

November 2023

# Colonial Courier

*Colonial Heights High School*

Photo courtesy of Slade Jackson, OpticsMedia



The girls' varsity volleyball team finished their season with a record of 20-2. They took their final game to the fifth set, almost qualifying them for states and the regional championship game. In this picture, Blanche Koudalo, 11; Cassidy Fite, 9; Alondra Sanjurjo, 12; Priscila Machuca, 11; and Kaylee Gilmore, 11; sing along to Drake in order to build pre-game hype.



# Colonial Courier

Colonial Heights High School



Faculty Advisor: Mrs. Terri Miles Moody



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# Creasey publishes her debut novel

by Heather Claytor

Compelled to write ever since she was a little girl, Mrs. Amanda Creasey, English 11 teacher, has published her first book. Mrs. Creasey has

curse.

Ever since she was young, Mrs. Creasey has always had a fascination with words and writing. Growing up in high school, Mrs. Creasey had an

date, but no one knows when. Mrs. Creasey tried to explain this concept to her friends, and they just didn't understand it.

"My first year teaching, right after I graduated from my undergraduate, my grandmother passed away," said Mrs. Creasey. "A few years later, I was in my graduate program, which was for creative writing, and I tried to write a poem about my grandmother passing away on April 16 and about all the other things she had done on April 16 that weren't dying, and the poem just didn't work. A couple years later I was just kind of like, 'I think I need to explore this idea with a bigger space,' so I tried writing a novel about it, and that was what it needed."

While writing this book, Mrs. Creasey went through the highs and lows of being a writer. From writing chapters with an ease to experiencing writer's block, Mrs. Creasey always remembered why she loved to write.

"I think writing to me is very

Photo courtesy of Amanda Creasey



For a five-year goal, Mrs. Creasey hopes to complete and publish her second manuscript that she has been working on.

published many poems and articles, but "An Expected End" is her debut novel. "An Expected End," which is speculative literary fiction, is about whether knowing one's death day is a blessing or a

idea cross her mind: everyone knows his/her birthday, anniversaries and other special dates, but nobody knows the date he/she is going to die. Every year people pass this ominous

satisfying, like when I have said something the exact way I want to say it, and it just has that smack,” said Mrs. Creasey. “I feel like writing is a way to kind of be immortal or to memorialize people, places and animals that I love and share them with other people, so it's kind of like if you write something that people read after you are gone, you have managed to leave some kind of legacy.”

Even though this book has been a work in progress for five years, Mrs. Creasey has been ready to extend this idea for almost 20 years. During the process of writing her first novel, Mrs. Creasey has learned a lot of new aspects about her writing.

“I learned that my teaching here and the literature I teach here is really influential in the fiction writing that I do,” said Mrs. Creasey. “I was amazed about how many lines that came back to me from books that I've taught in English 11 that influenced the way I wrote this book.”

While writing this book, Mrs. Creasey was supported by her family and friends.

“Mrs. Creasey is one of the most thoughtful, kind, caring, and generous people I know,” said Mrs. Jamie Wulfekuhle-Zaweski, former CHHS French teacher and paraprofessional at Tussing Elementary in the early childhood SPED classroom. “Ms. Creasey dreams big and

and former CHHS English 11 teacher.

Outside of the classroom, Mrs. Creasey loves to be outdoors with her dogs and go on adventurous trips. Wherever Mrs. Creasey's dogs go, she goes, and wherever Mrs. Creasey goes, they go.

**Photo courtesy of Amanda Creasey**



**Whenever Mrs. Creasey goes hiking or on any adventure, she always brings along her dogs, Nacho and Soda.**

has the work ethic and organization to actualize her goals.”

“Mrs. Creasey is creative; she has a glass half full mentality -- always seeing the good in everyone and every situation,” said Mrs. Sonya Lee, secondary literacy coach

Even when it comes to writing, Mrs. Creasey normally sits on the couch to write because her dogs would be lying there.

“My dogs run my whole life, so I just write wherever they feel like being and whatever time they feel like not playing



Photo courtesy of Amanda Creasey



One of Mrs. Creasey 's favorite chapters that she wrote was when Marshall and Penelope met. She enjoyed writing their dialogue so much that it came with an ease and didn't need many changes.

with me or taking a walk," said Mrs. Creasey. "They kind of determine when and

where I write. I like to write outside a lot because I really get put in the mood by nature

and the outdoors, so a lot of the time I will sit outside on the deck."

Not only do Mrs. Creasey's coworkers think highly of her, but so do her students. Many of her students are very excited to see her accomplish one of her biggest goals.

"I enjoy the hard work environment," said Justis Merriman, 11, a current student of Mrs. Creasey's. "She's a very helpful teacher and you can see that she just wants her students to pass and do their best."

Rylei Buck, 12, a former student of Mrs. Creasey's, is inspired to see Mrs. Creasey realize her dreams.

"Mrs. Creasey has put a lot of hard work and dedication into her book, bringing light to the fact that no dream is out of reach," said Rylei Buck, 12.

# Pulskamp honored as Teacher of the Year

by Landon Lopez

Teachers work hard to teach their students in a way in which they are comfortable and have the opportunity to really shine in that subject, but this inspiration is able to spread not just to students, but to other teachers, too.

The Teacher of the Year is a title earned by nominations from teachers all over the school. These nominations get put together into a ballot for the entire faculty and staff to vote for the Teacher of the Year.

This year's winner is Mr. Daniel Pulskamp, SPED department lead teacher.

"I work with a lot of good people in my department," said Mr. Pulskamp. "I try to make sure part of my job is to try and take care of the other staff."

Mr. Pulskamp not only performs his job in such a bright manner to students, being able to provide a great role model for them, but also inspires other teachers and staff to do as much as they

can to help other people. He follows a behavior projecting these words: "be considerate, but don't fall behind."

"Mr. Pulskamp is an exceptional teacher and person," said Mrs. Taylor Puckett, World History 1 teacher, who collaborates with Mr. Pulskamp. "He is always willing to go above and beyond to help his students and his colleagues."

Carrying the title of Teacher of the Year takes commitment. Mr. Pulskamp

helps his students in a way that they can not only understand, but also create additional paths that lead to greater ideas.

Mr. Pulskamp also shows consideration by wearing multiple hats throughout the building, either co-teaching to help subject-area teachers get their point across with the proper material or working with individual students to help them understand and accomplish their goals.

