



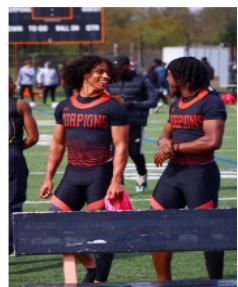
Beneath The Headlines



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Class of 2024 Graduation Updates

What we know so far



Nancy Barrozo
Staff Writer

As the end of the school year approaches, so does the class of 2024's graduation ceremony! Typically, HCPSS graduations happen from the last week of May until the first week of June, but this year all graduations

will be in May with the last graduation date on May 31, 2024. All Howard County high school graduations are held locally at Merriweather Post Pavilion.

All seniors will get 10 tickets to their graduation ceremony. If more tickets are needed, please ask fellow classmates for extras. Staff will ask for tickets at

the gate of Merriweather, so be prepared!

We are currently in the season for seniors to buy their caps and gowns for their special day! If you are a senior and haven't yet placed your order, you should try your best to get it done as soon as possible. All cap and gown prices will increase as we get closer

to the graduation dates, so be sure to head to the OMHS website now to find the link. All cap and gown orders will be delivered to the school and distributed at graduation rehearsals.

I wish the Class of 2024 an amazing graduation, and we'll keep you guys updated if more graduation information is released!

Can I Legally Vote?

Register to Vote this Election Year

a U.S. citizen, reside in or be a longtime resident of the state of Maryland, and your eighteenth birthday must be on or before this year's election day to vote. A voter can also register as a member of a political party (the two major ones are the Democrat and Republican parties) and vote for a nominee in party primaries as long as their eighteenth birthday is on or before the general election in November.

New student voters can use Maryland's Online Voter Registration System or submit a voter registration application to the local or state board of elections. New voters can also register to vote during early voting (May 2-9 for

primaries in Maryland this election cycle and October 24-31 for the general November election) or on election day (May 14th for primaries, November 5th for general).

Go to an early voting center in Howard County if you remain local next year. If living on a college campus, you can choose your residential address as the most recent childhood home address or use your college/dormitory address, but it must be your primary residence. You can also go to your assigned election day

polling place and bring a document that proves where you live. For a new voter to prove their legal, legitimate residency and right to vote, bring an MVA-issued license, ID card, change of address card, paycheck, bank statement, utility bill, or other government document with your name and new address.

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Why We Don't Buy Things From SHEIN

The truth behind SHEIN's fast-fashion

Devika Lalitha
Staff Writer

Have you ever wondered why SHEIN is so popular yet controversial? SHEIN has gained huge popularity in recent years. According to a 2023 UBS Report, the average SHEIN shopper spends \$100 per month on women's clothing, which is 60% higher than the average spending on women's clothing. SHEIN has become the top visited website in the world under the category of fashion and apparel with more than twice the average time spent compared to the second most popular apparel website, Nike.

What is SHEIN?

SHEIN is a global fast-fashion e-retailer founded in China in 2008. Its market has expanded globally, and as of 2022, it stands as the world's largest fashion retailer. Known for its \$2 shirts, \$10 dresses, and other rapidly produced clothing, SHEIN employs a marketing strategy with #SHEINhaul videos that have become immensely popular on social media.

What makes SHEIN so special?

Unlike other fashion industries, SHEIN operates in a notably advanced (or unconventional) manner. Comparatively, other stores such as H&M and ZARA operate the way the traditional fashion industry has always run for 150 years. They predict seasonal

trends, buy clothing weeks or months in advance, and fill their stores with the clothes they believe

the consumer will buy or will be trending in the next season.

However, SHEIN has its own algorithm and data-driven methodology to track the trend in the industry. When trends emerge, they place clothing orders and wait to identify the popular products before scaling up production. This approach makes SHEIN's production almost twice as fast as stores like H&M and ZARA.

In an interview conducted by Business Insider with SHEIN's global head of strategy and corporate affairs, Peter Pernot-Day, he debunked the claim that SHEIN utilizes AI in their on-demand fashion. According to him, SHEIN employs audience-engagement technology to identify trends and determine demand, similar to platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Every click within SHEIN'S app becomes a variable in their database. SHEIN then employs statistical sampling to assess the demand though this technology



isn't new. In fact, many online retailers collect similar data

to track consumer behaviors.

