

Maroon & White

“For a better Tennessee High”

Volume CVII, Issue 1

Tennessee High School, Bristol, Tennessee

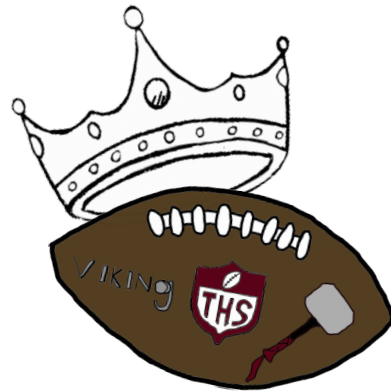
September 24, 2021

A Long Time Coming; It's Homecoming

By: Rachel Kent

Tonight, September 24th at 7pm, we have our annual Homecoming Football game. Our opponent this year is the Abingdon High School Falcons. This week was a very memorable Homecoming spirit week due to our awesome themed days such as Pajama Day, Country vs. Country Club, Dress like a Teacher and Dress like a Celebrity, and of course Maroon and White Day. Not only is tonight

exciting due to the big game, but also our school Royalty will be honored and crowned. A total of four young gentlemen and four young ladies will be on the field from each of the underclassmen grades. As for our seniors, expect five young gentlemen and 5 young ladies. These students were hand selected by their fellow classmates! Make sure to come to the homecoming game and show your school spirit.



A Handoff of Hope and Heart

Micah Montgomery

By the Maroon and White Staff

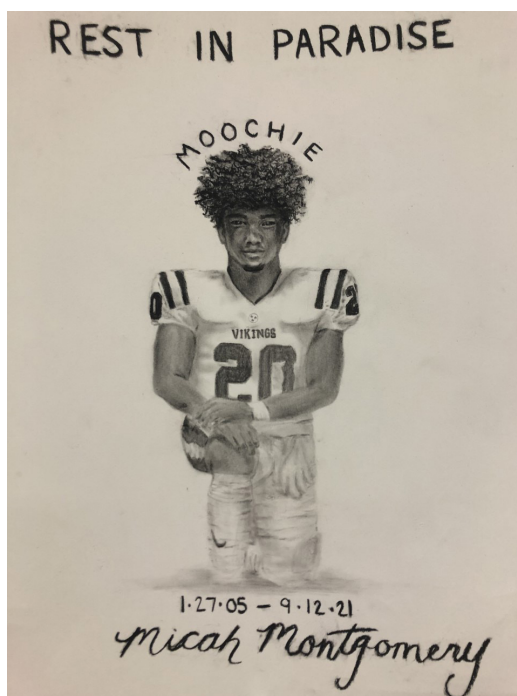
Trea Leonard

On Sunday September 12th, the THS community's heart grew heavy with the loss of one of our own, junior Micah Montgomery. Micah's fun-loving personality and his passion for football has left a lasting impact on the Viking family. Micah was number 20 on the field and number one in our hearts. Just as the butterfly that landed on the 20-yard line at a memorial at the Stone Castle seemed to signify, Micah's legacy will fly beautifully and freely.

Micah's friends Hadassah McDonald and Nick Osborne were immediately reminded of his persistent, glowing energy. "He always seemed to be dancing," McDonald said. Osborne also mentioned that he "would always be making beats with pencils and stuff. He found a way to make every situation upbeat." McDonald talked of Micah's ability to "always make you laugh."

Many remember Micah's gift for drawing others out from whatever difficult situation they might be in. Classmate Jenna Rhodes recalls that Micah was "full of jokes, encouragement, and kindness." Friend Alyson Cassady said that "no matter the situation, he was positive and helped you see things from every point of view." Cassady also finds inspiration and comfort in Micah's famous saying, "It's a great day to have a great day."

Micah, or "Moochie" as he was called by the football team, possessed an enthusiasm to do his very best that inspired his coaches and teammates. Senior Sam Weddington said, "he was a little brother to all of us and his playful character will be dearly missed." The running back gave an amazing performance in his last game and even scored a touchdown. His love for the game will be ingrained in our community



Artwork by Ruth Rose



Artwork by Joan Weddington

On Saturday, September 18th, our community lost yet another great soul. Trea Leonard was the defensive ends coach for Tennessee High since 2015 and taught social studies at Tennessee Middle School.

So, who was Coach Leonard? Coach Dowdell put it perfectly: "He was a wonderful father and husband. He was an inspirational teacher. He was an inspirational coach. And he was a man of tremendous faith." Not only was Coach Leonard a spectacular leader on the field, but also in class. The wonderful impact he had is shown in the environment he created for his students. Full of joy every morning, he would play music as his students entered his classroom. He did his best to make class as fun as possible, whether it was through funny songs to help with memorization or by telling playful jokes.

Coach Leonard never failed to encourage and inspire those who knew him - and even those who didn't. A student of his class this year, Eden Herbert, recalls that "even people who didn't have his class knew him because they would hear him sing in the halls." That was just who he was. His sense of humor and charismatic personality were one of a kind.

