

THE SPRESS

February 22, 2024

* LIBRARY

* MRS. FETH

* SWIMMING SENIORS

Academic League wins again

Addi Yochum



Jakob Dubich, Alexandra Stringe, Mia Bonacic-Doric, Sean Swartzwelder, Aakriti Gurung, Brian Grace



Murphy Sofranko, Elli-Anne Laing, Sean Swartzwelder

When someone mentions school pride and competition, you might think about football games or other sports. However, school pride and competition also includes the Academic League. On January 24, the Varsity Academic League team won first place in the Varsity South Western Regional Championship. The students who competed included Mia Bonacic-Doric, Jakob Dubich, Brian Grace, Aakriti Gurung, Alexandra Stringe, and Sean Swartzwelder. Other Academic League students like Elli-Anne Laing, Murphy Sofranko, and again Sean Swartzwelder were featured on KD Quiz, a KDKA trivia show that included three teams, which aired on Saturday, January 27th.

For those who don't know what Academic Leagues is, it's whenever two teams from different schools compete against each other to answer trivia questions about several subjects, such as history, english, science, and even arts and music. They compete for who buzzes in first, and then they say what they think the answer is.

When students were asked about why they decided to join Academic League, Alexandra Stringe, junior, said, "I used to be in Academic Games in middle school and enjoyed it, but wanted more of a team aspect. I found that aspect in the Academic League." Other students reported they joined because of their love for competition, learning, and because of friends on the team that recommended it.

As a team, the academic league enjoys many moments together, such as competing and encouraging each other. Jakob Dubich, a junior on the team, said, "I love to travel to the other schools." When you think of competing against other teams and being under the pressure to think of an answer before them, it sounds stressful. However, students on the team say that they would only get stressed if they didn't know the answer to a question. Stringe claims, "I do get stressed when I'm asked a question that I do not 100 percent know the answer to. I'll have an answer in my mind, but I won't say it even though it is most likely right." On the other hand, Dubich said, "No, I feel relaxed because I love the competition."

There's also a debate on which is more competitive, sports or Academic League. Well according to most students on the team, sports are more competitive. Sean Swartzwelder, junior, said, "I'd say sports because sports usually have the spirit of the crowd." At a sports game, there's more pressure from the crowd and on your teammates to do good. Stringe also said "Sports is definitely more competitive. Academic League allows more room for fun." Students also claim that a sports win is more meaningful because of the celebrations after the games.

Even though sports are more competitive, the Academic League team still brought home a trophy and recognition. Congratulations to everyone on the team, and everyone that was featured on KDKA.

Check out the new library

Noah Fiscus



The new couch is colorful and is the perfect spot to curl up with a book

Maybe some of you have noticed the renovations in the library. Have you seen the new booths? The big double-sided couch? The lower shelves? All of these and even more are available in the newly renovated space in the library.

Mrs. Finberg, the school librarian and English teacher, benefitted the most from the new library. Mrs. Finberg said that her favorite new addition was the low shelves, because “there is lots more natural light and I can see the entire space.” She also shared that “the renovations have made it easier for me to teach students because the classroom area is dynamic and able to accommodate a variety of classes.”

Many students have definitely enjoyed the change, too. When asked, most students exclaimed their love for the new booths, and some showed interest in the unique color of the furniture. Vassilia Bouzos, a senior, stated, “I feel like the lighter furniture gives me a happier and calming feeling.” Alexandra Stringe, a junior, said she feels more comfortable in the library now, “because there’s more comfy places to sit and relax.” Leah Sturdivant, a senior, takes advantage of the new changes. She replied, “I like the chairs when I come down to read during SOAR reading, and I like the booths for studying with a group.”

Overall, the library renovations have definitely made a positive impact on the high school and have helped students in many different ways. While the library is closed 11th period, you can check out the library during your study hall or in lunches 5 or .



The classroom area encourages students to work together



Students can choose from a variety of seating options

Not alone

Erika Filous

Everyone is familiar with cancer. February is known for a lot of things, like Black History Month and Valentine’s Day. But, what some people don’t know is that February is also Cancer Prevention Month. Cancer isn’t something that only affects older people. A senior from Peters Township High School, Kayla Keegan, was unfortunately diagnosed with leukemia and was kind enough to share her story.