What sets SHEIN apart is its approach once the demand for a product is determined. SHEIN produces a limited run of the product, and if it performs well, SHEIN will place a bid with its manufacturers for a larger order.

Is that the only issue why SHEIN is so controversial?

Of course not! Many people are highly skeptical of SHEIN's supply chain due to the lack of transparency about who or where their suppliers are, given the affordability of their products.

Another controversy revolves around the issue of human labor. The US House Committee accused SHEIN of utilizing forced labor from Uyghurs, a claim strongly denied by the Chinese Government. In a Wall Street Journal report, SHEIN asserted that they have no tolerance for forced labor and that they have no contract manufacturers in the Xinjiang region.

In 2023, SHEIN also faced multiple lawsuits related to intellectual property rights. Several artists have found their designs copied with SHEIN's inexpensive materials and selling them at remarkably low prices, thereby overshadowing their businesses.

But did they do anything to fix their image?

Well, yes, SHEIN is indeed a smart company, and that is how they have managed to survive this long. Currently, there is not enough evidence to fully accuse SHEIN, especially on the issue of cheap labor.

Last June, SHEIN flew in a group of influencers to tour their manufacturing facilities to show their happy laborers and advanced factories. However, this effort only resulted in a significant backlash against the influencers.

Does SHEIN even make a profit with their cheap stuff?

Based on Priori data, SHEIN is estimated to have generated \$30 billion in revenue in 2022 and is currently valued at \$68 billion.

One of SHEIN's key strategies is taking advantage of the US tax exemptions, allowing low-value packages to enter the country tariff-free under the de minimis tax rule in which importers are exempt from paying customs duties if the package is worth less than \$800.

So, while there's not enough evidence to prove any wrong doing in this controversy, would you still buy things from SHEIN?

HOPSS COURSES:

If you are interested in the hospitality & tourism part of this cluster the Culinary Academy (or some of their courses) might be for you, talk with your school counselor or CRA's for more information! If the sales & service part of this cluster is of interest to you, check out Business Management courses or the Finance Academy.

VIRTUAL SPEAKER PANEL:

Come hear from cluster professionals!

February 27 @ 10AM



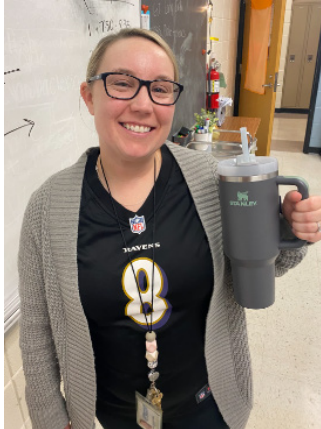
Features

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What's Going on During Valentine's Day? *OM Staff Plans for Valentine's Day*

Mariela Rodrigues
Staff Writer



Ms. Granfield, a Science teacher here, said her valentine is her husband, and her dream Valentine's Day is to spend the day with those she loves.



Ms. Johnson, a math teacher here, said she does have Valentines this year - her kids! But her ideal Valentine's Day would be to have a snow day at



Mr. De La Mar, the Hispanic liaison at OM, said his Valentine is his wife, and his dream Valentine's Day would be to go out to eat in a fancy restaurant and not have his



Senora Gimpel, the Spanish teacher here, said her Valentine is her husband and her dream Valentine's Day would be to go out and have a nice dinner at the beach. After eating, she would want to watch a nice show and

Abyenezer
Taye
Staff Writer

(continued
from page 1)

You don't have to go physically in person on election day in order to vote in Maryland. Mail-in ballots can be requested through the USPS (hence the name 'mail-in' ballots) and dropped off at a designated polling station or box. More information

about voting can be found at the state of Maryland and Howard County Board of Elections and Voting government websites (elections.maryland.gov or the BOE site for whatever other current state residence) for further information.

