



The Lion's Tale

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Howard High School

Winter 2021

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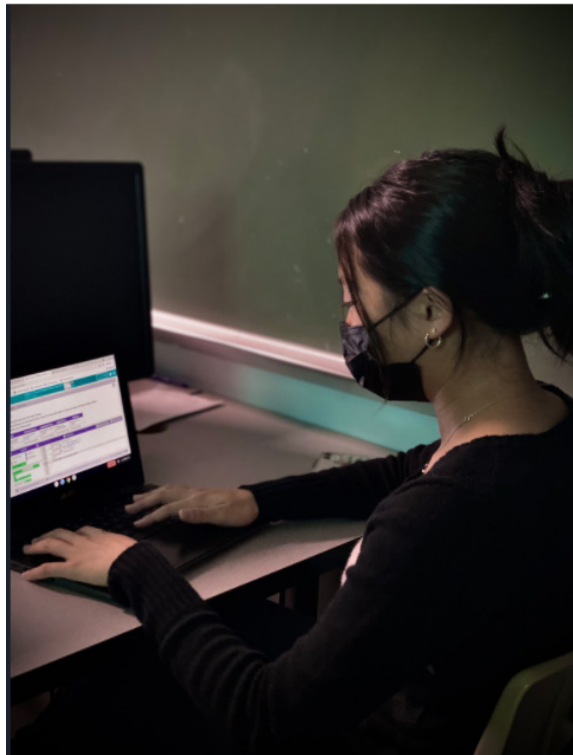
Howard County Adds Monthly Half-Days

Lily Soler '22
Staff Writer

On November 3, 2021, the Howard County Board of Education approved changes to the 2021-2022 academic calendar that would implement monthly, half-days to improve mental health, provide a much needed break for students and teachers, and give students and teachers time to get work done. As of November 29, these half-days will occur on December 15, January 19, February 16, March 16, April 27, and May 18. These half-days mimic the asynchronous Wednesdays that were implemented during virtual learning, which were used to have club meetings, meet with teachers, and catch up on work.

These half-days are supported and students are looking forward to them, but there is a major problem with them: They conflict with dual enrollment schedules. Senior Darien Garner is a dual enrollment student and takes sixth period at Howard. Unfortunately, she has a class at 11 am at Howard Community College (HCC). On half days, sixth period ends at 11:10, making it impossible for students like Darien to go to both. They have to decide between Howard High School and Howard Community College. Garner has decided to choose HCC because "HCC is more important and we're paying for that one." Garner is excited about half days, but says, "I will be missing my sixth period guitar class which I really enjoy. So I am kind of disappointed in that."

Before this implementation, missing



ELLICOTT CITY, MD, NOV 22, 2021 Student, Teresa Kim learns different ways to code. Students will have more time for school work and self-care because of the half days.

G. RUMSEY, L. WEBSTER/ LION'S TALE



ELLICOTT CITY, MD, NOVEMBER 8, 2021 - Mr. John Arnold, an ESOL teacher, also leads instruction in government class. The new half days will give teachers more time for planning, grading and self-care. R. GIFFORD & C. MADACHY/LION'S TALE

class at Howard would not have been as major. However, because there are many more half days this year, missing

class at Howard on half days will now affect attendance records much more. Garner is "a little concerned about attendance records because of the amount of half days that we have, which includes half days that were already built on the schedule before, like Thanksgiving break and things like that. So I'm hoping that there's a way that it'll be less of a big deal in terms of attendance." Additionally, sports eligibility is an issue for those whose dual enrollment schedule conflicts with the growing number of half days. To participate in sports, you must be at school for at least half of the school day, and this does not apply to half days. To be eligible on half days, you must be at school for the entire day, so if students do not attend their Howard classes to go to HCC on half days, they may not be able to participate in sports that day. This has been an issue in the past, but like attendance records, with more half days, students missing their sports at least once a month will begin to add up and be detrimental to their athletic careers and standing on their teams.

According to Mr. Novak, scheduling conflicts with half-days are "not just a Howard High concern since other schools are fac-

Scholarship Scramble

Alyssa McGuigan '23
Features Editor

Although the school year is many months away from coming to a close, many Howard seniors are starting to consider scholarships, college and the future this upcoming spring. Many students of Howard High feel like they need advice or do not even know where to start.

English teacher Dr. McArdle says that the hardest part of getting a scholarship is, "navigating through all the types of [scholarships] you can get. From endowments to specific colleges, their sports and academic scholarships, it's hard to navigate on your own." With the large variety of scholarships available to students, evaluating one's strengths is an important factor in the scholarship process. Choosing strengths, like sports and community involvement, and understanding weaknesses is one of the most important fac-

tors in getting scholarships.

Starting early proves helpful in helping students to know exactly what they want and when. Junior Jay McGrath says that when thinking about scholarships, "Juniors are stressed, for sure. I feel like the school doesn't teach us enough or give us any direction. They talk about SATs and ACTs but that's it from what I've heard. We should prepare now." Staying ahead of the curve can be really helpful for all high schoolers. Start by taking your classroom lessons and applying that to real world scenarios: Things that will help you personally in the future. By doing this, you set yourself up for a clearer path and start to develop academic interests. With the abundance of scholarships out there, it many times proves hard to navigate. Is every student taking full advantage of the opportunities? Teacher Mr. Carey says, "No, because there are millions of dollars every year that go untouched because students and families don't know the right websites

to navigate to. There is a lot of free money out there but some of the scholarship websites can be overwhelming and lead to families not pursuing them" Dr. McArdle states that, "Students focus on sports scholarships or academic scholarships [...] focusing on community scholarships might be a good way to also get some financial funding for college. Many students focus on big schools or private schools." There are many name brand scholarships to look out for: Coca-Cola, Burger King, Dr. Pepper and Ronald McDonald. Additionally, local organizations like EAAA give annual schoalrships, and there are several school-specific memorial scholarships that can help students afford college. Whether large or small, in the end, the best advice is to be knowledgeable about what you want. Check Naviance and <https://cfhoco.org/grants-and-scholarships/scholarships/available-scholarships/> for more information and applications.

