

THE PAW PRINT

DECEMBER

Editor's Note — December Edition



As the days get shorter and we wrap up the semester, this December edition of The Paw Print gives you something worth slowing down for. It's been a long stretch of classes, exams, and caffeine runs — but despite the chaos, our writers and editors pulled together another issue we're excited to share.

- In News, we recap the major events of 2025, highlighting the moments that shaped our year and the world beyond our campus.
- In Paw-litically Speaking, Parth explores the big question of what it really means to be an American today.
- Opinions reflects on Art Spiegelman's *Maus* as well as the intersectionality between European and American politics and culture.
- Culture brings flavour and festivity with restaurant reviews and a look at Christmas traditions around the world.
- In Features, Olivia's Mental Note returns, offering thoughtful reflections on mental health through a look at a recent study out of Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche.

Between all the summatives and deadlines, it's easy to forget to pause. Yet sometimes the smallest moments are the ones that matter most. As Fennel Hudson reminds us, **“December, being the last month of the year, cannot help but make us think of what is to come.”** It's a chance to reflect on what we've learned, celebrate what we've accomplished, and imagine what we're still chasing in the year ahead.

Here's to another issue of The Paw Print — thanks for reading, and happy holidays!

— **Parth Gupta & David Averbah,**
Editors-in-Chief 🐾



News Around the World

Vivan Gupta & Henri Bertram | Staff Writers

U.K.: The U.K. has released its first major plans to replace animal testing. By 2030, it aims to cut the use of non-human animals in testing human medicines by 30%. Alternatives will include artificial intelligence and 3D-bioprinted human tissues—structures created using “bio-ink,” a mix of living cells, biomaterials, and growth factors.

Egypt: The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that as of November 12, Egypt has eliminated trachoma as a public-health problem. Trachoma, an eye infection that can cause blindness if untreated, had afflicted Egyptians for over 3,000 years. Sustained public-health campaigns reduced infection rates below WHO thresholds.

China: China has achieved notable advances, including millions of new urban jobs, a significant reduction in poverty, and improved access to public services. The country has also increased funding for research and development in areas such as high-speed rail, renewable energy, marine engineering, AI, and quantum technologies.

Spain: Spain is seeing a rise in affordable energy-community projects. One example is Taradell Sostenible, which provides energy to more than 100 low-income households. By sharing solar power produced by public buildings within a 2,000-meter radius, the project helps reduce energy poverty for residents who cannot afford their own installations.



Nigeria: The Great Green Wall is an ambitious project aimed at restoring degraded land across the Sahel region. It boosts food security and helps communities adapt to climate change by planting trees, regenerating vegetation, and increasing biodiversity. It has become a symbol of resilience against climate change in Africa.

Bhutan: Bhutan continues to be the world's only carbon-negative country, meaning its forests absorb more CO₂ than the nation emits. Bhutan has committed to remaining carbon negative for the next decade. As part of this effort, the country is planning the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC), designed to be a sustainable urban hub.

Finland: Helsinki, the capital of Finland, recorded zero traffic-related deaths over a full 12-month period—a rare milestone for any major city. This achievement stems from the “Vision Zero” approach, which includes reduced speed limits, improved street design, better pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and reliable public transport.



South Korea: South Korea has decided to close all coal power plants by 2040. Of the 62 plants affected, 40 have already announced closure dates. South Korea, which operates the seventh-largest number of coal plants globally, officially joined the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) on November 18.

South Africa: The 2025 G20 Summit was the first ever held on African soil. Hosted in Johannesburg on 22–23 November, the summit’s leaders adopted a declaration centered on “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability,” focusing on giving greater voice to issues affecting developing countries.



Indonesia: On November 19, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the polio outbreak in Indonesia had officially ended. The outbreak was caused by circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2). After a mass immunization campaign delivering nearly 60 million additional vaccine doses, no new detections of cVDPV2 have occurred since June 2024.

Colombia: At the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference, Colombia became the first nation to halt all mining activities in the Amazon rainforest, which covers 46% of its territory. Environment Minister Vélez Torres also urged other countries to join the “Amazon Alliance for Life.”

Venezuela: The 2025 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to María Corina Machado for her work toward achieving a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy. She has long been a critic of dictator Nicolás Maduro, who recently won his third term. The award drew international attention to the ongoing crisis in Venezuela.

2025 in News

This Year's Stories that Shaped Our World

Parth Gupta (Editor-in-Chief)

Research help by Vivan Gupta & Henri Bertram

2025

EU AI Act: The World's First Real AI Rulebook

On February 2, the EU activated the planet's first full-spectrum AI regulations, banning systems like social scoring, emotion recognition in schools, and real-time biometric tracking in public spaces. It also forced companies and schools to provide "AI literacy" training. With penalties up to €35 million or 7% of global revenue, Europe turned itself into the world's AI compliance lab — and everyone else scrambled to catch up.



Trump's Return Blows Up Global Trade

Trump's second term started loud, but April 2's "Liberation Day" was the real earthquake. By slapping a 10% tariff on almost all imports (with China facing rates over 50%) he effectively rewired global trade overnight. Stocks tanked, inflation warnings spiked, and several states sued. Even after the White House paused increases for 90 days, supply chains rerouted, prices climbed, and the old free-trade consensus basically collapsed. Supporters called it a long-overdue reset; critics called it economic self-sabotage. Either way, it defined 2025's year of economics.

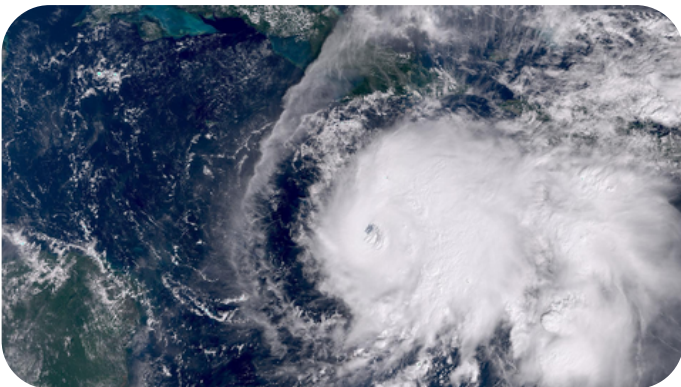


Youth Activism Goes Global

2025 was the year young people stopped waiting and started steering. Climate strikes returned, anti-corruption marches spread from Manila to Madrid, and digital organizers built campaigns in weeks that used to take NGOs months. Some movements scored real wins: green rollbacks reversed, local elections flipped, policy reforms passed. Critics said youth activism burns hot and fades fast; 2025 suggested the opposite — Gen Z and Alpha aren't just loud, they're coordinated, and they're increasingly forcing governments to respond.

Charlie Kirk Assassination Stuns U.S. Politics

Conservative activist Charlie Kirk was fatally shot at Utah Valley University, triggering a national manhunt. Tyler James Robinson, 22, was arrested and now possibly faces the death penalty. Trump declared a National Day of Remembrance as fears about rising political violence surged — and partisan blame games immediately followed.



Hurricane Melissa Devastates Jamaica

Hurricane Melissa slammed Jamaica as a historic Category 5, causing damage equal to 30% of its GDP and leaving massive power outages. Warm ocean temperatures supercharged the storm, making it a brutal reminder of how climate change is reshaping life for island nations on the front lines.

2025's Word of the Year is... a number?

A rap lyric turned TikTok inside joke exploded into the phenomenon of the year. Dictionary.com even named "67" the Word of the Year — despite it having no fixed meaning. Teachers banned it, students overused it, linguists called it brainrot, and Gen Alpha calls it culture. It's 2025's perfect meme: pointless, everywhere, and impossible to escape.



Immigration Enforcement Reignites a National Fight

Expanded detention, disputed ICE raids, and mass protests catapulted immigration enforcement into 2025's limelight. Civil rights groups condemned humanitarian impacts, restrictionists celebrated "law and order," and Los Angeles became the center of nationwide demonstrations (as well as a crackdown by the US National Guard).



Middle East Conflict: Fragile Ceasefire After Gaza War

The Israel-Gaza war continued into 2025, causing thousands of casualties and worsening Gaza's humanitarian crisis. A fall ceasefire finally slowed the fighting, allowing some aid to reach civilians and schools to partially reopen. Major challenges remain: Gaza's governance is unsettled, and Israel's security concerns make lasting peace uncertain.

Syria's Slow, Uneasy Steps Toward Stability

Al-Sharaa's transitional government made small gains: refugees returning, reconstruction starting, and a bit of institutional rebuilding. But unresolved questions — the Assad legacy, war crimes, regional influence — kept the future precarious. Still, after years of nonstop violence, even fragile progress matters.



Pope Leo XIV: A Historic First for America

Chicago-born Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost became the first American pope. A longtime missionary in Peru, Pope Leo XIV doubled down on environmental protection and migrant outreach, and he didn't hesitate to criticize U.S. immigration policies, sparking White House irritation. His first trip to Turkey and Lebanon focused on interfaith bridge-building.

Chocolate and Fried Chicken

BBIS Students Engage with Swiss and Bangladeshi Diplomats

Parth Gupta (Editor-in-Chief)

Last Wednesday, BBIS students visited the Swiss and Bangladeshi Embassies in Berlin — not for sightseeing, but to understand how countries make decisions, negotiate, and use influence well beyond what shows up in headlines.

Swiss Embassy — Strategy Behind Neutrality

At the Swiss Embassy, the discussion went deeper than the stereotype of Swiss neutrality. The diplomat explained how Switzerland uses soft power (reputation, humanitarian credibility, and “chocolate”) to stay influential without military involvement.

We also learned how foreign policy positions are drafted: carefully, deliberately, and with global consequences in mind. When Switzerland speaks, it tries to do so from a place of trust — that’s their diplomatic currency and a tool to maintain neutrality.

Bangladeshi Embassy — Hard Geopolitics and Honest Conversations

The Bangladeshi Embassy offered a very different vibe — warmer, more candid, and



generously hospitable. After welcoming us with fried chicken and traditional sweets, the diplomat pulled no punches discussing regional politics. Topics included:

- Bangladesh’s cooperation with China’s Belt and Road Initiative
- The tension between domestic politics and Western expectations
- Bangladesh’s major role in global climate agreements

He also gave us an unfiltered look into what life as a diplomat actually entails — a lot of cultural awareness and language-learning!

Why It Was Worth Leaving Campus

Both embassies gave us something textbooks can’t: the human reasoning behind policy choices. Switzerland showed us quiet strategic influence; Bangladesh showed us candid geopolitical complexity.

If you’re interested in joining visits like this in the future — or just want to talk global affairs — you’re welcome at BBIS MUN. Join the ECA or drop by Room 3205 on Fridays.



Payton Talbott at UFC 323

Giulia Turksoy

Before Payton Talbott made headlines with his victory over Henry Cejudo at UFC 323, he had already been through a rollercoaster of recent victories and defeats. Talbott's path to becoming one of the top contenders in the UFC was filled with challenges, and his past experiences only made him a stronger fighter.

Talbott's MMA journey began in smaller promotions, where he quickly made a name for himself with his aggressive style. He showcased his skills early on, winning several fights by knockout or decision, and soon caught the attention of UFC scouts. Payton made his UFC debut in 2023, impressing fans with a first-round TKO victory. His fast pace and sharp striking earned him "Fight of the Night" honors in his early bouts. By 2024, Talbott was climbing the ranks in the bantamweight division, picking up notable wins against fighters like Cody McKean and Nico Vasquez. Against McKean, Talbott really showed off his explosive power, solidifying his reputation in the division.