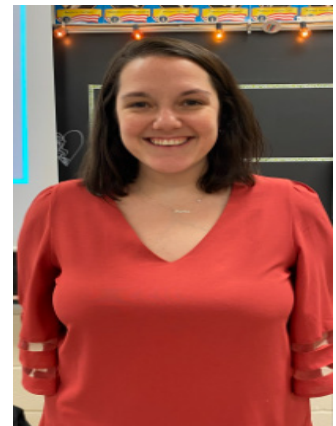
Now, just what exactly are you voting for this coming November 5th? There will be a presidential election to

decide who controls the White House, one of Maryland's two senate seats (the upper chamber of Congress), and all Maryland House of Representative candidates for the House (the lower chamber of Congress) are up for grabs. At the state level, three of seven justices with expiring terms for the Maryland State Supreme Court and the subordinate

intermediate appellate courts are either retiring or running for re-election. Additionally, a major referendum/ ballot measure dubbed the "Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment" regarding safeguarding reproductive rights is being slated for that same November 5th. It's a big year to have your voice heard!



Ms. Martinez, an OM Spanish teacher, said her Valentine is her husband and her dream Valentine's Day would be dinner for two and a



Ms. Anderson-Little, the Women's Studies and Psychology teacher here, said her Valentine is her husband, and that on Valentine's Day, someone watches her kids and she goes out to eat at Fogo de



Ms. Yavo, an OM teacher said no one has asked her to be their valentine yet, but she is married, and her dream Valentine's Day would include going on a trip.

Where is Physical Media!?

The Uncertain Future of Print

Niya Jones
Staff Writer

In today's ever-evolving digital world, the future of physical media seems uncertain. While physical formats such as CDs, DVDs, and books have long been popular, the rise of streaming services and e-books has posed a serious threat to their existence. However, physical media still holds its unique appeal and is likely to continue in some capacity.

One of the main reasons physical media persists is the sense of ownership it provides. Unlike digital files that can be lost or hidden within a vast sea of online content, physical media allows individuals to physically hold, display, and curate their collections and offer a tangible reminder of their interests, memories, and identity. Additionally, physical media can have sentimental value, making it

a cherished possession that can be passed down through generations. Another factor contributing to the future of physical media is the concept of the "retro" or "vintage" appeal. Just as vinyl records have made a comeback, physical media

cannot be replicated by its digital counterparts.

However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges physical media faces. Streaming services and digital platforms provide convenience, accessibility, and a vast



in other formats may also experience a resurgence. The unique artwork, packaging, and physical experience of interacting with a CD or DVD can attract collectors and enthusiasts. In an increasingly digital and intangible world, physical media offers a nostalgic charm and a sense of authenticity that

library of content at the touch of a button. Additionally, the environmental impact of physical media cannot be ignored, as the production, packaging, and distribution processes generate significant waste. Criticism of physical media often centers around inefficiency, as it is argued that all necessary

content can be accessed digitally without the need for physical products.

While the future of physical media may face some uncertainties, it is likely to endure in some form. The sense of ownership, sentimental value, and unique appeal of physically owning and interacting with media cannot be easily replicated in the digital realm. However, as technology progresses and streaming platforms become more prevalent, physical media may transition into a niche market, appreciated by collectors and enthusiasts, or even adapt and integrate with digital platforms to offer hybrid experiences. As consumers, it is important to recognize and appreciate the value of physical media while also considering the impact of our choices on the environment and embracing the benefits that digital media brings.

Top 5 Movies for this Valentine's Day

How to Celebrate with Love on the Big Screen

Brianna Myers
Staff Writer

Whether watching solo or on a date, viewing the highs and lows of someone else's love story from the comfort of a couch is one of the best ways to celebrate Valentine's Day. Here are some familiar classics to enjoy this February 14th.

Let's start with one of the most popular tragic romance movies: *Titanic* (1997). *Titanic*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet is the classic love story of boy meets girl on a doomed sinking boat. I won't spoil the end for you if you haven't seen it or ever paid attention in history class, but let's just say things don't quite go as expected for our starring couple. You can find the epic tale on Prime Video or Paramount+.

Speaking of Leonardo DiCaprio in depressing movies about love, check out *Romeo and Juliet* (the 1996 version). This version of the classic story stars Leonardo

see a pair of star-crossed lovers, and I promise it's even better than when you watched it in eighth grade! You can re-watch the modern take on Shakespeare's story on

comedy starring Ryan Reynolds (*Deadpool*) and Anna Faris. This silly and light-hearted story tells the age-old tale of what happens when you're "friend-zoned" with someone you like. See *Deadpool* in quite a different light on Amazon Prime.