Symptoms of cancer can be detected early, but can also be confused for something else. Kayla had confused her symptoms for a long time. She stated, “It started with easy bleeding, bruising, and persistent fatigue. I was juggling my time between honors, AP, and swimming classes. I thought that could be the answer for my tiredness and body pain. Random bruises also occur on every girl’s legs with no idea how they got there.” Her and her mom had overlooked the symptoms until they both came to the conclusion that it was more serious than they thought.

Along with getting diagnosed, there are also many mental struggles. Kayla stated that she struggled with denial, along with already having a fear of the unknown. She said that she tried to cope with the fact that she was now a cancer patient, but she had to end up accepting it. Hearing news like this would be hard on anyone, especially as a teen. As a teen she was still developing and in school. With Kayla’s cancer, she has been forced to stay home.

While battling the disease, coping can be a hard part of the process. Some treatments could be

harder than others, leaving her with overwhelming thoughts of what could happen. Kayla said that her friends and family helped her the most whenever treatments got hard. She said that they gave her a sense of hope, that she thought she could never find. She is even grateful for people she didn’t even know, because they took the time to send cards and care packages. She is forever grateful for the community she is surrounded by at a hard time like this.

Cancer is a hard subject to talk about for everyone. Not only is it hard for the patient, but it’s hard on the family. Cancer Prevention Month highlights people who have struggled or have been struggling with the disease. This month also highlights the struggle of every patient and family. In all, there are many organizations out there like American Cancer Society and CancerCare. You are never alone, you will always have someone to talk to.



Kayla Keegan’s senior photo

IMPORTANT DATES

- February 21: Scheduling meetings
- February 26: 2024-2025 Scheduling forms due
- March 4: Spring sports start
- March 10: Daylight savings begins
- March 17: St. Patrick’s Day
- March 19: First day of spring
- March 22: End of 3rd nine weeks
- March 25: No school
- March 29-April 1: Spring break

FEBRUARY
**NATIONAL
 CANCER**
 PREVENTION MONTH



Black excellence

Savannah Booth



Photo courtesy of The Guardian

Ever wonder where celebrations of different months come about? Well, Black History Month is recognized during the month of February to symbolize the strength that African Americans have and all they have accomplished. August Wilson is recognized especially in Pittsburgh because of the massive impact he made and still makes on the African American community.

Many people in history have made major impacts in history, but Pittsburgh playwright, August Wilson, made one of the biggest for many. Frederick August Kittel was born on April 27, 1945 in the Hill District community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In high school, Wilson struggled with his social life, and during his freshman year he secretly dropped out of high school after being accused of plagiarism and began to educate himself at the Carnegie Library during his school hours. Wilson started writing plays right before relocating to Minneapolis where he received a fellowship at the Minnesota Playwrights Center, which led to his acceptance into the National Playwrights Conference at the O’Neil Theater Center in Connecticut. During the conference, Lloyd Richards, dean of Yale University School of Drama and artistic director of the Yale Repertory Theatre, ended up making a major impact on Wilson and later became a father figure to him.

Wilson’s greatest contribution to American culture would be his ten-play cycle that covers 100 years of African American hopes and struggles.

Two of August Wilson’s play that received the Pulitzer prize for drama includes, “Fences” and “The Piano Lesson.” The ten-cycle play combines historical facts, comedy, and gritty realism with supernatural elements of African American cultures. Over the course of Wilson’s life, he was honored with many awards, the Tony, seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards, as well as the Carnegie Library giving him an honorary degree.

Many people in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania still are inspired by Wilson and want to share history with others. In Downtown Pittsburgh, the August Wilson African American Cultural Center can be located. The center is one of the largest organizations in the country which focuses on the arts of the African diaspora, which also is a dedication exhibit to August Wilson. The exhibition explores the people and places of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania that have made an important impact. The exhibit shows all of the main places of Wilson’s life which include, the coffee shop where he came to observe as a kid, the office where he worked, and the street that shows the neighborhood that he grew up in for much of his life. When going to his center you can explore many events that are always going on that revolve around the African American community and their culture. If you visit their website at awaacc.org, you can find ways to visit and schedule tours if you are interested in learning more!