"I work more behind the

**Photo courtesy of Dan Pulskamp**



**Mr. Pulskamp enjoys hiking and traveling when he can. At school he can be seen walking up the mountain of success.**



scenes,” said Mr. Pulskamp. “Being able to help so many people just by working in so many different areas in the school really shows the attitude of some of the students here, who are mainly resilient and show that they’re ready for the day.”

Motivation is a big part of shaping a person into their final mold, and Mr. Pulskamp found himself constructed by the visions of his mother. Unfortunately, she was under the effects of muscular dystrophy.

Seeing his mother have the ability to tough out every day with a smile really made Mr.

Pulskamp realize his potential and how it could help people.

“Mr. Pulskamp is an excellent educator and role model for students with disabilities,” said Mr. Mike Nelson, principal. “He is very impressive at teaching as well as being a lifelong military man, serving this country, inspiring us all even further.”

Mr. Pulskamp never expected a reward, or certificate or even recognition. As long as he helped somebody, he didn’t let anything tear him down. A simple “thank you” was enough to keep him going.

“Always look for opportunities. Just know that sometimes opportunities will come when least expected, and you just have to grab it and go with it,” said Mr. Pulskamp. “I never expected to hold the title of Teacher of the Year for just pure kindness; in reality, I didn’t think teaching would be the path I would go, but I have no regrets.”

With so much strength and an unbreakable shield, Mr. Pulskamp continues to go above and beyond with the students and staff of both the CHHS and the community overall.

“Mr. Pulskamp is tremendously knowledgeable in so many different content areas,” said Mrs. Puckett. “He contributes awesome ideas for activities and strategies within every area throughout the community, and he is just a great human being.”

Photo courtesy of Dan Pulskamp



Mr. Pulskamp loves nothing more than his family and the ability to experience new adventures whilst seeing the beauty of the world.

# Staff celebrates Barnum's dedication to CHHS

by Catherine Alderson

During what he thought was a normal faculty meeting, Mr. Robert Barnum, head custodian, was “shocked” when finding out that he had been named the 2023-24 Staff Member of the Year.

Every year the faculty and staff nominate and vote for a staff member that they believe deserves the title of “Staff Member of the Year.” After working for Colonial Heights Public Schools for 27 years, Mr. Barnum has finally earned this title.

“I was told to make sure that I was at the faculty meeting,” said Mr. Barnum. “Then, I saw my brother at the meeting, and I was wondering what he was doing here.”

Mr. Mike Nelson, principal, called Mr. Charles Barnum, custodian at Tussing Elementary School and Mr. Barnum’s brother, invited him to the meeting and told him the good news.

“Getting Staff Member of

the Year is very neat, and I’m proud to be a Colonial,” said Mr. Barnum.

Mr. Barnum has worked at every school in Colonial Heights. He has gone back

and forth working between schools, but his favorite to work at is North Elementary School. Prior to working in CHPS, Mr. Barnum worked at Central State Hospital in

Photo by Catherine Alderson



In his free time, Mr. Barnum enjoys going to sporting events at CHHS and Dinwiddie High School, which is where he went.



Petersburg, Va.

“Working as a custodian in the schools is similar to what I did in the hospital,” said Mr. Barnum. “When looking for a new job, I came across a school custodian, and I thought I could make a career out of it since it would be a lot of the same stuff that I did at the hospital.”

Mr. Barnum’s hard work and dedication throughout the school are key contributors to his getting named Staff Member of the Year.

“Robert is a very hard worker and very dedicated to his job,” said Mrs. Lolita Smith, a CHMS custodian who worked with Mr. Barnum at CHHS for many years. “He always finds a way to brighten someone’s day.”

Not only does Mr. Barnum work during school hours, but also he is at all of the school dances and assists in after-school functions.

“Mr. Barnum is easily here 50 to 60 hours a week,” said Mr. Burnett, assistant principal. “He is always willing to step in and help, no matter what the job is; he’ll stay late and come in early if we need him to.”

Apart from working on and off together at CHHS for 15 years, Mr. Burnett has known Mr. Barnum for many years: Mr. Barnum was a custodian at North Elementary School while Mr. Burnett was a student there.

“Mr. Barnum is always on the lookout and makes sure that students are safe and everything is clean and orderly,” said Mr. Burnett. “He takes pride in his job.”

Mrs. Smith and Mr. Barnum have also known each other for many years, working together for 16 years. Mrs. Smith appreciates how Mr. Barnum is not only a hard worker, but also a source of laughter.

“Mr. Barnum always has a joke to put a smile on someone’s face,” said Mrs. Smith.

Mr. Barnum’s family are his biggest supporters, and they motivate him to succeed. He has five children of his own. He tries to keep CHHS a clean and safe place for the students, just like he would’ve liked other people to do for his own children.

“My brother is good at everything he does,” said Mr. Charles Barnum. “I can always count on him because I know he’ll never say ‘no.’”

Since earning Staff Member of the Year, Mr. Barnum feels proud every day when he walks up and down the halls.

“I’m very proud of Mr. Barnum for winning this award, and it shows how much the staff values and adores him and his hard work does not go unnoticed,” said Mr. Burnett.

# Bryant honored as October SOM

by Ava Kwiek

The day she was called down to the “cafetoffice,” Alima Bryant, 12, was ridden with nervousness up until the moment Mr. Mike Nelson, principal, announced to her the good news of being selected as October Senior of the Month.

“I was so happy and excited!” said Bryant. “I wasn’t expecting to be Senior of the Month so soon into the school year!”

Bryant plans to go to college or university, with her top three choices being William & Mary, Aston University and Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. She is planning on studying in the medical and health sciences to earn the requirements and skills of becoming a pathologist.

Some of the biggest challenges that Bryant has faced during high school have been AP classes.

“This was the first time where I had to take the time

to sit and study,” said Bryant. “With the help of supportive teachers and forcing myself to find a way to study and understand the topics, I was able to achieve decently high grades in these classes.”

Photo courtesy of Alima Bryant



**Bryant aspires to become a pathologist while studying at either William & Mary, Aston University or Lithuanian University.**

Since her sophomore year, Bryant has been running cross country, joining it as a way to start getting involved in sports. Over time, it turned into a sport that became really meaningful to her.

“The team is an amazing group of people who will push you to be faster and better but also cheer you on and support you,” said Bryant. “It’s so rewarding

when you and your teammates get new personal records.”

Bryant has been volunteering at the High Tunnel for the AgriProject since her sophomore year, as well. There, she has learned how to observe, think outside of the box and care for plants. She has also made many friends while at the High Tunnel and sees them as a part of the core memories that she has experienced there.