Finally, check out 2000's *Love & Basketball* starring Sanaa Lathan and Omar Epps. This movie is a great movie to watch on Valentine's Day, especially with your sports-loving significant other! You can find this gem conveniently on Netflix. Whether in real life or on the big screen, make sure you celebrate love this Valentine's Day!



DiCaprio and Claire Danes as the famed couple. This movie is THE movie to watch when you want to

Hulu and other providers.

Enough of the tragedy! Just *Friends* is a 2005 romantic

Black History Month

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Those Who Lead Us

A list of African American leaders whose actions helped bring change

Victoria Williams
Editor-In-Chief

Although Black History can and should be recognized every month, February is a great time as it is the season of love. Amidst the considerable challenges faced by the black community, it's easy to dwell on the negative and be hateful, but alongside the struggles, there has been so much to love, so many achievements and milestones, and so many notable people who helped lead us to where we are today. Delving into education, inventions, social movements, and protests, let's explore some maybe lesser known African American leaders whose contributions have shaped our journey.

Those who lead us through education:

1. Daniel Hale Williams: In 1891, Daniel Hale Williams established the nation's first interracial hospital. The facility functioned

as the nation's first black nursing school.

2. Hallie Quinn Brown: A lifelong educator and advocate of women's rights, established a scholarship program for women's education in the 1880s to encourage more women to pursue higher education.

3. Dorothy Height: A well-known civil rights activist, Dorothy Height had the ear of President Eisenhower in urging him to desegregate schools. President Bush awarded her with a Congressional Gold Medal in 2004. (Source: onlinecollege.org)
Those who lead us through social movements:

1. Ida B. Wells: A devoted feminist and journalist, Wells exposed the atrocities of Black American lynchings in the Jim Crow South through her investigative work. (Source: oprahdaily.com)

2. Bree Newsome: American filmmaker, activist, and speaker from Charlotte, North Carolina,

and Oakland Mills Alumni. Her most well-known act of civil disobedience occurred on June 27, 2015, when, in the wake of the Charleston church shooting, she removed the Confederate flag from the grounds of the South Carolina State House and was subsequently arrested. (Source: Wikipedia.org)



Those who lead us through inventions and innovations:

1. Garrett Morgan: A Black inventor and the son of enslaved parents, created several important innovations with only an elemen-

tary school education, such as the gas mask and an improved sewing machine. But Morgan's most significant creation was the three-light upgraded traffic signal, created in 1923. (Source: Historical.com)

2. Mary Van Brittan Brown: Co-Inventor of the Home Security System in 1966. She created an early security system for her own house. With her husband gone, she spent a lot of evenings alone at home in Queens, New York, and she felt uncomfortable because of the high crime rate in her area. So, she invented a tool to help ease her mind. (Source: History.com)

3. Ernest Everett Just: Just was an internationally recognized biologist who changed how cells are studied and co-founded the Omega Psi Phi fraternity at Howard University, which would later create what is today known as Black History Month. (Source: history.com)

The History Of Black History Month

Exploring the Origin

Morgan Williams
Staff Writer

What is Black History Month?

Black History Month is an annual period where we celebrate and acknowledge the achieve-

ments, history, and role African Americans have played in the evolution of the United States. Though we observe

it each February, how many of us know the celebration's history and how it has changed over the years?

The History:

Black History Month began with an organization called "The Association For The Study Of Negro Life And History" (ASNLH) founded in 1915. The ASNLH

dedicated its time and energy to spotlight the success of many overlooked African Americans during that time. In 1926, the organization came up with the idea of "Negro History Week" and chose the second week of February to represent it.

As this idea gained popularity,

people all over the country began to participate in it. Schools and communities nationwide decided to put together celebrations, history clubs, lectures, and performances.

Over the decades, leaders all over the country began to recognize "Negro History Week" and thanks to the civil rights movement and growing representation of African-Americans, people began to recognize "Negro History Week" as Black History Month. In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially acknowledged Black History Month as a national celebration. Now, it is a time to honor the accomplishments, culture, and contributions of African Americans.
Happy Black History Month!



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V-Day Gift Guide

Wondering what to give your loved ones this February 14th?