As we celebrate Black History Month, it’s important to recognize the significant contributions that August Wilson made to African American culture and history. Through his plays, Wilson gave voice to the Black experience in America, shedding light on the struggles and triumphs of a community that has often been silenced and pushed aside. His legacy continues to inspire and educate people around the world, reminding us of the importance of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of society. We honor not only August Wilson’s life but all African Americans this Black History Month by reflecting on the impact they have and by continuing to support and uplift the voices of those who continue to share theirs.

Birthday corner

February

Andrea Barbosa- 16

Ava D'Agostino-18

Zachary Gantner- 19

Antonio Stanley- 20

Joshua Stringe- 20

Bella Washington- 20

Cameron Caldwell- 21

Rylan Giles- 21

Kylie Mettrick- 21

Brody Wojcik- 21

Kyle Furman- 22

Maclin Cassidy- 23

Riley Marone- 23

Lyan Coelho- 24

Madisyn Philips- 24

John Tusai- 24

Ryan Ellis- 25

Dominic Orr- 25

Katherine Seitz- 25

Jaiden Anderson- 27

Valentine's day

Jessa Harmer

Valentine's Day is about spending time with your friends and loved ones. They celebrate it by sending gifts and letters. The holiday started in the 14th century and became associated with romantic love.

When Valentine's Day is brought up, the thought of candy, gifts, and letters come up. The real question is, how did it all really start? It originated as a Christian feast day honoring a martyr, someone who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs, named Valentine. The Saint Valentine of Valentine's Day was one of the two guys preaching the good word, signing the note "Love from your Valentine," in Rome in the third century. Valentine was put to death on February 14th, 269. The priest was put to death by the Emperor Claudius II Gothicus. Now, this makes Valentine's Day a day for couples to celebrate their love for each other by giving each other gifts, candy, and letters.

Do people like and celebrate Valentine's Day? Erika Filous, a freshman, said, "I think that Valentine's Day is a sweet day to spend time

with your significant other, or even a friend!" Valentine's Day is a nice day of the year and it shows others how much you care for them. Everyone loves candy on this holiday. Abbie Schweitzer, also a freshman, and Erika Filous said that their favorite Valentine's Day candy is chocolate. Candy is a nice treat and mostly known to be given on Valentine's Day, but there are other things too. Nika Contakos, a freshman, said that the nicest thing someone has done for her is take her out for dinner. Erika said, "Last year, my boyfriend gave me chocolate and a paragraph explaining how much he loved me." A lot of people experience very nice things for Valentine's Day. This holiday is important so you can show your loved ones your love for them.

Valentine's Day has a lot of history behind it. To this day, it's still celebrated for romantic love and gift giving. Even if you don't celebrate Valentine's Day, it's important to remember how it became the day it is now.

Keeping up with Feth

Khai Brown



The lovely Mrs. Feth

A teacher who is loved by most students who know her has got to be Mrs. Feth. She works so hard and has a kindness to her that is what draws her students to come back even after they've left her class. But what do we know about Mrs. Feth, she's surely more than a teacher, right? She sure is. She's a mother of three, a wife, an athlete and an amazing person. She's worked here for five years but not many people know much about her, so let's find out. She's a lot like some of our students, when asked what sport she did in high school it may surprise some people. Mrs. Feth was a swimmer for a four years of high school and even swam for a year

in college but quit to make time for two jobs. But where did she go to college? Like some other teachers here, she also went to Slippery Rock.

Did you know Mrs. Feth didn't originally plan to be a teacher? She originally wanted to be a chiropractor, but due to a wrist injury she didn't pursue it and changed her mind to be a teacher. All jobs have a hard part, but what did she find to be the hardest part? When she worked in an elementary school she found some of the behaviors to be a challenge, even now some behaviors students display can be a bit of a struggle. Even students close to Mrs. Feth don't have to know everything and that's okay, but what's something not many people in general know about her? That she used to be a runner. Mrs. Feth has run nine half marathons before she had a shoulder injury, but that doesn't stop her from moving. She still stays active with indoor cycling, good for her!