“I’m taking a semi-leadership role at the High Tunnel by starting a project that includes making eco-friendly plant labels with the students from Tussing Elementary School,” said Bryant. “I’m hoping to execute this project once I get all the materials needed for this project.”

With graduation slowly getting closer and closer, Bryant feels terrified but also very excited.

“It’s terrifying for me to think right now that this time



next year I could be anywhere in the world by myself, but it's exciting because this means I'm about to start a new chapter in my life," said Bryant.

She feels sad about leaving CHHS, but she is glad that she will be leaving with many great memories and no regrets. Since her freshman year, she's always felt that she has grown, not only physically, but personally, too.

"I feel like I've grown more confident in myself, become more optimistic and let myself flow with the tides of life," said Bryant.

To both current and future freshmen, she has some words of advice to give.

"We all go at our own pace, and you don't need to be the best of the best," said Bryant. "There are so many opportunities and memorable moments out there waiting for you; just focus on having high grades and making lasting memories with friends and family."

Some students don't like the last years of high school,

Photo courtesy of Alima Bryant



Helping at the High Tunnel for the school's AgriProject has been an activity that Bryant has loved to do as it's where her favorite core memories have been made at CHHS.

whether because it's too hard or because they just don't pay attention to the bright side of it all. Looking back at all the memories they make with their friends and family is something that Bryant believes everyone should treasure.

"Enjoy your last years of

school: don't hate them," said Bryant.

Bryant herself has many memories that she and her friends have made over the years, such as volunteering after school at the High Tunnel and the pep rallies. Pep rallies aren't often easily found in other schools

Photo courtesy of Alima Bryant



Running with her fellow seniors, as well as her other teammates, is another of Bryant's favorite high school memories. Kendall Ackerman, 12; Catherine Alderson, 12; Dawson Moody, 12; and Jamie "Addy" Yin, 12; are the other seniors that she has been running cross country with for the past few years.

outside of America, and having grown up in England, Japan, Lithuania and the United States, Bryant has found them to be very exciting and a lot of fun for her.

Bryant will miss the teachers more than anything, and she finds that the faculty

and staff at CHHS truly try to connect with the students and care for each and every one of them. She calls the staff "one big support group for students to rely on for help and advice."

Mrs. Dana Barefoot, chemistry teacher, has been one of Bryant's biggest

inspirations.

"She's an amazing teacher who takes the time to get to know each of her students and always lends a helping hand to anyone who needs it," said Bryant. "She inspires me and reminds me to always be kind to others and to support and guide others when needed."

At the end of the day, though, Bryant always has her dream career and her mom to motivate her to succeed.

"My mom is one of my biggest supporters, and I hope to one day achieve my dream career (pathologist) and be able to give back and thank her for all that she has done for me," said Bryant.



# Marching Colonials earn excellent rating, top rankings

by A.J. Plummer

From the start of band competition during the sweltering days of July and August, the Marching Colonials dedicate their sweat, energy, talents and time to perfecting their competition season program.

The Marching Colonials have earned themselves a successful season. This team has accomplished many goals and received many awards.

“During a competition at Mechanicsville High School, not only did we win first place in our division, but we received the trophy for the best band overall that entire day,” said Carson Armstrong, 12, drum major. “Technically, we got 2nd overall, but they mistakenly announced that our band was the best, and it was the most hype I’ve ever seen the band for anything.”

Armstrong had to overcome some nerves when he first stepped into his leadership role of drum major.

Photo courtesy of Carson Armstrong



The Marching Colonials achieved success during their competition season, including the highlights of receiving an excellent rating during VBODA assessments and winning second place overall at the Mechanicsville Tournament of Champions.

“Originally, I felt pretty nervous,” said Armstrong. “I would have to be in charge of everyone, and it seemed like a really Herculean task. However, after a few weeks of getting used to it, I felt way more confident in my ability to lead the band.”

Armstrong’s favorite song to play with the marching band is “The Cupid Shuffle.”

Mr. Cougar Conley, marching band director, was pleased with the outcomes of the competition season.

“I think each competition we went to was a great time!” said Mr. Conley. “Each panel of judges treated us very fairly,

each venue was a great host, and the students had fun participating and getting to watch other schools’ bands.”

Mr. Conley hopes the Marching Colonials learned the value of a strong work ethic and teamwork during the season.

“I hope they learn that hard work, dedication and working together to achieve a goal do truly pay off in the end,” said Mr. Conley. “It is a tough thing to work together day in day out for months, and I think our students did a very admirable job of staying intense, focused and ready to work throughout the season.”



# Marching Colonials' Competition Season Results

## Warhill Classic

1st Place, Class 1A  
Best Music, Class 1A  
Best Visual, Class 1A  
Best General Effect, Class 1A  
Best Guard, Class 1A  
\*Third Place overall\*

## JMU Parade of Champions

3rd Place, Class 2A  
Best Music, Class 2A

## VBODA Marching Assessment

Excellent Rating



## Powhatan Fall Classic

1st Place, Class 3A  
Best Music, Class 3A  
Best Visual, Class 3A  
Best General Effect, Class 3A  
Best Guard, Class 3A  
\*Best Guard Score overall\*  
\*Third Place overall\*

## Mechanicsville Tournament of Champions

1st Place, Class 1A  
Best Music, Class 1A  
Best Visual, Class 1A  
Best General Effect, Class 1A  
Best Guard, Class 1A  
\*Second Place overall\*

# Bullis adjusts to new subject, school

by Ashy Pillai

After receiving many new teachers at the start of the school year, CHHS welcomes another new teacher ready for change and a new learning experience. Mr. Zachary Bullis, English 12 teacher, is hopeful for his new change in scenery and subject.

Photo by Ashy Pillai



Mr. Bullis is already feeling welcomed into the CHHS community. He appreciates that the school respects teachers and students.

“I’m so excited. I get to be with my best friends every day, which is exciting,” said Mr. Bullis. “I get to teach a whole new set of students. I’m most excited about teaching seniors.”

While enjoying his time at Prince George High School, Mr. Bullis is ready to become a Colonial and is adjusting

well to his CHHS transition.

“The transition has been amazing,” said Mr. Bullis. “While I loved my time at Prince George, I already feel like I am a part of the Colonial Heights family.”

Not only is Mr. Bullis teaching new students at a new school, but he’s also teaching a whole new subject. Making a switch from teaching French to English, Mr. Bullis shows his desire to try new experiences.

“Learning something new is always inspiring to me, along with trying to share the love of learning with students,” said Mr. Bullis.

