated

what he’s trying to say. Regardless, it is an irrevocably human labor, and there are endless depths of poetry to be found in it. All we can do is hold on



with as tight a grasp as we can muster, and of course, we can write about it.



# The Breakfast Club

By Nathaniel Morefield

Peter Dotterweich is going to be a millionaire. He plans on accomplishing this by making a toy train company called “Miniature Railway,” which will, according to Peter, make “the smallest toy trains ever made by a large manufacturing company.” Such a dauntingly small task is not an easy feat, but fortunately, he has meticulously planned every aspect of his career, and prepared his whole life to accomplish this. Peter has loved model trains since he was a toddler. He’s always been highly creative and imaginative, and toy trains allowed an outlet for this throughout childhood. This developed into a passion to give others that same release for expression. “If I can graduate from school, I’ll go to Northeast State. There I need to take a 3D modeling class,” he said. This is, of course, so he can begin producing his “highly collectible tiny trains;” the first train of which will be a red engine with a #1 on the side. Peter’s passionate commitment to his niche is an important reminder to us all to find that entirely individual gift within ourselves and chase it unrelentingly. Seeing the joy that it brings Peter to talk about trains excites me for his future in that field. I know I will be looking out for Miniature Railway Company, and I hope to count myself among its first customers.

# ETSU: Leaders Left Unrecognized

By Caitlin Vining

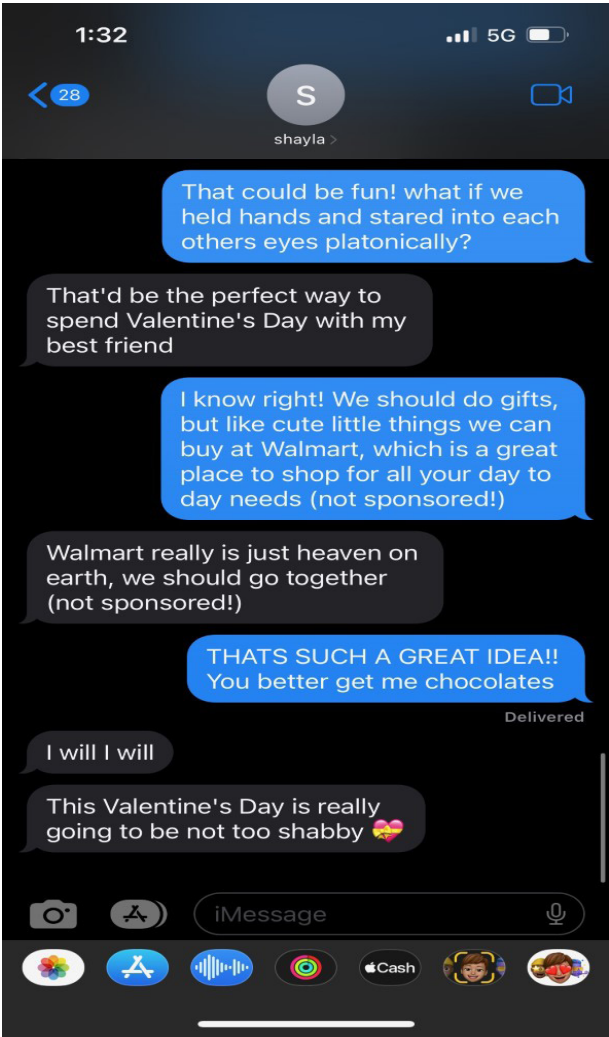
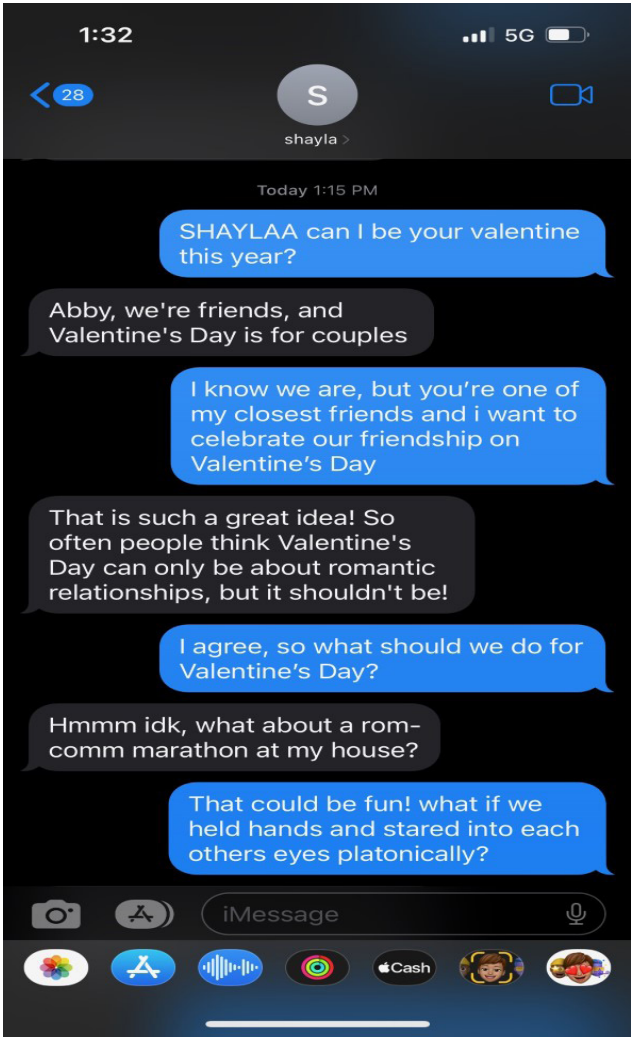
“We don’t get recognized with the rest of the student athlete,” began a recent statement by East Tennessee State University’s cheer and dance team. During the ETSU men’s basketball game on Wednesday, February 1st, all student-athletes who earned a 3.0 GPA or higher during the fall semester were recognized. All but the cheer and dance team. Each member of both teams earned a 3.0 GPA or higher in the fall semester, so why weren’t they recognized? The NCAA nor SoCon value cheer or dance teams as sports teams, and it has been a big controversy on if cheer and dance should be considered sports. Cheerleaders and dancers put in just as many hours, if not more, as the football team and basketball team. Risk of injury is high, ranging