Mrs. Feth contributes so much to her students, she provides a comfortable environment for them and goes out of her way to make her room feel like a safe place. If there's ever a teacher students should be able to talk to in a casual manner it should be Mrs. Feth. She's just one of many of South Park's amazing teachers, standing out of her way to bring students comfort away from home.

Bouncing into the future

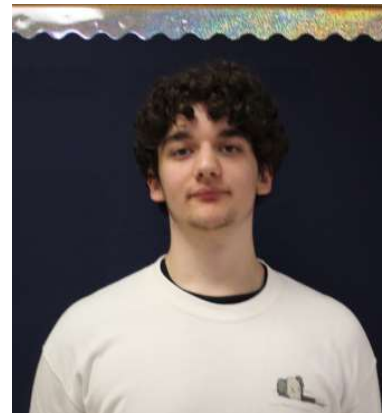
Callie Heynes



Nicolas Bove



Jack Ozimek



Drake Barbara

There are three seniors on the boys' basketball team this year. Of all the players, these three seniors are Nicolas Bove, Jack Ozimek, and Drake Barbara. As their season draws to a close, it is time to think back on their years of playing. During the senior rec night, these three were honored for their commitment to the team, dedication to their teammates, and their work ethic. It is not only a night to remember their time on the team, but also their overall contribution to the team. Drake Barbara has been playing basketball for nine years since his brother inspired him to play. When Drake talks about his time on the team, his favorite memory actually has nothing to do with basketball at all. Of his four years on the high school team, his favorite memory includes passing out gifts to families in need for Christmas. He says, "It felt very rewarding for the team".

Nicolas Bove is someone who has been playing basketball since freshman year who decided

to give basketball a shot. Looking back, Nicolas will cherish yet miss the camaraderie between the players on the team. One piece of advice that he wants to leave behind for his teammates is, "Always work hard and have a good attitude."

Not only is this a time for the players and team to reflect on time spent together, but it is an opportunity for the community to have a glimpse of the team. Friends, family, students, and alumni came together to encourage and cheer the 2023-2024 basketball team for one of the last times on February 9th.

The result of the game was a win for South Park, with a score of 41-26. Regardless of the score at the end of the game, a final opportunity to play and have that sense of team unity leaves a lasting impression on all. This game is not only about basketball, but about the individual growth of each and every player to make this game memorable for seniors and all. The boys' team will continue their journey with a playoff game on Monday, Feb. 19th at Yough.

The last splash

Megan Beam



Ridvan Karakoca, Aiden Yochum, Ethan Rakip, Josh Kosmach, Matthew Chekan, Katie Jackovic, Will Price

This year the South Park High School swim team has 7 seniors. They were celebrated on February 1, 2024 at the home meet against Ringgold. After the meet, there was dinner and then seniors gave their speeches.

Our first senior is the girl's team captain, Katie Jackovic. Katie has been on the high school swim team for four years but she has done club swimming for 14 years. Over her time on the high school swim team, Katie has been a three time WPIAL champion, a four time state qualifier, and she has already qualified for WPIALs again this year. She will be going for the 100 freestyle and 100 butterfly, competing for a chance to race at states. After high school, Katie plans on going to the University of Cincinnati and continuing her swimming career. Katie said she will miss laughing with her lane buddy, Megan. "If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be able to finish some practices." However, her favorite memory was dancing to "Drop Em' Out" in the Longhorn Steakhouse parking lot in front of Tom Keyda, our old athletic director, her freshman year.

Our next senior is Will Price, the boys team captain. Will has been a member of the high school for four years and he was also on the middle school team for a year. During high school, Will attended trade school for three years and

learned many new skills. After high school, he plans on working. Will's favorite memory was going out to eat at Buffalo Wild Wings after a meet when Josh Kosmach did the Blazin Challenge.

Josh Kosmach, the boys assistant captain, has been a part of the high school swim team for the past four years. While being on the team, Josh went to WPIALs his junior year and he has made so many friends and memories he will never forget. He has also qualified for WPIALs in the 100 breaststroke as of February 17, 2024. He plans on going to a university to get a degree in civil engineering after high school. He will deeply miss the inside jokes and memories that he and his teammates have made together. Josh's favorite memory was WPIALs his junior year.