While Talbott's career started strong, he faced two significant setbacks that tested both his skills and mental toughness, especially after riding a winning streak. His first major loss came against Merab Dvalishvili, a fighter known for his relentless pressure and wrestling. The fight was tough for Talbott, as he struggled to find a rhythm and ultimately lost by unanimous decision.

His second loss came against former bantamweight champion Petr Yan. In a fight where Talbott had some good moments, he struggled to match Yan's technical striking. Yan's precision and timing proved too much for Talbott, and he was knocked down and finished in the third round by TKO. These losses forced Talbott to rethink his training and focus on improving his defense.



However, after these defeats, Talbott worked hard to fix his weaknesses. He spent months improving his wrestling, striking, and ability to handle pressure. By the time UFC 323 came around, Talbott was ready for the next big challenge: Henry Cejudo. Against Cejudo, Talbott looked like a new fighter. He controlled the fight from start to finish, outstriking the former champion and landing 134 significant strikes. Talbott also scored a knockdown and avoided the mistakes that had cost him in earlier fights. The victory was a statement that Talbott had learned from his past defeats and was now a force to be reckoned with in the bantamweight division.

"I knew I had to learn from my losses," Talbott said after the fight. "You can't just look at a loss as a failure. It's an opportunity to grow, to learn, and to come back stronger. That's what I've done."

With his dominant victory over Cejudo, Talbott has proven he's ready for the top of the bantamweight division. His next steps are still unclear, but he's now one of the top contenders for a future title shot. Fans are excited to see what's next for this young star. Payton Talbott's story is one of resilience. Despite his losses, he never gave up. Instead, he used those defeats to become a better fighter. His career is just beginning.

2026 World Cup

Parth Gupta (Editor-in-Chief)

The 2026 World Cup groups are out, and this tournament already feels different. With the expanded format and matches spread across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, fans are bracing for a long, unpredictable group stage.

There are plenty of intriguing matchups on the schedule—traditional giants facing rising nations, regional rivals meeting on a global stage, and even several instances of colonisers facing their former colonies. Despite the expanded format, the draw looks surprisingly fair, with most groups offering a clear path forward but no easy guarantees.

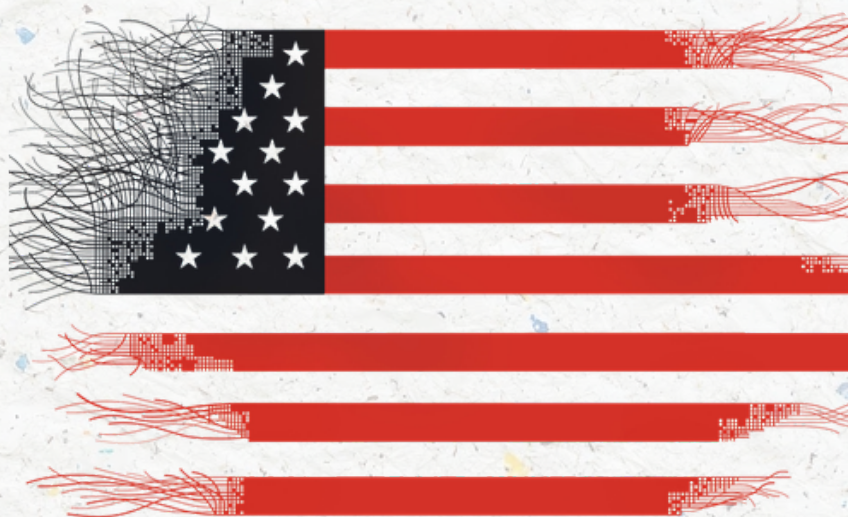
Now the only real question is: who are you cheering for? The countdown is on. ⚽

GROUP A MEXICO SOUTH AFRICA KOREA REPUBLIC CZE/DEN/IRL/MKD	GROUP B CANADA BIH/ITA/NIR/WAL QATAR SWITZERLAND	GROUP C BRAZIL MOROCCO HAITI SCOTLAND	GROUP D USA PARAGUAY AUSTRALIA KOS/ROU/SVK/TUR
GROUP E GERMANY CURAÇAO CÔTE D'IVOIRE ECUADOR	GROUP F NETHERLANDS JAPAN ALB/POL/SWE/UKR TUNISIA	GROUP G BELGIUM EGYPT IR IRAN NEW ZEALAND	GROUP H SPAIN CABO VERDE SAUDI ARABIA URUGUAY
GROUP I FRANCE SENEGAL BOL/IRQ/SUR NORWAY	GROUP J ARGENTINA ALGERIA AUSTRIA JORDAN	GROUP K PORTUGAL COD/JAM/NCL UZBEKISTAN COLOMBIA	GROUP L ENGLAND CROATIA GHANA PANAMA

Not by Blood

Why I Dare to Call the U.S. My Home

Parth Gupta (Editor-in-Chief)



Almost everywhere I go, someone asks me where I'm from. I say, "I'm from the United States." Then comes the follow-up: "But where are your parents from?"

I pause. I hesitate. Am I less American because of my skin? Because I'm vegetarian? Because my parents were born in India? That tiny question carries a bigger weight than anyone expects. It always leaves me wondering: *who actually gets to decide what it means to be American?*

Some people insist the answer is blood. JD Vance recently suggested that certain Americans are somehow "more American" than others, citing ancestry, Civil War roots, or family histories as proof of greater legitimacy. It's absurd. It ignores the actual history of a country built by immigrants chasing freedom, opportunity, and a chance to build something better.

America has never had one agreed-upon definition of "American." Every wave of newcomers got questioned. Irish Catholics were once written off as "unassimilable." Italians were branded criminals. Jewish immigrants were treated as outsiders. Chinese and Japanese immigrants were excluded by law. Mexican and Muslim Americans still get asked to prove their loyalty.

This pattern isn't new—it's the oldest tradition in the country. Someone gets told they don't belong, and then a generation later, the same group becomes described as "real Americans," while the outrage simply shifts to the next family off the boat. That's why the idea of "bloodline American-ness" collapses in contact with reality. If ancestry were the test, most of the country would fail it instantly. The Founders were immigrants. Nearly every American traces back to someone who came from somewhere else, often recently.

Still, those questions hit hard. My Americanness gets constantly probed—not by where I was born or what I believe, but by how I look and the culture I practice. Having your belonging measured by a family tree feels both foreign and familiar. It's a reminder that people love to gatekeep identity, even in a nation that was supposed to welcome everyone.



Over the past few months, I've been trying to understand what being American actually means. It's one of the hardest questions I've tackled. No other country is as dynamic, diverse, messy, loud, or bold as the U.S. And at the center of all that chaos is one simple truth: America was built on immigration. Every generation brought new people, new traditions, and new ideas. The country's culture, identity, and values were shaped by

those who arrived from somewhere else. Being American isn't inherited—it's chosen, lived, and experienced.

The American Dream isn't just about opportunity. It's about belonging. It says anyone—regardless of ancestry—can become American through participation, contribution, and commitment. Unlike countries built on ethnic identity, the U.S. made a radically different choice: citizenship defined by values and allegiance—not by blood.

My identity, upbringing, and experiences make me American in every meaningful sense. Which is exactly why the idea that someone could be "more" or "less" American based on ancestry isn't just wrong—it's fundamentally incompatible with the country itself. American identity is supposed to be fluid, inclusive, and rooted in experience and values, not genetics.

And considering that identity grows from experience, here's a glimpse of mine:

I'm American because I, too, watched fireworks explode on the Fourth of July, my face washed in red, white, and blue.

I'm American because I know what those colors feel like, not just what they look like.

I'm American because I grew up believing that democracy is messy, loud, frustrating, and still worth fighting for—just like the founders believed when they spilled blood, sweat, and ink to build it.

And I'm American because I pledged allegiance—not to a bloodline—but to a flag and the idea behind it: one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

So when someone asks me where I'm from, I just smile and say, "I'm from the United States." And I mean it. Every word. Because being American isn't about ancestry. It's about who you are, what you do, and how you choose to belong.

Genocide Education: Why Learning About the Holocaust Still Matters

Constantin Voss



A month ago, our class finished reading and discussing *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a graphic novel that uses simple drawings to tell one of humanity's darkest stories. Despite its comic-style appearance, there is nothing "lite" about what it depicts. As we moved through the book and connected it to global issues, it became clear that learning about genocide and the Holocaust is not only about understanding the past but also about recognizing warning signs so history is not repeated.

A History That Still Echoes Today

Many people falsely assume that the Holocaust began suddenly with gas chambers and mass shootings. In reality, it started with stereotypes, harassment, lies, and the normalization of hatred. Anti-Jewish laws, propaganda, and people's fear of speaking out made it easy for violence and murder to grow into something unimaginable.

Maus makes especially clear how everyday life can slip into exclusion and discrimination. By following Vladek's story, we saw how families like his were institutionally targeted, step by step. Even today, it is important to understand that history shows genocides—whether they are in Europe, Asia, Africa, or anywhere—rarely start suddenly. They gradually begin with words, attitudes, and divisions that grow when people stop questioning them.

Why Genocide Education Is Still Necessary:

Because discrimination hasn't disappeared

Hatred toward smaller groups and minorities, including antisemitism, still exists and will sadly never fully disappear. Learning about the Holocaust helps us identify harmful stereotypes and understand where they can lead if left unchecked.

Because misinformation spreads faster than ever

In the 1930s, propaganda spread through newspapers and radio. Today, it spreads in seconds through social media. Learning about the Holocaust shows us why we must question sources that seem false or suspicious, how to recognize misinformation, and how to avoid being manipulated.

Because survivors won't be here forever

The number of living Holocaust survivors grows smaller every year, as the events happened more than 80 years ago. Books like *Maus* preserve their stories. By reading them, we carry those memories forward for future generations.

Because "Never Again" is a responsibility

Genocides did not end in 1945. From Rwanda and Bosnia to ongoing human rights crises today, the world continues to see violence driven by hatred and identity. Understanding the Holocaust gives us the ability to recognize early warning signs and speak out.

The Role Schools Play

Simply memorizing dates or names will not help us understand genocide. The goal is to understand what happened (and to develop empathy) so it never happens again. *Maus* is a good example of how we can connect to the past through emotionally powerful stories, discussions, and memorial days.

Schools have an important responsibility: to ensure that future generations learn not only what happened, but why it happened — and what must be done to prevent it from happening again.

What We Can Learn From *Maus*

Maus is powerful because it doesn't present the Holocaust as just another story in a history book. It shows real people and their real experiences, bringing the events closer to us. Many lost their homes, loved ones, and lives; families were torn apart. All of these horrors appear in the story Vladek tells.

By reading it, we didn't just learn facts. We saw how the horrors of the Holocaust affected survivors long after the war, and even their children. It reminds us how important it is to listen to those who lived through such events.

Conclusion: Remembering Is Preventing

Learning about the Holocaust is not about dwelling on the past; it is about shaping the future. Students can become aware and compassionate if they understand what happened and especially how it happened.

When our class closed the chapter on *Maus*, we didn't just walk away with average historical knowledge. We left with a reminder: hatred grows when good people stay silent. Genocide education teaches us to never be silent again.