from a slight finger strain to a fatal concussion. While other athletes visited their homes over Christmas break, the ETSU cheer and dance spent their break on campus honing their skills so that they could compete at college nationals in Orlando, Florida. Both of these teams made ETSU history by advancing into the finals at UCA college nationals, but they still weren’t recognized. The blood, sweat,

and tears weren’t recognized. Their constant support of other athletes and sports weren’t recognized. Instead, they sat in front of other athletes who earned a 3.0 GPA or higher and cheered them on. But this isn’t just an issue at ETSU, this is an issue across the nation. Cheer and dance teams aren’t recognized as sports. The budgets for these teams are slim to none and aren’t a part of athletic advisory committees. Many of these cheer and dance teams are more successful than the teams they cheer for on a daily basis. These athletes have earned their GPAs just like any other student-athlete. They have earned their success just like any other student athlete. Cheer and dance teams should be recognized.



# Not Too Shabby With Shayla and Abby



# Chocolate: The Only Good Thing About Valentines Day

By Piper Booher

I dread sickening pink tones, anatomically-incorrect heart-shaped letters that are impossible to open, and happy, lovey-dovey couples! Bleh. Everybody knows that the heart doesn’t determine love—the brain does! I mean, why isn’t it romantic when I draw a pink brain on some construction paper and pass it off as a Valentine. Instead of the desired gratitude, the response I get is, “You’re crazy! AAAAAAA! Get away!” I also dread the sheer injustice of this “holiday.” This time of year isn’t fair for the single lads and lasses without

