

THIS ISSUE

NEWS



Indiana's history of canals is brought to a new light.

SPORTS



Emily Wilhelm enriches IC swim team with experience.

FEATURE



Students fondly remember classmate Robert Toole.

OPINION



Different generations come together to celebrate Valentine's Day.

CALENDAR MARCH

- March 12-15: IC Swim Club's Senior Short Course Championship
- March 14: IC Show Choir's Brownsburg Spectacular Championship
- March 14: IC Dance Team's IHSDTA State Championship
- March 16-27: Spring Break
- March 28: IC Track and Field's HLC Relays Indoor State Championship



Chilling Auschwitz Exhibit Leaves ICHS Students

SPEECHLESS

By: SAVANNAH BERTRAM & ALI PERRY
CREEK CURRENT REPORTERS

ICHS students recently got to experience the Auschwitz exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum. This educational experience was led by English teacher Mrs. Blazer, who took a mix of students from her semester one English 10



Upon arriving in Auschwitz, prisoners had their photographs taken.

Honors class and her Holocaust Literature class.

The "Auschwitz. Not Long Ago. Not Far Away" exhibition at the Cincinnati Museum Center gives people the chance to have an inside look at all of the horrors that went on from 1940 to 1945.

There are artifacts there from the uniforms the Jewish people had to wear during their time in the camps, the bunks they slept in, and the walls that kept them inside.

Blazer said, "I believe some of the most powerful learning experiences happen outside of the classroom, so visiting the Auschwitz exhibit with students has been the highlight of my school year. Seeing my students engaged, listening, reading, making connections, and asking questions was so rewarding as a teacher. The exhibition is an incredible resource, so I'm

actually making plans to take my current sophomores later this semester."

Field trips in general are beneficial for students of all ages. They make for new and educational experiences out of the classroom. This field trip, in particular, gave the students at Indian Creek who were learning about the Holocaust a deeper dive into their material, along with seeing hands-on some of the things they were reading about and learning in everyday class.

According to Senior Eliza Chapman, a student in the Holocaust literature class, "I learned that it doesn't always take words to describe something. Sometimes words can't be used."

Other students felt the same way. Many of the artifacts and articles in the exhibition left students



This is a striped uniform from Auschwitz-Birkenau that captives had to wear daily.

speechless and processing the new information learned. Students say that this heartfelt field trip will be one remembered for a lifetime. They described how it pulled on their heartstrings as well as filled their brain with information and recommend that others take this impactful trip.

Work-Based Learning Provides Real-World Experience

By: MIKAYLA REDENBAUGH
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

Work-based learning gives students the opportunity to work in the morning and have classes in the afternoon or vice versa.

The class had many accomplishments last semester. The 150-hour minimum requirement was exceeded by every student with 258.3 hours on average. Students worked a combined total of 13,175.05 hours. The average score for the quarterly evaluations were 2.97 out of 3. There is hope that those statistics grow this semester.

Supervising teacher, Mrs. Woodworth, said her goal is "to prepare kids for after high school in learning technical and soft skills." Woodworth said these unique opportunities have helped students further their careers after high school.

Some opportunities are electrician apprenticeships,

medical internships, and jobs in construction. Students have said that this class has helped them go straight into the work force early.

Senior Tory Mittendorf is thankful for the experience she is getting at Rosebuds Salon. "Being part of the work-based learning pro-



Senior Tory Mittendorf washes IC graduate Hope Soots' hair during her work-based learning experience at Traflagar's Rosebuds Salon.

gram through Rosebuds Salon and Spa has been such an amazing opportunity for me. It's given me real hands-on experience, helped me grow both professionally and personally, and allowed me to build confidence in my skills while learning from talented professionals in a real salon environment."

The class is not just for staying in the work force; many students have said that this class has helped them decide what they want to study in college.

This class has been around for many years, but this year, due to a new 8-class schedule, students can take four periods for their career exploration instead of two. Woodworth said she wants to be more flexible with the availability of in job opportunities. She hopes the class grows and helps students with their future.

Principal Luke Skobel is

very proud of the WBL program, saying, "Every student deserves opportunities that prepare them for their best future, and Work-Based Learning is one of the most powerful ways we make that happen. It gives students the chance to explore careers early, helping them discover what truly excites them—and what doesn't—so they can confidently shape their future path."



Senior Grant Dalton gives an overview of his job at Vaught Family Eye Care to a film crew from CIESC.

IC Golf Teams Face Course Location Uncertainty

By: CASSIDY COOK
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

Tameka Woods Golf Course has been a family-owned business since 1989. Indian Creek has been utilizing the course for the golf team's practices for over twenty years, but is facing new uncertainty as the business has recently been purchased for almost \$2.6 million. The IC golf teams may no longer have the opportunity to practice so close to home, which could affect the fees and consistency of practices.