Travis Scott Travesty: Concert Safety Tips

Layni Webster ‘24
Staff Writer

Lately, one of the main focuses of students at Howard High School is the disaster that occurred at Travis Scott’s Astroworld Festival in Houston, Texas. On November 5, 2021, around 9pm, Travis Scott performed the Astroworld Festival, which he hosted. When Scott entered the stage, the crowd became a swarm of constant movement. At first it was like any other lawn concert, but within a few minutes the fans quickly began to get trapped in the crowd. The crowd was unstoppable. It soon became so bad that the fans were forced to gasp for air. Scott’s fans were pushing through people in the crowd, trying to get out, while Scott was still performing on stage. Some of the people in the crowd began to collapse and go unconscious. Friends were trying to safely get their unconscious friends out of the crowd. During all of this chaos, Scott continued to perform. Staff and security workers were helping in every way that they could. The concert became a tragedy and left many fans scarred from the traumatic event. By the end of the performance, 8 people died. Their ages ranged from 14-27.

Hundreds of fans were injured in this tragic event, leading to Travis Scott receiving lawsuits and a numerous amount of fan hatred. Sophomore Luke Nobleman stated that he was “a little bit of a Travis Scott fan.” When Nobleman was asked his opinion on the event he stated, “I think it was very unfortunate but as far as his career. I don’t think it’s going to affect it that much because it’s not his fault for having a lot of fans.” Sophomore Avery Kitchen stated that she was not a Scott fan and when asked her opinion she said, “I



Travis Scott performing at the 2021 Astroworld Festival in Houston Texas. Photo Provided By Getty Images

think it was really unprofessional and could have been prevented.” Whether the performer is at fault for the chaos, death and injuries remains controversial.

The Astroworld Festival was not the first tragic concert event, though it has been the first in a while. On June 4, 2017 at the Manchester Arena in England, there was a bombing at the Ariana Grande concert. 22 people were killed and many more were injured. On June 30th, 2000 at the Roskilde Festival in Denmark, nine deaths occurred due to a rush towards the stage where fans collapsed. On August 13, 2011 the Indiana State Fair stage collapsed due to 70 mph winds. Due to this event, a total of seven people who attended the concert were killed.

As many concerts are occurring again now that the Covid-19 pandemic is more under control, it is a great idea to know how to stay safe at concerts while still having fun. A big tip to use when going to a concert is making sure you have an escape plan if anything were to happen. It is important to know where all of the exits are. Sophomore CJ Summa agreed that exits are very important to be aware of. Summa stated, “Make sure you have an exit from where you’re standing or sitting and make sure you always have easy ac-

cess to the parking lot.” Although the closest exit would seem to be the safest, it is also where everyone will be running towards. Knowing where all exits are could help if the main exit is too crowded to get through safely.

Another risk during concerts could be where there is a large crowd or mosh pit. Most of the time this occurs at lawn concerts or festivals. Kitchen has had experience with being stuck in a mosh pit, and when asked how she felt she stated, “It was stressful because I did not know how I was going to get out and it was really scary.” If you were to get stuck in a large crowd, it is important to conserve your energy so you do not pass out. Instead of jumping with the crowd, if you’re lightheaded or uncomfortable, stand in the crowd so that you do not use all of your energy and get hurt. When stuck in a large crowd the main tip is to just make sure to stay on your feet. After entering a mosh pit, it is not very easy to get out of it, and staying on your feet is important because if you fall you could get injured. Along with staying on your feet, if you are to drop something in a large crowd, it is important to think twice before bending down to pick it up. If you were to drop something not valuable, like a pair of cheap sunglasses, think before picking it up. By bending down in the

crowd it is very easy to get injured because even though you are stopping for a second, it doesn’t mean the crowd will stop with you. The crowd will continue to jump and dance to the artist. Overall, if you are considering going into a larger crowd with your friends, try your best to be on the outside so that you do not get caught in the middle, or do not go in at all.

The final tip for going to concerts is making sure that you do not go alone and you dress appropriately. When attending a concert you do not want to wear any jewelry that you value a lot. This is because if it were to fall off there is a pretty good chance that you would not be getting it back. It is also important to wear sneakers. Wearing sneakers is important because it is good to have a good grip in case you were to slip or fall in the crowd. Wearing sneakers would reduce your chances of falling. You want to keep your phone in your front pocket rather than your back pocket because it is less likely to get stolen that way. Lastly, do not go alone. When going to any concert it is extremely important to go with other people so that someone has your back. Having people with you helps to ensure both you and your friends safety. While with your friends or family at concerts, always make sure you stay hydrated. Being dehydrated and jumping around a lot could cause you to pass out.

Concerts are a blast, but it is also important that the students at Howard High know how to stay safe if they choose to attend concerts. Summa’s piece of advice to anyone who is going to a concert for the first time is, “Go with a group of people that you know there and just try to have fun.” Always remember to be aware of your surroundings, wear proper clothing, and go with a friend. Finally, make sure you have fun and enjoy the whole concert experience.

Half Days, cont.

ing the same schedule. That’s why the county wants to have a standardized schedule.” The county is working on a schedule and addressing these issues, and one can hope they will be smoothed out and students will not be penalized for their scheduling conflicts on half days. Teachers are looking forward to half days, too. Social Studies teacher Mrs. Masami Stratton says, “I think that just even as an idea-It’s nice, you know, to know that we have just that little bit of time where we can take a breath and kind of, you know, think about getting stuff done that might not necessarily get done during any work day.” Stratton believes that half days will help mental health and give a much needed break to both teachers and students. As for the scheduling conflicts, she is willing to work with students who may have to miss class for HCC classes, saying, “I mean that is just like an excused ab-

sence. You know, so we can deal with it exactly that way. Not a problem.”

As for Howard High School’s plans for the half days, the Student Government Association, specifically the Executive Board, is working to create meaningful events on the half-days. Executive Board President Nico Drummond says, “The SGA is partnering with BSU, ASA, and One Howard We are serving as a mediator between them and the administration to make sure their ideas and goals are accurately represented.” Drummond sees Howard’s plans as “key to building a Howard community that is truly inclusive and welcoming.” Drummond also believes the half days will be beneficial to the entire school system and create a better community, saying, “If we collectively agree to take that time to reflect and care for ourselves as a community, then the stress really goes away.”