Former student Destany Stamey, now a senior at Sullivan East High says, "I remember having a project to present in his class. I was so nervous I asked him if I could just take the failing grade for it . . . He said no and reminded me that God and him were right there with me, cheering me on. You don't find that kind of love just anywhere." Although he is not physically here with us anymore, the legacy he left serves to remind us all how extraordinary he truly was.

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Covid 19 protocols

By Sheany Regules-Lopez

A new school year is among us. Unfortunately, so is Covid-19. However, the protocols have changed this past year. Students and faculty are now required to wear masks due to the increasing number of covid cases. You may exempt this if your parent or guardian signs the exemption form. "If an individual school has a significant number of positive cases...BTCS will require masks for all students and staff for an identified period of time," says Dr. Tudor, director of BTCS.

If you're vaccinated and are found to be a contact trace, quarantine will depend on whether the other student has symptoms or if they're vaccinated. If you do get put on "temporary homebound", you will be able to either join live Zoom or Teams classes or watch videos to complete assignments. However, the route taken will be dependent on your teachers' preference.

Although there is still so much chaos among us, let's make the most out of this school year.

Bristol's Pollution Problem

By Lilly Chafin &
Joan Weddington

Many Bristol residents on both Tennessee and Virginia sides are unhappy with the Bristol Virginia Landfill located on Shakesville Road. Reports of an unpleasant stench surrounding the area of the dump has had a negative effect on the people around it, described by some as a "cancer to the city". Frequent complaints of headaches, burning eyes, and a lingering smell accompanies the issue of the landfill, though

EPA officials note that there are no imminent health risks that are present with the air quality. A local Facebook page has been dedicated to the issues of pollution in the city of Bristol, and was made on December 10th, 2020, which is still active today. Virginia City Council members have recently passed a vote to take action to the problem in a city council meeting in August and have voted for an improvement on landfill

gas and dewatering systems for the landfill



THS Choir Competes For All East

By Danica Mai



Artwork by Nyla Surbur

On September 18th, twenty of Tennessee High School's best singers traveled to Harden Valley High School to compete for a spot in the All-East Honors Choir. These 20 singers were chosen from either THS' Madrigals or Advanced Women's Ensemble and competed against other high-school singers throughout the Tri-states area, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. Choir director Jason Whitson, said, "about 1,300 to 1,4000 students audition for 200 spots within the All-East Honors Choir." To make it into the Choir, singers learn two new pieces of music

and sight-read music as well.

Once these students make All East, they have to learn a new set of music to perform for the All-East Honors Choir Concert. That concert will be held in Maryville College from November 18th-20th. If a singer scores high enough on their initial audition, then they may be accepted into Tennessee's All-State Choir.

This audition was extremely important for our Viking Choir members, and we wish them the best of luck!

A Kick-Off to Football Season



By Callie Eckley

On Friday, August 20th, Tennessee High School had a very exciting first football game. The season fans have been waiting for is finally here, along with cowbells, spirit days, and Friday night fun. The Vikings played against Dobyns-Bennett with a final score of 13-35, leaving Dobyns-Bennett with this game's win. This is only a minor setback for the Vikings though. Coach Matt Chandler says they will continue to work on fundamentals and correcting mistakes for upcoming games. The team will accomplish more than just a successful season. Coach Chandler says they will, "learn how to be tough, to always battle, and to have fun." Sophomore, Jimmy Phipps agrees saying, "we will play hard and not give up." With the team having new program matchups and playing against new schools, as well as the effects COVID-19 is bringing that causes players to practice in groups and the possibilities of quarantines, this season will be unlike any other you've seen before. Prior to upcoming games, Chandler plans on scouting the new team they're up against to gain knowledge and try and secure the next game's win. It will be another tough battle, but that is what fans love to see. Keep a lookout for future games!

THS Volleyball Team Takes the Win

By Nyla Surber & Lucy Paulson

Tennessee High's Lady Viking Volleyball team's first home game was a rousing success. On August 17th, they defeated Boone's Trail Blazers in the first three sets and got everybody home early. This game was a rollercoaster, with the final score coming in at 25-21. The team had impeccable plays, including attacks that barely grazed the net! Our team had many strong plays, with one of the strongest being our double block. No matter the combination, these girls put up a wall of steel the other team couldn't penetrate.

Their block wasn't their only strength. They easily broke through the other team's walls as if they were made of paper. The liberos on our team were also able to save even the fiercest of spikes, giving their teammates ample opportunity to score. All of this was cheered on by our loud and mighty student section. The Lady Viking volleyball team has a strong backbone, and they've started this season off with an impressive victory on their belt.