Any shift to the team's practice regimen could lead

to less cohesive play and stress for members who are confused about where to go from here. While the fate of this course remains unannounced, it is important to be informed about potential changes.

IC's girls and boys golf teams are coached by high

school art teacher, Ms. Moore and business and manufacturing teacher, Mr. Scott, respectively.

When questioned about the future of the team, Ms. Moore stated, "the four golf coaches met with Mr. Perry and discussed possible courses to use for the future.

The course will really depend on a course being willing to let us play there as our home course."

Senior Shelbylin Roach shared, "we will have to travel elsewhere for practice, but it can be difficult since the girls' team is mostly made up of younger girls who can't drive yet." Roach was upset about the loss of the nearest golf course, but she is excited to see what other courses have to offer.

In light of the current situation, IC's golf team remains eager to continue future practices and is optimistic about the team's future.



Photo by: Somchai Soakkasem

Beech Grove Mourns Loss of Fallen Police Officer

By: GREYSON GREENE,
JAKOB GUMERSON, &
ULUGBEK MATBABAIEV
CREEK CURRENT REPORTERS

In the streets of Beech Grove, Brian Elliott wasn't just a police officer, he was a kid who never really left his hometown. He walked the halls of Beech Grove High School as a student in 2011, and on a sad Monday morning, he returned there one last time with all of his fellow police officers and a heavy silence. Students were given the day off to support and show appreciation for everything Elliot did for the community.

His story sadly came to an end on the night of February 16 2026. Officer Elliott and his partner were called to the Beech Meadows Apartments for what was expected to be a routine call. But as they approached, the situation

turned lethal.

Hearing a woman's screams for help, Elliott didn't hesitate. He kicked in the door to save her, stepping directly into gunfire. This fearless act came at a cost. Elliott was hit multiple times. Even as his fellow officers rushed him to Eskenazi Hospital, he died from his wounds, leaving behind a young wife, Erin, whom he had married just over two years ago.

JCSD Deputy Chris Mad-



Photo by: Tony Alter

ison said, "Tragic, uncalled for, unnecessary. Disrespectful to law enforcement [by the subject]. Heartbreaking that public safety had to result in the death of another young officer just doing his job. We understand the risk, but we do not sign up to die."

The suspect, Kenneth Terrell Johnson, allegedly tried to escape by jumping down a third floor balcony, but officers caught up with him hours later. He now faces charges of murder and

attempted murder.

On Monday, February 23, the community he spent his adult life protecting packed the streets for a funeral that stretched for miles. Police cars from many agencies across the state were in attendance. Flags were set at half staff as he headed toward Crown Hill Cemetery.

Chief Michael Maurice spoke of Elliot as a man who "just wanted to serve his town."

Elliott's legacy isn't just in the fearless final act that cost him his life, but in the smaller things, one of which being his love for his rescue cat, "Soup," and the request that people support animal rescues in his memory.

Officer Elliot is at rest, but his sacrifice has left a mark on his hometown, and his legacy will live on for many years to come.

PAGE AFTER PAGE



By MAGGIE SMITH
News Editor

Celebrate Emotion and Art in Sports

Huge sports competitions have been taking headlines in recent weeks: the Super Bowl, Winter Olympics, and the college football finals. With these major events all happening within a month of one another, sports of all kinds have been a hot topic of conversation. I used to say I hated sports, but every time the Olympics comes around, I find myself engulfed in them. I have come to realize it is not the sports I hate, it's the culture. For some reason, only very specific sports get talked about in the media, and they are not even the ones that take the most athleticism.

Football and basketball are always discussed, but figure skating and gymnastics are rarely talked about outside their respective circles until the Olympics start up again. A pattern I have noticed is that sports that mix athleticism with quite a bit of artistry are ignored in major media circles. This really comes down to the arts being looked down upon. These activities mix sports and arts and take an incredible amount of effort and control, but they also tell a story.

Generally, arts are already not given the credit they deserve. This could be because of how misunderstood they are, as art can be interpreted in many different ways. Stories and emotions are very deep things, and unfortunately when things are too complicated to understand at first glance, people write them off. Sports like figure skating depict such intense emotions in very beautiful ways that oftentimes people do not want to take the time to analyze it. Sports like this have more meaning than others, and as a society, storytelling should be more celebrated. Being able to express emotions through performance is a skill society can't afford to lose.

1800s Canal Creation Shaped and Refined Indiana's History

By: LEVI DICKENS
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

In 1816, the nineteenth state of the U.S. was admitted to the union. That state was Indiana. However, many Hoosiers do not know Indiana's history; the period between its founding and the American Civil War was important to the growth of the state. It led to settlement of the land, improved infrastructure, and a brought a revised constitution for the state of Indiana.