In his journey of sharing his knowledge, Mr. Bullis has learned to adapt. His transition from French to English has been hard, but according to Mr. Hunter Spence, a paraprofessional who assists in Mr. Bullis’s English 12 class, Mr. Bullis has excelled in adjusting to his difficult changes.

“He’s doing great, especially from French back to teaching

English, especially because English 12 is very important," said Mr. Spence. "I feel like he has taken complete grasp of it and is doing really well."

Amid all the changes, Mr. Bullis still has some constants. He's happily joining the CHHS circle alongside his former co-workers at PGHS. These connections have aided him in his transition.

"Every question that I have, they answer," said Mr. Bullis. "Any time that I sigh and have to say the transition is hard and it's just something new, they're always there to pat me on the shoulder and say it's going to be all right."

This close circle of friends acknowledges Mr. Bullis's motives in engaging kids in the classroom.

"He's very focused and very driven. I do love that about Mr. Bullis," said Mrs. Paola Jones, Spanish and ESL teacher. "I'm very excited to have Mr. Bullis here at Colonial Heights. I think he's a

great addition to the English department, and I know the students will greatly benefit from everything he has to offer."

Mr. Bullis brings many positive qualities to the classroom, but his positive attitude brings the biggest effect. His humorous and optimistic teaching style helps him and his students get

Photo courtesy of Paola Jones



Traveling is one of Mr. Bullis's favorite hobbies. In the past, he has traveled to many places in Europe.

through the school day.

"I think he's a great teacher," said Elissa Sorensen, 12. "He does very fun activities in class and makes sure that everyone has a good time

and learns, too, while also getting information in."

Along with getting his students to stay engaged, Mr. Bullis tries to add humor to everything he does. He believes that adding a touch of humor to his lessons effectively engages his students.

"I desperately try to bring humor into the classroom," said Mr. Bullis. "I find my jokes hilarious, but the students sometimes don't. I bring humor to the classroom."

He hopes that his efforts in teaching his students the importance of acquiring new information will stick with them even after their high school careers.

"I hope that when students leave they are always able to learn new things, they have ways to access new information, and they are able to grow constantly, so when they leave school, it's not the end," said Mr. Bullis.



# Thanksgiving foods bring families together

by Ka'lyah Givens

Food seems to be the common denominator for all families' Thanksgiving holidays. According to a survey conducted by the *Colonial Courier* staff, people's favorite Thanksgiving foods seem to vary, but everyone seems to have strong feelings about their choices.

Mrs. Melissa Anderson, science teacher, favors the high-carb side dishes, such as sweet potato casserole and stuffing.

"They are delicious, and I usually only eat them during the holidays," said Mrs. Anderson.

Another fan of stuffing is Ms. Pam Morgan, counseling office secretary.

"It's the best part!" said Ms. Morgan.

Mrs. Taylor Puckett, history teacher, likes the broccoli casserole that her mom taught her to make when she was growing up.

Mrs. Elizabeth Roberts, math teacher, likes the homemade cranberry sauce she makes herself and takes to each Thanksgiving dinner that her family has.

Mrs. Cestelle Green, main office secretary, likes candied yams. She makes the dish herself using her mom's

recipe.

"It's truly a comfort food and something I usually only have at Thanksgiving and Christmas so it's a real treat," said Mrs. Green.

Markel Hosten, 10, likes the mashed potatoes and gravy that his parents make for holiday meals.

Overall, Thanksgiving dinner provides many different foods for everyone to enjoy together. Whether it's homemade or store-bought, we're all brought together by our favorite Thanksgiving foods at dinnertime.



# CHHS weighs in on favorite coffees

by Eme Trusty

Photo courtesy of SchoolPhotoProject.com



In a survey conducted by *Colonial Courier*, students and staff voted Starbucks their favorite coffee.

Many can't start their day without their first cup of coffee, but the best flavor of coffee differs in opinions for each person. There's iced, hot, seasonal and homemade coffees, and even the shop where the coffee is bought from matters.

Winning with 67.7 percent of votes, Starbucks is the most loved coffee shop among the school's staff and students.

Two best friends Sintory James, 9, and Reagan Catron, 9, love iced coffee and recommend others to try the

store-bought Starbucks for the best coffee experience. James loves and recommends Starbucks's iced white mocha, whereas Catron loves the vanilla iced coffee.

Wawa came in second place with 19.4 percent in votes with their "make-it-yourself" style coffee shop.

A local Wawa's coffee lover, Mrs. Darbara Simmons, SPED teacher, enjoys herself a nice, hot cup of Wawa's coffee made by her own hands.

"It's cheap, and I can fix it the way that I like it," said Mrs. Simmons.

Mrs. Brandi Cutrer, SPED teacher and English 9 co-teacher, goes to Wawa to make her favorite Dark Magic coffee flavor.

"Wawa, they have all kinds of specialty coffees," said Mrs. Cutrer, "probably more than Starbucks."

Emma Brandeberry, 9, is a

huge fan of Dunkin' Donuts' caramel coffees. Dunkin' graphed up to 12.9 percent of votes.

"I drink more water," said Brandberry. "As much as I love coffee, water is very important. Any of my friends will tell you I always say 'stay hydrated.'"

Brandberry is not the only Dunkin' coffee lover.

"I like anything vanilla or caramel," said Liz Elmore, 11.

Elmore loves herself an iced coffee and recommends the "vanilla iced latte with extra vanilla" from Dunkin' Donuts.

Many of the students and staff choose Starbucks as their primary choice but trying out your own flavor of coffee and experimenting a little bit will help form your own opinion about which caffeinated drink to choose to start your day.

# Galyen holds 5 school swim records

by Carleigh Harrison

Waking up at 4:30 for a two-hour practice before school might seem insane to some, but to Austin Galyen, 11, this is a normal part of his life.

“For my year-round team, we do Monday, Wednesday, Friday before school from 5-7 a.m.,” said Galyen, who swims for NOVA, “and then in the afternoons I practice from 4:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.”

“I don’t think people realize how hard swim is,” said Galyen. “Two-hour practices before school in the morning are not easy.”

Galyen is a part of NOVA year-round team, the Swim and Yacht Club summer team, and the CHHS swim team. Mr. Christian Kaseloo, long-term SPED substitute and Galyen’s S.Y.C. coach, describes him as “a great athlete” who is “naturally gifted.”

“I’ve been swimming since I was a little kid,” said Galyen. “I just never stopped.”

