

THE SPRESS

December 18, 2023

* 2023 WRAP UP

* MRS. MONTUORO

* OLIVER MILLER

South Park's shining scholars

Nicolas Bove



Front row inductees: Jason Gigliotti, Jakob Dubich, Elizabeth Cleaver, Athena Chen, Taylor Vargo, Ella Beck, Emily Smith, Addison Kerr, Nathan Klocek, Dominic Sprouse, Jessica Shaffer, Back row inductees: Elliott Giusti, Ella Clifford, Maclin Cassidy, Audrey Brewer, Alexa Albert, Alexandra Stringe, Alyssa Rider, Angelo Reynoso, Tiffany Meeder, Jacie Hilligsberg

On Thursday November 16th, The National Honor Society welcomed 21 new students to the organization. To earn membership to the prestigious service based organization, students must have maintained at least a 3.8 GPA, have consistently served the community, have held leadership positions, and demonstrated excellent character. These requirements are derived from the pillars of the NHS: Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character. It is quite a challenge to have met these requirements, thus the school is extremely proud of these new members. Now, they will join current members with projects such as tutoring, collection drives, and reading to elementary children.

Writing contest winner: Murphy Sofranko

Noah Fiscus

Last month, The SPress held a writing contest for the students of South Park High School. The rules of the contest were to create an original two sentence holiday story.

The best two sentence story was written by senior Murphy Sofranko. Murphy won a \$10.00 gift card to Sheetz for his tale. His story is reprinted below.

“The loud, thundering footsteps awoke the sleeping children as they hurriedly rushed out of their bed to catch Santa after bringing them presents. When the children eagerly went to tell their parents about the footsteps they heard in anticipation of Santa arriving. Mom and Dad responded with ‘Santa is not real- call the police.’”



Naughty or nice?

Savannah Booth



Say cheese to Santa and Krampus while both of them try to figure out which way is best to handle children on Christmas. Photo by Comic Art Fans

Growing up, many people have heard the stories of Santa Claus coming down their chimney to give them presents with many traditions to follow. While Santa is a big icon in the Christmas world... so is Krampus. Both Krampus and Santa have similarities and differences, both characters follow several traditions and come from different stories.

Santa Claus, otherwise known as Saint Nicholas or Kris Kringle, can be traced back hundreds of years to a monk named St. Nicholas. It is believed by many that Nicholas was born in Myra near modern-day Turkey. St. Nicholas was always said to be giving away all of his inherited wealth and traveling the countryside helping the poor and sick. Over the years, Nicholas's popularity spread and he became well-known as a protector of children and sailors. St. Nicholas made his way for the first time into American culture at the end of the 18th century. The name Santa Claus evolved from Nicholas's Dutch name, Sinterklaas. In 1804, John Pintard, a member of the New York Historical Society, gave woodcuts of St. Nicholas at the society's annual

meeting that had engravings of stockings filled with toys, fruits, and presents hung over a fireplace. Over time, Santa Claus started to spread throughout America and eventually around the rest of the world.

Traditions surrounding Santa Claus are depicted as Santa flying to homes on Christmas Eve to deliver toys to children. He flies on his magic sleigh led by his reindeer. Santa enters each home through the chimney and fills their stocking with toys and treats. Santa Claus is said to live with his wife, Mrs. Claus, and calls the North Pole home. Children are meant to write letters to Santa and leave cookies out as a thank you. Santa Claus keeps a naughty and nice list to determine who will get presents on Christmas morning and who will get coal.

However, the German Christmas traditions are more twisted than Santa. The legend of Krampus dates back centuries to a German Christmas tradition during the 12 century. Krampus is said to be a half-goat, half-demon monster that punishes the naughty children as a devilish companion of St. Nicholas. Krampus was thought to have been part of pagan rituals for the winter solstice. According to legend, he is the son of Hel, the Norse God of the underworld. With the spread of Christianity, Krampus became associated with Christmas despite the Catholic churches wanting nothing to do with him. Beginning in early December, the children of Germany begin to hear whispers of a dark-haired creature with huge horns and fangs that would carry a bundle of birch sticks which would be used to swat naughty children. According to traditional Alpine folklore, Krampus would enter the towns, lashing his chains and bells to capture the bad children in a basket to bring them down to the underworld on December 5th.