After Indiana reached statehood in 1816, work began in the Hoosier government to industrialize the wild area into something similar to the states to the east: New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. So, throughout the 1830s, large infrastructure



projects were approved and construction began. Under the 1836 Indiana Mammoth Internal Improvement Act, Indiana began the construction of roads, railroads, and interestingly canals.

Several canals would begin construction, including the Wabash and Erie Canal, which stretched over 460 miles in length. This was due to the fact that it was made up of four different canals being built into one,

those being the original Wabash and Erie Canal, the Miami and Erie Canal, the Cross Cut Canal, and the Central Canal. The canal was massive, going from Evansville

all the way past Fort Wayne. And it wasn't the only canal; there were several that had been and were under construction, though some were never finished.

In light of all these ambitious projects throughout the state, it became apparent that Indiana could not handle it. The state became bankrupt because of it, inheriting the debts of towns who attempted and failed to create proj-

ects such as massive canals. Then there was the Panic of 1837 which was an economic depression. In response to all of this, the government of Indiana came up with a solution.

In 1851, Indiana had adopted a second constitution. It stated that the state shall no longer inherit the debt from towns and prevent public debt and worked on the liberties of Hoosiers, although this did not apply to African Americans who had been expelled from slave states. It also made the public schools unified and truly public and open to all.

Though the increase of infrastructure put Indiana in debt, overall it proved to be great in the long term for the state. Transportation was

at an all time high and easy for trains, boats, and wagons. The population greatly increased and, according to David G. Vanderstel - Adjunct Assistant Professor of History in the Department of History at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, "...moved (the economy) beyond pioneer subsistence to a more diverse, specialized system which depended upon mercantile, manufacturing, and agricultural production."

A new constitution was developed, one much more refined than the original, and overall this period laid the foundation for what the state was to become. It changed Indiana from being a frontier to a state to match the original thirteen.

Large Snowfall Allows IC Students to Enjoy Three eLearning Days

By: ABRAM WISEMAN
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER



Freshman students Grant Harding, Evan Stout, and Cole Carter build a ramp for sledding. The boys got their schoolwork finished and then enjoyed the snow.

Indiana residents were wondering if there would be a big snowstorm for the week of January 25-29. Kids and teens were excited, hoping for the chance of a two-hour delay or maybe even an e-Learning day. The snowstorm began the evening of January 24, continued through the night, and finally slowed down the following afternoon. Many areas in Johnson County got around 11 inches of snow, and with some areas around Edinburgh

getting up to 13 inches. This was the largest snowstorm in Johnson County since 2014.

A lot of people expressed excitement when they saw snow coming in on Saturday, January 24 and Sunday, January 25. "I was excited, because I got to try out my new skis and because I love the snow," ICHS sophomore Gage Prose said.

Many people at Indian Creek speculated they would have one or two e-learning days. However, it turned out they had three e-learning days and after they returned, Thursday and Friday were

two-hour delay days.

It continued to snow slightly throughout the week, but not enough to cause the roads to need to be plowed again. Over the following weeks, the snow would slowly melt. However, a long cold front had the snow stay longer than most expected.



Freshman Jacey Komorek relaxes in the snow with her English cream golden retriever, Lincoln, who enjoyed both the snow and having Jacey home from school.



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Indiana Hoosiers Win First National Championship

By: ISAAC SMITH
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

On November 25, 2023, Indiana football lost their last game of the season to Purdue, giving them a record of 3-9. Just five days later on November 30, they made arguably what has turned out to be the best decision in franchise history in signing coach Curt Cignetti.

Immediately he got to work on the losingest team in college football history. New game plans, practices, and most importantly a new mentality.

In his first year coaching, Cignetti took his team to the playoffs with a record of 11-1. The team then lost their first round matchup to Notre Dame in a heartbreaking loss, bringing an end to their Cinderella story season with



their only losses coming to Ohio State and Notre Dame who were both in the CFB championship.

The Hoosiers came back more fired up than ever in 2025 stomping on anyone on their tracks, beating number 9 ranked Illinois 63-10.

They then traveled to Eugene, Oregon to face the Ducks who had been undefeated at home for over 30 games, which was the longest ever. The odds seemed stacked against them, but

they prevailed winning 30-20. Everyone now seemed to take this Indiana team seriously, but the real test was the Big Ten championship where they would be playing Ohio State. In their previous matchup, Ohio State blew out Indiana in a 20+ point victory, but this year's team was different. IU took the win with a 13-10 nailbiter, and pushed their record to 13-0 and finished the regular season undefeated.

The Hoosiers traveled to

Pasadena to battle Alabama in the Rose Bowl; however, it wasn't much of a battle at all. IU stomped on Alabama 38-3 and advanced to the Peach Bowl to play the Oregon Ducks for a second time.