A Mighty and Ghoul-proof Performance

By Joan Weddington

After boundless effort put in by many, the Mighty Viking Marching Band and Color Guard is truly living up to its name for their halftime performance during this year’s football season. The dramatic and impactful production is titled “The Cursed”, which is a tale of vampires accompanied by strong visuals and music arranged by Mr. Semones himself, the band director of nine years at Tennessee High School. “This performance is very personal to me,” he explains, “not only because I love vampires. I mean, I’m kind of a nerd when it comes to pop culture, but this is my first time ever arranging music for this band. I’ve really gotten to see my creative side.” The story is planned to stretch out and continue over the marching band season at home games, with added use of props and backdrops to stage the story to create an amazing spectacle. “You haven’t seen anything yet- it will get better and better with new things

each week, even late in the season.” Members of both the color guard and band seem to show enthusiasm for the production, including drum major Amy Shi. “Personally, it’s my favorite performance I’ve ever been a part of.” “The Cursed” is very dynamic and so fun to conduct and listen to... I get to listen to the group really perform with their heart. You can tell by the way they play, and it’s very rewarding to me because I try my best to bring it out with my conducting. It’s life changing.” Even acknowledging the struggles of COVID during last year’s season, the guard and band is still working hard to create a safe but memorable production. Semones’ goals are to keep the students safe and follow school protocols as best as possible. “It’s very tough, since COVID is a respiratory disease. The students are working incredibly hard, and there isn’t a day that goes by that I am not thankful for their hard work.”



BAM! POW! ROB! The Comic Guy

By Callie Eckley

Before he could even read, young Robert Pilk knew he had a passion for comic books, but he didn’t know that one day, he would own his own comic bookstore, Mountain Empire Comics, or host his own comic convention, RobCon. “If somebody told me that my job would be working at a comic bookstore and working with comics all day long, I would’ve been the happiest little boy in the world,” Rob reflects. Just like all of us, Rob was unsure growing up when it came to the topic of a future occupation. Once he found journalism though, things began to flow from there. He was always a pretty good writer, as well as being interested in sports, so starting as a sportswriter only made sense. He studied at ETSU, with a double major in Biology and Journalism. During his time in college, Rob also worked part time at the Johnson City Press.

ETSU got real reporters, such as Rob’s mentor and former Kingsport Times News reporter Ellis Brikley, to be professors. This enabled Rob to not only have a great role model, but also to begin building connections in the world of printing as a college student. Rob was able to work for the Bristol Herald Courier and Bristol Virginia-Tennessean. During Rob’s time in journalism, he did everything from taking pictures to writing columns. As a writer, he was able to talk about many forms of entertainment, including movies, TV shows, and of course, comic books. Through connections with his coworkers, Rob began to dream about owning his very own comic book store. John Slone and Wayne Richardson noticed that there was only one comic bookstore in the Tri-Cities, located in Johnson City.

Peculiar Pets of THS

By Ruth Rose

When the idea of a pet is mentioned, most minds immediately migrate towards the cute and furry: cats and dogs. Understandably so! Cats and dogs are generally very lovable, making them a highly favored companion. However, some take the less conventional route when it comes to choosing a pet.

11th grader Raina Moody set sights on a Madagascar Hissing Cockroach. Despite the intimidating name, these docile creatures make a great beginner pet for anyone interested in owning insects. Feeding primarily on plant material, she feeds her cockroach —Aroc Gregor Alessandra Alfanzo Alaska Aspen Sesom Moody— lettuce and chopped carrots daily. Hissing cockroaches make their sound by rubbing together body parts or employing vibrational membranes. Most of the time, they do this during mating rituals or as an alarm cry. Unfortunately, for Raina, it can be an annoyance, as Aroc “loves to hiss and wake [her] up in the middle of the night”. Despite this, she fully recommends getting a roach as a pet, which she declares are “a lot cooler than people think”.

Moving to the reptilian class, 12th grader Sophia Detrick owns a bearded dragon named Pablo. Though she originally wanted a chameleon, through research she found they are extremely difficult to care for, and resorted to a much more kind, bearded dragon. Pablo eats a small salad daily, and superworms every other day. Much like a cat, Pablo’s favorite pastime is sunbathing. Sophia makes sure to keep Pablo safe by keeping him in his tank when dogs are around. Having a bearded dragon as a pet has taught her “how to take care of things” through the experience she gained.



And as long as you understand how to properly care for a bearded dragon, Sophia confirms just how rewarding owning one truly is.

11th grader Anna Shelly’s long-held admiration for spiders led her to decide upon owning six tarantulas. Tarantulas only have to eat once or twice a week, with a diet that consists of cockroaches and mealworms. However, extra caution is a must when caring for tarantulas. Anna uses tweezers when feeding her hairy friends, as they can elicit a painful bite. Tarantulas shed their old skin and grow bigger in a process called, “molting”. During this time, they do not eat. If you obtain all the right equipment, Anna does recommend getting a tarantula, just “not as a first-time pet” because they do require a great deal of patience.

At the end of the day, providing the best care for your pet is imperative. Owning an exotic animal is a serious decision that can be very fulfilling if done properly. So, if the idea piques your interest, be sure to fully prepare for the responsibility. You too, can find a fascinating pet to accommodate your lifestyle.