A Voice for Evidence

Anna Ziems

I firmly believe that everyone is entitled to their opinion. But it is also important that our opinions should be supported by evidence, particularly when trying to persuade others. I feel that the anti-abortion piece in the last issue of this magazine was concerning, as it contained some inaccuracies. Just like mine, the article was published in Opinions, but the scientific style including use of statistics and reference to scientific studies implies that it is based on facts and shares true evidence regarding abortions, the time a human's life begins, and statistics of reasonings behind abortion. The trouble is that many of the facts cited were inaccurate or taken out of context, meaning that the article's conclusions did not necessarily stand up logically. This meant that these conclusions were really the author's opinion. This is fine in an opinion piece, but as they were dressed up as the uncontestable truth, I find it misleading to publish them as opinions.

After some further research many of these studies and statistics that were linked within the article could not be verified. When strong references are made to information taken from scientific studies, which are key towards the description of arguments, it would be extremely helpful to cite the sources directly, as to help readers deepen their understanding of a topic.

One argument is about abortion in pregnancies caused by rape. My colleague's article suggests that pro-choice support for abortion in these cases overstates the problem of sexual assault causing pregnancies.

Specifically, it cites a study which states "only about 1% of abortions are due to rape-caused pregnancies" stating the source of this statistic to be from the Guttmacher Institute.

When looking for the study that was cited I found that it was comprised of two surveys which had about 1000 participants respectively. While the 1% number used in the article is not factually incorrect, the way in which it is portrayed is extremely misleading. This one singular study, which encompasses survey responses from about 2000 women, was used to describe the general statistical reasoning behind abortions worldwide. This is in fact a vast oversimplification of a very complex and societally impactful issue.

Firstly, in most western countries women are not required to state their reason for an abortion, so it is hard to represent women's motivations statistically. There are also many hurdles that women need to overcome when reporting rape. Having to face the police, social stigma, and possibly their assaulter again all make it very difficult for women to report rape. The US National Crime Victimization Survey in 2018 estimated that 75.1% of sexual assaults went unreported ([Reproductiverights.org](https://reproductiverights.org)). If most rapes go unreported, and we don't ask women to give reasons for their abortions, then it is extremely difficult to know how many abortions are caused by rape. My sense is that it is higher than 1%, but we can't know for sure.

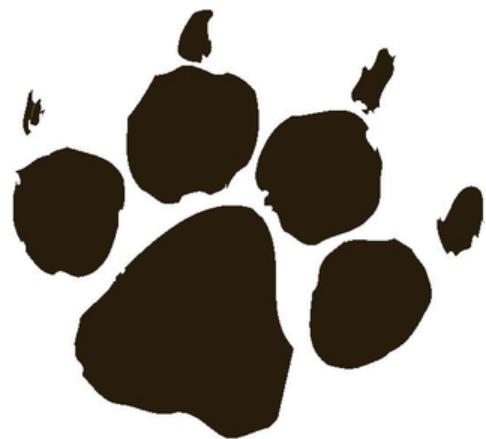
The previous article notes that it is a “scientific fact” that a pregnancy involves two humans, not one. But there is not a scientific consensus on when a human life begins. That is essentially a philosophical, not a scientific question. Some people will say that life begins at conception, others that it does not, and this is not really a question that science can answer for us. So using terms such as “scientific truth” and “biological” statements to make the argument appear more reliable and true, but is really a misrepresentation of the facts – in this case, the fact that there is not a scientific truth.

Lastly the article discusses economic hardships as a reasoning behind abortions and describes them as “unfortunate situations” which should be overcome by relying on “support systems such as community resources, adoption services, and social programs”.

While I would be delighted to know more about various community resources and social programs that can help tackle this global issue, this is where pro-life arguments tend to fall silent. In fact, hundreds of millions of children live in extreme poverty according to the World Bank, and this status during childhood is a significant risk factor for substance and criminal misuse later in life. They talk of supporting mothers and children born into economic hardship as an alternative to abortions, but seem to offer precious little real help. This leads to an argument that minimizes the hardship of living in poverty and the impact it has on mothers and children. Additionally, although not expressly stated, by claiming that there are available resources, abortions are represented almost as an “easy” solution, chosen due to a refusal to utilize these resources. Very few women who have an abortion would see it as an “easy” solution.

Do you want to know my personal opinion about all this? My real opinion about this is that it is none of my business. I am not, and have never been in the position to be impacted by it. So I don’t think that I have the right to tell anyone else how to make that decision. I’m not saying that abortions are good and that we should encourage people to have them all the time. But I don’t believe that anyone can tell someone else what to do with their body, with the most personal decisions they may make, with a complicated question that determines your future and other people’s too. It is vital in my view that abortion should be safe, legal and available, so that women can make their own choice.

Although I am writing here about the abortion debate, this is about deeper issues. When discussing sensitive topics, it is important to do your research carefully, and also important to clearly distinguish between facts and opinions. Everyone can and should have their own opinion. But if we are going to try to persuade others, we need to do so honestly, and we must begin by being clear about what the facts are.



Does America Get the Appreciation from Europe That It Deserves?

Vittorio De Cristo – Staff Writer



As an American living in Germany, I expected cultural differences and occasional stereotypes. While I knew that Germany and America were strong allies, what I didn't expect was how many people carry a specific stereotypical image of America in their minds. There is a gap between what people perceive America to be and what it actually is. After living in the U.S. for the majority of my life and now in Europe, I have experienced this first hand. I also believe the reverse is true—Americans often don't have an accurate idea of Europe. I want to make clear that this isn't about shaming Europeans or saying that every European thinks this way; it's about highlighting a contradiction between attitude and behavior.

The Irony

I find it quite ironic that European culture often criticizes America while simultaneously absorbing massive amounts of American culture through technology and entertainment. For instance, rap music is now one of the most listened-to genres among European youth. Germany, France, and the UK all have huge domestic rap scenes. A culture that claims to dislike America often embraces one of its largest cultural exports.

All of Europe's major cities have McDonald's, KFC, Burger King, Starbucks, and more. In Germany alone, there are over 1,300 McDonald's locations.

While this shows America's presence in Europe, it may also contribute to European stereotypes of Americans. Many Europeans associate America with burgers, fries, and obesity. While obesity is a growing issue in the U.S., this stereotype is rooted more in visibility than reality; most Americans don't eat fast food all day. However, a significant portion do –according to the CDC, around 32–36% of Americans eat some form of fast food on any given day. Even so, this doesn't justify prejudice, especially considering that, according to unofficial sources, the U.K. and France rank second and third globally for fast food consumption after the U.S. This adds to the irony: European consumers enjoy these products while simultaneously criticizing "American culture."

Europe often portrays itself as more "social" or "balanced," but the EU is one of the world's largest capitalist free-trade zones. European companies rely heavily on globalized American-style markets for advertising and branding. Germany, in particular, is Europe's largest economy, operating on free-market principles heavily influenced by the U.S.' post-World War II reconstruction models. Europe was rebuilt with the help of American money and protected by the US military. It still is! European economies adopt American capitalist ideas while sometimes criticizing Americans as "uneducated."

A prime example of American consumer culture adopted in Europe is Black Friday. Originating in the U.S., Black Friday occurs on the Friday after Thanksgiving, with major sales across the country. It has become a symbol of American consumer culture and is now embraced in European countries. Even though they don't celebrate Thanksgiving, countries like Germany, the U.K., Italy, Spain, and Scandinavia now promote Black Friday, which has become one of Europe's biggest shopping periods by revenue.

While Europeans often joke about Americans being obsessed with sales and consumerism, European malls, websites, and brands act the same way during Black Friday. This adoption reflects how influential American economic culture is in Europe, showing that anti-American stereotypes don't stop people from enjoying American culture when it benefits them.



American pop culture also heavily influences the European entertainment industry. Hollywood films dominate European theaters and are streamed on platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Paramount+. Social media apps such as TikTok, Instagram, and

YouTube have spread American slang—words like “bro,” “cringe,” and “rizz”—throughout Europe, becoming part of youth language and everyday speech. European youth culture is closely intertwined with American culture, even while being criticized.

As mentioned, Europe relies heavily on American platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Google, Apple, and Microsoft. There are few major European alternatives. Whatsapp is owned by Meta (American), and Asian companies like Samsung are other options. This article is being written on an Apple MacBook, and will be published by one. Almost every computer in BBIS runs Windows, Mac OS, or Chrome OS—all American-made software. Daily European life depends on American technology, and it's often underappreciated.

This pattern isn't new. Europeans have been influenced by America since the country's founding. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed, marking America's independence from Britain. This inspired France and other parts of Europe to consider

democratic ideals achievable. The influence continued, particularly after World War II, when European countries adopted American democratic models, economic systems, and cultural norms during reconstruction. America's presence through NATO has shaped European politics, music, and consumer culture for decades. America's influence on Europe has been ongoing since the country's inception.

The irony of Europe's attitude toward America may have several causes: mixed feelings, a desire to preserve European identity, and negative portrayals in media. People often love American culture but dislike its politics. Some Europeans may criticize America to feel more “European” or independent. Media coverage often highlights America's problems—gun violence, obesity, poverty, education issues—which creates a negative image without reflecting how much America does right. Every country has challenges and strengths, and Europe relies on America far more than it admits.



Growing Up Around Guns

Why I Stopped Believing Hunting Is “Just a Part of Life”

Ben McMorrow



Growing up in Texas, I was surrounded by a culture where hunting was often celebrated as tradition or sport. As a kid I never questioned it that much — it was simply part of the landscape. But even at the time, I felt uneasy about killing animals for the sake of entertainment. Over time, as I learned more about the environment and biodiversity, my discomfort with hunting turned into a conviction. Hunting for sport not only disregards animal life and ethics, but it also threatens fragile wildlife populations and disrupts the balance of nature. This inspired me to start this blog, to advocate for such issues. This stance has only continued to deepen with age as I’ve become more aware of how animals are essential participants in our shared environment.

Australian philosopher Peter Singer argues that morality should be based on interests — not on species, tradition, or power. Humans have an interest in avoiding pain, staying alive, and pursuing well-being. Animals have those same interests.

Maybe they can’t vote or speak or write poetry. But they can feel fear, experience pain, form emotional bonds, and fight to survive.

Singer says that if two beings share an interest — like the interest in avoiding suffering — then their interests deserve equal consideration. Not identical treatment, but equal moral weight.

So if a deer wants to continue living, and a hunter wants a trophy photo, those interests are not equal. One is about pleasure. The other is about life itself. According to Singer, choosing pleasure over another being’s survival is morally unjustifiable. I agree.

To conclude, allow me to bring this to one final question: What do you think the reaction would be against an animal if they started killing humans for fun? Have a think about that.

Check out Ben’s blog, ‘Ben’s Take on Wildlife’ here:
<https://medium.com/@benmemorrow22>

Being thankful for what you already have, or saying “thank you” for taking more?

Flavia Luca



What better way to end the year than with a big and heavy platter of things that call for opinions and sides to take, just to figure out if it truly leads to the happily-ever-after everyone wants by the time the sun sets? I wouldn't know. Ask Trump.

Ha! You see, I already smell the pro-Trump crowd toughening up, ready to defend anything non-Trump supporters throw at them in attempts to prove their point or even disagree. And hey, who are we to tell right from wrong? We don't really know anything apart from what we get from the news, and that's just enough to help us form opinions of our own that turn into either metamorphosis or hubris. Now take my hand and join me on a walk down the Yellow Brick Road...