Once again IU took the win by over 30 points, and for the first time in school history, Indiana football was heading to the National Championship where it would be IU vs. Miami.

The game was close, but Indiana seemed to keep a one-score lead the entire time. With Miami down by 3 points, quarterback Carson Beck threw up one last heave, but was picked off by Jamari Sharpe, and IU had won their first national championship in school history after being the losingest team in CFB history.

How 'Bout Them Hoosiers?



By JOHN CAVE
Sports Editor

Hoosier Hysteria

"The Hoosiers are flippin' champs!" These words rang out up and down Kirkwood Ave. in Bloomington on the night of January 16, as Jamari Sharpe made the game-sealing interception to crown IU as the National Champions. Crowds of people swarmed out of the Assembly Hall watch party and out into the streets, looking to celebrate this milestone achievement.

In Miami, the scene was similar. Tens of thousands of Hoosier fans cheered from the stands as the Hoosiers all gave their post-game speeches.

Despite the celebration, it was not an easy journey to get there. Contrary to dominant wins over Alabama at the Rose Bowl and Oregon at the Peach Bowl, Miami was able to keep the score close. The Hoosiers took a quick 10-0 lead by the half, but after coming back from halftime, the Hurricanes were able to put up a quick touchdown to bring the score to 10-7.

Several stalled drives and punts followed this, and Miami seemed to be settling into a defensive rhythm.

What happened next, however, would break their spirits. With around five minutes left in the third quarter, Indiana blocked a Miami punt, followed by Isiah Jones recovering it in the end zone, delivering a crushing blow to bring the score to 17-7.

The Hoosiers would score another decisive touchdown on a Fernando Mendoza fourth-down scramble, with this play going down as his signature Heisman moment. The game would end following a Miami interception.

Since then, the Hoosiers have been at the front of football. The team would make appearances around the media. With the combine right around the corner, NFL coaches wait with bated breath to see the performances of top-tier players.

Dowty Earns Third State Title; Neibert Grabs Second in a Row

By: CLAIRE SMITH
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

It was a huge victory for Indian Creek and girls' wrestling as Ella Neibert and Libby Dowty both walked away with state championships this season.

Neibert's win at 105 pounds gave her back-to-back state titles, after she won at 100 pounds last season. Going into the tournament, Neibert knew she had a target on her back, but she stayed focused and handled the pressure all the way through.

Neibert said "It was good, but there is more to come." Winning state two years in a row shows the work Neibert has put in and the growth she's made as a wrestler since last season.



Dowty and Neibert celebrate their victories with (L-R) Coach Phoebe Dowty, AD Mr. Perry, Coach Fair, Coach Pat Dowty, and Coach Hessman.

Dowty added another championship moment of her own by winning the state title at 110 pounds. While this was her first wrestling state title after an injury took her out of contention last season, she's no stranger to

winning big. Dowty also has two state championships in cross country, proving she can compete at the highest level no matter the sport. Dowty said "I'm really glad to have wrestled this year and be able to compete

at high levels in both sports." Dowty's success in both cross country and wrestling shows her determination and athletic ability, and her win was a major moment for IC.

The girls are led by head coach, Spencer Hessman, along with former IC standout, Pheobe Dowty, Libby's older sister, Pat Dowty, Libby's dad, and Sammy Fair.

Together, Neibert and Dowty's titles made the state tournament a weekend to remember and showed how strong IC's girls' wrestling continues to become.



Emily Willham Brings Competitive Spirit to Indian Creek

By: AUBREY LINDSAY
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER



IC swim coach, Emily Willham, competes for IU's swim team.

Former top-tier athlete Emily Willham opened up about her career and her decision to move to Indian Creek to be the high school swim coach and aquatic director. When asked what her favorite accomplishment was, Willham replied, "my favorite accomplishment was making it to the high school state championships. Those were some of the best meets of my life."

Willham has earned six

rings, three Big Ten medals, four first-place state medals, and two second-place finishes, along with competing in the Olympic Trials and winning several junior national medals.

Willham explained that she moved to IC for the tight-knit community, which reminded her of her roots in Yorktown, Indiana. She also cited her husband, who was raised in Greenwood, and is now a wrestling coach there,

as another reason for the move.

When asked about a potential return to competition, Willham was non-committal, simply saying, "maybe." Will she compete in the 2028 Olympics? Only time will tell.

For now, Willham is focused on her new life at IC, leaving her future in sports a bit of a mystery. For now, she's helping future swimmers meet their full poten-

tial, and building up Indian Creek's swim community.



Lady Braves Basketball Team Ends Season with Strong Sectional Run

By: EDIT GUNNARSSON
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

The Lady Braves basketball team were up against Oldenburg Academy in their last game of the regular season, but it wasn't just their last game: it was also Senior Night. The team's five seniors, Alexa Sichtung, Reese Tunell, Gracie Werden, Edit Gunnarsson and Nerea Echevarrieta, got to celebrate their senior season together with the team, coaches, family and audience during this incredible night.