“I didn’t think it would last like 6 months,” Rob said, “but [thought] it will be fun anyway.” Rob and his friends all decided to give it a shot. Two long boxes of comic books and \$600 each later, the comic book journey officially started. That was 37 years ago, with a location next to the Burger Bar.

Today, Mountain Empire Comics is located on the corner of 6th Street. They sell comics like DC Heroes, the Marvel Universe, and Star Wars. Comics are for all ages, in the words of Rob himself, “I am the gatekeeper, here to introduce people to all the great comics out there. It’s a good job.” For a person who started a business just for fun, Rob now says, “I can’t imagine doing anything else.” Rob continued to use skills acquired as a journalist to write press releases for his own convention, RobCon. RobCon isn’t just a convention but a way to bring the community together. “If you do something you really love to do, and you get up every morning excited to do it, it makes life so much better. A lot of times everything falls into place if you can do that.” If anything, following your passions will always help you end up where you are supposed to be.

Mai Closet

By: Danica Mai

Hey THS! It's that time of the year again. Whether you love it or hate it, it's back to school season. And with back to school season comes new fashion trends and new fits to show off. For the past year, Covid has either squashed people's motivation to dress up or heightened people's fashion sense. If you are a student who wants to elevate their fits to the next level or are wanting to try something different with how you dress, this is the article for you.

In this sort of monthly column, I will be helping you guys turn your outfits from basic to fashionable. If you are wondering what credentials I have to be giving out advice, I was voted Best Dressed for the school year book. That is credible enough.

For the first lesson, we will be talking about a staple that should be in everyone's closet: a belt. A belt can make or break an outfit. With the ability to cinch in one's waist to be slim-thick or to connect random articles of clothing to be cohesive, a belt is extremely versatile. Imagine you see a pair of pants that you are absolutely in love with, but it is just a tad too big in the waist, because you know clothes are made to fit an unrealistic body and everyone's body is different and clothing companies do not understand that. But, your saving grace is a belt that will allow you to wear the pants without fear of them falling down and look good while you do it. You do not want to be that person that has their pants all the way to their ankles walking through the halls.

If you are wanting to start out your belt collection, I would recommend first buying a basic black belt. It can go with virtually anything and match with at least some part of your attire. From there you can add on a clear belt and a white belt to up the diversity in your closet while also being able to go with most outfits. After you get your staple belts, you can go out and gather more unique types of belts to build up your collection. For more tips and tricks for upgrading your closet, make sure you read the next issue of the Maroon and White!



10/10 for the Legend of the Ten Rings

By Lucy Paulson

As Marvel moves into Phase Four, we are introduced to characters not previously brought to life on screen. One of the first movies in this new phase is Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. This marvel adventure follows Shang-Chi, or Shaun, played by Simu Liu, trying to escape his unavoidable past life, and more importantly, his father.

As Shang-Chi's father, Tony Leung plays Xu Wenwu, the feared leader of the Ten Rings army. He gives a captivating performance, making you see both parts of the love/hate relationship with his children, Shang-Chi and Xu Xialing. Flashback scenes provide information on their

upbringing and how their parents met, including what they gave up to be together.

During the ten years he left his father, Shang-Chi built a life for himself in California, changing his name to Shaun and attending school, where he met his best friend Katy, played by Akwafina. They both got jobs and spent most of their nights and early mornings singing karaoke together.

After ten years of Shang-Chi's absence, his father sends men to retrieve something their mother gave both of his children, believing he had found a way to bring their mother, who previously passed, back to life. The movie is created with the right

amount of action, comedy, and tension sure to keep you entertained. It also includes TWO post-credit scenes and a cameo of Wong from Dr. Strange, making me hope Shang-Chi and Katy will appear in Multiverse of Madness. I don't believe you need to see past Marvel movies to enjoy Shang-Chi, as there are only some cameos; however, all the Marvel junkies watching the film will feel excited about the characters brought back.

Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings is compiled of gorgeous scenery and mythical creatures, a beautiful music score, fight scenes to keep you on your toes, and stunning acting. I can't wait for future installments and where it takes the characters.

The Comfort In Losing Sight of Reality

By: Rachel Kent

Since the start of lockdown, book sales have skyrocketed. An abundance of articles have been written about teens being excited about books and adults being confused by their teens being excited over books. Shock and a sense of pride surrounds the amount of new readers flooding the book scene. As of last year, 2020, book sales reached a new high since the year 2007. This recent interest can sadly be summed up with two reasons: attractive characters and escapism.

Today's authors captivate our romantic imagination by writing idealized characters in the form of "book boys." Bookboys, while somewhat toxic if they were to exist in the real world, can be considered superior due to them being written as a desirable type of person. They could literally be the worst and most unjustifiable figure ever created and they would still be forgiven if they make a grand gesture of love. If that were to occur in real life, however, they wouldn't be forgiven so easily or perhaps at all.