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School Lunches: Free, but far from satisfying

Sarah Rezavi '25
Staff Writer

It's officially 2021, and many students are returning to school for the first time since March 2020. From masks to social distancing, things just aren't the same. One of the more prominent changes is the sudden and drastic change in the school lunches. Howard High has generously offered to serve all students breakfast and lunch, free of charge. However, these school lunches are less varied than in the past.

Some popular dishes like pizza and burger patties range from 200-370 calories, which is 400 calories less than what's recommended. The vegetarian option is either a 230 calorie banana muffin or a Trix yogurt, which also has dangerously low amounts of protein and fiber and extremely high amounts of sugar, trans fat and cholesterol. Side options include packaged apple slices, raisins, green peppers. This part of the lunch contains the vegetables and fruits, but many times we are left with 4-5 slices or a small box of raisins, which isn't at all nutritious. While the pre-pandemic lunch consisted of fries and tater tots, these were considered "vegetables" because of the potatoes. This option was healthier but undeniably more filling.

Students have also been restricted from getting more than one lunch and have been punished with detention from lunch servers. But Howard County claims that it continues to "Provide healthy and nutritious meals each day." The terms "healthy" and "nutritious" are used rather loosely.

The HCPSS food services website explained their reasoning for this quiet, sudden change, saying that the food supply shortages are facing a number of product delivery shortfalls. These failures cause the suppliers to make "unanticipated substitutions." Kristan Rhodes, the food service manager, stated that Howard was currently serving 8 other schools (5 Elementary and 3 Middle) the hot meals prepared in the oven/steamer before the pandemic. Like spaghetti, tacos and the elementary school favorite, Mac and Cheese. But unfortunately was only permitted to serve meals that were packaged, to prevent the spread of germs and bacteria. And coordinating a packaged taco meal wasn't feasible because they are currently understaffed.

"The biggest challenge is mostly the pre-packaging, and that we have to serve the whole meal." The manager explains that students can just grab their own lunch and pour their own condiments.

"I think that the key thing is making sure that we're filling a student's nutritional needs, not just ensuring that they're healthy," Mr. Novak says, eventually coming to the conclusion that the Howard County lunch will continue to fluctuate and have drastic changes. But this isn't Principal Novak's decision. The HCPSS participants in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs control these changes. Services and companies aren't the only things that are affected by this. Many students that come from different backgrounds have a specific take on this as well. Many athletes need protein and carbs to perform at their best. While many students from low income families heavily rely on the school lunch as their main source of food.

"When I was younger the school food was some of the only food I would eat and with the change it seems pointless to even go up and get it," an anonymous source states. They explained how their circumstances weren't the best, and that they would bring parts of their lunch back home and eat for dinner. Many students with this similar issue were put into the program FARMs (Free And Reduced Meals) This is where they paid a substantially lower amount. Where the breakfast is \$0.10 and the lunch is \$0.20, a \$2.65 and \$4.30 difference. This did resolve the issue of students in lower income families and did cause the meals to become healthier, but less filling. Mrs. Rhodes stated that when the meals became free the amount of students consuming them increased. Principal Novak also added that there were currently no direct complaints about the change because students feel obligated to take it because of this. The un-healthier option may be more satisfying, but the healthy option is causing students to waste more food and overall resources.

Through all the issues that the lunches and staff overcome, many students grow unaware of the amount of effort put into these meals. Through the vast history and alters it's been through, there's no doubt that it'll change again. The only modifications that us as students can make is bringing our own improved lunches or eating better breakfasts.

Small changes can have an extreme effect on the rest of your day, causing you to have more energy for completing your class and homework assignments. One that not only fits the County's Health and Wellness policy, but students wants and needs as well.



ELLICOTT CITY, MD, NOVEMBER 30, 2021- Howard County is serving their students a quesadilla (right) and a fresh and healthy side of bagged green peppers (left) with fat free chocolate milk. S. REZAVI/LION'S TALE

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Eddy's **MORAL** HIGH GROUND

Eddy Calkins '22
Editor in Chief

Every year, during the last week of September, libraries and schools nationwide celebrate the American Library Association's Banned Books Week, a week dedicated to spotlighting attempts to censor books. At Howard, freshmen spend that week of high school English discussing censorship. The rate of banned books is rising with a +14% increase in banned materials from 2019-2020 (American Library Association). I don't understand why, because words are many people's way of expressing their freedom of speech, guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Still, many try to take that away based on their selfish viewpoints.

On November 17th, parents of Howard County bundled up in the cold in the presence of law enforcement to file official police reports against Howard County Public Schools. The parents each filed a report concerning books in school libraries that contain "sexually-explicit content" and "portrays pornography." The two books being questioned are "Gender Queer" by Maia Kobabe and "Lawn Boy" by Jonathan Evison.

"Gender Queer" is a 239-page auto-biography that follows Maia's childhood and the struggle of discovering herself. The graphic novel has won many awards, such as the 2020 ALA Alex Award Winner that recognizes the "ten books written for adults that have special appeal to young adults ages 12 through 18." "Gender Queer" is available at Hammond, Long Reach, Marriotts Ridge, Oakland Mills and Wilde Lake school libraries, with an additional 6 copies in the Howard County Library System (HCLS). "Lawn Boy" is a 337-page novel that follows a young Mexican American that begins to explore their identity. "Lawn Boy" is available at River Hill, Centennial, and Wilde Lake High Schools, with an additional 9 copies in the HCLS. The interesting part about this is our public libraries also have copies of the books. In Howard County, all students have access to a library card, meaning they can still check out these books even if these books were to be removed from schools. The only accomplishment for these parents would be to limit the number of copies available to students, and publicize their presence in the libraries.