Photo courtesy of Rebekah Galyen



Galyen is in his third year of swimming for CHHS. Outside of school, he swims for NOVA year-round and for SYC during the summer.

Galyen has broken five school records, including two individual swims and three relays alongside Parker Hanshew, 12.

“It was a lot of fun and a great experience,” said Hanshew. “I learned a lot.”

When asked about how it

felt to break five records, Galyen said, “It feels good, but I can definitely get more.”

“I figured once he started training that he would get super fast,” said Kaseloo. “Like I said, he has always been a great athlete.”

Galyen’s individual records



Photo courtesy of Rebekah Galyen



Galyen qualified for states during both his freshman and sophomore years and hopes to make a return this year.

include a 100-meter breaststroke at 1:00.42 minutes and a 50-meter freestyle at 22.27 seconds.

"I wasn't shocked at all. I knew it was a matter of time before he broke them," said Officer Wayne Moody, SRO and CHHS swim coach. "If Austin wanted to break every record on the board, he has the ability to do it."

Galyen's biggest motivations are his teammates.

"We all compete against each other," said Galyen. "We all want each other to do good."

"We push each other to do the best," said Hanshew. "We all help each other."

Galyen's biggest motivations are his teammates, but he motivates them just as much.

"Austin has a huge impact

on our team by being a team player," said Officer Moody.

Photo courtesy of Rebekah Galyen



Galyen has spent most of his life swimming and has earned many ribbons and medals. At CHHS, he currently holds five school records: two individual records and three relays records.

"He motivates the other guys on the team to work just as hard as he does by trying to keep up at practice."

Galyen hopes to swim in college but is not quite sure where he will attend yet. He plans to go D1 in College.

"We will see what happens," said Galyen.

# Dedicated athletes condition in the off-season

by Madelyn Elmore

Sports not only last during the three months listed on the athletic calendar, but they also go on all year long through conditioning. Many sports start conditioning

months in advance to prepare for their upcoming season.

Girls' tennis, coached by Mr. Nick Davis, started conditioning in mid-September despite their

season not starting until February. Girls' tennis is not the only sport that has started, however. Soccer has also begun their conditioning.

"Conditioning started right when Homecoming was over just a couple of weeks ago," Ms. Sarah Crinkley, biology teacher and varsity girls' soccer coach.

Conditioning is not the same as normal practice but is for learning new skills and getting in shape for the upcoming season.

"Our practice now is more focused on fundamentals and general skills than say match play," Mr. Davis, environmental science and biology teacher. "When we get closer to our season, we will be playing mostly matches during practices."

Many coaches use this time to teach the new players the vital skills to play the sport. This way, in the regular season, athletes are more focused on improving rather

Photo courtesy of Ashy Pillai



Returning tennis player Lisa Ou, 10, has already started conditioning for the upcoming spring season. She and her teammates practice at least one afternoon each week.

than learning new skills.

"It gives them a good idea of 'do I want to play this sport?'" said Ms. Crinkley. "It's a good place to develop skills because we have a lot of new girls coming out that don't know what they're doing. This is the perfect time to teach them so that during the regular season, they know what they're doing."

Not all athletes practice with a team; some condition on their own time.

"I play indoor and spring rec. teams and practice in my backyard," Abby Emory, 10. "It's helped me learn many new techniques and skills for field hockey."

Practicing on their own helps athletes improve the individual skills that they need to work on. This also helps them to get in shape for their sport so that they are ready for the season.

Examples of this could be running around their backyards or playing on rec.

teams throughout the year.

"You're just playing more. The more you do something, just in general, you're going to get better at it just from time," Mrs. Casey Crow, English 10 teacher and field hockey coach. "If you're only used to playing with each other, you'll only get as good as each other. Playing with other girls that have a different skill set and different types of coaches gives you a whole lot more room to grow."

## Spring Sports Coming Up



**Girls' Tennis**



**Boys' Tennis**



**Girls' Soccer**

**Boys' Soccer**



**Track and Field**

**Girls' Softball**

**Boys' Baseball**



**\*Tryouts start Feb. 19, 2024\***

**All sports require a physical and concussion form.**



# New movie releases excite people for the holidays

by Hope Eastwood

Around the holidays, there are many spirited people who enjoy watching movies, as well as many Christmas spirited people. Movies get released in November and December mainly because of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Christmas is a favorite holiday for many, and there are many different Christmas movies being released this year.

This season the classical Grinch story will get a scary, new twist. The new Grinch is a horror movie called "The Mean One," and was released in theaters on Oct. 3.

There are multiple Christmas movies coming out, like "Candy Cane Lane," "Holiday Twist," and "Silent Night" (horror movie), all of which are coming out Dec. 1. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid Christmas" will be released on Dec. 8.

There are also Christmas movies that were released in

the month of November, including, "Dashing Through The Snow," which was released on Nov. 17, and "Best Christmas Ever," which was released on Nov. 16.

Photo courtesy of IMDb



"The Mean One," which is based off of Dr. Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," was released on Oct. 3 on Video on Demand.

Thanksgiving is many people's favorite holiday. For many it's about the food, but for others it's about the history behind it. There are a few movies being released that are related to the Thanksgiving holiday.

The movie "A Charlie

Brown's Thanksgiving" is a classical favorite for many because it symbolizes the holiday and it's an overall good movie. This family-friendly movie can be watched on Apple TV+.

A new movie coming out called "Thanksgiving" (horror) was released on Nov. 17.

Other movies coming out in the month of November are "Priscilla" and "Sly," which were both released on Nov. 3. "The Killer" came out Nov. 10. "Saltburn" and "The Hunger Games" were released on Nov. 17. "Napoleon," "Wish" and "Good Burger 2" were all released on Nov. 22.

Movies shape our holidays because they excite us for the holidays. If we had no movies like the ones we do, then the holiday spirit wouldn't be the same.

# New video games released for holiday season

by Lance Gallahun

The holidays are right around the corner, and what's better than receiving a brand new video game in your stocking?

The *Colonial Courier* sent out a survey asking people to choose from five different options which new video game releases excite them the most: "Spider-Man 2"; "WarioWare: Move It!"; "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3"; "Mario RPG"; and "Wave Six of the Mario Kart Booster Course Pass."

"WarioWare: Move It!" came in fifth place with only a single vote. Next was "Mario RPG" with six votes. In third place was "Mario Kart 8 Deluxe's Final Wave of Downloadable Content" (DLC) with 11 votes.

Second place was "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3" with 16 votes, and coming in first place was "Spider-Man 2" with 20

votes.