The Lady Braves had the lead at halftime with a score of 29-26, but when the final



signal came, they lost to the Twisters 57-49. "I think we did a lot of good things in the game and I'm really proud of my teammates. There are still a lot of things we could have done to prevent losing the game but I think we just

had fun and just played," said senior Grace Werden. "We have never played against Oldenburg Academy and to be honest I had never heard of the school. We didn't really have much time to scout the team or really look into them

because they were kinda just added to the schedule and not practicing due to not having school definitely makes things a lot harder."

The seniors were celebrated by walking onto the court to a presentation and gifts from the rest of the team. "I think it's very crazy to think that it was the last time I would play a home basketball game. I think after playing for so many years it becomes surreal," said Werden. Her favorite part of Senior Night was to see all her friends and family coming to cheer on the team and to play with the team on their home court

one last time.

The team put their previous season behind them to prepare for their sectionals. On February 3, the girls traveled to Rushville for their first round matchup against the Lady Lions. They returned to Rushville for their February 6 second-round bout against the Shelbyville Golden Bears. While they fought hard, they came up short of the win with a final score of 67-38.

The Lady Braves are excited to use this experience to help them prepare for next year.

Athletes Competing in Unity

By: HALEIGH BAIRD
& MIKAYLA REDENBAUGH
CREEK CURRENT REPORTERS

Unified Track is a sport involving those with special needs. It gives them a chance to participate and enjoy sports along with fellow students. Mary DeHart is one of the coaches for the IC Unified Track. She works as an essential skills teacher at Southwestern. DeHart started as an assistant coach in 2016 and has been the head coach for two years. She found out Unified Track was a sport through the Special Olympics and the parents of a student. DeHart explained what led her to coaching. "To start, I have been a part of the unified program at Indian Creek for ten years now, and

I want it to continue and be an option for the current and future students at IC. It has brought so much joy to my life and the lives of so many students, and I want to help keep it going as long as I can."

DeHart is very passionate about what she does, describing it as her "favorite part of the year." Speaking about the upcoming season, DeHart said, "So far, we have 26 students signed up, and they all seem very excited to start and be a part of the program. Some have participated before, and others are new, so I am very excited to see what this season holds for us."

Practice started in early March, and the team is encouraging more students to join.



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Classmates Remember Robert as a Quiet, Sweet Friend

By: ELISE GIGER
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

On Christmas Eve morning, Indian Creek sophomore, Robert Toole, and his parents were heading towards Franklin and were involved in a traffic accident. All three of the passengers were rushed to the hospital and later Robert was pronounced deceased.

Students and teachers at Indian Creek High School have been grieving Robert's loss and are voicing a few things about him to celebrate his life and memory.

Sophomore Ashlee Fouch described Toole as "Quiet, but when you actually got to know him and talk to him he was really funny and also enjoyed playing his games and talking to his friends."

"He was very quiet if you didn't know him, but learn a few things about him and you'll find out he's an amazing person and friend," said sophomore Justin Howell.

According to sophomore, Audrey Runyon, "Robert



was a very nice person, and unfortunately I didn't have many classes with him after middle school so we didn't get the opportunity to talk too much. He mostly kept to himself and slept when I did see him, but whenever we did talk it made me smile every time. I can distinctly remember one time him coming up to me in the hallway and we had a conversation about something I can't really remember. Looking back on that conversation I wish I had paid a bit more attention so I could have that memory of him. What

happened to him was an unforeseen tragedy and I am deeply saddened that I wasn't given the time to get to know him better."

One of Robert's best friends, sophomore Joey Delbridge, shared, "Robert was a person I could always count on for support. God bless his soul."

Sophomore Savannah Bertram expressed her sadness with the loss of her friend. "Robert Toole was a sweet loving soul, he cared for everyone around him and loved goofing off. He would fall asleep in class and people would be talking and he would wake up and comment on what we talked about then fall right back to sleep. Nobody deserves to lose their life, especially at 16 years old. He was a great friend and someone that will always be remembered. Robert's joy and pure heart will be missed by many."

Toole's obituary said, "Robert had a heart that was simply too sweet and kind

for the world today. He carried his heart on his sleeve, loving freely and deeply. His family meant everything to him, and he loved them with all the capacity a heart could hold. He also had a tender affection for animals, treating them with the same care and devotion he gave to people. Robert found great joy in painting and building, expressing himself through creativity and craftsmanship. He is truly irreplaceable and will be missed fiercely by all who love him."



Sophomore Savannah Bertram wears "Long Live Robert Toole" T-shirt to celebrate the life of her friend.