What is Trump actually up to now? Is he sitting behind the Resolute Desk drinking an espresso, or lying in bed watching *Gossip Girl* on full blast in his custom embroidered “DT”-initialed fuzzy robe? Imagination is a wild thing. But one thing is for sure: he's plotting major plans in places far from Kansas, well away from the Wicked Witch of the West and into Eastern territory—Europe.

So, what exactly is happening? After Trump's organized summit to address the Russia-Ukraine war, and his unsuccessful attempt to meet personally with Zelenskyy a few days later, things were left right where they started. Close to absolutely no progress. Things went quiet for a while, but these past months Trump has turned his attention toward the

immigration “issues” currently unfolding in mostly Western European nations, primarily France and Germany.

A little backstory for those who may not know: during Angela Merkel’s leadership, her policy limiting restrictions on immigration led to an extraordinary number of foreigners and refugees entering Germany seeking a better life. This helped spark an “open border policy” around 2015.

Although this sounded like a noble cause—as it was intended to be—other Western countries like France chose to welcome a portion of refugees while keeping stricter border controls. France was able to contain the intake, while Germany underestimated the situation and ended up receiving around a million foreigners. It quickly got out of hand, the economy began struggling, and the government lost control of the influx. Germany wasn’t doing particularly well, and many German citizens resented Merkel’s decisions, with some referring to the migration as the choice that could end the “heritage” of their country for good.



Now back to how Trump is “handling” all this. He has made it very clear over the past year how he feels about Europe’s policies on helping asylum seekers and the tradition of

humanitarian aid being part of European culture. He’s not a fan in the slightest. He called Europe’s soft border control a “collective failure,” and their open-border “experiment” a total fiasco, as stated publicly several times in his 2025 speeches. Alongside this, Trump has begun pushing the idea of U.S. influence over Europe’s border flow as he tries to convince leaders of major Western powers to rethink their choices.

If European countries yield to pressure and tighten immigration and refugee policies because of U.S. urging, it could reshape how Europe approaches asylum, refugee flows, external migration, and relationships with countries of origin. It risks undermining shared EU principles on human rights, asylum, integration, and solidarity—especially considering Europe’s diverse political traditions and histories.

Trump pressuring and undermining Western leadership raised awareness but also made him sound almost desperate to control an issue nobody asked him to address. Europe has been an open, diverse continent since its beginnings and has generally been able to handle its issues on its own. So why does Trump feel the need to step in? Europe’s sovereignty stands at risk if foreign opinions interfere, potentially causing more damage than good and even leading to global conflicts in extreme cases.

I mean, if we take a step back and look in the mirror, we’re here in Germany because we were allowed in. Most of us were immigrants at some point and probably will be again. Germany’s ability to sustain so many lives shouldn’t be seen as a cry for help, but as a sign it can support those in need while still protecting a future for those who came before. Europe’s “heritage” isn’t stained by acts of aid; instead, it symbolizes that the continent can uphold its legacy of being open-minded and willing to give people a second chance at success.

Christmas Around the World

Vivan Gupta & Henri Bertram – Staff Writers



Finland

Christmas in Finland is known for being warm and cozy. People light candles and Christmas lights, often relying on fireplaces or soft lighting during the dark northern winter. Pikkujoulu is the pre-Christmas celebration, with social gatherings, glögi (mulled wine), and festive food. Many families even visit cemeteries on Christmas Eve to light candles on the graves of loved ones. Christmas in Finland is also full of natural decorations—and of course, the Finnish sauna.



Russia

The Russian Orthodox Church uses the Julian calendar (13 days behind the Gregorian one), so Christmas is celebrated on January 7. On Christmas Eve, many people fast until the first star appears in the sky. The traditional Christmas Eve meal, called the Holy Supper, has 12 meatless dishes such as kutya, borscht or mushroom soup, pickled vegetables, vareniki or pierogi, and kisel. The main church service is the All-Night Vigil on Christmas Eve.



Philippines

Christmas in the Philippines is one of the longest and most festive celebrations in the world. It often starts in September and runs until January, ending with the Feast of the Epiphany. The main holidays are Christmas Eve (Noche Buena) and Christmas Day. Since the Philippines is predominantly Christian, Christmas has strong religious roots. A series of nine pre-dawn masses begin on December 16 and end on December 24. Afterward, people enjoy snacks like bibingka (rice cake) and puto bumbong (purple sticky rice).



Nigeria

Christmas in Nigeria is celebrated by traveling to one's hometown, leaving big cities nearly empty so people can savor time with their families. Different dishes are served in different regions. In the south, people eat jollof rice with various stews. In the north, they also enjoy rice with stews, especially with tuwon shinkafa, a rice pudding. Most homes have an artificial Christmas tree.

Colombia

Colombia's Christmas season is famous for its lights, music, food, traditions, and community gatherings. December 7 marks the official start of Christmas, when families place thousands of candles and lanterns outside homes, on balconies, in streets, and in parks. Colombia is also known for spectacular Christmas light festivals. Cities like Medellín, Bogotá, Cali, Bucaramanga, and Barranquilla create massive light displays featuring figures, arches, sculptures, floating ornaments, and themed music shows. There's a lot more to Colombian Christmas—worth diving deeper.



Brazil

In Brazil, Christmas plays are popular, often featuring a woman trying to steal the baby Jesus. Sometimes children leave their socks near a window; when Papai Noel finds them, he exchanges them for presents. Brazil has a wide range of cultures, so people might eat Italian panettone or Portuguese salted cod. Dinner is normally served around 10 p.m., when it is dark, since December is summertime there.



Spain

In Spain, the Christmas holidays run from December 24th to January 6th. In many regions, large feasts last late into the night. A common first course is seafood such as prawns or salmon, followed by soup. An old tradition involved walking through the streets carrying torches, strumming guitars, and beating tambourines and drums. Another tradition is eating twelve grapes with the twelve strokes of midnight—one for each month of the coming year. If you manage all twelve, you're considered lucky.



Venezuela

Christmas in Venezuela is very colorful, and people enjoy big firework shows. Christmas celebrations start on December 21. Traditional Venezuelan foods include hallacas—a mixture of beef, pork, raisins, capers, chicken, and olives wrapped in plantain leaves and steamed or boiled. It is traditional to paint the house two to four weeks in advance so everything looks clean and festive. In Venezuela, the presents are brought by San Nicolás.

Japan

Christmas in Japan isn't very traditional, as less than 2% of the population is Christian. Instead, the celebration is cultural, festive, romantic, and very commercial. Japan is known for massive winter light displays in large cities, and Christmas in Japan is often compared to Valentine's Day. One unique tradition is eating KFC, thanks to the "Kentucky for Christmas" marketing campaign. People also enjoy strawberry shortcake.



Australia

In Australia, the weather is very different from what we're used to. That's why Australians enjoy Christmas on the beach, cooling off in the ocean. Despite the heat, many still enjoy eating roast turkey, although traditions are much more flexible than in other countries, often borrowing ideas from Asian cultures. They also enjoy putting up Christmas lights as neighborhoods to create seasonal attractions.

Perks of Being a Wallflower

Scarlett Morin – Staff Writer

Perks of being a wallflower by Stephen Chbosky is one of the rare novels that explores how self worth affects not just your ability to love but also your ability to receive it. In today's article I will go in depth about this insightful novel. If you are interested please continue to read.

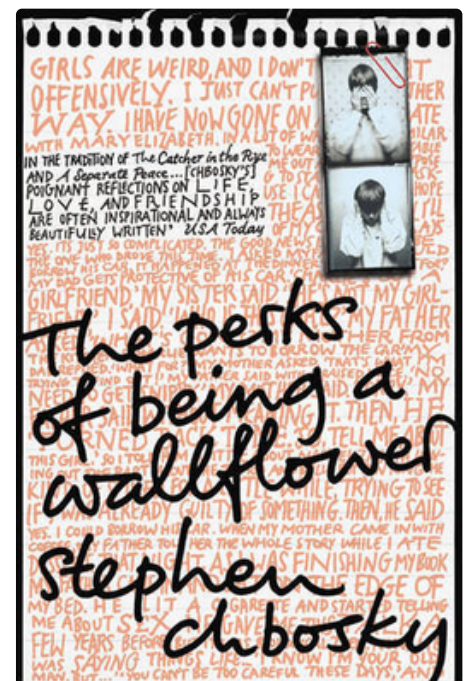
Perks of being a wallflower was published in 1999. This book follows Charlie, a freshman in high school struggling to fit in. Charlie writes this entire book as a series of letters addressed to an unknown friend. Each letter starts with "Dear friend" and ends with "Love always Charlie". In these letters we as the reader get to know Charlie as a person and get a window into his experience of high school. At first he is overcome with anxiety and trauma from the suicide of his best friend. However his life gets significantly better when he meets a girl named Sam. Sam is a senior in his school who introduces him to a group of friends. Charlie quickly develops a crush on Sam. As the year and book progresses we see Charlie come out of his shell and process a lot of untouched trauma.

This book explores many key themes such as anxiety, depression, PTSD and bullying. In the book Charlie struggles a lot with anxiety and depression due to his trauma. Since the book is written as a series of letters we as readers get an insight into those struggles and how he copes with them. It is a very meaningful experience to follow Charlie's journey of not just healing but overcoming these issues as well. The book also touches on the global issue of bullying. Charlie and his friendgroup in this book is made out to be a bit alternative. Their peers don't always admire this. Unfortunately this leads them to all face the conflict of bullying.

Bullying is a common experience which the book does a good job of enrapturing. One of my favourite parts of the plot is despite all of the bullying and torment each character never once changes who they are.

The genius behind this thrilling novel is Stephen Chbosky. He is a 55 year old American author and film director. He grew up in Pittsburgh and wrote this book in 1999. He later adapted it into a movie which he directed himself in 2012. You may know him from the movie wonder which he also directed. Stephen decided to write this novel because he wanted to share his own personal experience of coming to age and adjusting to life as a teenager.

In conclusion I highly recommend the perks of being a wallflower. This book leaves each reader with their own unique experience depending on how they interpret it. The book addresses the pressing issue of mental health in an accurate, relatable way. The plot is very well thought out and each character flawed but endearing the very same. If you are interested in this novel you can find it at the library.



The Top Three Christmas Songs in 2025

Nina Dressler – Staff Writer

The Holiday season is right around the corner, Snow, Big meals and Family time. I know everyone is so excited for the Winter break, but what is the winter soundtrack of 2025? I have 3 songs for you that are perfect for this winter break.

I'll start with a proclaimed classic! This song was released on the 3rd of December 1984 and in 2023 it was named the number one Christmas song, can you guess? It's "Last Christmas" by Wham! This song enters the charts in December every year since its release. The song was written about a heartbreak and betrayal that takes place over christmas time. Famous lines from the song like "Last christmas I gave you my heart, but the very next day you gave it away" or "Tell me baby do you recognize me, well its been a year it doesnt surprise me" are so timeless people have been screaming the lines since the 80s. Last Christmas is personally one of my favourites.