## "Spider-Man 2"

Brandon Charles, 11, has been excited for the release of "Spider-Man 2" ever since it was revealed.

"Ever since the release of the first one, I've just loved every second of it," said Charles.

Charles's favorite element of the game is the featuring of characters not often seen in Marvel.

"Much like the previous games, my favorite element would be bringing into light

certain characters that would never be covered in the MCU verse, per se," said Charles.

"Spider-Man 2" is the sequel to the hit 2018 video game, and it definitely shows.

The sequel contains new villains from all across the Spider-Man universe, such as Venom and Lizard.

The story of the game follows Miles Morales and Peter Parker as they deal with their own personal struggles while having to deal with Kraven, who is

Photo courtesy of Amazon.com



hunting individuals with superpowers for sport.

The game also features improved combat from the first game, new gameplay elements and more for players to discover.

### **“Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3”**

The third installment of the reboot of “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare” was released on Nov. 10. The story follows Task Force 141 and their attempts to stop a worldwide disaster.

This new game promises over 30 unique weapons, new and returning maps, and a 4-6 hour campaign.

### **“Mario Kart 8 Deluxe’s DLC”**

The final wave of “Mario Kart 8 Deluxe’s DLC” launched on Nov. 9. This DLC will feature three new tracks and five returning ones. The returning tracks spread from multiple consoles, from the SNES to

the 3DS.

Some of the tracks released in this wave are even based upon real life cities, such as Rome and Madrid.

### **“Mario Kart RPG”**

Elizabeth Elmore, 11, was obsessed with Mario games when she was growing up and is highly excited for the release of Mario RPG’s remake and all aspects of the game. Elmore highly recommends this video game to all of her fellow students.

“Mario RPG” is a remake of a beloved classic game. This game was released on Nov. 17 and features Mario and friends as they seek to defeat the Smithy Gang, who have crashed into Mario’s world and scattered the seven star pieces of Star Road.

Mr. Mickey Alderson, art teacher, has loved “Mario Kart” since his family received a Wii for

Christmas,

“I remember the Christmas my family got our Wii, and it was great,” said Mr. Alderson. “My daughters, niece and nephew would all race against each other and have the best time!”

Mr. Alderson hopes that the new courses releasing in “Mario Kart’s Final DLC Wave” will live up to the standards set by previous games.

“The original ‘Mario Kart’ is a classic and will never go out of style,” said Mr. Alderson. “Hopefully, the newest version will carry on that tradition.”

The 2023 holidays are filled with anticipated games that will be excellent stocking stuffers to receive for Christmas. No matter which of these games you want this year, you’ll have plenty of options to choose from.



# "Spider-Man 2" swings into the hearts of fans

by Gavin Jarvis

One of the greatest superheroes, Spider-Man is in the hearts of many fans. Insomniac Games took this love and put it full force into their first Spider-Man game and didn't back down now with the newly released "Spider-Man 2." "Spider-Man 2" takes the "I'm Spider-Man" phrase to a whole new level by immersing players in a cinematic experience that makes you feel like you're the crime-fighting web slinger.

## Story

The story in "Spider-Man 2" is nothing short of a masterpiece. The plot expands on the events of "Spider-Man" (2018) and "Spider-Man: Miles Morales" by threatening New York with new forces that the Spider-Men must defeat.

Insomniac welcomes players back to the Spider-Man franchise by putting them smack dab in the middle of an epic introduction of battling a villain that players may not

Photo courtesy of playstation.com



"Spider-Man 2" was released on Oct. 20. It expands on the story of Peter Parker and Miles Morales, and it includes a smoother Spider-Man experience for players to enjoy.

have suspected to be featured in the game. The introduction sets the scene of what players are to expect with our two Spider-Men.

The story follows Peter and Miles through New York City, which is being occupied with new villains like Kraven, Lizard and Venom, who were confirmed before launch; however; Peter and Miles are up against new challenges:

college essays and mortgages.

These new problems are featured in the day-to-day missions that have more of an inclusion in "Spider-Man 2." Insomniac uses these missions to give players a clear insight of what it's like to be Spider-Man, under the mask, by implementing elements that players can relate to; this feature creates

the emotional tie that players experience with the game.

It's an experience you cannot miss. The thrills, character development, the villains and everything is just what makes the story feel real. I felt as if I was watching a movie, but I was in it, and I was Spider-Man.

Even though the story of "Spider-Man 2" is so amazing, it's not only what makes the game so great. The game has introduced new features and improvements to past mechanics to give players a more immersive experience while playing the game.

### **Web-Slinging**

The web-slinging in

Spider-Man 2 is smoother and more polished with new animations that make the Spider-Men look more alive and animated. You can perform new tricks and gimmicks to match your own swinging style.

A new notable feature added to the game is the web slingshot, which allows you to sling shot as Spider-Man to gain a massive boost to traverse across the city. With this feature, you can get around the city more easily, but a new addition to the game makes it even better: web wings.

The Spider-Men now have web wings that allow them to glide around New York City to

make the idea of Spider-Man more stylish. Wind tunnels around the city give you a boost of speed while you travel through them to make it quicker to get around to places and to keep the momentum.

Spider-Man 2 has definitely improved web-slinging with their new and improved features that makes the Spider-Man experience more immersive for players. Even after beating the game, players can find themselves web-slinging for hours.

### **Combat**

The combat of "Spider-Man 2" has improved exponentially from past games. With new gadgets, the inclusion of new abilities for both Spider-Men and improved gameplay make the combat more enjoyable.

Insomniac took the weaknesses of the 2018 "Spider-Man" and strengthened them to make the combat more enjoyable. In the first game, you were just button mashing with only a few enemy variants.

In "Spider-Man 2," you are

Photo courtesy of engadget.com



A new feature in "Spider-Man 2" is the black-suit that has taken over Peter Parker. Players will navigate through the effect that this new suit has on Parker during the story of "Spider-Man 2" while using the new abilities that the new suit has to offer.

met up with a variety of enemy variants that have certain strengths and weaknesses that you must explore to find out the best way to defeat each one. The game requires you to use more than just one attack to be successful in combat. What else it requires you to utilize is the new abilities that are in your possession.

Miles and Peter are equipped with select abilities that are exclusive to each character. Miles's power focuses on his "Venom" abilities, and Peter's abilities features his "Spider Arms." With these in mind, there is more to unlock, but I will let you discover those for yourself.

The new abilities are as well accompanied with four new gadgets that you will unlock throughout the story. Each gadget has its own unique ability that you will experience yourself to pull off new combos that get the job done to make New York City a safer place, whether it be loud or stealthy.