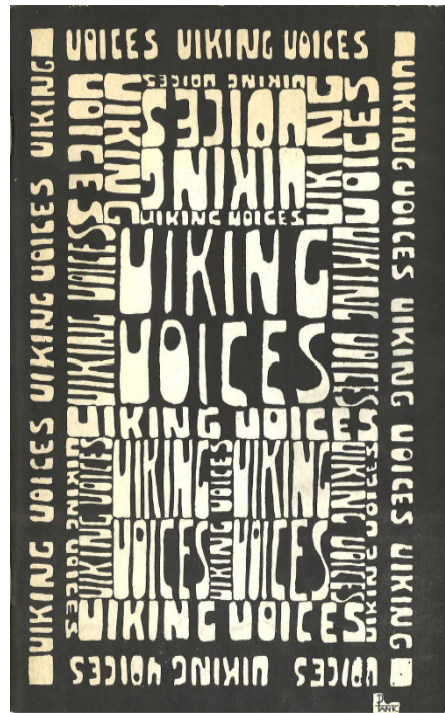
a special someone to exchange Xs and Os with. Fortunately, February 14th also equates to chocolate, its saving grace. Long have I had miserable Valentine’s Days in class, only to be given Cupid’s delectable treat by a kind teacher or classmate. Nothing spells out a more satisfying and pleasant way to enjoy a day centered around romance than biting down on a crunchy candy bar and imagining it’s your ex’s head. Ha! For like-minded people, I have arrived with a solution to make Valentine’s Day more pleasant and less vicious: all bitter, love-sick souls

should be awarded with a handful of that heavenly, savory chocolate! Unless they’re vegan... in that case, they should be given vegan Chocolate! Some lovers may prefer roses, but chocolate takes the cake. Roses don’t taste as good, unless you like the sting of the thorns—I won’t judge—and the texture just isn’t as creamy as chocolate. Plus, you’re more prone to choke on the petals. No, I do not recommend roses. Just give me sweet, comforting chocolate. From bitter, to sweet, and back again to bittersweet, this delicious treat single-handedly is the best part of Valentine’s Day.





By Kat Staton



In the spring of 1970, during her sophomore year, Tennessee High School alumni, art hobbyist, and my grandmother, Peg Staton, was invited by her friend Lee Welsford to join the school publication team for Viking Voices. After filling out a form, as well as submitting samples of her artwork to be reviewed by a board of faculty and students, all that was left to do was wait. “I was terrified that I would fail,” she recalled about the experience, “Now I look back and I think, ‘Nah.’” When it was time for THS’s annual Publication Banquet, she was accepted, and became a member of the publication’s art staff, eventually earning the title of Art Editor during her senior

## Tennessee High’s Voice Returns

year. Around a decade prior, the Maroon & White staff published the first ever issue of Viking Voices, a ‘literary magazine’ whose main function was to showcase the poetry, short stories, and artworks of THS students. With the success of its first run, the Viking Voices was soon formed, assigned the responsibility of producing and publishing the magazine. It has existed alongside its sister publications: Maroon & White and the Cadmea for two decades. Staton’s name and signature, as well as those of dozens of other alumni from back then, can be found in the credits of Viking Voices’ many issues. But just as countless students have walked the halls and departed from THS, interest in Viking Voices eventually waned; however, though the publication hasn’t received a new issue in several decades, its story is far from over. In fact, the saga is getting a long-awaited sequel. In the process of trying to learn more about the magazine, I reached out to Ms. Silvers, school librarian, for more information. After stumbling upon a few old issues of Viking Voices, Silvers decided to begin scanning them so they could be added to a new digital archive for the publication, located on THS’s website. This process caught the attention of the creative writing teacher, Mr.Gentry, who quickly began devising a plan to publish an all-new issue of Viking Voices.



Submissions for both writing pieces and traditional art for the issue are currently open until March 3. The guidelines can be located on the school’s Instagram page, and Mr. Gentry is open to any further questions on the topic. The unexpected return of the school’s literary journal has been a subject of excitement for teachers, alumni and current students alike. Peg Staton, who has been

graduated for over fifty years now, shared fondly, “I’ve been talking to some of my friends from [THS]. They said, ‘[high school students] need an outlet for [their] creativity that’s outside the bounds of class and testing, and there’s a lot of talent.’ It brings tears to my eyes to think that maybe we planted a seed; a seed that would encourage others to do their artwork and put themselves out there.”