Parents in Fairfax County, VA challenged the same books citing "explicit images" and "pedophilia." On Tuesday November 23rd, the Fairfax Board of Education reviewed the books and ruled in favor of returning the books to schools. They gave reasons such as, "students with a related experience will feel affirmed and others can gain understanding and empathy" (for "Gender Queer"), and "["Lawn Boy"] is an accessible examination of race, class, socio-economical struggles, and sexual identity... it is an uplifting and humanizing depiction of navigating through setbacks with resiliency to reach goals." Illinois, Tampa Bay, FL and Anchorage, AK also have school districts that have challenged and removed the book from school libraries.

I can guarantee that if one of these novels were based upon a heterosexual child that showcased questionable images, there would be no debate over it: The books would remain on the shelves. The fact that these books both follow people who are in the midst of self-discovery and gender identification is a significant factor in the censorship argument, as the people reporting the books have been linked to a heavily conservative religious group, We the People 2.0. This group has led discussions on these books throughout the country.

As someone who's read one of HCPL's copies of "Gender Queer," I haven't seen anything that is too questionable. There are a couple of graphics that do depict sexual activity, but there is nothing that aligns with the accusation of "distribution of pornography." In order for something to be considered pornography it needs "to simulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings" (Oxford). The graphic novel contains cartoon representations of sexual activity that only appear on, at most, 5 pages.

As a student, it's hurtful to see parents advocating to restrict books because of their personal views. Kids have seen much worse on their own than what these novels depict. The increasing presence of social media among younger kids makes it even easier to access more shocking content without any context or purpose. The images in these books have context that matters, and the texts can help someone navigate a challenging mental process of figuring yourself out. It's important to remember that books aren't just entertainment; they are learning tools that can help by relating to real children's lives. I hope HCPSS follows in the footsteps of Fairfax County and keeps the books on the shelves.

Features

Walking in a Winter Wonderland

It's time for hot chocolate, spending time with family, 24/7 pajamas, and best of all - no schoolwork! The Howard Lions are ready for Winter Break (and hopefully some snow days to follow)!

Holiday Gift Guide

Noelle Dreisch '24

In the midst of December, stores start to bring out decorations and get more and more packed for the approaching holidays. That's when you know you have to start shopping. Sometimes you can feel clueless about what people want nowadays.

Well, that's where this gift guide comes in to help.

If you're looking for good stocking stuffers, a great place to start is with sweets. You can't go wrong with them. From candy canes, chocolates and candies, there are many things to choose from. If you can't choose between candy canes and other assortments, the "Sour Patch Kids Holiday Candy Cane Tube" is a good recommendation (they come with different candies and chocolates too). Sophomore Yahmeah Tano said, "I love giving my friends candy around the holidays because it's inexpensive and everybody loves it." If you want to take a more hygienic direction, bath bombs, bath salts, face products and makeup are great ideas for a spa themed stocking. To finish off, don't forget to add a giftcard for their favorite restaurant or store.

When shopping for actual presents, it isn't as hard as you might think. If the person has mentioned needing or wanting a certain item, that is the perfect opportunity to get them that gift. Sophomore Kenndy Grimes said when deciding on the perfect gift for her friend, "My friend actually mentioned she wanted this shirt from this one store, so I think that would be a good gift for her." Cute and trending clothes like baggy shirts and baggy jeans are a good place to start if your friend is more into street-wear fashion. In addition, Y2K fashion is coming back with low-rise jeans and layered shirts paired with gloves. Anyone would love to see a cute outfit like that. But if you're more on the creative side, holiday baskets are a great way to go. Some things to put in the basket are favorite snacks and other festive holiday items. Winter PJ's are a must and to pair with them, fuzzy socks.

What is highly recommended for gift giving this holiday season is being sentimental and thoughtful, but also finding things that are current. Something that your person/people will deeply appreciate. Have fun shopping!



A Question for Every Binge Session:

Creepy or Cringey?

Grace Khai '22

Would students rather watch a movie with a cringey plot that has a forced comedy and unrealistic standards of love mixed with holiday magic? Or how about a scary movie that has a half-goat, half-demon monster that punishes misbehaving children on Christmas day? An Instagram poll shows 55% out of 71 people chose "cringe" and 45% chose "creepy."

Somto Anuonyemere, a senior in Howard High, said, "I enjoy cringey movies since I like to watch romantic and happy-feel good movies. I just enjoy the cute stuff during the holidays. I prefer watching Netflix Original movies rather than Hallmark." Some people just cherish the over-the-top, evident romance plot and the holiday magic that makes them fall in love.

But what about the creepy? Senior Jamie Zheng expressed that she does not celebrate Christmas so she prefers to watch creepy Christmas movies instead. She said, "I personally don't celebrate that holiday, so watching cringey Christmas movies doesn't really interest me. I get second-hand embarrassment from them. I think creepy Christmas movies are more digestible." For some students, it seems that the cringe is too much to handle and that the creepy, folklore, horror and gore is the way to go. Since some people do not celebrate Christmas this is another chance to feel the Halloween vibes, but make it festive.

Krampus (2015)



Better Watch Out (2017)



The Knight Before Christmas (2019)



A Christmas Prince (2017)



New Year's Resolutions

Esther Olojo '23

The origin of New Year's Resolutions started with the ancient Babylonians some 4,000 years ago, who are said to have made promises to the Gods trusting that they would acquire great favor and blessings in the coming year (history.com). Many of us are still making New Year's resolutions today, but what's the key to following through with them? Just wanting to change isn't enough; you need to make it stick. One method for doing this is to share your resolutions with others like friends and family. If you keep your resolutions a secret, you won't have any accountability, causing you to slack off or even lose motivation to start the process of achieving your goals. Now that you've involved others, how do you ensure that they check up on you and you have positive progress to report?

The success of New Year's resolutions starts with your mind. According to Micheal Kitchens, assistant professor of psychology at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA, "It's tempting to make lists of 'to-dos,' but that list will easily be overwhelming and you will end up frustrated." Narrowing down your list of resolutions to maybe a few or even one, and being specific is something to keep in check. For example, instead of saying I want to lose weight by the end of the year, be specific and say, "I want to lose 20 lbs by May 1st." Likewise, instead of saying "I would like to eat healthier," be more specific like how Junior, Dylan Grobelstein states, "cut out most of the sugar from my diet."