Cardan Greenbriar from The Folk of the Air Series by Holly Black, Maxon Schreave from The Selection Series by Kiera Cass, and Rowan Whitethorn from The Throne of Glass Series by Sarah J. Mass are all great examples of book boys.



These "men written by women" are the top tier example of what those attracted to guys want. These kinds of books supply the blueprint for readers to create their dream partner. This can also be argued against, since they are just words on a paper. So, are fictional

characters superior to real people or is it because those that believe this are overwhelmingly relying on an outlet from reality, so they lose sight of what is real more than they meant to? In other words, they managed to escape. Books can also provide escapism, the need to find distraction and relief from the unpleasantness of reality; fantasy worlds provide an alternative to escape into. Personally, I love to escape from the stressful and fast paced world we live in and go to a world that seems to go, possibly, even faster than our own. The only difference is that it is indeed not our world; which is why those words are more enjoyable.

We always want what we don't have and books seem to heighten that want for many individuals.

So, to all those nonreaders out there who are looking for an outlet from the commotion in their lives, open a book. Maybe finding a new way to cope with this ever changing world and falling in love with a fictional character that possesses traits similar to oneself or is just generally an attractive character.

Artwork by Nyla Surbur



Rob the Comic Guy!

Artwork by Joan Weddington

What to Expect When Expecting: Viking Edition

By Rachel Kent & Danica Mai

THS is experiencing something of a baby boom, with new mini-Vikings joining the family. Earlier this year, Coach Mooney, Mrs. Slagle, and Mr. Snyder welcomed their little ones, and Mrs. Wood is expecting a sweet baby girl in January. As students, we share in their excitement, and miss them while they are on leave. Follow us as we take a tour of just a few of the new additions to the Viking nation.

Our story begins on the third floor where the beloved biology teacher, Mrs. Wood, is 23 weeks pregnant. She discovered this thrilling news on the titular holiday of May the 4th. The Woods have been trying to expand their family for a little while, and on that fateful day, Mrs. Wood’s motherly instinct kicked in. She decided on a whim to take a pregnancy test, and when the test came back positive, she said she “took 17 more pregnancy tests and all of them came back positive.” Mrs. Wood told her husband--as well as favorite cousin who is like an older sister-- about the wonderful development. As the due date draws closer, Mrs. Wood noticed that the WikiHow page “How to be a Good Mother” frequently pops as a recommended read. Anyone who has had Mrs. Wood as a teacher already knows, however, that if she just puts a fraction of the care and attention into her child that she does with her students, the child will be well-loved.

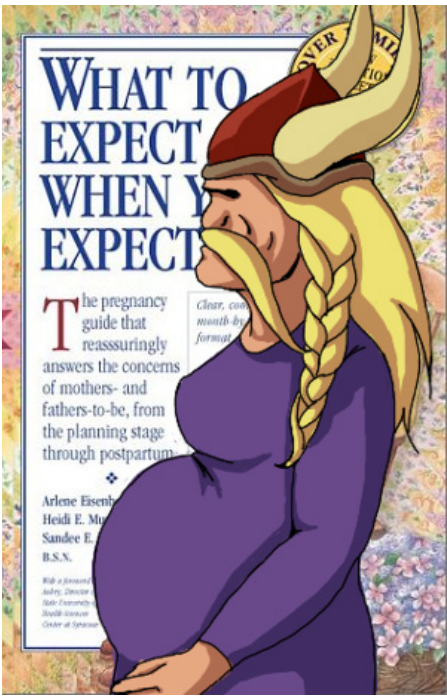
Across the third floor halls, Mr. Snyder, who has recently

returned from paternity leave, greets his students. His son, Jonah David Snyder, was born a little over a month ago on August 9th. Snyder recalls that back in December when his wife first shared the news of their pregnancy with him, he was in the middle of exterminating an ant infestation. Coincidentally, when Mrs. Snyder announced their first pregnancy, Mr. Snyder was also killing another infestation of horrendous ants. Mr. Snyder exclaims, “If I have another ant infestation, we know what’s coming!” He enjoyed the leave time at home with his wife, baby, and 3-and-a-half-year-old daughter Marli. “[Marli] wants to ‘help’ more than she used to,” Snyder reflected. “By ‘help’ I really mean she tries to do everything because she’s Miss Independent, but doesn’t realize that it’s best if a toddler doesn’t change a baby’s diapers.” With Jonah’s arrival, the family has been brought closer together. Synder says that he and his wife “work in tandem” with each other as parents. THS missed the nerdy English teacher’s presence, and we are glad that he is back in the classroom.

Walking down the main stairwell to the guidance office, guidance counselor Mrs. Slagle welcomed her son Tucker Thomas Slagle this summer on July 13th. Mrs. Slagle calls Tucker her “miracle baby.” Tucker was a miracle baby because the Slagles struggled with pregnancy prior to Tucker’s arrival. “We found out we were pregnant with Tucker super early.