## BTS of Baseball’s Star Players

By Avery Hommel  
Coach Roberts:

Preston Roberts played baseball for seventeen years before deciding to become a coach. While all his players “create their own unique identity” these six individuals have stood out to him: Andrew Dingus (outfielder), Evan Mutter (Shortstop), Braden Willhoit (Utility player), Adyn Patlan (2nd base), Cainan Meyers (Catcher), and Ashton Leonard (left fielder).

**Andrew Dingus:**

#16 Andrew Dingus, senior, was encouraged by his dad when he was 6 years old to try baseball. He will be continuing his career at Milligan University while also majoring in business. He has grown so close to his teammates over the years that he feels like he is “leaving his sons.”

**Evan Mutter:**

#2 Evan Mutter is also a Tennessee High Senior, he has been playing baseball for 15 years. He is undecided of where he is going

or if he will play but he plans to major in Physical Therapy. He feels “very unfortunate” to have to leave this team but is looking forward at what’s to come.

**Braden Willhoit:**

#8 Senior, Braden Willhoit has been playing baseball since he was 6 years old. He will be joining Andrew Dingus on the Milligan University baseball team and is double majoring in mechanical engineering and business. One of the things Braden loves most is

leading his teammates in a prayer before each game.

**Adyn Patlan:**

#9 Adyn Patlan is a Junior on the baseball team. He has played for 12 years but it hasn’t all been easy. He is returning this season after having surgery due to a Labral slap tear. However, he has worked hard for his return by lifting, hitting, and doing glove work with his brother, Conner. He strives to always contribute the best he can in hopes to help the team make state.



**Cainan Meyers:**

#19 Junior, Cainan Meyers has also played baseball, like Patlan, for 12 years. Cainan feels the hardest part of being a catcher is having to maintain focus through every play. He works hard in the weightroom to prove that he can manage it. His best advice is “don’t wait too long to start getting better, it’s never too early to start working drills and getting stronger.”

**Ashton Leonard:**

#11 Ashton Leonard is a junior returning from a Tibia and Fibula break. He has played for 12 years but so far has not played a full high school season. The most difficult thing for him has been “having to watch everyone else play the game from the sidelines [it] hurts my heart” but he is excited to be back.



**AI vs. Writer: The Importance of Human Perspective**  
**To see if an AI generated prompt-to-text generator could produce its own opinions, the listed prompt was assigned. A human journalist attempted to dismantle and assess the AI's argument.**

**Prompt: Write an article about the pros and cons of AI generated media in the workforce and media. Is AI worth it?**

**By Joan Weddington**

Hello? In the short amount of time I have been working as a hostess, I have been conditioned to associate this question with an eerie feeling. Google's new automated assistant feature, which directs an AI to call and make reservations in place of its users, has been haunting restaurant phone lines in America for weeks. It's more than uncanny when you hear it for the first time; the stoic voice takes natural breaks to stutter and leave room for conversation. It even says thank you. The assistant is an effective example of the rapid integration of artificial intelligence into modern society, being far from the only system to become popular amongst all classes of people. After all, today's problems require modern solutions; about half of all companies utilize AI in some way. The increased productivity and low labor costs of AI maximizes profit, which will ultimately lead to a dent in human employment demand. Essays, emails, and novels can now be drafted in seconds with the help of text generators, such as Smodin. Because of these technologies, those thought to be immune to AI alternatives are starting to worry. Employees in data management, customer service, and creatives across all fields are now at risk of losing their jobs to more proficient AI tools. But it's more than an irrational fear; these AI programs are much cheaper, accurate, and efficient compared to the capabilities of humans.