"Set a goal that is challenging, but manageable," says Kitchens. "This is a sensitive balance that really can only be made by each person. For example, Sophomore Lateefah Gobir

states, "I want to get all A's and B's the entire school year." Since Leetfah is already a hard worker, puts effort into school, and is already on the right track, this goal is achievable for her, but if you're someone who doesn't do that well in school or lacks effort you may want to cut back on that goal and maybe start by making it a goal to put more effort into school, whether it be actually studying for a test, paying attention in class while taking notes, getting a tutor, going for extra help, or getting at least a C or higher in all your classes.

Overly ambitious goals that don't end up being met can shoot someone's confidence down. Try to build on the small wins and eventually achieve bigger goals in the future. Remember to take things one at a time and don't try to rush everything.

No matter what your goals may be, be sure to record your progress. If your goal is to lose weight, regularly check your weight. If it's to increase your running distance, be sure to record your miles. When you monitor those few challenging goals you will exceedingly improve your success rate.

Overcoming bad habits is also a part of many resolutions such as stress eating, smoking, procrastinating, indecisiveness, spending too much time on electronics, and the list goes on. Although some of these may seem difficult to completely get rid of since they are especially easy to rely on when stressed out, "One of the best ways is to have a social support system," says Kitchen. In other words, have a group of friends or even your family members be your cheerleaders and help you step by step in overcoming those bad habits.

Google Ruins the Magic

Christina Parnell '22

Does Santa Claus make Christmas more magical? As time goes on has the average age for kids finding out about his non-existence decreased? And an even more important question, has the magic of Christmas declined because of it? Astronomy teacher Mr. Marcantonio has an interesting take on the topic. He said, "Yes, I do feel as you grow older the magic of Christmas decreases. That is until you have children of your own. Watching your own kids brings all the magic back and more seeing them caught up in Christmas."

But how much of this declining belief in Saint Nick is due to the rise of technology over the years? According to an Instagram poll, the majority of people who were born around 2004 found out about Santa Claus' non-existence when they were around 8 years old, while the majority of older people around age 40 found out around 10-11 years old. Since owning technology has become more normalized, kids younger and younger have been exposed to the depths of the internet, becoming disenchanted by news and information. Although technology has its pros, it also has its cons, the magic of Santa Claus is quickly dismissed within seconds upon typing a simple search with words such as "Is Santa Claus...." The first bar that comes up is "Is Santa Claus real." That may spark some curiosity and lead these young kids down a rabbit hole of questions that come up from websites like Quora, Yahoo, and even official times articles, such as "When do you tell your kids that Santa Clause isn't real?"

We know that this has been happening since the beginning of the normalization of technology, but these children are becoming a lot younger, to ages as young as 4. Does finding out about this mysterious magical man's non-existence completely diminish the magic? Mr. Marcantonio chimed in on this as well, agreeing, "Yes I do feel tech has hurt the belief of Santa. Kids are just exposed to more and more information. I firmly believe that because kids are only young for a short time, and they have the rest of their lives for reality, that in that brief time, let them be kids and let them (and yourself) get caught up in the impossible spirit of the Christmas season." That sounds like good advice.

Real or not, you can still choose to tap into your inner kid in the coming weeks and believe, or at least remember what it was like to believe, in the big man in the red and white suit all over again. You can then return to "reality" after the first of the year. It will still be there.

Tasty Berry and Coconut Recipes

Oahn Nguyen '23

Ingredients:

4 X 400ml cans coconut cream
3 X Aeroplane Original Raspberries jelly crystals
250g strawberries, hulled, halved, plus extra, unhulled, halved, to serve
125g raspberries, plus extra to serve
12 egg yolks
1/3 cup corn flour
1 cup caster sugar
3 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 cup strawberry jam
1/2 cup raspberry cranberry juice
Shredded coconut, toasted, to serve
Vanilla Buttercake:
125g unsalted butter, softened
1 cup caster sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
3 eggs
1 1/2 cups self-raising flour
1/2 cup milk

Instructions:

Refrigerate the coconut cream overnight
Pour your jelly into a 16-cup capacity trifle bowl. Continue to refrigerate it for 2 hours, then stir it in the raspberries and strawberries, it will need to be in the fridge one more time for 4 hours until set

Meanwhile, scoop the coconut cream into each can and place on the bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate

Using an electric mixer, beat egg yolks, cornflour, 2/3 cup sugar and 2 teaspoons vanilla in a bowl until thick and creamy. Gradually whisk in hot coconut cream. Transfer the custard into a large bowl and cover the surface with plastic wrap. Then refrigerate for 4 hours.

Now let's make the vanilla butter cake parts:

Preheat the oven to 355 degrees F. Using an electric mixer, beat butter, sugar and vanilla for 5 minutes or until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until just combined after each addition. Add flour and milk, in 2 batches, beating until just combined after each addition. Then turnout, top-sided up, onto a wire rack lined with backing paper.

Spoon 1/2 the custard over jelly, spread it to make a cake as you desired, place the cake over the custard. Drizzle with raspberry and strawberry and put it in the fridge overnight.

Using an electric mixer, beat reserved coconut cream with remaining sugar and vanilla for 2 to 3 minutes or until soft. Spoon coconut mixture over custard. Top with toasted coconut and extra strawberries and raspberries.



Is Your Sweater the Right Kind of Ugly?

Ella Werdell ‘23
News Editor

With the upcoming holiday season staying warm and spreading holiday cheer is a necessity! The perfect way to do this is by sporting a festive ugly sweater. Ugly sweaters could be considered displeasing; however, I strongly disagree with this false notion. Ugly sweaters are not “cute” or considered particularly “fashionable,” but that is the entire essence of what an ugly sweater is. Ugly sweaters are meant to be funny and a fun way of showing holiday spirit.

The only time ugly sweaters should be worn is when they are worn ironically. Here are a few examples of good ugly sweaters and bad ugly sweaters with ratings from junior Ashley Bui and myself:

The Thanksgiving Disaster

This sweater is not very ugly. It is something that I would wear to a Thanksgiving dinner. I think if styled appropriately it can be very cute. Bui also believes this to be a cute sweater that “people could just wear normally.” I do not believe this to be an appropriate ugly sweater for a holiday party - maybe just for a nice family Thanksgiving dinner.