But for the 2025 holidays we need to break from heartbreak songs and enter a new age of love songs. This song was written in 1956 and was part of the album "Calendar girl", fun fact this song was produced by the singer's husband "Bobby Troup". This acclaimed song is "Warm Christmas" by Julie London. This love song is about being with your loved ones at christmas time, it's a nice mix between jazz and holiday themes. Julie's vocals in this song extend expectations and really bring in joyful, mellowed emotions.



But fast forward 58 years to this very famous Christmas pop song. Released in 2014 by a lionized pop artist. For all you Ariana grande fans, "Santa Tell Me" is a must have on your playlist. Already peaking at #5 on the Billboard 100 in 2025, this song will be once again another holiday hit. Full of modern beats and incredible vocals by Ariana, this song is one of few Christmas pop songs that had major success. In my opinion these 3 songs touch every genre for this holiday, Hope everyone has an amazing break with a great holiday soundtrack.



Haikyuu!!

ハイキュー!!

Akira Salem – Staff Writer



The manga and anime series Haikyuu!! by Furudate Haruichi is sport anime about a young boy, Shoyo Hinata, who is short, but dreams of becoming a volleyball ace. His ability to jump is incredible, and together with his rival and friend, Tobio Kageyama, he becomes incredibly hard to beat. Over time, their team, the Karasuno volleyball club, grows stronger and stronger, with increasing teamwork and friendships.

I recommend reading or watching Haikyuu!! because it is hilarious, motivating to do sports and on top of that, extremely impressive. And who knows, maybe you might actually learn something about volleyball

Haikyuu!! has some amazing characters, including the hot-headed duo Hinata and Kageyama, the duo that has a crush on their team manager, Tanaka and Nishinoya, or the tall and intimidating but easily scared Azumane.

I would give this series an age rating of 8+, because there is some light cursing in it. Otherwise, there is no inappropriate content in the anime and manga.



Food Review: DAMSO Teehaus

Teltower Damm 54, Berlin-Zehlendorf

Julie Monnet – Staff Writer

About the Owners

The two owners of the DAMSO Teehaus are Kyeola Lee and Dukhyuan Nam. They took over the restaurant in 2021 from Kyeola's sister and her husband. Kyeola and Dukhyuan come from Seoul in Korea. Their favourite Korean dish is tteok-bokki which is rice cake in spicy chili sauce.



What we ordered

When I went to eat at DAMSO with my parents, we ordered a wide range of meals. We all started our Korean journey with a cup of traditional tea. I drank the red ginseng tea. My mom had the "Gerösteter Mais-Tee", which is a roasted corn tea. My father ordered the "Grüner Wintertee", which is a green tea. We were all pleased with our tea and enjoyed the taste of it.

As our starters, we had a cucumber salad, one big portion of kimchi, and a savory wheat pancake. The cucumber salad tasted fresh and was very well spiced. The reason why I especially enjoy the kimchi at DAMSO is because it is made without fish sauce, which gives the kimchi a natural flavor. The wheat pancakes are great for sharing and very flavorful.



As my main course, I ordered a chicken noodle soup. The soup was outstanding and perfect for cold winter days. The noodles are handmade and have a perfect consistency, the broth is not too spicy and contains small stripes of meat. We also ordered avocado gimbap. Gimbaps are small, thin rolls of rice wrapped in seaweed usually with radish, carrots, spinach and (since we ordered avocado gimbap) avocado. As our third main course, we ordered tofu japchae. Japchae is a traditional Korean noodle and rice dish. At DAMSO, the japchae is a portion of glass noodles made of sweet potato flour next to a bit of rice with fresh vegetables and marinated tofu. You can ask for extra spicy homemade sauce for each meal.

Coming to an end on what we ordered, the dessert was a pumpkin mug-cake. The "Kürbis-Tässchen" at DAMSO is truly one of the most comforting desserts I have eaten. The pumpkin mug-cake is served hot and steaming, and is drizzled with cinnamon spices and maple syrup.

Pricing and opening hours

I think the pricing for individual meals at DAMSO is very appropriate and fair. The chicken noodle soup cost 13.00 euros and everything else we ordered was below that price. The pumpkin mug-cake only costs 1.80 euros.

The opening hours for DAMSO are: Monday and tuesday closed, and wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday from 12-8 pm.

Atmosphere

The ambience of DAMSO is very home-like and cozy. The restaurant itself is decorated with many hand-painted pictures based on the current season and warm lights hanging from the ceiling. The tables are decorated nicely, and the benches have many soft cushions on them. When you walk in, you instantly get greeted, and you can even watch Kyeola prepare food. DAMSO is usually very quiet, calm and relaxed, which is why it is so enjoyable to eat there.



Verdict?

Overall, DAMSO is a slow-paced, calm and relaxing restaurant. The food is delicious, and the teas are traditional and very flavorful. The prices are reasonable for the extraordinary food you get served and the interior design of DAMSO is very cozy. It is definitely worth stopping by there, even only for a tea. My family and I have been eating at DAMSO for over 8 years and still love the food! Thank you for reading my article and I hope you enjoy DAMSO as much as I do.

The Game Awards 2025

Moya Schoenharl – Staff Writer

The Game Awards are presented by Geoff Keighley, the creator of The Game Awards. 2025 marks the twelfth year the awards have been held. There are multiple categories, including Game of the Year, Best Narrative, Best Score and Music, and Best Debut Indie Game, among many others. Nintendo, IGN, Xbox, and Epic Games all participate in The Game Awards. Steam and PlayStation, on the other hand, have their own respective game awards. Steam hosts The Steam Awards, which do not have as many categories as The Game Awards. PlayStation runs the PlayStation Blog 2025 Game of the Year. These two “game of the year” awards aren’t as widely watched as The Game Awards, which drew around 154 million viewers for the 2024 ceremony.

There are currently six contenders for Game of the Year: *Death Stranding 2: On the Beach*, *Hades II*, *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*, *Donkey Kong Bananza*, *Hollow Knight: Silksong*, and *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*. Perhaps the most unexpected nominee is *Expedition 33*, the breakout hit from new French studio Sandfall Interactive. It is a JRPG (Japanese role-playing game) set in a fantasy Belle Époque France. The game takes place 67 years after a magical explosion rips apart the fictional Paris, called Lumiere. Every year, The Paintress writes a number, and at the end of that year, everyone of that age disappears in an event called The Gommage. After the main character, Gustave, watches his old love disappear in The Gommage, he leads a group of adventurers to confront The Paintress. *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* combines stunning visuals with a sweeping orchestral score and a combat system that is both unique and challenging, setting a new standard for JRPGs.

Two other notable indie nominees are *Hades II*



and *Hollow Knight: Silksong*, both sequels from indie studios. *Silksong* is a highly anticipated follow-up to *Hollow Knight*, an indie game released in 2017 by Team Cherry for Windows, macOS, Linux, and multiple consoles, including Xbox and Nintendo Switch. The game is a 2D platformer metroidvania praised for its graphics, soundtrack, gameplay, and story. *Silksong* features Hornet, the princess and protector of Hallownest, who is captured and brought to the unfamiliar world of Pharloom. One notable aspect of its release was the overwhelming demand on launch day, which caused the Steam platform to crash. On Steam alone, it sold over three million copies in just three days.

Hades II is a roguelike dungeon crawler developed and published by Supergiant Games, an indie studio based in San Francisco. The game is a sequel to the highly acclaimed *Hades*. In *Hades II*, players control Melinoë, the daughter of Hades, with the mission to defeat Chronos, the Titan of Time. The game has been praised for its breathtaking art, striking character designs, and engaging combat.

Find out who will win Game of the Year on December 11 at thegameawards.com.

Game Review: Cuphead

Matilda Sadler – Staff Writer

Are you a fan of seriously old school animation (from almost a hundred years ago) somehow with cutting edge gameplay? Even if you're not, you soon will be with Cuphead! An indie video game released in 2017 developed by Studio MDHR. It also went on to have a 3 season Netflix show in 2022, The Cuphead Show. The game is known for its 1930s cartoon aesthetic making its visuals and gameplay style completely unique. It's a run and gun bullet hell platformer. You play as Cuphead, or Mugman, his brother (and sometimes a special new character from the DLC – downloadable content) on their quest to reclaim their souls from the Devil.

Yup, you read that right, the plot of the game is that the daredevil Cuphead gambles his and Mugman's souls away to the Devil. They now have to fight a wide variety of bosses and collect their souls to get a chance to be free from Hell.

Now, I've played the game and I'm a big fan of Cuphead, so it might come as a surprise that I often hate this game with my entire being for one reason only: it's really hard for an average player like me. The boss fights have me dying and resetting almost to the same degree as an Undertale no mercy run (for those of you who don't get the reference, that's a lot), and I often want to rage quit. Why then, you might ask, am I still playing it after I get beat to a pulp by giant frogs, a living boat or other strange creative bosses? Because it's fun, captivating and has a beautiful style that is refreshing compared to some other games taking the spotlight today.



Overall, Cuphead is a must play game, especially for indie game fans. I would recommend playing it with a friend, though it might break that friendship when you yell at them to dodge the giant frog. So what are you waiting for? It's 19,99€ on Steam, but that Winter Sale is coming! In my opinion the money is worth it. Have fun!



Forsaken game review

Jiho Jung – Staff Writer



I'm doing another retro Roblox game review again.

This time, it is about Forsaken, my favorite game in all of Roblox. Now, let's get you to at least understand what the game is like.

Forsaken is a game quite similar to Dead by Daylight, but more child-friendly, I guess (still not child-friendly, though, because one of the roles is to brutally kill people). If you know what Dead by Daylight is, you'll know what I mean. If you don't, here's a more detailed explanation:

When you join the game, you'll eventually get sent to a round. In that round, you try to survive the killer for around 5 minutes. You can do generators to lower the time by 3.5 seconds and get points that will give you a higher chance of being the killer. If you get killed, then, well, you get killed, and get sent back to the lobby and need to wait for the match to end. This just continues on forever.

You might be thinking, "Wow, how does this random guy even like this? It sounds repetitive and boring." And yes, that would be true if it were only that. Luckily for us, when you're not the killer, you have a variety of 11 different survivors to play, all with unique abilities and very different and creative playstyles for each. When you're a killer, there are 7 different killers to play as, each also with unique and strategic abilities, along with very different playstyles.

Similar to my last game review, I will review 3 things: gameplay, convenience (how laggy it is and under what conditions the game can be played properly), and quality of the models and renders.

For gameplay, survivors aren't much fun if you play certain survivors, namely 007n7, Chance, and Taph (sometimes. This is just my opinion). Others, however, are sometimes more fun to play. Some examples are Guest 1337, where



you can block one of the killer's attacks and get to use the skill Punch. If you punch right after a block, you can parry them and stun them for a whole 4 seconds (it doesn't seem like much, but every single second matters in this game). If you pull this off correctly, you might have the most fun time ever playing this in Roblox. Another great one is Veeronica. If you play as Veeronica, you can spray graffiti on walls and create an area where you can start skateboarding. When you go near a wall, you get the ability to jump off the wall and regain some stamina (which allows you to continue skateboarding). Again, if you do this right, you're probably going to feel like some skateboarding god.

For the killers, there are also less fun killers to play, like Slasher, the starter killer. He has 4 abilities, and here's what they do in a nutshell:

- **M1:** Just a 20-damage slash
- **Q ability:** 20-damage dash slash that disables survivor abilities
- **E ability:** Combo them and shred most of the survivor's health; hard to land, though
- **R ability:** Run slower, but regain stamina really quickly. Also, you get buffs for your abilities, like reduced cooldown

As you can see, basic and not that fun.