Despite the obvious skill of a robot,

such as my "colleague" Smodin, there are two integral elements obviously missing in the work it generates: the ability to empathize and to possess an opinion. To want these elements within media is innate. As a species, we have an inborn desire to connect with others. Even if AI may be infinitely more perfect as opposed to humans, its largest weakness is that it is perfect, the most inhuman trait. AI can only perform within the boundaries of its code; it does not possess original thought, abstract understanding, or interpretation in any way other than objectively. It cannot grow or mature, lacking any life experience. These are the priceless and unique abilities people offer, which is the core in creation. Despite its illusion, the Google Assistant lacks the charm of real people over the phone. It cannot display the impatience, awkwardness, and rudeness of humans. However, the variation of humanity is an invaluable trait that draws away from the monotony of life, an experience that AI can never provide its observers. As we look toward a future paved by AI, it's essential to assess what is irreplaceable about us as individuals: the perspective we hold and how we share it with others.



**By Smodin (An online text generator)**

Artificial intelligence is an amazing technology that has the potential to change our world and the way we live in it. But as with any new technology, there are pros and cons to AI-generated content—both of which businesses need to understand before deciding whether to use it. AI in today's media is increasingly being used as a tool that can make tedious tasks easier and enable journalists and entertainers to work more efficiently. For example, many media companies are now using Verbit's Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology to annotate their videos in real time,

including live broadcasts. Verbit's in-house media transcription and subtitling simplifies what was once a time-consuming process, allowing producers to save money and time on tedious subtitling work and free up more time for creative work. Media producers can also use these tools by providing them with transcripts of everything said on tapes of shows and interviews. This capability enables them to meet mandatory FCC compliance requirements, while also serving as legal evidence for interview statements to avoid potential litigation. Verbit's leadership recently spoke at the NAB Show about how artificial intelligence can simplify subtitling and transcription and reach a larger audience.

Media professionals suddenly caught on to the "hype" surrounding artificial intelligence and are now increasingly trying to solve media industry challenges. Multinational mass media and entertainment conglomerate Warner Bros. is just one example of a media giant that is now using technology to manage its movies and budgets. AI is used to speed up repetitive tasks, optimize closed captioning, filter and distribute messages, and more, leaving developers more time to actually create. While some today question the effectiveness of AI-driven journalism, other professionals see AI as a way to open up new horizons for innovation, quality journalism, and media. Thus, journalists can forget about repetitive, routine and tedious tasks and instead focus on the creative aspects of media content. In this way, artificial intelligence should create added value in the field of journalism.

The ethics of AI text-to-image generators have been a bone of contention. A key issue is that these AIs can be trained on the work of real, living, working artists. This makes it possible for anyone to use these tools to create new work in these artists' signature styles.

Even if the training of generative AI models is proven to fall within the scope of fair use, it will be difficult to solve problems in this field. It won't appease artists, whose work has been used to train commercial models, nor is it necessarily applicable to other fields of generative AI, such as code and music. With this in mind, the question becomes: What technical or other remedies can be implemented to allow generative AI to flourish while providing credit or compensation to creators of jobs in the field?

**"Oh My God, She's Insane!": Taylor Swift vs. Misogyny**

**By Hayden Arnett**

"Have you ever heard someone say about a male artist, 'I really like his songs...but there's just something about him I don't like?' No — that criticism is reserved for [women]," Taylor Swift stated in her Billboard Woman of the Decade award acceptance speech. Throughout her career, Taylor Swift has been plagued with judgments from the media about her dating history and how it affects her music. It's a common occurrence to hear "Taylor Swift only writes songs about her exes" whenever someone brings the musician up. But why is the world so obsessed with Taylor's dating history? The answer lies within our society and its misogyny. In the past seventeen years, Taylor has released a fair number of songs detailing her personal life and the emotions behind

it. She has been insanely successful, charting numerous No. 1 hits and winning countless awards. But despite her numerous successes, the only thing the public can talk about is her dating history and the people she writes her songs about. They tend to discredit Taylor because society hates to see women—on any level—succeed. For example, Taylor's male peers: Harry Styles, Ed Sheeran, Bruno Mars, etc. all write songs about their exes, just like Taylor does, yet are far from being criticized for it. Instead, these male artists are praised for their songwriting abilities and artistry, when Taylor has been doing the same thing for longer. Not only is Taylor criticized for her songs about her exes, but she's also scrutinized because of the number of people she's dated. Swift was in her mid-20s when she released some of