I was in the process of healing from a miscarriage when my bloodwork started to raise some questions with my doctors” Mrs. Slagle said. “It turns out Baby Tuck was the reason for those questions. My doctors said, ‘There are some things that even science and medicine can’t explain.’ He is our miracle baby.” Even though she prepared extensively to welcome Tucker home, Mrs. Slagle observed that “you cannot fully prepare until your baby comes into the world.” She is thankful for the support she has gained along the way. “Raising a family truly takes a village,” she said. Teamwork is a common thread when it comes to being new parents. Having a strong support system such as Tucker’s grandparents, is also a much desired bonus. Until Mrs. Slagle’s return to THS, we wish her a special time at home with her son.

Finally, a few doors down from the guidance office, math teacher and soccer coach Mr. Mooney also has a new edition to his family. His daughter, Whimbley Cruz Mooney, was born early in the morning on April 25th. Whimbley now accompanies her partner and crime and older brother, Declan. Unlike some older siblings, who develop a sort of jealousy towards their new younger siblings, Mr. Mooney said that Declan is consistently “loving on her.” Mr. Mooney described the new family dynamic as “playing a man to man defense,” an appropriate analogy



for a soccer coach. When becoming a family of four rather than of three, balance is key. Finding balance can consist of assisting one another, and Mr. and Mrs. Mooney have established even stronger teamwork skills than they had before. On game days especially, the couple makes sure to communicate with one another on accomplishing nightly tasks such as feeding their children dinner and putting them to bed. Mr. Mooney has been back for the entirety of this current school year, and we are grateful to celebrate his bundle of joy.

There are no set rules when it comes to “What To Expect When You’re Expecting.” Each of the new parents is learning to adapt to the delights and challenges of parenthood. “Every facet of life changes when you have a baby. Everything,” said Mrs. Slagle. That seems to be true for these teacher-parents. We wish them all the best and say, “Go mini-Vikes!”



The Webb Triplets: Tripple Trouble

By Joseph Burriss

Left out of sight only for a short amount of time, three two-year olds are bound to cause trouble. With an open opportunity, triplets Ethan, Grayson, and Jeremiah had finally decided to enact an unspoken plan. Though unable to talk, the group coordinated themselves into a human ladder and managed to reach a candy jar sitting on a shelf and happily reaped the benefits of their reward, having successfully completed their heist all without saying a word. Their scheme was only later discovered.

Though the Webb triplets have grown up significantly since that incident, this hasn’t stopped them from maintaining a close connection and an intuitive understanding of each other. “You don’t have to express a full idea for another to understand”

states Jeremiah Webb, the firstborn of the three triplets. “When you interact with someone very often, the language evolves very quickly”.

Before the triplets were even born, however, their mom had to struggle through the abnormal pregnancy. “I was in total shock when I found out I was having three babies!” exclaims their mother, Amy Webb. “I took great care of myself throughout the pregnancy and we were blessed with three beautiful, healthy baby boys!” Taking care of three babies is never easy though, as so many children will require constant attention. “I still look back and think, ‘How did we get through those first couple of years?’” says Amy. It seems that raising triplets, especially on top of a four year old daughter, was

only possible with “round the clock feedings, diapers, and laundry... [and] the help of Grandparents and friends.” Today, all three are in band and Boy Scouts together, and Jeremiah shares every class with Ethan this semester. Grayson, however, puts special effort into avoiding being in the same classes as his brothers, highlighting the stark differences present even between identical siblings such as Jeremiah and Grayson. Grayson, for example, is more outgoing than his brother. Despite this, all three feel a strong sense of comradery having been so close to each other their whole lives. Most of us who have siblings are used to still being able to claim some of our own space and identity. The Webb triplets, on the other hand, have a constant companion and are familiar

with the same friends, teachers, and coaches. Through their close bond, the triplets have lived their whole childhoods alongside each other, but despite it, each possesses their own personality, friendships, and qualities that allow them to stand apart from one another. Most of us will never understand the bond they share, but we still have the power to form our own close bonds with others despite all of our differences.



You Just Lost The Game

By Nyla Surber

You lost the game. For those reading who know the game, I apologize for bringing back this buried memory. For those who have no idea what I'm talking about, let me tell you about the abstract concept of "The Game." This is like no game you've ever played before. There are no objects, no playing field, and no way of winning. The Game is strictly held in the minds of those who play it, and once you start playing, you will be playing it for the rest of your life. Here's how it works:

You are always playing the game, from the day you're born to the day you die. Once you hear about the game and its rules, you are officially aware that you are playing. The goal is to forget you are playing for as long as possible. Once you remember, you must stand up and say, "I lost the game." After that, anyone around you who is also playing the game loses. It is like the Matrix, where you take the red pill and realize you are in the Matrix, thus no longer seeing it as the real world.

You see the manufactured rules that keep you from the truth. The origins of the game are unknown, although some may have discovered or rediscovered it through Tik Tok. I personally found examples of the game going back as far as 2010. Some people believe it stems from Buddhist roots, since it supports the idea that with knowledge comes loss. Others think that's crazy and it's just a meme to troll people. No matter what you think, the theory of the game and how it works is everywhere.