However, there are more fun killers, like 1x1x1x1, John Doe, Guest 666, and Noli. Each killer has unique gameplay:

- 1x1x1x1 is a ranged killer
- John Doe, my personal favorite, is a trapper killer, with gameplay encouraging you to corner and block off entrances to trap survivors (also with a really cool design)
- Guest 666 is a killer that mostly relies on abilities rather than using the basic M1 (the slash)
- Noli is a high-mobility killer who deals damage spread out to the whole survivor team, instead of targeting each one

With these different unique gameplay styles, I almost never get bored playing as a killer because if I do, I just switch.

Review on gameplay: 4.6/5 (when you play this game for over an hour, you'll understand why I rated it so high)

For convenience, Forsaken isn't actually that laggy if you just set the graphics quality low. The hit detection system is actually quite good, despite there being one million memes about how bad Slasher's hit detection is, and the models still look really good, even on low graphics. If you see people complaining that you're hacking when you're not, they're just really bad, have a skill issue, and just need an excuse for how garbage they are.

As for the fandom... umm, I don't really know what to say without breaking school rules. To say the least, they are weird people. The only problem is the hacker-preventing code. There has been recent commotion in the fandom, complaining about the anticheat and how hackers are moving at insane speeds, but the game doesn't ban them, and from time to time, normal players just stand on a slope and get kicked. Because of this, convenience goes down by 0.8.

Review on Convenience: 3.2/5

For the models and renders? Oh, this is 100% a 5/5.

Every single render in this game is just absolutely magnificent. Just look at Milestone 4 for my favorite killer:

Some skins also have special animations, and each and every one of them looks very nice.

As I would say, by my standards, an absolute cinema. All the models and skins are very detailed and well-modeled, while also performing really well in-game. The animations are also very smooth and look like an actual human moving (if the human had 6 joints).

The developers are also physically incapable of making a bad redesign. A redesign for the character Two Time has been leaked, and it looks so much better than the current Two Time. They have also redesigned Guest 666, which looks way more realistic and performs way better than the old model. The same

goes for Noli. They have also made a redesign for the upcoming killer, Azure. The before-and-after will be somewhere on this page:

So yeah, the models and renders are a 5/5.

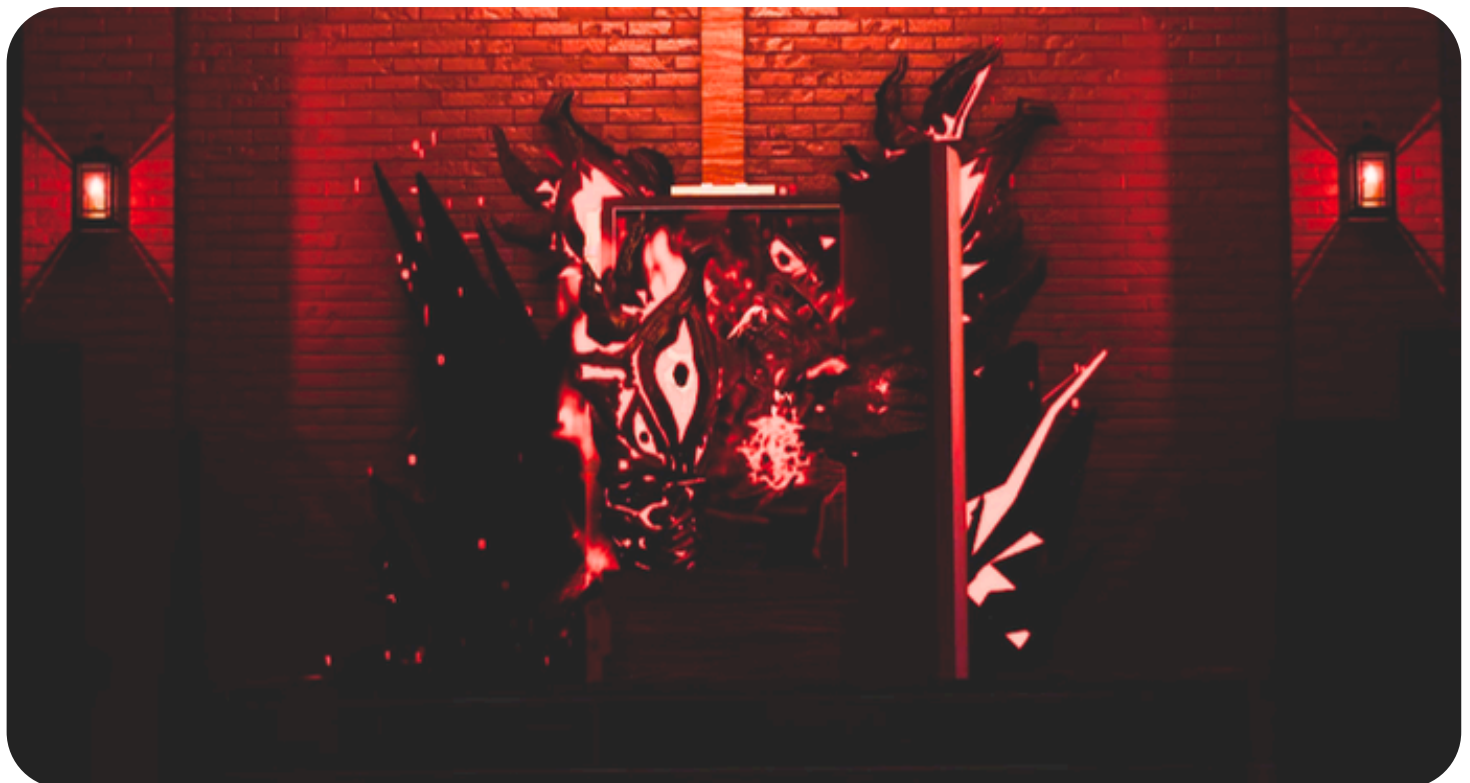
Models and renders: 5/5

So my final review is... *(act like there are people drumrolling, please)*

4.8/5

You see, the fandom of this game doesn't actually matter that much. Just ignore them and you should be fine. Also, there is an aspect I forgot to rate that isn't very big: the game has great music, like special last-man-standing music that is exclusive to when some characters go against each other. It just adds so much. The soundtracks and chase themes are generally quite good and fit well with the killer's style.

So yeah, maybe now you have a cool new game to play that has actual effort put into it, and isn't some slop made in two days.



Short Stories

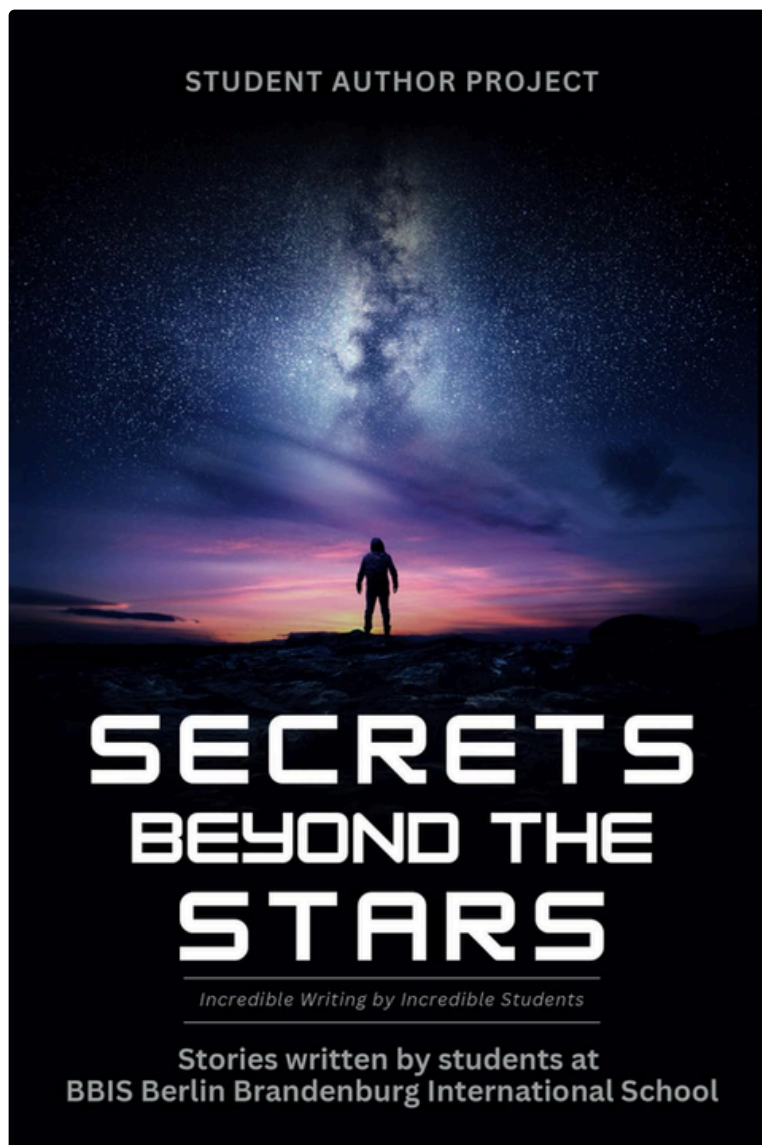
Our regular Grade 6 short story writer, Annabelle Voigt, is working on a story entitled "The Big Stable 2". Here is a sneak peek.

Susan remembered how happy everything was, before Nicky left and before Anna's dog died and before... tenth grade started...

Taylor was laying in her dog bed watching Alice closely, Alice stared back and for a moment there was silence. Alexa wasn't playing. Taylor wasn't barking. Alice wasn't mumbling. Even her sister's room lay in silence.

It rang a few times before a voice came through: "Hello?". Alice didn't answer and just sat on her bed in silence. Finally she asked: "Nicky?"

"With that attitude you won't make it far" Susan's mum shook her head.



"The Big Stable 2" is a sequel to Annabelle's first published story, which is available in the BBIS Library in this collection...



Ben Dare - The 12 y/o CIA Agent

Vivan Gupta - Staff Writer

Students in grades 6–8 created original stories in two languages as part of their Service as Action project. They shared these stories with primary students to help normalize and celebrate home languages in the school community. This is Vivan's story, written in both English and Hindi.

Ring, ring went Ben Dare's iPhone 29. It was his friend Victor Grayson who was in 6th grade with him at Valley Park School in the outskirts of San Francisco, USA. Ben Dare immediately answered the phone and put it to his ear.

"Hey, how are you? You didn't come to school are you ok?" said Victor Grayson on the other side of the call.

"Yeah I am ok, but just caught a fever at night." answered Ben Dare.

"Alright, man. Hope you get better soon," Victor said. "By the way, did you hear about the weird van outside the school this morning? It looked like some kind of government vehicle."

Ben frowned. "Government vehicle? Here? That's weird."

Before Victor could reply, Ben's phone rang once more—a new incoming call. Unknown number.

"Sorry Victor, talk later." said Ben quickly. Then he switched lines.

"Ben Dare?" came a deep, commanding voice. "This is Agent Nathan Blackwell of the CIA. You and Victor Grayson have been selected for a special program. We've been monitoring your... talents."

Ben sat up in bed, his forehead feeling cold suddenly. "Wait—what? The CIA?"