The next senior being highlighted is Aiden Yochum. He has been a part of the high school team for two years and over that time he has accomplished pretty good technique with all strokes, a fitter lifestyle, and better endurance. Aiden stated that he will miss going out with the team after swim meets. His post high school plans are to become a city of Pittsburgh fireman. Lastly, Aiden's favorite swim memory is when the team went out bowling after a hard Saturday practice.

Our next senior is Ridvan Karakoca. Ridvan has

The last splash (Con't)

Megan Beam

been on the high school team for four years and he was also a part of the middle school team for a year. During his time on the swim team, he made it to WPIALs this year for the 200 freestyle relay and the 200 medley relay, and he dropped time in the 50 free and 100 fly. Ridvan said that the thing he will miss the most is the team. His post high school plans are to attend CCAC. Ridvan's favorite memory is all of them. He enjoyed making bonds that will last a lifetime with his teammates and he will remember the memories he made along the way .

Next up is Matthew Chekan. He has been on the high school team for all four years and then he was on the middle school team as well. While on the team he went to WPIALs his junior year for the 200 medley relay and this year he is swimming backstroke in the 200 medley relay at WPIALs. Matt, along with many of the other seniors, stated he will miss going out after meets and

getting dinner. Matt plans on going to college for a degree in political science and a minor in economics after high school. Matt's favorite memory is when he did a front flip off the block in practice because he thought the buzzer went off when it didn't.

Last but not least, we have Ethan Rakip. Ethan has been on the high school swim team for all four years, as well as the middle school team for two. During his junior year, Ethan qualified for the 200 medley relay, swimming butterfly. This year, Ethan has not only again qualified for the medley relay, swimming the freestyle, but also in the 200 freestyle relay. Additionally, Ethan has qualified individually for the 50 freestyle. After high school, Ethan plans on attending a four year college with an intention of majoring in engineering. Ethan's favorite memory is swimming at WPIALs during his junior year.

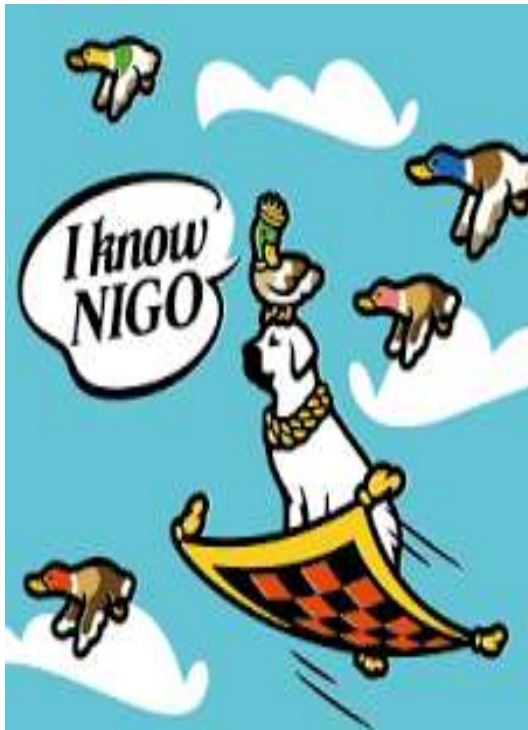
We will miss our seniors and we wish them all the best of luck!

Comic by Tom Holmes



Caelyn's mixtape

Caelyn Robbins



Welcome to Caelyn's Mixtape, your monthly music recommendation to help expand your taste. If you have ever heard of the brand Bape (bathing ape) you probably know how big the brand is recognized in the music industry. But you might not know that the designer behind Bape, "Nigo", also produces music. His album "I Know NIGO!" came out in 2022 and features many artists including: A\$AP Rocky, Tyler the Creator, Pusha T, Clipse, Pharrell Williams, Gunna, Kid Cudi, Teriyaki Boyz, A\$AP Ferg, Pop Smoke, and Lil Uzi Vert. This album has a very classic hip hop and rap sound to it but also more modern electronic beats mixed in to create the perfect harmony. I find this album to be slightly underrated. Considering how many artists are featured on the album, I think it should be talked about more. My favorite song off of this album would have to be "Come On, Let's Go". Tyler, the Creator is rapping this song and he does it so effortlessly and perfectly. The song is extremely catchy and a great summer song.