Generations Celebrate Valentine's Day in Different Ways

By: JENNA ROETHEMEIER
CREEK CURRENT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Some people are particular to Valentine's Day, while others may not be. Some see Valentine's Day as a "silly" or "unnecessary" holiday. Especially people who don't have partners. Valentine's Day tends to highlight romantic relationships, which can often make single people feel left out.

It could also put undue pressure on couples to have a "perfect" day. There can also be a lot of commercial pressure around Valentine's

Day, pushing people to spend money on gifts, dinners, and flowers, which can feel inauthentic to some.

Different age groups might also view Valentine's Day differently. According to Minaret Staff, Gen Z is the most enthusiastic when it comes to celebrating Valentine's Day. Gen Z is on more of the friendship side of Valentine's Day, with most of them celebrating "Galentine's Day," which is a celebration of platonic love.

Millennials are known for being the most likely to buy

gifts. Millennials usually prefer dining out over traditional, material gifts, with 68% finding self-love important.

Gen X and older generations prefer more traditional, intimate, and small-scale celebrations. They are more likely to focus on the romantic, one-one aspect of the holiday.

Valentine's Day doesn't have to be only about romantic relationships. Valentine's Day is about love, and everybody should be involved, not just romantic couples. It is a wonderful chance to cele-

brate all the different kinds of love.

For example, friends can host a get-together where everyone brings a fun dish and shares what they appreciate about each other. Another great option is spending quality time with family or even focusing on self-love. While Valentine's Day is often linked with romantic couples, it's really about appreciating anyone who brings joy to the heart.



THE SPOTLIGHT



By KAYCEE TOWELL
Feature Editor

Seeing Yourself in the Mirror

Many teenagers around the world struggle with self-confidence. Being a teenager is often perceived as being unserious and not having any problems. Being a teenager is like being a kid trying to figure out how to handle every new emotion they feel. Teenagers often find themselves looking in the mirror and being unable to recognize the person they see. This is often due to the lack of self-confidence.

The definition for self-confidence is "a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities, and judgment." If someone lacks that confidence in themselves, it makes simple tasks harder. When you go to complete a task and have it in your head that you're not good enough or smart enough, you can't bring yourself to complete the task. This can lead to lower test and quiz scores.

Low self-esteem can also lead to darker things, such as depression, eating disorders, etc.

When someone has the feeling that they aren't good enough and they never will be, it causes them to fear judgment, which leads to avoiding social outings, which over time leads to lower moods, such as depression and anxiety. These feelings can result in doubts about your body, possibly leading to an eating disorder.

Any type of confidence doesn't appear overnight, and everyone, especially teenagers, struggle with it at moments in their lives. Loving yourself fully and completely takes time. Many people expect it to be fixed right away instead of recognizing the smaller victories.

Everyone is still growing all the time, and acceptance is a step that everyone takes eventually, just at their own time.

Teens Exhibit Mental Health Issues

By: AUBREY LINDSAY
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

Why are some teenagers so hesitant when it comes to speaking up for themselves? That's a question many ask and even study. Even when teens want or need something, many struggle to find the words and don't speak up at all. This has been a problem for a long time, but with technology advancing it makes it worse.

Teenagers are now so focused on social media platforms and staying up to date with trends that interaction online has become second nature to them. Students get so used to posting, commenting, uploading, etc. that some forget how to interact with the real world, if they knew in the first place.

The second reason is mental health and home lives. No one ever really

knows what's going on in someone else's brain, same with at home. Several students struggle from mental disorders that even when diagnosed are not treated directly at schools. Even more struggle from undiagnosed mental disorders that no one has had the ability to treat yet. Studies show that 1 in 7 teenagers struggle from a mental disorder. But, what some don't know is that home lives can be a core reason for a mental health problem such as severe anxiety or depression.

The third possible reason is bullying. About 1 in 5 students from 12-18 experience bullying at school. When someone is brutally picked on it can make them overthink anything they do. So what's their solution? Do nothing at all. Which leads to awkwardness or the inability

to speak up for themselves.

These are problems that will last for decades but that doesn't mean people can't do anything about it. Even little things count, asking someone how their day has been. So, if a student sees someone struggling, maybe offer some kindness.



Picture from Phoenix Recovery Center shows the complex nature of the human brain.



School Subject Virtues

By: ABRAM WISEMAN
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

Most kids nowadays wonder if what they are currently learning in school will help them out in the real world. Some subjects are good for helping you have a better work ethic, some help you with real-world problems, and some teach you new skills.

On the average, many people agree that reading is the most important subject. They concur it is the most important subject because of the amount of written communication in the world. Although, a lot of communication nowadays is through technology. Not being able to read or communicate through technology will most likely not allow somebody to get a job. To be able to become a working citizen in the community, people

have to be able to read and communicate. For example, to get a driver's license, people taking the test need to be able to read. Once somebody gets their driver's license, they've got to be able to read road signs. Another example is when somebody is ordering food at a restaurant, they need to be able to read what is on the menu to know what they want to eat.