Many traditions follow Krampus but one of the most popular is Krampuslauf, the Krampus Run. In this activity, people will dress as Krampus with alcohol and parade through streets, scaring viewers and sometimes chasing them. It is also customary to offer a Krampus schnapps, which is a strong distilled fruit brandy. Although some try to forget about Krampus, his teachings are still widely spread all over. Just in Pennsylvania on

Naughty or nice? (con't)

Savannah Booth

December 5, Krampusnacht was celebrated in Market Square to share the teaching of Krampus and to celebrate with performers, holiday shops, and food.

In South Park, many students are not very educated on Krampus besides the fact that he is a naughty and more disturbing version of Santa Claus. In Frau Schemm's German class, her lessons include the history and the cultural beliefs of the many versions of Krampus to inform students about who this Christmas icon is. Frau states, "Krampus is the Austrian version of Knecht Ruprecht or der schwarze Peter. The children do not want a visit from him on St. Nicholas Day. He is known as the evil Santa and he scares them. They tend to behave because they are afraid of him." Krampus is important to learn about because it is an important tradition in German/Austrian and entire European culture. In most versions of Krampus throughout Europe, he carries a whip.

Both Krampus and Santa Claus hold a significant place in the history of Christmas. While Santa is known for bringing joy and presents to children, Krampus serves as a reminder to be good and kind throughout the year. Both characters have many traditions and stories that have been passed down through generations, and they will continue to be celebrated in various ways around the world. Whether you believe in the magic of Santa Claus or the teachings of Krampus, the holiday season is a time to come together and celebrate the spirit of giving and kindness.

IMPORTANT DATES

December 18: Concert band and chorus holiday concert

December 21: First day of winter

December 22: Festivus

December 22: Early dismissal at 11:00am

December 23-January 2: Winter Break

December 25: Christmas

December 26: Kwanzaa begins

January 1: New Year's Day

History in our own backyard

Callie Heynes

When golfing on the South Park golf course or driving through the park, many people often don't think about how much of this land wasn't always modern. But a blast to the past may remind us of this. Through the American Revolution lessons, activities, and Horrible History episodes, middle schoolers learned about the Whiskey Rebellion and our close relation to it as remains of settlers' lives still endure hundreds of years, right in South Park's backyard.

In early America, the 18th to the 19th century was a time of unrest due to heavy taxes forced from Great Britain to America. European settlers would come over in hopes of finding a new life, settling in what is now Pennsylvania for hundreds of years starting in the mid 1600's. In 1742, a young Oliver Miller had transported him and his family from northern Ireland to new beginnings in America. Originally he settled in Pennsylvania, but moved to Maryland as a small scale merchant. Years later, he moved back to Pennsylvania, traveling over the Allegheny Mountains and over rivers to the house modern South Parkers can visit even now in 2023.

At this time, many people of all kinds of origins, English, French, or German, also made this dangerous trek from nation to nation. According to the Philadelphia Encyclopedia, at the time, the Scots-Irish were considered the most diverse non-English speaking group, 15% of the state's population in 1790. Modernly, from the years of 1717 to 1773, many Scots-Irish largely immigrated away from civil and religious unrest in Europe to a new hope as they favored settling in Pennsylvania for its farming ability and religious liberty. Lots of Scots-Irish peoples fought in the Whiskey Rebellion, including Oliver Miller.

The first shots of the Whiskey Rebellion were fired on Miller's property. Unfortunately, many of the Miller's family members have died and had blood spilled for their beliefs. Yet, they continued to fight for many years and the homestead still holds the same traditions and spirit of those times. Not only is this site historically and politically important, people need to find out about the hardships of the past in order to appreciate modern luxuries.