बेन डेयर का आईफोन 29 बज उठा। यह उसका दोस्त विक्टर ग्रेसन था, जो अमेरिका के सैन फ्रांसिस्को के बाहरी इलाके में स्थित वैली पार्क स्कूल में उसके साथ छठी कक्षा में पढ़ता था। बेन डेयर ने तुरंत फोन उठाया और उसे अपने कान से लगाया।

"अरे, कैसे हो? तुम स्कूल नहीं आए, ठीक तो हो?" कॉल के दूसरी तरफ विक्टर ग्रेसन ने कहा।

"हाँ, मैं ठीक हूँ, लेकिन रात में बुखार आ गया था।" बेन डेयर ने जवाब दिया।

"ठीक है यार। उम्मीद है तुम जल्दी ठीक हो जाओगे," विक्टर ने कहा। "वैसे, क्या तुमने आज सुबह स्कूल के बाहर उस अजीब वैन के बारे में सुना? वह किसी सरकारी गाड़ी जैसी लग रही थी।"

बेन ने भौंहे चढ़ाई। "सरकारी गाड़ी? यहाँ? यह अजीब है।"

विक्टर के जवाब देने से पहले ही, बेन का फ़ोन एक बार फिर बज उठा—एक नया इनकमिंग कॉल। अनजान नंबर।

"माफ़ करना विक्टर, बाद में बात करते हैं।" बेन ने जल्दी से कहा। फिर उसने लाइन बदल ली।

"बेन, हिम्मत है?" एक गहरी, आज्ञाकारी आवाज़ आई। "मैं सीआईए का एजेंट नाथन ब्लैकवेल बोल रहा हूँ। आपको और विक्टर ग्रेसन को एक विशेष कार्यक्रम के लिए चुना गया है। हम आपकी... प्रतिभाओं पर नज़र रख रहे हैं।"

बेन बिस्तर पर उठ बैठा, उसका माथा अचानक ठंडा पड़ गया। "रुको—क्या? सीआईए?"

Yes," said Blackwell. "Your martial arts performance last month at the state competition caught our attention. And your friend Victor, well his hacking skills are excellent for his age. Let's just say we need minds and skills like yours and your friend's."

Ben's mind was spinning. "Is this some kind of prank?"

"You'll find out soon enough," the agent replied. "Look outside your window."

Ben hesitated, then pulled the curtains aside. A sleek black Cadillac SUV sat idling by the curb. Two men in suits stood beside it, wearing dark sunglasses.

"Do my parents know about this?" asked Ben. "Naturally, they have given consent and have been sworn to secrecy. Now pack your things," said the voice. "You've just been recruited."

Two days later, Ben and Victor found themselves standing in front of a massive compound hidden deep within the Sierra Nevada mountains—the CIA's Covert Training Facility.

They were greeted by Agent Nathan Blackwell, a tall, broad-shouldered man with sharp eyes and a scar running down his jawline.

"Welcome to your new life," he said. "From this day on, you're not just a kids. You're trainees of the Central Intelligence Agency."

Training was brutal. Ben's martial arts skills were refined into deadly precision. Victor's hacking skills were made even better and his photographic memory was improved. Ben and Victor learned surveillance, disguise, weapons handling, and teamwork.

But after a few weeks, strange things began happening. Confidential files went missing. Security cameras glitched. And someone was leaking classified information directly from inside the facility.

"हाँ," ब्लैकवेल ने कहा। "पिछले महीने राज्य प्रतियोगिता में आपके मार्शल आर्ट प्रदर्शन ने हमारा ध्यान खींचा था। और आपके दोस्त विक्टर, उनकी हैकिंग स्किल्स उनकी उम्र के हिसाब से बेहतरीन हैं। मान लीजिए हमें आपके और आपके दोस्त जैसे दिमाग और कौशल की ज़रूरत है।"

बेन का दिमाग घूम रहा था। "क्या यह किसी तरह की शरारत है?"

"तुम्हें जल्द ही पता चल जाएगा," एजेंट ने जवाब दिया। "अपनी खिड़की से बाहर देखो।"

बेन थोड़ा हिचकिचाया, फिर पर्दे हटा दिए। एक चमकदार काली कैडिलैक एसयूवी फुटपाथ पर खड़ी थी। सूट पहने दो आदमी उसके पास खड़े थे, जिन्होंने काले धूप के चश्मे पहने थे।

"क्या मेरे माता-पिता को इस बारे में पता है?" बेन ने पूछा। "ज़ाहिर है, उन्होंने सहमति दे दी है और गोपनीयता की शपथ ली है। अब अपना सामान पैक करो," आवाज़ आई। "तुम्हें अभी-अभी भर्ती किया गया है।"

दो दिन बाद, बेन और विक्टर खुद को सिएरा नेवादा पहाड़ों में छिपे एक विशाल परिसर के सामने खड़े पाया—सीआईए का गुप्त प्रशिक्षण केंद्र।

एजेंट नाथन ब्लैकवेल ने उनका स्वागत किया, जो एक लंबा, चौड़े कंधों वाला आदमी था, जिसकी तीखी आँखें थीं और जबड़े तक एक निशान था।

"तुम्हारे नए जीवन में स्वागत है," उसने कहा। "आज से, तुम सिर्फ बच्चे नहीं रहोगे। तुम केंद्रीय खुफिया एजेंसी के प्रशिक्षु हो।"

प्रशिक्षण बहुत कठोर था। बेन के मार्शल आर्ट कौशल को घातक सटीकता में निखारा गया। विक्टर के हैकिंग कौशल को और भी बेहतर बनाया गया और उसकी फोटोग्राफिक मेमोरी में सुधार किया गया। बेन और विक्टर ने निगरानी, भेस बदलना, हथियार चलाना और टीम वर्क सीखा।

लेकिन कुछ हफ्तों बाद, अजीबोगरीब चीज़ें होने लगीं। गोपनीय फ़ाइलें गायब हो गईं। सुरक्षा कैमरे गड़बड़ा गए। और कोई व्यक्ति सीधे सुविधा के अंदर से गोपनीय जानकारी लीक कर रहा था।



One night, Ben decided to call Victor about it.

"Hey Ben what up?" said Victor.

"First switch the call to encrypted then I will tell you" commanded Ben.

"Okay" answered Victor with uncertainty.

The call was encrypted on both sides of the call.

"I need your help, someone's been hacking the facility's data files. Could you maybe find out the source?" asked Ben.

"Yeah definitely, time to put these hacking skills into play." replied Victor cracking his knuckles.

Together, they started digging—quietly, carefully. Using Victor's hacking skills, they traced the transmissions to a secure office—Agent Nathan Blackwell's.

Ben didn't want to believe it. Their mentor? The man who trained them? But the evidence was overwhelming. They set a trap: a fake classified file encoded with a tracker. When it was accessed, the signal lit up—inside Blackwell's private quarters.

They confronted him the next night in the training arena.

"Why?" Ben demanded. "You're the leak!"

एक रात, बेन ने विक्टर को इसके बारे में फ़ोन करने का फ़ैसला किया।

"अरे बेन, क्या हुआ?" विक्टर ने कहा।

"पहले कॉल को एन्क्रिप्टेड में बदलो, फिर मैं तुम्हें बताता हूँ," बेन ने आदेश दिया।

"ठीक है," विक्टर ने अनिश्चितता से उत्तर दिया।

कॉल दोनों तरफ़ से एन्क्रिप्टेड थी।

"मुझे आपकी मदद चाहिए, कोई इस सुविधा की डेटा फ़ाइलों को हैक कर रहा है। क्या आप शायद स्रोत का पता लगा सकते हैं?" बेन ने पूछा।

"हाँ, बिल्कुल, अब इन हैकिंग कौशलों को इस्तेमाल करने का समय आ गया है।" विक्टर ने अपनी उँगलियाँ चटकाते हुए जवाब दिया।

दोनों ने मिलकर खुदाई शुरू कर दी—चुपचाप, सावधानी से। विक्टर के हैकिंग कौशल का इस्तेमाल करते हुए, उन्होंने ट्रान्समिशन को एक सुरक्षित कार्यालय—एजेंट नाथन ब्लैकवेल के—तक पहुँचा दिया।

बेन इस पर यकीन नहीं करना चाहता था। उनका गुरु? वह आदमी जिसने उन्हें प्रशिक्षित किया था? लेकिन सबूत भारी थे। उन्होंने एक जाल बिछाया: एक ट्रैकर से एनकोड की गई एक नकली गोपनीय फ़ाइल। जब उसे एक्सेस किया गया, तो सिग्नल जल उठा—ब्लैकवेल के निजी क्वार्टर के अंदर।

अगली रात प्रशिक्षण क्षेत्र में उनका सामना उससे हुआ।

"क्यों?" बेन ने पूछा। "तुम ही लीक हो!"

Read Part 2 in the next edition of the Paw Print!

December 1st: World AIDS Day

What are AIDS and HIV, and why is raising awareness on the illness so important?

Liora Krause – Staff Writer

What is HIV and AIDS?

HIV, or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, is a disease that targets the immune system, specifically white blood cells. HIV is sexually transmitted, but can also be passed on from a mother to her child. Symptoms of HIV include a fever, headaches, a sore throat, and rashes, but if the condition progresses, additional symptoms like weight loss, diarrhoea, or swollen lymph nodes may appear. If left untreated, people with HIV are prone to other, oftentimes severe illnesses like tuberculosis, cryptococcal meningitis, or even cancer. If left untreated, HIV can progress to AIDS, or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. In 2024 alone, it was estimated that approximately 1.3 million people were infected with HIV, and that 630,000 died from the complications caused by HIV.



Prevention and the Importance of Awareness

Through proper protection, testing, and medication, HIV and AIDS can be prevented. The use of pre-exposure, or PrEP, for example, involves the use of antiretroviral medication to help protect people who do not have HIV from acquiring the illness. The truth is that HIV and AIDS awareness continues to be an incredibly important topic, as proper awareness is crucial to preventing the disease from spreading. Through awareness campaigns, communities can be informed about the dangers of the illness and how to best protect themselves.

Furthermore, HIV and AIDS awareness helps break down the stereotypes and stigmas associated with the illness. Many people with HIV or AIDS face social judgement and discrimination, and are often afraid to come forward and ask for help, and as a result, misinformation wins over facts in conversations about HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the fact that HIV is a sexually transmitted disease makes it a tough topic for many to discuss. However, by raising awareness on the condition, these stigmas and false notions can be broken down and the actual work of helping those with the illness get the help and treatment they need can fully take place. Because of this, days like world AIDS day are so important for fostering dialogue and educating people globally.