Take social media for example. You may join social media for your own enjoyment, having a platform to share your ideas with no real expectation. Once here, however, you may realize the greater game at play. Social media as a concept was brought about around the 1840's as morse code, and then officially being brought to life as we know it in the late 1990's as the site Six Degrees. After this, big media corporations such as Facebook, Tik Tok, LinkedIn, and Snapchat took the

idea and created their own rules. They promised that everyone who played had a chance to win. In this case, the players win the status of influencer, greater exposure, money, followers, and likes. They then become pleasure-centered and self-aware. This is where they realize they've been playing the game, and they've been losing. In truth, there is no way to win, because there will always be more to rise to and there will never be enough to satisfy. With social media, there will always be more exposure, more likes, more follows. Another example is marriage. "If marriage doesn't end in divorce, it will end in death". This is a goal worth fighting for, but one you cannot win indefinitely. However, just because you can't win the game doesn't mean it isn't worth playing. You have to find games that are valuable to you. You must be careful not to believe the only way to be happy is to "win" the game, because that is a sure way to never be happy. Instead, don't care if you win or lose.

The world wants you to play the game and the world makes the rules. There are 4 types of people playing. The ones who know they are playing and attempt to win, the people who know and try to rebel against it, the people who don't know they are playing the game, and the people who don't care either way. If not playing isn't an option, then what will you do? How will you adapt now that you've been told about the game?



Student Poem By Zach Johnson

Studying for long hard hours
Testing your knowledge often
Understanding after searching for answers
Desks you sit in listening to lectures
Exiting school after long days
Never quite knowing everything
Tomorrow, more that's needed to know



Summer vs. Fall

By Sheany Regules

Summer. Nagging nats. Mosquitoes bites. Sweaty hats. Hot snacks. The worst of the worst occurs at this time. You can't get cooled down because the scorching sun just heats you right back up. Eventually everyone is cranky, complaining about the heat. There's no time to enjoy the outdoors while you're sweating like a barn animal. However, fall comes around to make everything better. Perfect weather. Warm sweater. Thanksgiving pleasure. Oh how I wish it would last forever. Although fall is better, summer also has its perks. During this time there is no school for two months, summer vacations to Disneyland, tan lines at the beach, and boat rides on the lake. You get to enjoy life at its fullest without stressing about your math test next Tuesday. That is until August rolls around to bring you right back down to reality. If you live in a place like Alaska, the weather could make summer enjoyable. If you live in California or any other place, good

luck. Fall, on the other hand, has so many days to look forward to. Halloween rolls around just as the crisp fall air settles in. Haunted houses and pumpkin patches all while you're drinking a warm cup of hot chocolate or apple cider. Right when you think the fun is over, Thanksgiving brings joy to everyone's bellies with the sweet ham and side of creamy mac and cheese, as well as other yummy treats. Fall also brings pumpkin spice everything and the crunching of leaves under your feet. Even if fall is a magical time of year, we can all agree, or most of us, that both seasons bring different types of happiness. While summer brings never ending nights and long days outside, fall brings trick or treat and amazing weather. Although fall will always have a special place in my heart, summer sure does bring a less stressed version of me.

The Toilets of THS

By Ruth Rose and Joseph Burriss

THS students know the feeling all too well: You rush to the bathroom in-between classes hoping to make the bell, only to find zero open stalls. So, you have a few options. You could one, make your way to another bathroom that proves to be equally full. Two, wait for an open stall and risk being late. Or three, continue to class and either relieve yourself all over the floor or deal with a possibly annoyed teacher hesitant or unwilling to let you leave because "you should have gone before class". One likely cause of this is the lack of working toilets. As I am sure you have noticed, the faulty toilets are covered with a large black bag. But what can we do to prevent this? Well, don't flush things you are not supposed to flush. Luckily, there are available trash cans in each stall to dispose of any non-flushable items. Use these to your advantage. However, even if every toilet worked in every bathroom, there are about 100 total stalls in a school with over 1,000 students. So, if just over 10% of students have to use the bathroom before class, some are bound to be stuck in the previously mentioned scenario. So, should we be granted more grace when it comes to something as involuntary as our bladder? Arguably, yes. Most teachers seem to be

understanding, and don't make a fuss when students ask to use the restroom. Some, however, are not as tolerant. This is especially an issue for anyone dealing with the curse that is a menstrual cycle. Because many students use a bathroom trip as an excuse to leave class, it makes sense that teachers may be hesitant to let you leave, however, nobody can be forced to want to learn. Does not letting them leave really change anything? Furthermore, as Mrs. Kirk has made clear, we have a problem with vandalism. One form of vandalism is based around a Tik Tok trend called a "devious lick". This entails breaking or stealing something on camera for likes. As funny as this may have been at the start of its popularity, it is still blatant disrespect. The lack of soap dispensers in the boys bathrooms is baffling and completely preventable. Out of our control, however, are the unfilled soap dispensers in some bathrooms. In a time where we should all be working more than ever to prevent spreading sickness, having soap to wash our hands is necessary. Pandemic aside, if you don't wash your hands after using the bathroom, there is never a better time to start than right now. Yes, the bathrooms are far from perfect. This is not news to anyone. So, let's do all we can to keep them clean and usable.