Rigging up the Lights

It is important for ugly sweaters to be creative and this is definitely creative. However, as Bui stated, “It’s ugly, but the wrong kind of ugly [...] not something that is ugly/funny enough for me to wear on purpose.” This sweater is just ugly, not the proper type of ugly for a holiday party.



Thrown-up Christmas

This is the ugliest Christmas sweater I have ever seen, making it perfect for the upcoming holiday season. Bui agrees, “I love the ruffles and the fact that it’s 3D, probably the ugliest sweater.” This sweater cannot be hidden, it is extremely loud and will notify anyone that you are on your way. Sadly, it is most likely uncomfortable and itchy because of the tinsel, making it lose a star.



Jingle Bells

This is the best ugly holiday sweater I have seen. It has all the necessary elements: Christmas colors, loud noises, and tinsel to add various textures and sounds. This sweater is comfortable and just ugly enough to be perfect for an ugly Christmas party. However, Bui disagrees, believing this sweater to not be ugly enough and just a bit “boring and too symmetrical.”

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

This is the epitome of an ugly sweater. The contrasting Christmas colors and the addition of feathers makes for a variety of textures. This sweater is Bui’s favorite sweater because of “the ruffles and the bright green,” a perfect combination for an ugly sweater.



Sledding Snowman

I love this sweater, it is creative and festive. It is definitely a sweater that can be made at home. It is comfortable and a fun way to show holiday spirit. Bui’s take on this sweater is that it is “very cute.” However, she does not consider it to be “necessarily ugly, just a weird sweater.” I agree with this, I still think it would be the perfect addition to anyone’s holiday wardrobe and appropriate for a holiday party.



A Llama Christmas

This holiday sweater is super fun, the sparkles on the sleeves add a lot of character. Furthermore, the holiday llamas are adorable and sure to garner compliments. This is Bui’s second favorite sweater however she believes it to be “more funny than ugly.” I think ugly sweaters should be funny in some way, so this is perfect.

Let it Snow

Students need snow days free

Bobby Smith ‘22
Staff Writer

Snow days are something every student looks forward to during winter. The possibility that school might be closed for a day, or even a few days offers a break from the constant work of school and some time for relaxation indoors or some fun in the snow outdoors. However, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of everyday life, and it may change snow days too. During the 2020-2021 school year, most of the educating was done from home on Google Meets, and students would still have to attend these meetings on days that would normally be snow days. We may have come back to school, but that doesn’t eliminate the possibility of online learning being used on days where snow covers the ground and school is inaccessible. That begs the question, has online learning put an end to snow days?

On the page regarding emergency weather closings on hcpss.org, it states, “If schools are closed, or closed early due to weather conditions, all after-school and evening activities, both school and non-school, scheduled in school facilities are canceled.” This includes ath-



letic practices and games, as well as aftercare programs. A schedule is also provided, and this schedule shows what actions will be taken at certain times in the possibility of an emergency weather closure. Weather temperatures and national weather service forecasts are reviewed at 2:45 AM, observations of the road and weather conditions are made at 3:00 AM, the road conditions are assessed and reviewed and a decision is made whether or not Maryland’s Snow Emergency Plan will be in effect in Howard County at 4:30 AM, and these steps are repeated until 7:30 AM, when a decision must be finalized determining whether or not schools will be closed or will open two hours late. However, this didn’t answer whether or not there will be online learning on snow days. When asked if the Board of Education had made a clear and final decision about whether or not snow days would be days off from school, Student Member of the Board Peter Banyas stated that, “The Board Of Ed hasn’t decided yet; however, until something changes, the default will be snow days.”

The overwhelming majority of students and staff at Howard seem to be in favor of there being days off from school on snow days as opposed to there being online learning, with 52 participants in the poll voting in favor of off days and 7 participants voting in favor of online learning, and this makes sense. Students may need a break from the constant workload given at school every now and then, and snow days provide such a break. The main argument in favor of online learning on snow days is that it will allow the school year to end sooner so students can have a longer summer break. While that is a valid argument, what’s the point of a snow day if it cannot be fully enjoyed?

Winter Sports Preview

Ryan Cassidy '23
Staff Writer

UPDATE DECEMBER 15, 2021: Howard County Public Schools cancel all winter sports until January 15, 2022 due to the rise in Covid-19 cases around the county. Reevaluations about the decision will take place January 7, 2022. This article was written prior to that announcement.

Howard High School winter sports are underway. The teams all look to make deep playoff runs this year with an exciting roster of new and returning players. With no winter sports last year due to Covid-19, the basketball, wrestling and track and field teams are hungry to get back out to play.

The girl's varsity basketball team returns with expectations through the roof. Last time the team was on the court, they had an undefeated season going 25-0. Junior guard Gabrielle Kennerly said the whole team has been ready for the opportunity to play again, stating "we've been practicing hard and getting better every day. Coach Robinson along with the assistant coaches have done a great job at putting us on the right track for a great season." With many returning players, the Lady Lions expect to be right back



ELLCOTT CITY MD, DECEMBER, 3, 2021 - Junior track star Christian Randolph jolts off the starting line in preparation for this year's winter track and field season. B. SCOTT/@trueblurryphotos

where they were in 2019, competing for state championships.

The boy's varsity basketball team has a new coach, Mike Twardowicz, the former junior varsity coach for the Lions. Junior Guard Ethan Makamphiou said, "I feel excited to have a season this year especially because we didn't have one last year." He also added, "the goal every year is to win a state championship and I expect us to be a really good team this year." The first basketball game was on October 8 against Long Reach. The junior varsity won, but unfortunately, the varsity lost.

The Howard wrestling team is full of a mostly new group of people, one of the few returners being senior Xavier Anthony. Anthony remains confi-

dent: "My expectations this year are that the experienced guys are going to go out and dominate, and the guys with less experience are going to wrestle to the best of their ability and that's all we can ask for." The wrestling team has seven matches this season.