For other people, the most important subject is math. A lot of jobs nowadays consist of math. Some of those jobs are electrical engineering, data scientist, financial analyst, etc. All of those jobs listed require a college degree to obtain. When studying to get these degrees a lot of math classes are being taken. As it seems, the skill of being able to read and write is an integral part of today's society.

IC Embraces and Learns from its Four Foreign Exchange Students

By: GRACIE WERDEN
CREEK CURRENT REPORTER

Every year Indian Creek has the opportunity to welcome different foreign exchange students with different backgrounds and cultures. These foreign exchange students travel from their home countries to study abroad. Foreign exchange students bring different perspectives to the classroom as well as sharing their different traditions and languages. Although it might be difficult to adjust to a new culture and environment, the school, students, staff, and host families help make the transition a lot better for them. This year, Indian Creek is proud to spotlight four foreign exchange students, highlighting their background, more information about their country, and overall how their experience in the United States has been so far.

Edit Gunnarsson: "I'm from Sweden, which is a country in Northern Europe, also a part of Scandinavia. Since we are in the north, we get pretty cold, long, and dark winters, which is often wonderful if there is a lot of snow, but summer is still my favorite! There is something special about a real Swedish summer. I've had a wonderful time here in Indiana so far! To expose



Lucas (second from right) and Brahim (far right) celebrate with IC friends after a football game.

in such a short time. Winters are usually very cold and rainy, although it almost never snows. The opposite is true: it's incredibly hot, so much so that in the mornings we can barely go outside unless it's to go to a store or the pool. The city where I live is a couple of hours from Madrid, the capital of Spain. Life is quite different in Spain than it is here, but I am still having a fantastic time and learning a lot every day. In Spain, people tend to spend more time outdoors, walking or exercising, because you can go almost anywhere on foot or by public transportation, which is convenient. Here, on the other hand, you need a car to get around almost everywhere. Also, I want to say this experience has been amazing because I have had an amazing time."

Ulugbek Mattbabaev (goes by Lucas): "I'm from Uzbekistan, a small country with a huge history in central Asia. It has one of the oldest cities in the world, Samarkand, which is a major stop on the silk road. It is not far from Russia and I am fully Uzbek. I have a Russian background so I am a little bit mixed which makes my story a bit

more interesting. Uzbekistan used to be a part of the USSR until it broke up. Everyone calls me Lucas, which I really like, but my real name is Ulugbek Matbabaev. There are a lot of things I like: good people, kindness, nice smells, sunsets, cars, good food, and having fun. I also really love to do sports. I have tried tennis, taekwondo, wrestling, and boxing. Right now I am obsessed with basketball. My time here in America has been amazing. I love the people and I honestly became an exchange student because life back home started to feel too predictable. I really wanted something new, something different. The United States felt like the right place to push myself and explore more. I am enjoying it and maybe I will even come back for college."

Brahim Idlgseyr: "I'm from Morocco, a country located in the northern part of Africa. Morocco has a rich and diverse culture and history that have shaped it to what it is today. I came from Agadir, specifically from a small town called Ait Melloul. My country is very small compared to the U.S., but its culture makes it shine. We are mostly known for food. Couscous and Tagine are among people's favorites, and our cuisine is considered one of the best in the world.

Nerea and Edit (right) played on the Lady Braves basketball team together this winter.



Nerea (left) and Edit (right) played on the Lady Braves basketball team together this winter.

Morocco is also really good at soccer; we have a whopping 19-match win record this year, which broke a lot of records. We also won the 2026 Arab Cup. We are also one of the ones that might potentially win the 2026 world cup, which will be held in the U.S. I love doing a lot of things, but I'm mostly into sports like wrestling, which I never did before I came here. I honestly fell in love with wrestling and I am very grateful I got the opportunity to try it. I also will start running track here soon. My experience so far here in the United States has been so great and the people here are so nice and welcoming. High school here and the experiences have been great."

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FOR THE RECORD



By ADRIANA WEST
Opinion Editor

The Caffeine Craze of Today

Many teenagers now rely on an energy drink or coffee to function. Caffeine is a stimulant that blocks certain receptors in the brain to keep you alert.

But, when is too much caffeine?

Teenagers are especially susceptible to addiction with all the things going on in their lives, just to get a rush.

Caffeine's stimulating effects can bring energy for hours (depending on who you are), but like any addiction, you can build a resistance to it, and thus need or look for higher caffeine levels in drinks.

So the question is, are we really addicted to caffeine like we are to our phones, or is it really just "for the flavor"?