If you have any music suggestions, DM me on [instagram@caelyn.robbins](https://www.instagram.com/caelyn.robbins).

Release radar

Caelyn Robbins

January 5th

DJ Booker & NLE Choppa - "The chosen ones" (rap)

January 10th

Teezo Touchdown - "How do you sleep at night? with you" (hip-hop)

January 12th

21 Savage- "American dream" (rap)
 Blueface - "Free blueface" (rap)
 Kali Uchis - "Orquídeas" (r&b / neo soul Latin)
 Kid Cudi- "Insano" (rap)
 Vacations - "No place like home" (indie)

January 19th

Ericdoa- "dead on arrival" (pop/rap)
 Lil Tecca- "TEC" (rap)

January 26

Lyrical Lemonade - "All is yellow" (rap/hip hop)

February 1st

Hit Boy & The Alchemist - "Theodore & Andre" (hip-hop)

February 2nd

Scrim - "Lonely boy" (hip-hop/punk rap)

February 9th

Declan Mckenna - "What happened to the beach?" (indie pop)

February 10th

Kanye West & Ty Dolla \$ign - "Vultures" (hip-hop / rap)

February 23rd

Jazmin Bean- "Traumatic Livelihood" (hyperpop/alternative)

Release radar (con't)

Caelyn Robbins

Hit Boy & The Alchemist - "Theodore & Andre":

Hit boy is an American producer and rapper from Fontana, California who started making music in 2007 and was later signed to Kanye West's label GOOD Music in 2011. Hit Boy first started gaining popularity for his feature on Lil Wayne's single "Drop the world" which was on the billboard top 100. The Alchemist is also an American producer, rapper, and DJ. He has been making music since the 90's but is best known for his recent hits like "something to rap about" ft. Freddie Gibbs & Tyler, the Creator. With both of these producers' more recent recognition in the media, they decided to create and release "Theodore & Andre" as a stepping stone for both of their careers and being in the music production and rap industry as long as they both have.

Scrim - "Lonely boy": Scrim (Scott Arceneaux Jr.) one of the two members of the rap/hip hop duo \$uicideboy\$ recently decided to make some of his own solo music alongside the music he makes for the duo. Him and his cousin Ruby Da Cherry (Aristos Petrou) have been making music since 2014 and started gaining a large cult following in 2019 after releasing their album "Stop Staring At the Shadows". Scrim's new album has a similar vibe to the very unique sound of \$uicideboy\$ but with a more pop sound to it. You could consider it more relaxed than most music put out by the duo.

Declan Mckenna - "What happened to the beach?": Declan is an indie pop artist who released his first song at 15 in 2015. His most popular song is "Brazil" which he wrote and released at 15 and was very popular on tiktok in 2020. He recently posted a cover of "Slipping through my fingers" by ABBA which has gained him much more attention for his name as an artist than just his song "Brazil". This new album will have the same unique Declan Mckenna sound to it that isn't heard in other indie music and can't be reproduced.



Kanye West & Ty Dolla \$ign- "Vultures": Everyone knows who Kanye West is, one of the biggest rappers in the world. He has been teasing "Vultures" since the beginning of January and hinted at an album drop every Friday up until he officially released the album on February 9th. The album does not have the usual Kanye sound to it. He uses some unusual samples for these songs and the album has sparked much controversy amongst the rap community. The album was produced by Kanye, Ty Dolla \$ign, and JPEGMafia. It also includes features from North West (Kanye's oldest daughter), Freddie Gibbs, YG, Quavo, Playboi Carti, Travis Scott, Bump J, Lil Durk, Rich the Kid, and Chris Brown.

Jazmin Bean - "Traumatic Livelihood": Jazmin Bean is an English singer best known for her "extreme" makeup looks from tiktok. In 2020, she released her first single "Yandere" to later be on her first album "Worldwide Torture" which would include the song "Princess Castle" gaining popularity. This song was highly recognized on tiktok. Her new album is said to have a more Melanie Martinez pop sound to it and fans are very excited.