Winter track and field is preparing for another great season. Many athletes run cross country in the fall, then switch over to track for the rest of the year. The cross country team went to states and nationals this past season, if the winter track and field team can have similar results, they will have quite the rewarding season. Junior Alison Ferris said, "I can't speak for the sprinters, but I know that our distance team is incredibly hardworking and ready to grind out this work. After I was able to go to nationals with the girls cross country team and get 24th in the nation, we have very high hopes to bring out a track team to win states."

Each team has high hopes, goals and expectations for this year. After no season last year, athletes are hungry to get back out there and show the country what the Lions can do.

Howard High Introduces: Volleyball Club

Matt Allen '22
Staff Writer

Howard High School's newest club, the volleyball club, has sparked a lot of attention from students. With over 60 students at the very first meeting, it is clear that the creation of this club has been long-awaited.

The goal of the club is to allow all students to play volleyball at Howard. With no male volleyball team, students wanted a way to play at school. To join the volleyball club head over to @hohs_vclub on Instagram and fill out the interest form in the bio. Students should also go to the HOHS Student Community page on Canvas and click "Join a Club." Scroll down to "volleyball club" and hit join. Voila! Now you are officially the newest member of the club.

Currently, there are no planned meeting days. This is because the club will start in the spring due to Howard basketball team's use of the gym. President of the volleyball club, senior Mafo Amoussou says, "when the season starts members of the club will be divided into ten teams and play in a tournament fashion. The games will be played in the auxiliary gym of Howard after school. We may play against other schools depending on how things go." He also added, "more information on the tournament will be released as the spring season approaches."

Unfortunately, due to the rise of Covid-19 cases the Howard County Public School System decided to suspend all after school clubs, sports, performances and field trips until January 15, 2022. The county will reevaluate the decision on January 7, 2022. This means, there will be no in-person meetings for the volleyball club until the suspension ends. Luckily, volleyball matches were not officially going to start until the spring. Hopefully, extracurriculars will be back by then.

The Howard High School volleyball club hopes students will join the club as a way to have fun and meet new people. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join regardless of skill level.

In the Cleats: Ethan Jeanneault

Caroline Stavrou '22
Staff Writer

While the Howard High School football team was hosting off-season practices during the summer, senior kicker Ethan Jeanneault was skateboarding around winding roads in his neighborhood. Casually skateboarding down a lane one day, he took a sharp turn and skidded off his skateboard and landed head first, on the asphalt, while wearing no protection. A neighbor found him outside of her house and immediately called for help. Jeanneault underwent several surgeries in the hospital while he was in a medically induced coma. "[Doctors] did expect me to wake up but they didn't know how I was going to wake up or what state I was in. That was kind of the unknown thing," Jeanneault stated. When he woke up, his life was changed forever. Jeanneault was told by doctors he was lucky to be alive. And his football career seemed to end the second his head hit the pavement.

Fortunately, Jeanneault's injuries did not include any type of permanent brain damage. His diagnosis was two subdural hematomas (brain bleeds), a moderate to severe concussion, whiplash, skull fractures, facial fractures, damaged eardrum, damaged sinus, deviated septum, nerve damage to the olfactory nerve and nerve damage to the skull. This meant he would be bedridden for an entire month and would even need to relearn all the basic functions of living: How to eat, drink, sleep and

even walk. Jeanneault told the Lion's Tale, "I ended up emerging [from surgery] well enough and being fine and now I'm on my way to a full recovery."

Before the accident, Jeanneault was considering pursuing football in college. He had many Division 3 offers and some Division 1 interest as well.



ELLCOTT CITY MD, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021 - Ethan Jeanneault hugs teammate Abdullah Khan after Senior Night. B. SCOTT/@trueblurryphotos

He, along with his parents, ultimately decided to put football to rest after high school to play it safe, so there would be no chances of further injury. But after

spending over a month in the hospital, Jeanneault decided his end goal was to resume his position on the football team for the one-time special game meant to honor seniors: Senior Night. In order to recover and ultimately get cleared to play, Jeanneault needed to use an occupational therapist to relearn and re-teach his body and brain to work together. He started with walking, then moved to jogging, and about a month and a half later, Jeanneault was allowed to practice kicking for the first time since the accident. Jeanneault had to get cleared by the medical team at University of Maryland, the superintendent of Howard County, the Howard football coach and his parents.

Senior Night was on September 24. The Howard Lions played their rivals, the Long Reach Lightning. Unfortunately, Howard lost 21-17 during a very tense and exciting game. Many tears were seen rushing down the Jeanneault family's faces as they watched Ethan play.

Instead of sports this spring, Jeanneault plans to go around the county to speak to younger students about the importance of helmets and safety. He is using his story to share his knowledge with others and promote safe activities while bringing awareness to traumatic brain injuries. Jeanneault's goal is to "positively influence change in our community."

LOOKING FOR MORE
HOWARD HIGH NEWS?

CHECK OUT THE LION'S TALE
ONLINE!



Clue

A Howard Theater
Production

Kajzahna Gray-Richardson ‘22
Staff Writer

Thursday, February 24th through Saturday the 26th, Howard High School brings the classic “whodunit” to the stage with the play Clue. Unlike most theater productions, Clue was originally a film in the 80’s and then adapted to a live play. Clue takes place in 1954 New England, where six guests are anonymously invited to a secluded mansion for dinner, where secrets are revealed, tensions are high and people are murdered, only leaving the questions: Who are the killer(s), who are the victims and which will remain victorious at the end? It’s a show you don’t want to miss and it’s going to be done like never before. The play is double casted with students from period 1 and 2 theater classes. Similar to the past winter showcases, the students from advanced theater classes will be cast for the play. Each class will have their own performances on alternating show dates. Mrs. Greffen, the theater teacher and director for Howard theater productions, wanted to give Howard students the full exposure to the production process by giving her students the opportunity to act, direct and organize the stage setup. The stage design for this play is particularly unique because Clue has several different locations which means the majority of the set will be on wheels. This makes the stage design a bit of a challenge, but as Mrs. Greffen described, there will be lots of lighting techniques and use of props to create a bit of an illusion that will leave the audience mesmerized. Spread the word with friends and family and to remember to follow the Instagram page @hohs_theatre for updates. Clue will certainly be a show to die for.