her most "controversial" songs, such as "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" and "I Knew You Were Trouble", and was labeled a "serial dater" by the media. Even though she's dated no more than anyone else who's in their 20s, because she's a woman, her dating history is magnified and blasted all over the internet. In fact, Taylor has only had 9 boyfriends (not that it's anyone's business), which is a perfectly normal amount. We need to reevaluate our priorities; we are so worried about women's dating history when there are men in the industry dating women 30 years younger than them. Despite all of this, Taylor is more than what the media presents her to be. She has done indisputable work for human rights and has donated countless times to different charities and individuals. The Equality

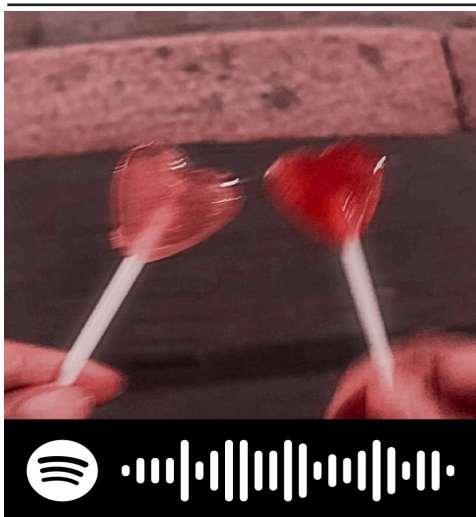
Act—a piece of legislation that "protects LGBTQ+ Americans from discrimination based on 'sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity'"—was openly supported by Taylor in 2019, when she wrote an open letter condemning the then president and rallying her fans to support the cause. She even started a petition urging the Senate to pass the bill, which garnered over 800,000 signatures. More recently, Taylor donated to an animal shelter in Williamson County, Tennessee, to which the shelter thanked her by naming several puppies after her songs: Midnight Rain, Willow, Bejeweled, and Carolina. Call her what you want, but to many, she is one of the greatest artists of our generation.





**THS Meme of The Month**  
By Anna Grace Hodges

**Valentines Playlist**  
By Abby Morefield



**Madlibs: Love at First (SENSE)**

By Kaylee Staton

My Dearest \_\_\_\_\_,  
(PERSON)

Since the day I laid my eyes on you, I have been \_\_\_\_\_ in love with you.  
(ADVERB)

It all began last \_\_\_\_\_, on the day of the field trip when the class went to the \_\_\_\_\_  
(MONTH) (PLACE)

and \_\_\_\_\_. I accidentally stumbled into you as we were lining up  
(ACTIVITY) for lunch

and that's when our eyes met. Instantly you \_\_\_\_\_ me with your  
(PAST TENSE VERB)

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Since then, I  
(ADJECTIVE) (NOUN) (ADJECTIVE) (NOUN)

have been \_\_\_\_\_ from a distance, unsure what to do. I didn't say anything because  
(VERB)

I was scared you would \_\_\_\_\_ me. I waited patiently for the right time to act. I waited until now, \_\_\_\_\_  
(VERB)

when I am writing this letter. Would you \_\_\_\_\_ with me?  
(ACTIVITY)

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(PERSON)

**Vikings Vocalize**

**What Is the Worst First Date Spot?**

9th Grade Jonah Cunningham: "Any museum"

9th Grade Shelby Vining: "The bed of a truck"

10th Grade Kade Beverly: "Any fast food restaurant"

10th Grade Austin Shrenker: "Dinner, like just dinner"

11th Grade Bree Eaton: "The Big Lots parking lot"

11th Grade Abby Hodges: "The Main Stairwell"

12th Grade Maddie Smith: "Tennessee High School"

12th Grade Ethan Webb: "The Dump"

Teacher Dr. Lewis: "Your nephew's bris"

**Joan's Comic Corner**  
By Joan Weddington



By Piper Booher







INNOVATIVE • RESOURCEFUL • RESPONSIVE