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History in our own backyard (con't)

Callie Heynes

The old farmhouse was owned for many years by the County Federation of Women’s Club in the 1930s but since the 1970s has been owned by an open volunteer organization. The homestead itself is owned by the Allegheny County Parks Department but is operated by Oliver Miller Homestead Associates. Lots of work by county officials, workers, and volunteers have been put into furnishing and taking care of the property to preserve what remains of the past. Volunteers there dedicate time to showing visitors myths and tales of the time, the process of candle-making, or even blacksmithing. Now, especially in December, many events are happening to commemorate the past. One of these events is an annual dance in traditional American/Scots-Irish music and dance will take place by performers to teach the public about how traditions have formed from nation to nation and century to century. This dance has already taken place on December 3rd. However, there are still opportunities to do self guided tours. The homestead is open to the public every Sunday afternoon from 1:30 to 4:30 for self guided tours.

You don’t have to just learn about history, you can love and live it too. It is crucial to develop an understanding of the past, remember those who have settled before us, and share our heritage. More information about events and possible membership volunteering opportunities can be found on their website.



Oliver Miller Homestead’s main house
 Picture courtesy of Oliver Miller Homestead’s website

What lurks in South Park

Khai Brown

In the past few years, South Park residents have put several complaints and warnings into the South Park Township Facebook page about coyotes in their yards or uncomfortably close to the roads where they walk their dogs. In the past two years, in the middle of the night these loud canines can be heard from all around South Park. Even in broad daylight, they’re spotted in areas such as Stoltz, Hilldale, Wilson Road, and even the Montour Trail has had many sightings and warnings from residents on the Facebook page about the issue of coyotes.

This is becoming an issue for people with outdoor cats and people trying to walk their dogs as now they are worrying about whether it’s safe or not for their beloved pets.

Some South Park residents speculate that more coyote sightings are a cause of the coyote’s habitat being stripped away as more houses and buildings are placed. Specifically in Summit Station when in 2019 they started the process of building the townhouses for Ryan Homes. With nowhere to go, they’re heavily populating the wooded areas nearby. Even if it’s not exactly proven, it’s clear these canines are becoming more bothersome with their loud howling as more reports on the Facebook page come in each month. Keep yourself and your pets safe as these canines lurk around, even in places you won’t expect.



Coyote spotted on Queens Drive

Birthday corner

December

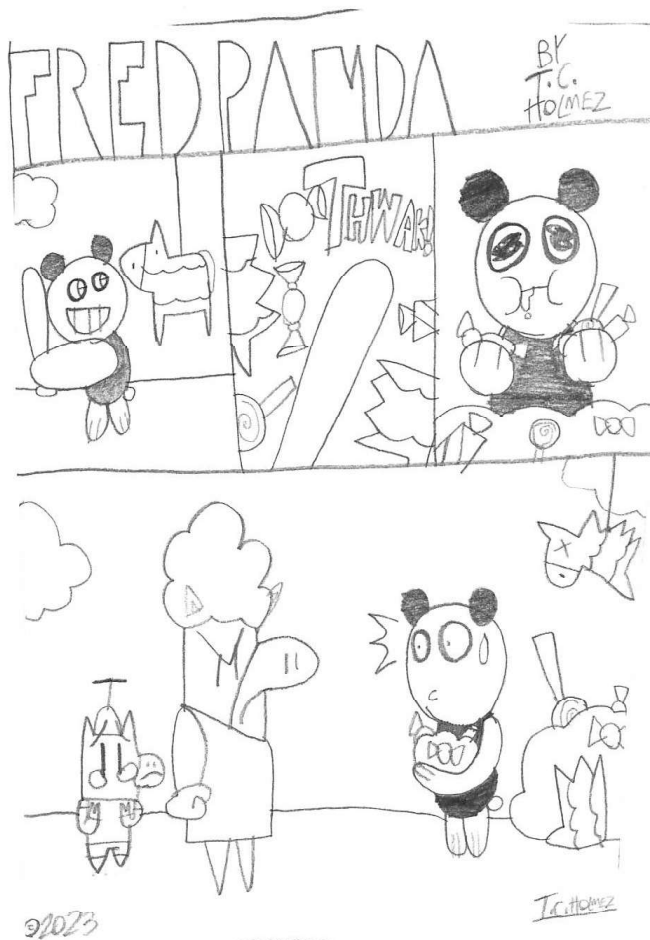
- Colin Kinevy - 19th
- Dominic Dugas - 19th
- Patrick Flannery - 20th
- Halie Malley - 21st
- Lila Jesensky - 21st
- Landrie Craig - 23th
- Desiree Philman - 23th
- Tiffany Meeder - 26th
- Joseph Anselm - 26th
- Aiden Fehr - 27th
- Logan Ludwig - 27th
- Ryan Zubasic - 28th
- Katie Thurston - 28th
- Dominic Wall - 29th
- Piper Stock - 30th
- Sydney Sekely - 30th
- Kimara Linton - 31st