Nicole Parker ‘24
Sports Editor

One of the biggest Grammy-winning albums of 2012 is back -- this time as “Taylor’s Version.” Taylor Swift recently re-released Red with more tracks and even including a short film, to the delight of fans.

Taylor Swift set out to re-record her first six albums after a controversy over the ownership of her master recordings. Swift signed with Big Machine Records in 2005. She decided not to renew her contract in 2018, although the company still had ownership over all of her albums and music. Big Machine Records was then sold to Ithaca Holdings, run by Scooter Bruan, in 2019. Bruan sold her master rights for \$300 million to Shamrock Holdings, a private equity firm. Any money made from streaming or purchasing her music profited Bruan as part of the deal. Swift took to social media, feeling that Bruan stole her music and bullied her through clients like Justin Bieber and Kanye West. In response, Swift signed with Republic Records in 2018. The deal allowed Swift to own her music. Swift has re-recording her first six albums and Red (Taylor’s Version) is the second of these re-released albums.

The new album includes all of the

songs from the original Red album along with nine “from the vault” tracks that were written while Red was being produced, but didn’t make the original album. Ed Sheeran, Chris Stapleton and Phoebe Bridgers appear in a vault track as well. Junior Luca Dorotovics, an aspiring singer and songwriter, explains that “Forever Winter” is an underrated vault track “because of the value it has regarding mental health issues, and I think it’s beautiful.”

The whole album is thirty songs long, including a 10-minute version of “All Too Well.” Rolling Stone ranked “All Too Well” 69 out of 500 on the latest revision of the “500 Best Songs of All Time.” The album has already broken multiple records. On November 13, 2021, Red (Taylor’s Version) was the most-streamed album by a female artist of all time in a single day. Additionally, the 10-minute version of “All Too Well” was the longest song ever to reach number one on the Billboard Hot 100. Dorotovics agrees with the ranking of “All Too Well,” stating, “I think lyrically it is so beautiful and emotional. I also love the melodic changes she incorporates in order to make a ten minute song not melodically repetitive.”

Along with the release of the album, Swift wrote and directed a short film based on the song, “All Too Well” called, “All Too Well: The Short Film” starring Sadie Sink, star of Stranger Things and Dylan O’Brien of Teen Wolf. The film highlights the true meaning behind the song: Her past re-

lationship with actor Jake Gyllenhaal. Scenes in the film have made some fans uncomfortable since Sink is only 19 years old and O’Brien is 30. Yet the actors were specifically chosen for the film since Swift and Gyllenhaal had a similar age gap when they were dating. Senior Adam Bayoumi “really liked the short film.” He loves both Sadie Sink and Dylan O’Brien, which sparked a lot of interest in the film.

Fans wonder which album Taylor Swift will re-release next. Fearless and Red have already been released, so that leaves Swift’s debut album, Speak Now, 1989 and Reputation. Legally, Swift can not re-record any albums until at least five years after the original release date, so Reputation couldn’t be released until late 2022. Bayoumi believes “1989 (Taylor’s Version) is next because the roll out makes the most sense for a summer drop. Maybe Speak Now (Taylor’s Version) will be next though.”

Swift has entertained, but also inspired many people. Sophomore Avery Kitchen states, “Taylor has been an inspiration for me basically my whole life. She’s basically been my idol for fifteen years and she inspires me as a woman and a person in general.” Dorotovics explains, “Taylor’s music is so relatable and from a mental health standpoint. She’s really helped me and been sort of like a rock to rely on.”

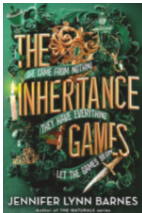
Bayoumi sums it up best by saying, “Stream [Red (Taylor’s Version)] All Too Well (Taylor’s Version) will change you.”

“ All Too Well
(Taylor’s Version)
will change you. ”
-Adam Bayoumi ‘22

Book Recommendations for Escaping Stress

Gabi Rabold ‘22
Staff Writer

With school causing students stress, sometimes all you need is a book to escape from reality. Here are 5 books to help you escape to a world of your dreams.



Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes: All Avery Grambs wanted was to work hard for a better future and leave New Castle, Connecticut. But things don’t go as planned when billionaire Tobias Hawthorne dies and leaves his entire fortune to her. This seems like a retelling of “Cinderella,” but with a catch. Avery must stay at the Hawthorne Mansion for an entire year with the rest of the Hawthorne family. Mysteries, games and love triangles arise in this thrilling book.



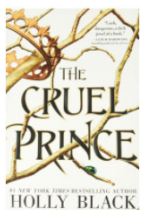
Throne of Glass by Sarah J. Maas: Calaena Sardotheian, the legendary assassin of Adarlan never thought she would escape from Endovier, a salt mine and prison for criminals. She is proven wrong, though, when Captain Westfall and Prince Dorian of Adarlan offer Calaena a deal for freedom in return for a huge sacrifice. This sacrifice brings a deadly contest to determine who will be the King of Adarlan’s champion.



Kingdom of the Wicked by Kerri Maniscalco: Emilia was perfectly fine living a normal life in the city of Sicily (or as normal as being a witch in secret can be). But witches in her town start mysteriously turning up dead, including her twin sister, Vittoria. Emilia sets out to find her sister’s murderer, helped along the way by Wrath, one of the seven deadly princes of Hell, who her grandmother always warned her about.



Dance of Thieves by Mary E. Pearson: Kazi, a thief turned premier guard of the queen and Jase, son of a daunting outlaw family both have opposing goals. Each is determined to complete their own task to benefit their respective kingdoms and prove themselves, but a battle of wit and hearts takes place instead. In the end, they must choose what is most important: their kingdoms or their relationship.



The Cruel Prince by Holly Black: All Jude had ever wanted was to belong in the High Court of Faerie. Many of the fey despise humans, especially Prince Cardan, the youngest and most vile of the High King’s offspring. To achieve a place in court and to finally belong, Jude must defy Cardan and face the consequences. Through heartbreak and politics, Jude sets off to make herself known in the High Court of Faerie.