Future Prospects

Currently, there is no cure for people with HIV or AIDS, however thanks to developments in modern medicine, it is entirely possible for people with the condition to lead happy and healthy lives. Treatments involving antiretroviral therapy medicine, as well as other medication such as protease inhibitors like atazanavir or entry or fusion inhibitors like enfuvirtide can help people with HIV strengthen their immune systems and prevent the condition from worsening. Through collective awareness, we can help prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Energy Drinks

Benefits, Affections, and Disadvantages on Teenagers

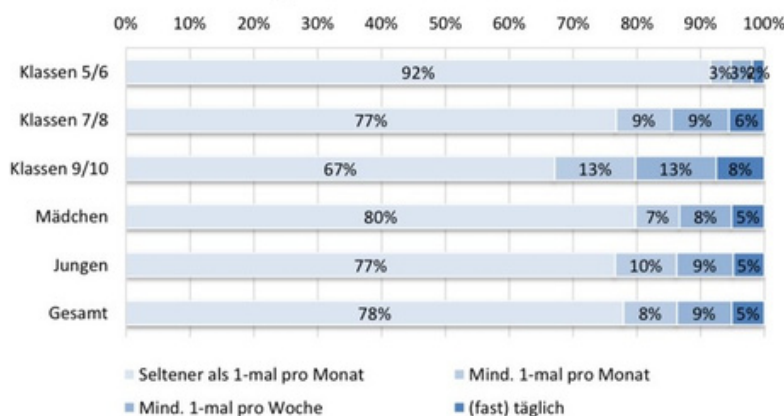
Yeonjun Yoo – Staff Writer

Have you ever tried an energy drink? How often do you drink them? Let's consider the pros and cons of the energy drinks we drink now and their effects on us.

Energy drinks contain caffeine and taurine, which help to improve alertness and concentration. An increasing number of people enjoy them for sports or to help them recover from fatigue. Their unique taste and various promotions make energy drinks increasingly popular. They are easily found at nearby supermarkets at affordable prices. Big brands such as Red Bull, Monster and Prime aggressively market their energy drinks through partnerships with major sports clubs and entertainment companies, making them familiar even to teenagers.

The number of teenagers enjoying energy drinks is also increasing. In 2021, the organisation Präventionsradar conducted a nationwide survey of 15,000 students from 13 federal states, including Berlin. The results showed that 78% of students drank an energy drink at least once a month, and 8% of those in grade 9 or above drank them daily. According to the 2023 Mintel Market Report, 44% of people – including adults – consume energy drinks at least once a week. Among those aged 16–24, this figure rises to 82%.

Energydrinks - aktueller Konsum



Meanwhile, energy drinks can also be problematic for teenagers.

Firstly, energy drinks contain a high amount of hidden sugar. According to the WHO (World Health Organization), one 355 ml can contains more than 70% of the recommended daily intake. For example, a 250 ml can of Red Bull Original contains 27 g of sugar, while a 355 ml can of Monster Original contains 54 g.

High sugar intake can lead to health issues such as being overweight and emotional instability. While some products reduce sugar or use alternative sugars and artificial sweeteners, these are limited in number.

Secondly, frequent consumption increases sensitivity to the caffeine in energy drinks. The more often teenagers drink them, the more likely they are to experience the effects of a caffeine overdose, including anxiety, headaches, an increased heart rate and sleep deprivation. Those who consume energy drinks three or more times a week are particularly at risk of sleep deprivation, depression and suicidal thoughts. The side effects are even more serious for teenagers, whose central and digestive nervous systems are still developing.

There is still insufficient evidence to suggest that energy drinks improve concentration, and some argue that any such effects are largely imagined. However, because they are so widely available, we tend to consume them as freely as we do soda or sports drinks. Teenagers who frequently consume energy drinks should be fully aware of their disadvantages. Recently, sugar-free, naturally caffeinated green tea-based energy drinks have become available, so it is important to make smart choices.

Green Team

Come join us and be part of something meaningful!

David Averbah - Editor-in-Chief

What We Achieved This Year

This year, the Green Team led a wide range of environmental initiatives across the BBIS community. One highlight was the **Eco-Pledge**, which encouraged classes and teachers to adopt small, meaningful habits to reduce their environmental impact. Many homerooms even created their own pledges.

The team planted an **Eco-Tree** on campus in cooperation with *Verein Bäume für die Zukunft*, supporting UN Goal 15, and a new **Primary School Green Team** was launched by a group of motivated 5th graders. In the **Primary School Culture Rooms**, students made seed bombs and collages from recycled materials and later planted the seed bombs to support local pollinators. The team also expanded the school's **rewilding areas** to support natural habitats on campus.

This year included several clean-up efforts as well: a **community clean-up** with *Gemeinde Kleinmachnow* and an additional Grade 11 clean-up focused on understanding the long-term impact of litter on nature. To fund future projects, the Green Team participated in the **Summer Fest** with bake sales and kept an active presence on social media to promote events and raise awareness.

The Secondary School contributed through hands-on projects, including building **automated irrigation systems** in the school garden to save water. Grade 11 also carried out a **Collaborative Science Project** developing a more sustainable chocolate recipe. A school-wide **Green Day Assembly** for Grades 6–8 promoted energy conservation through games, discussions, and practical tips.



What We Will Focus On in 2025–2026

Biodiversity. The team aims to increase the variety of plant and animal species on campus. Plans for the year include producing birdhouses, seasonal fundraising events, planting spring flowers, making recycled bird feeders, and installing birdhouses and feeders during the summer months.

Food and Water Sustainability. Efforts will include reducing unnecessary water use, limiting food waste, and raising awareness across the community. Initiatives will run throughout the year, from promoting reusable bottles and sharing sustainable holiday recipes to plant-based days, Water Day on March 22, and awareness assemblies in May and June.

Join the Green Team!

If you want to make a real difference at school – whether through environmental action, community engagement, creativity, or long-term service – the Green Team is the perfect place to start. We meet every **Thursday, 11:30 in Room 5337**, and new members from all grades are warmly welcome. You don't need any experience, just curiosity and a willingness to help. Many students also find that regular participation in Green Team projects fosters the kind of ongoing commitment that the IB values in service learning.

The Mental Note

Scientists May Have Found a Way to “Turn Down” Anxiety — Here’s Why Students Should Care

Olivia Hard – Staff Writer

A new study out of Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche has done something pretty wild: scientists figured out how to reverse anxiety and social withdrawal in mice just by rebalancing activity in a specific part of the brain. And even though this research is still in early stages, it opens doors that could seriously shape the future of mental-health treatments, the kind students everywhere could benefit from.

So... what part of the brain are we talking about?

The study focuses on the **amygdala**, a small almond-shaped region deep in the brain that helps process emotions, especially fear and threat. It’s basically the brain’s built-in alarm system.

Inside the amygdala, the researchers identified a specific set of neurons that had become **hyperexcitable**, meaning they fired too quickly and too often. In psychology and neuroscience, **neuronal excitability** refers to how easily a neuron is triggered to send a signal. When neurons are *too* excitable, they can amplify emotional responses, like anxiety.

What the scientists did

The team, led by neuroscientist Juan Lerma, used a genetically modified group of mice that overexpress a gene called **Grik4**. This gene cranks up certain glutamate receptors, basically increasing the strength of “go!” signals in the brain. These mice act a lot like people with anxiety disorders: they avoid social interaction, prefer staying in enclosed spaces, and react more fearfully to new environments.

By calming the overactive neurons in a specific part of the amygdala (the basolateral amygdala, which is heavily involved in emotional learning) the researchers restored normal communication between brain cells. This allowed inhibitory neurons (the “slow down, chill out” cells) to do their job again. And that alone was enough to reverse the mice’s anxiety-like and withdrawal behaviors.

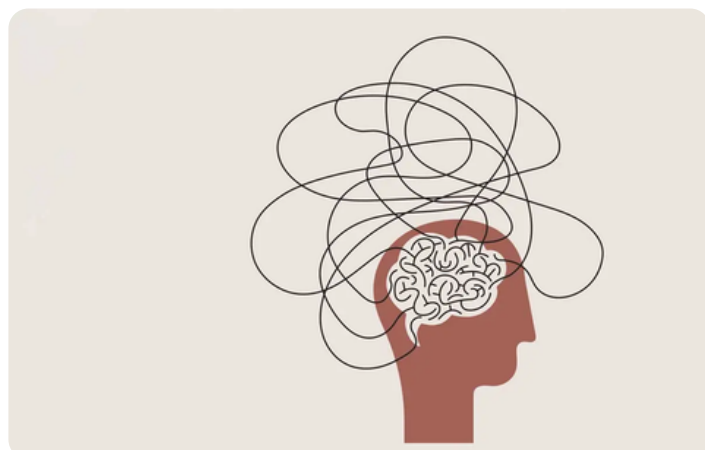
Why this matters for actual humans

Even when the scientists tested the treatment on regular mice (not genetically altered), it still reduced anxiety behaviors. That suggests this mechanism isn’t just some rare genetic quirk, it could be a general principle of how emotional disorders work in the brain.

In other words: anxiety may not always be a vague, messy feeling. Sometimes it’s a very specific circuit misfiring. And if you can fix the wiring, you can fix the feeling.

Okay, but how does this relate to us, actual students?

If you’re in school, you already know anxiety isn’t uncommon. Between exams, university pressure, social expectations, and, well... life, a lot of teens experience some level of it.



Right now, treatments like therapy and medication help many people, but they aren't perfect for everyone. This new research doesn't mean a brain-balancing cure is coming next week but it does point toward a future where treatments can be way more targeted and personalized.

Imagine therapies that don't just reduce symptoms but fix the specific brain circuit causing the problem. That could mean fewer side effects, faster results, and better understanding of what's actually going on in our heads.

Some things to keep in mind

Not everything improved in the mice, for example, memory issues didn't fully go away. That's because other brain areas (like the hippocampus, which handles learning and memory) are also involved in emotional disorders. Anxiety is complicated and rarely has a single cause.

Still, the study is a big step forward in understanding the biology behind anxiety and depression, something that directly affects many students.

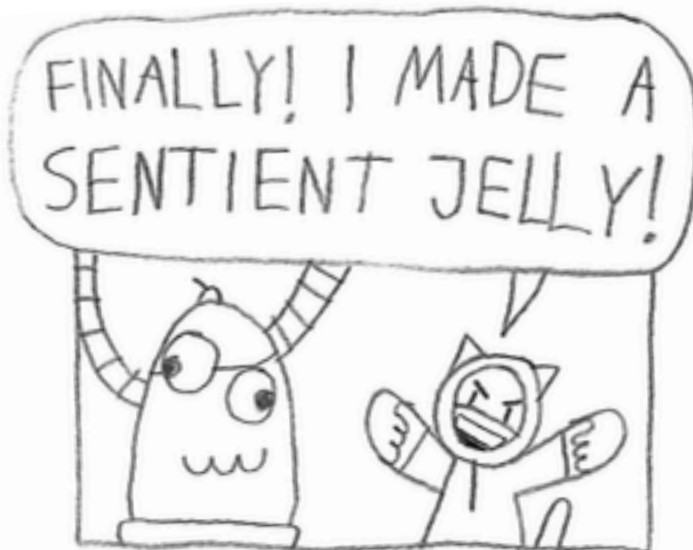


THE KINDNESS ACT OF THE DAY:

Introduce and try communicating with a kid who seems to be alone especially at lunch if they don't have anyone to eat with and invite them to your table.

STICKY SITUATION

max.T



Important Announcement!

Paw Print Art Section

Hi Panthers!

I hope that reading this edition for the Paw Print was as enjoyable for you as it was for me. Next edition, the Paw Print is starting it's very own Art Section!

In order to make this section successful, we would like contributions from our fellow BBIS students. Whether you are interested in sharing art through writing articles, or showing off your visual art skills in any medium, you can easily send in art submissions to **pawprint@bbis.de** in order to be featured in upcoming editions!

I hope that this section can start off the new year with amazing contributions from our fellow community members.

Thanks for reading!

Annika Wypyski, Art-Editor