January

- Kara Ferguson - 2nd
- Giana LaFrankie - 2nd
- Madelynn Serechin - 2nd
- Owen Lafferty - 3rd
- Brionne Brown - 3rd
- Zach Britton - 4th
- Kaden Kostelnik - 5th
- Noah Haddad - 6th
- Brooke Paylo - 6th
- Isabella Barker - 6th
- Alani Brown - 7th
- Camaren Terry - 8th
- Tamaryn Johnson - 8th
- Robert Reinheimer - 9th
- Kasey Wagner - 9th
- Grace Kempton - 9th
- Hayden Mirena - 9th

Cartoon

Tom Holmes



Bleachings in our seas

Megan Beam

Did you know that over half a billion people and over one million aquatic species rely on coral reefs? They are helpful in so many different ways that you probably didn't even think of. Regardless of that, the reefs are dying and coral species are becoming endangered day after day. What is coral? Well, believe it or not, coral is an animal! Coral exists at the tissue level and they are very simple. In turn, they do not have internal organs. Their nervous systems are connected to their muscular systems. However, they have a dedicated reproductive system. Certain corals are hermaphrodites, which means they have both male and female reproductive systems, and they can produce eggs and sperm. There are over 6,000 species of coral including sea fans, sea pansies, and anemones.

Coral has an interesting symbiotic relationship with zooxanthellae, a type of microscopic algae. The zooxanthellae lives in the tissue of the coral polyp and converts carbon dioxide and water into oxygen and carbohydrates. The polyp uses the carbohydrates as nutrients and the oxygen for respiration. The carbon dioxide goes back to the zooxanthellae and the coral saves energy. However, when the water is too warm, the coral will expel the zooxanthellae that live in their polyps. Thus turning the coral a bright white color. 1,980 species, or 33 percent of coral species are considered threatened or endangered due to pol-

lution, human activities, and global warming. Global warming is happening because of greenhouse gasses blanketing the earth and trapping in the sun's heat, in turn that is causing the sea level and temperature to rise. Corals are highly sensitive to temperature, even very minuscule changes can deeply affect them. Temperature change can cause reduced growth, reproduction issues, vulnerability to infectious diseases, bleaching, as stated previously, and death. Although bleaching is very detrimental, the coral is not dead when bleached.

You might think that this is irrelevant, but it really isn't. Coral reefs help marine life, the environment, and people. 25 percent of the ocean's fish rely on healthy reefs. They use the reefs for habitat and shelter, food, spawning and reproduction, and nursery grounds. Coral reefs provide jobs and food for people in surrounding communities, especially on islands. They also are used as a replacement for bone. Coral is perfect for transplants because it does not carry the risk of transmitting HIV, Hepatitis, and more diseases. There is also a lower risk of infection when using coral. It is also used in dental and facial surgeries. Reefs also protect coastlines from extreme weather, storms, and erosion.

As a society we need to enact a change because global warming affects so much more than just the temperature.