Stealth is back in "Spider-Man 2," but not as

Photo courtesy of wired.com



"Spider-Man 2" gives players new suits to style the Spider-Men while they protect New York City. The game features over 35 new suits that makes the crime-fighting web slinger look oh so good.

much as it was in the last game. There are some areas where you are given the option to stealth, but it usually isn't required. In "Spider-Man 2," you are mostly encouraged to go loud and fight enemies head on in the action.

The improvement of the combat in "Spider-Man 2" is a smile-filled moment that provides players with sequences to look forward to in the game. The new

features for combat gives players a wide range of elements to experiment with to make their time worthwhile.

### **Score (Music)**

The score in "Spider-Man 2" is something else. Thanks to John Paesano, composer, the "Spider-Man 2" soundtrack gives the game the meaning that should be exerted from a Spider-Man game.

The emotion that players feel from the story is because



of the score. While fighting the many bosses, going through each sequence and swinging through New York will make them feel the sunny skies, the rainy days and the cold winters of New York City on their skin.

Paesano's score mostly consists of orchestral music

many emotions, I couldn't contain myself. I was elated, nervous, angry and tearful. The feelings I felt just from the score alone were beautiful.

Paesano throws players for a loop each and every twist and turn of the game. Insomniac made an excellent

been added to heighten the activities in New York City.

Insomniac definitely got creative with their open-world events. They added a variety that requires you to use different game mechanics for each and every open world event although the amount of activities to do in the open world of "Spider-Man 2" doesn't feel like enough.

During the story you unlock open world missions one at a time, and while it may sound nice, you realize that there is but so much you can do. Some of the missions seem pointless because there is no cool fancy suit or anything; you just complete it and you're done.

This is a bit of a disappointment because the only time-consuming activity is a certain list of collectibles the game tasks you to find. The other open-world activities don't take too long to complete, which cuts your play time down.

While it may be disappointing that there aren't as many open-world activities, you can be

Photo courtesy of [logo-designer.co](https://www.logo-designer.co)



Insomniac Games has been working since 2020 to make "Spider-Man 2" the experience of a lifetime for Spider-Man fans across the world.

with a few slow, quiet songs that balance the intensity of the game. He navigates the game perfectly with each soundtrack by placing each sound in the most delicate spots to amplify the emotions for players.

While going through my first playthrough of "Spider-Man 2," I fell in love with the score of the game. I was feeling so

choice to leave the score of "Spider-Man 2" to him. He was able to not only contribute to the story, but also make a good score that is worth listening to.

### **Open World**

The open world in "Spider-Man 2" introduces new events around New York that players can look forward to; however, they could've

entertained by them, as well. The creative side missions and activity that the game gives you isn't boring at all. The game introduces open-world activities through the story that makes them feel natural.

In "Spider-Man 2," crimes are back as well. In the 2018 video game, they were more of a chore than anything to complete. In "Spider-Man 2," Insomniac has improved their chore-like crimes by adding a very interesting and enjoyable variety of crimes that players will be eager to take on.

The disappointing aspect of the open world may ruin it for players that complete the open world in a short amount of time. Even if the activities are creative and enjoyable, there should've been more that players can do as the two Spider-Men.

### **Final Verdict**

"Spider-Man 2" is truly an experience that no one can miss. Every aspect of the gameplay just makes the game better and better.

With the few disappointing aspects of the games, it doesn't take away from the fact that the game is still a

contender for Game of the Year. The story, score and gameplay are just incredible.

Insomniac really outdid themselves for the sequel of the 2018 Spider-Man game. They only prove that they've gotten better and better at telling the story and embodying the elements of Spider-Man.

"Spider-Man 2" is an experience that heightens the story of Insomniac's Spider-Man. With great power comes great responsibility and the development of an amazing Spider-Man game.

# Opinion: Native American heritage should be celebrated

by Ethan Greenwald

According to [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov), about 0.6 percent of Virginia's population is Native American, and while this is certainly not a large number, it's still important to embrace our differences and be inclusive to others.

According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Native American Heritage Month was first proclaimed as a national month by President George H.W. Bush in 1990. Native American Heritage Month is meant to serve as a reminder of the cultures and traditions of indigenous peoples and societies and

their contributions to the growth of the United States

Long before Columbus's landing in the Caribbean, the ancestors of North, South, and Mesoamerican peoples crossed an ice bridge connecting present-day Russia with Alaska. After the Ice Age ended, the bridge melted, and it would be until about 1000 A.D. until any people from either hemisphere would make contact with one another and an additional 500 years until the Age of Discovery began.

In the time between crossing the ice bridge and Colonialism, several cultures

and civilizations would form in the Americas and leave behind rich and interesting histories. Three of the more well-known civilizations of the "New World" are the Aztecs, Mayans and Incans, and while these societies are certainly incredible, there are many more to learn about and discover.

According to [theworld.org](https://www.theworld.org), Pre-Columbian America had an estimated population of 60 million people in 1492, certainly not a number to scoff at; however, as a result of European contact, nearly 95 percent of all indigenous peoples in the Americas died





as a result of "Old World" diseases. Because of the technological differences and dropping populations, native civilizations stood no chance against European Colonial Powers.

Over time, indigenous peoples would continue to be pushed farther and farther west into U.S. territories and put on Indian Reservations by the U.S. government. Native American Boarding Schools were established to attempt to "eliminate traditional American Indian ways of life and replace them with

mainstream American culture," according to the National Museum of the American Indian.