Energy drinks are generally not healthy whatsoever. They can cause headaches, heart issues, dizziness, and high blood glucose due to the amount of sugar in the drink.

However, to others, it can serve a function. It can help them sleep. People with ADHD or other diagnoses such as that can have an almost reverse reaction to caffeine. People with these usually have lower dopamine levels, and caffeine brings up those levels, bringing them to a calm state.

People addicted to caffeine typically end up having a physical dependence (like most addictions do). People can get headaches, nausea, irritability, or even insomnia, even if you aren't just ingesting it for a mere day.

But caffeine doesn't have to be harmful. It increases alertness, energy, and can improve performance. It is fine to have regular things in small doses, but starting early is not advised. Most experts advise avoiding it until the age of 18, but if younger, then to drink in moderation.

Super Bowl Halftime Show Ignites Political Controversy



By: SAVANNAH BERTRAM & ALICIN PERRY
CREEK CURRENT REPORTERS

Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny performed the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show. The show was 13 minutes long, featuring 13 tracks and famous guests Lady Gaga and Ricky Martin.

Despite having many praises for his performance, Bad Bunny is also facing criticism for his performance, including the Latino community being upset with Lady Gaga's appearance. This stems from the fact that Lady Gaga herself does not fit in that ethnic group, given her Italian heritage. Bad Bunny brought out Gaga because she could show off the culture very well, and to show that you can bring other cultures and lifestyles together, igniting the overall message of unity.

Another backlash the half-

time show is facing is how a Latin American performed it in Spanish. On Truth Social, an American right-leaning social media platform, President Donald Trump spoke out with his feelings on the halftime show, stating things such as, "one of the worst, ever," and "an affront to the greatness of America," along with calling the choice to have artist Bad Bunny perform "terrible" and "absolutely ridiculous." Trump judging another American for being a part of a different culture is heartbreaking. (Bad Bunny is Puerto Rican, which is an American territory, therefore giving him American citizenship.)

For those not wishing to watch Bad Bunny's performance, there was a separate concert, Turning Point USA, featuring Kid Rock, Lee Brice, Brantley Gilbert, and

Gabby Barrett, on a different channel. IC secretary, Christina Zobel, watched The Turning Point halftime show. Zobel said she watched the alternative show because she didn't understand Bad Bunny, and actually knew who was performing on Turning Point. However, Zobel thinks the Turning Point show was pre-recorded because Gabby Barrett started her first song with shoes on, then went into her second song without shoes, and also stated that the bands switched out too quickly. Overall, she enjoyed the show.

ICHS principal Luke Skobel and Spanish teacher Laura Gunderson, who both watched the regular halftime show, also weighed in on the performances. Skobel, watches the Super Bowl and halftime show with his family every year. Skobel, a former social studies teacher, said, "The message was all about unity and trying to celebrate diversity and overcome a lot of strife that is going on across the country."

IC Spanish teacher, Laura Gunderson, enjoyed the halftime show as she is a big fan of Bad Bunny. She is very big on symbolism and on bringing cultures together. Though she enjoyed the whole performance, the most impactful moments for her were "when he handed his Grammy to a young child. That gesture symbolized inspiration and possibility. It said, 'This could be you.' As a teacher, that moment hit me deeply. We want students to see examples of hard work, to feel belief in themselves, and to imagine their own future success."

THE FINAL POLISH



By JENNA ROETHEMEIER
Editor-In-Chief

Powerful Message on Display

Bad Bunny's Super Bowl 60 halftime performance was a powerful, 13-minute celebration of Puerto Rican heritage. Bad Bunny made history at the 2026 Super Bowl by performing the first ever set almost entirely in Spanish. Bad Bunny brought Puerto Rican culture to the mainland.

To focus on the Puerto Rican aspect of Bad Bunny's performance, he opened with a clip showing the lush green fields of Puerto Rico before transitioning to the grand stage at Levi's Stadium. Bad Bunny used many Puerto Rican instruments including the pandero, cuatro, and guiro.

Many fans say Bad Bunny's halftime show expressed "love in the time of hate."

NBC Sports reporter Rohan Nadkarni tweeted that the couple on stage before Lady Gaga's performance actually got married. Also, the proposal at the beginning of Bad Bunny's performance was an actual proposal. Bad Bunny's performance brought many together as he had many other celebrities (Cardi B, Pedro Pascal, and Jessica Alba) at his performance.

Bad Bunny also delivered a powerful message in Spanish that translates to, "My name is Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, and if I'm here today at Super Bowl 60, it's because I never, ever stopped believing in myself. You should also believe in yourself. You're worth more than you think. Trust me." This message was a direct address to young people, immigrants, and anyone who has been told they don't belong. Bad Bunny, who worked in a grocery store just ten years ago, delivered this message on the biggest stage in American entertainment, in Spanish.

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