German Sandwich Day

By Joan Weddington



The Perfect Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe

By Ruth Rose

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter (room temperature)
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs (room temperature)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons hot water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions:

- Set out butter and eggs to allow them to reach room temperature
- Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit
- Cream together butter, white sugar, and brown sugar until smooth
- Beat in eggs one at a time
- Stir in vanilla extract
- Dissolve baking soda in hot water and add to batter along with salt
- Stir in flour and chocolate chips
- Drop by large tablespoons onto an ungreased cookie sheet
- Bake for approximately 12 minutes
- Let cool
- Enjoy!

Crystals With Benefits

By Rachel Kent

Rose Quartz- It gives off desperate vibes for love, but I am not one to talk since I have rose quartz earrings. The effort to attract a significant other is appreciated though. You didn't hear this from me, but maybe leave one in their car and they will be prone to thinking about you.

Amazonite- This might possibly be the key to people's confidence. I'm not sure though just a hunch.

Carnelian- Ok, have you been seeing those tik tok ads as well? The ones talking about all the sudden love interests? Not sure what is up with my Tiktok, but it really wants its viewer to invest in some carnelian necklaces, earrings, stones, and even pens.

Amethyst- Respect. This is a stable when collecting crystals. Most of the time, people have amethysts in their daily lives and they didn't even know. Since it is mainly for balance and higher wisdom, it has varying benefits.

Black Tourmaline- This one tends to be found inside of cars due to its protection benefits. Now, this doesn't mean that having this in your car while driving like you want to pursue a career in drag racing in Bristol is going to protect you from harm's way.

Malachite- The manifesting of wealth and beauty in the future is very much respected. The person who possesses this crystal is for sure a strong human because come on now, these crystal benefits! How could you not be strong?

Lepidolite- Since this crystal has emotional balancing benefits AND stress relief, I think this is a necessity for lots of individuals. One of those individuals is without a doubt me.

Vikings Vocaize

“Favorite Football Theme”

By Callie Eckley

Manuel Hyatt (9th Grade)
“White-Out”

Carly Rutherford (9th Grade)
“My favorite is Pajama because it's super duper comfy and fashionable at the same time.”

Alexa Mancera (10th Grade)
“White out because you get to make a mess with colors. And you get to look pretty afterwards like a rainbow.”

Adam Hrirou (10th Grade)
“Either Camo or Alien because I feel like camo just makes everything so funny and alien really brings out a lot of ideas and creativity.”

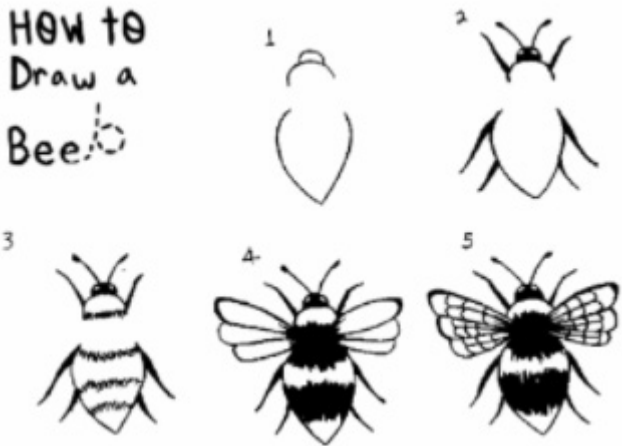
SallyCarol Corwin (11th Grade)
“Cowboys vs Aliens because it is the most versatile like you can do the most with it.”

Aiden Fennell (11th Grade)
“Space theme because I'm interested in that kind of stuff. This one kid had this cardboard astronaut thing and it was pretty cool.”

Kaeman Wilcox (12th Grade)
“Tie dye”

Gage Canady (12th Grade)
“Camo because you can't see it.”

HOW TO
Draw a
Bee



Artwork by Lilly Chafin

Viking Gossip

Hey Tennessee Highschoolers,
Did you hear the latest news? Mr. Sand told Galena that Tate and Luck covered his classroom in mouse traps from the entrance to his desk. Right when he entered his classroom, all you heard was a little girl scream coming from his room. Their punishment you ask? Scraping all the gum off every single desk in the entire school. I guess Mr. Sand finally got tired of the class clowns. Little does he know that Tate and Luck made Penny do all the work for them.

Xoxo,
Viking Gossip

Word Scramble

By Joseph Burriss

Back to School Word Scramble
AKCACBKP
KORWHEMO
WAHALYL
PHELOCOSWOR
SINAEGTSMN
RLSSOAMCO
KSLIALCNS
ESECHTRA

Special Shoutout to Mr. Shipley
for all his graphic design help!
-The Maroon and White team



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