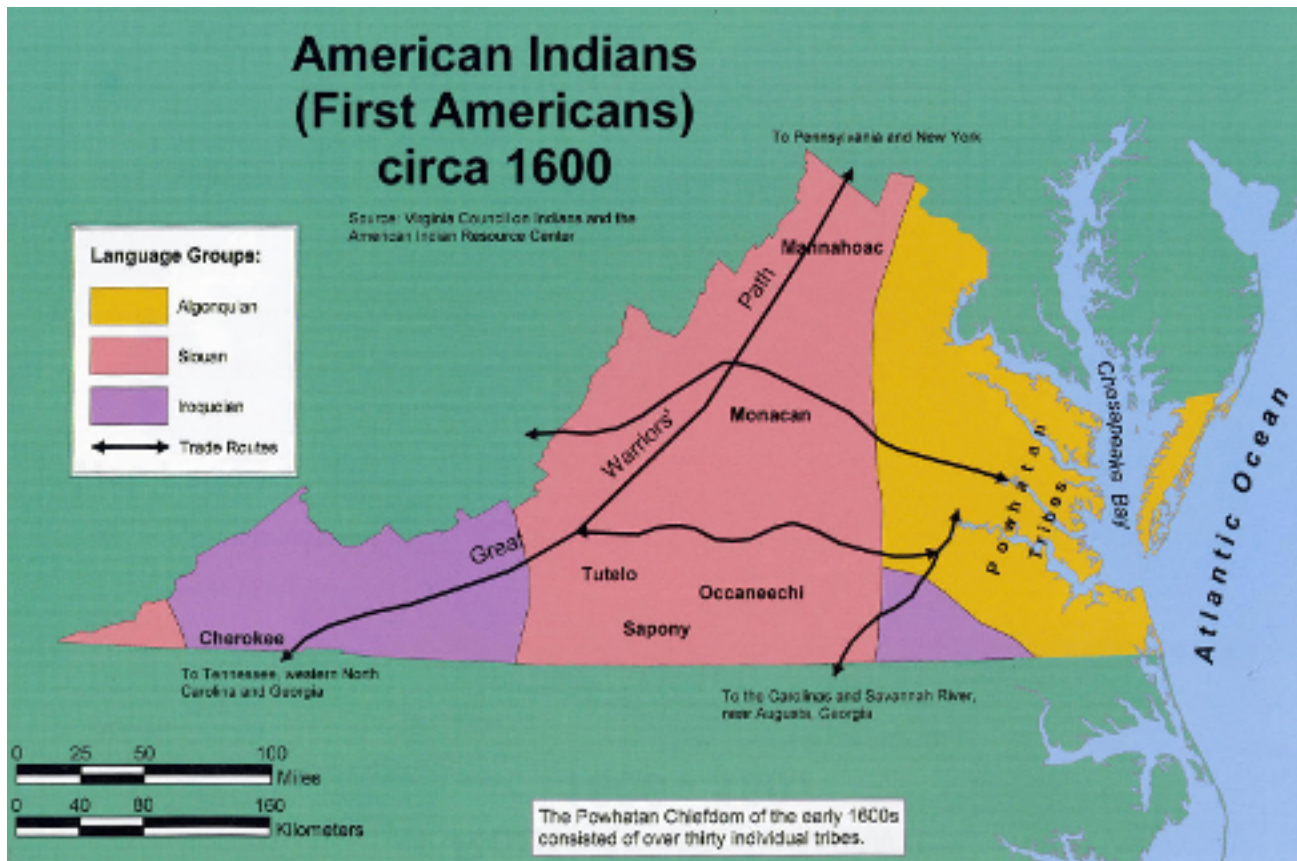
Today, the largest Indian Reservation is the Navajo Reservation, located in the "four corner" states of New Mexico, Utah, Colorado and Arizona.

According to the U.S. News & World Report, there are about 8.75 million people in the U.S. who identify as at least partially American Indian/Alaskan Native, making up about 2.6 percent of the U.S. population. There

are still many people of Native American descent in the U.S., and even more in Latin American countries, such as Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia.

We all come from different backgrounds and have different traditions, but it's important that we learn about other cultures and people so that we can better understand one another and strive for a more inclusive world.

Image courtesy of virginiaplaces.org



# Opinion: People start celebrating Christmas too early

by Khoi White

Christmas is one of the most beloved holidays and is celebrated by people in many countries. Over time, people have started celebrating much earlier than in the past, sometimes as early as Nov. 1. By beginning to celebrate Christmas a month earlier than before, people risk ruining what makes Christmas feel so magical.

It was once considered appropriate to wait until after Thanksgiving before decorating for Christmas, but in recent years, that no longer seems to be the case. There is a period of time after Christmas decorations, songs and festivities start that excitement starts growing, and people are happy to embrace the joy of Christmas. There is a risk, however, that the joy will peak long before Christmas arrives and holiday tunes, commercials and decorations will become overwhelming.

Another effect of starting Christmas celebrations so early is the tendency to

overlook all of the joy and traditions that come with Thanksgiving. When stores are decorated for Christmas, are playing Christmas music and are selling Christmas-themed products as early as the day after Halloween, it makes Thanksgiving feel like an afterthought.

Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate family and be grateful for what we have. Overlapping Thanksgiving traditions with Christmas celebrations feels wrong.

In the 1996 movie, “Elmo Saves Christmas,” Elmo makes a wish for Christmas to occur every day. This leads to a holiday disaster to the point of gifts remaining unopened, carolers losing their voices and Christmas trees going extinct. This example emphasizes that there can be too much of a good thing. October is the time to celebrate Halloween, and November is the time to celebrate Thanksgiving, which leaves December as the perfect time to begin celebrating Christmas.



# Opinion: Celebrating Christmas early increases happiness

by Allyson Cobb

Don't let people steal your joy; if decorating for Christmas in October will make you happy, then do it.

In an article published by Today.com, psychologist Deborah Serani confirms that the Christmas season can brighten spirits and make people happier.

"It does create that neurological shift that can produce happiness," said Dr. Serani in the Today.com article. "Christmas decorating will spike dopamine, a feel good hormone."

Most people have good memories from their childhood holidays, and the earlier they start Christmas, the earlier they can recreate and relive those very same happy memories.

"43 percent of Americans think it's suitable to put up holiday decorations before Nov. 1," said Zoya Gervis, in an article on nypost.com.

I, for one, think you could never start getting ready for

Christmas too early. When you're young, you spend all year looking forward to waking up for Christmas. Why is it any different now?

With the decorations out in



stores and the lights on houses already up, it's hard not to get excited for Christmas; by starting Christmas celebrations so early in the season, everyone has plenty of time to get in the holiday spirit.

Not to mention, starting the normal Christmas festivities, such as decorating and shopping for gifts, reduces your stress levels by not being overwhelmed closer to Christmas.

According to a survey conducted by First Beat Blogs, the amount of stress is at its highest -- 51 percent -- in the

month of December.

By starting the chores that come with Christmas just a little bit early, you have more time to plan and make arrangements.

The National Retail Administration estimates that Americans will spend anywhere from \$940 to \$960 billion this upcoming holiday season. If you start shopping early, then you can spread out your expenses.

Although it's not celebrated by everyone, Christmas and the days surrounding it are the happiest days of the year for many people. As you get older and older, it becomes even more special.

When you grow up and have kids of your own, you'll be able to pass along the traditions you did while growing up as well as making new ones with your own family.



# Student Government Day: Nov. 15