Bleached coral

All about Mrs. Montuoro

Addi Yochum

The teacher highlight of this month's issue is Mrs. Montuoro! You might've seen her in the math hallway teaching her students, and also in the pool room coaching the swim team! Mrs. Montuoro has lots of experience in teaching mathematics, and working with students. She graduated from Carlow University with a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and science, and she also has a master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. After she graduated, she taught 7th and 8th grade math at South Park Middle School, and computer science for eight years. After that, she applied to be the assistant principal at the middle school, and after eight years of being in that position, she moved up here, to the High School to teach math.

When she was asked what her favorite part of teaching is, she said, "My favorite parts about teaching here are my department colleagues and the students in my classes. They all make the days much better! Everyone has bad days, but when you can encourage others and smile, it makes the day so much better." Mrs. Montuoro also shared her experience of how she initially wanted to be an accountant, but realized she didn't like sitting in a cubicle all alone. Teaching allowed her to communicate with students and other teachers, and also do what she loves.

In her free time, she likes to work on her travel business. She said, "If there was free time to fill with a hobby, I do love to read!" If you didn't know, Mrs. Montuoro coaches the varsity swim team every day after school. She's been involved in swimming ever since her daughter was six. When her daughter applied to be the swim coach here, she decided it would be fun if she joined her to continue her love of the sport. Since her daughter is no longer coaching the swim team anymore, Mrs. Montuoro is now the head coach. She added, "I love working with the swimmers and am in awe of the dedication and determination they have to be the best they can be!"

When she was asked how the high school has changed since she graduated, she said that when she graduated, the high school was where the football field is now! She describes the old building as dark, and that it had skinny hallways that were hard to walk through with everyone else. She explained that the current high school building is nicer, and more open and bright.

Mrs. Montuoro is loved by her students, from the math hallway, all the way to the pool deck. Mrs. Montuoro has clearly left a lasting impression on South Park!



2023 wrap up

Jessa Harmer & Erika Filous

2023 as we know it has had some of the most memorable events that we have seen. We have even had a lot going on in South Park. Here's a wrap up of the most impactful events.

South Park

New playground - The South Park playground has been needing to be rebuilt. The playground has recently opened along the intersection of Corrigan Drive.

SPEC construction - Along with the playground, there has been construction at the South Park Elementary School. They have added a huge addition near the side of the building. The reason for this was because of more housing developments, increasing the elementary school needs.

SPHS fall sports - Along with this, all the fall sports, girls' volleyball, boys' and girls' soccer, golf, cross country, girls' tennis, and football in South Park went to playoffs. Go Eagles!

America

Barbie - One of the biggest movies of all time, Barbie, was released on July 21st. It made \$1.3 billion dollars at the box office.

X - You also might have woken up one day confused if you have Twitter, and you couldn't find it on your home screen. Twitter changed its name to X surprisingly, confusing many.

Hollywood strikes - A Hollywood writer and actor strike concerning better pay as well as contracts that include provisions on artificial intelligence shut down Hollywood. The writer's strike ended September 27, and the actor's strike ended November 9.

Hawaii wildfires - Hawaii wildfires were a huge thing to happen this year. They impacted people by destroying more than 2,000 homes. Drought and abnormally dry conditions were reported throughout Hawaii causing major wildfires to break out. From all of this damage, it cost about \$6 billion in economic losses. This is a very tragic event that happened in Hawaii, and a lot of families and friends are affected by it daily.

World

The Titan - In June, a submarine called the Titan submarine went missing. The purpose of the submarine was to find Titanic wreckage. It took searchers about four days to find the submarine. They discovered parts of the Titan about 1,600 ft from the bow of the Titanic.

Canadian wildfires - The Canada extreme wildfires had burned an estimated 45.5 million acres, an area roughly the size of North Dakota. Smoke was seen all the way to New York and Pennsylvania, causing people to have to stay inside due to dangerous air.

Israel vs. Hamas War - One of the most tragic incidents going on right now is the Israel and Hamas war. Since 2006, Israel and Hamas have fought five wars. Many families are being affected to this day due to this war. There have already been so many losses, including many Americans.

The year 2023 has had many events, some good and some bad. In the end, we have all survived another year.