Julianna Healy
Features Editor

Searching for what to get that special someone for this February 14th? Don't want to just get a CVS teddy bear or a box of chocolates? While those are great failsafes, there are plenty of better options. Look no further because I am here to supply you with some more creative ideas.

If you want to stray away from the standard convenience store teddy bear inscribed with some cheesy phrase, here are some other stuffed options. Jellycat is a stuffed animal company created in London, but they have a new line of stuffed animals and plushes specifically themed around Valentine's Day. These are a little bit more fun than your standard teddy bear, and are still affordable with prices beginning at \$14.

An item that could

provide an opportunity to spend quality time with the person you are gifting it to, is a set of LEGOs, specifically Lego Flowers. In recent years, LEGO has created a wide variety of bouquet sets that you can put together. An alternative to real flowers, these won't die and provide a great activity to do with the person you give it to.

Kaydence Grier, Junior, said a bouquet of Ferrero Rocher chocolates is definitely one gift she hopes to receive.

An increasingly popular idea on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, are these things called "Bae Baskets". Users have created one for each major holiday/season and posted slideshows with gifts you could fill these baskets with. Some of the names include "Boo Baskets" for October and Halloween, "Burr Baskets" for Winter in general and Christmas, and "Bae Baskets" for Valentine's Day.

This Valentine's Day basket can be filled with your special someone's favorites candies, a gift card to their favorite restaurant, their favorite packaged drink, a handwritten note or card, a bulkier item like a Valentine's Day themed blanket, a hoodie they might like in a traditional Valentine's Day color, some fuzzy socks, matching pajama pants, matching bracelets, or maybe even a framed picture of the two of you! The options are endless. The cool thing about a basket is that they can go serve another purpose and be used for storage elsewhere after the holiday!

Stores like Target, Walmart, CVS, or Walgreens are great for finding the majority of the items that you can put in your basket. If you have any pictures you want to print out and frame to give to your significant other, Walgreens and CVS are great for that, and can

have them ready in very little time.

If there are any essential items your significant other is missing or has been needing it doesn't hurt to throw those in there! A nice-smelling candle to keep their room smelling fresh or a self-care product to add to their routine is a thoughtful, but simple addition to a good basket.

Taking note of when your significant other brings up something they've been eyeing in the store or been curious about trying is a great way to make gift planning easier. Keeping a running list in your notes app gives you lots of options when it becomes time for gift shopping.



Top 3 Valentine's Day Date Ideas

Where to enjoy time together!

Belma Respa
Staff Writer

Valentine's Day is a great day to celebrate especially with your partner. Sometimes it can be hard to find ideas of what dates to go on. I asked the students and staff members of OM what dates they had planned for Valentine's Day, or if they wanted to go on a date, what would they want to do.

The number one date

idea that was said by people was a dinner date. You can never go wrong with a dinner date, it is simple but always a nice way to take your partner out. Mr. Guest, one of the art teachers here at OM, said that he will be taking his wife out to dinner. "My ideal date for Valentine's Day is spending time with my boo, which is my wife and going out to a wonderful dinner."

The second date idea that was said was

a picnic date. This is a very simple, but cute way to plan one-on-one time with your partner and talk. Willow Romack, a junior at OM said. "Probably like a picnic in the park with a heart shaped platter from Chick Fil A".

The third date idea option is an ice cream date. This date idea is a good way to be able to talk to your partner and hangout. It's a very comfy date environment and a

great way to get to know each other if it is your first date. But if it's not, it's still a good way to just hangout with your partner.

So if you are in need of picking out a date on Valentines Day you can never go wrong with these three date ideas.



Souls of the Scroll

Editor in Chief:
Victoria Williams
Digital Manager and News Editor:

Vic Burch

Editorials Editor:

Kira Hatcher

Features Editor:

Julianna Healy

Sports Editor:

Malcolm Brooks

Faculty Advisor:

Katlyn Moore

Principal:

Dr. Jeffery Fink

Staff Writers:

Kaden Alston-Akers

Carly Arauz

Nancy Barrozo

Hayes Bishop

Juel Collins

Noah Curwen

Antoine Hodges Jr.

Isaiah Johnson

Niya Jones

Carter Keenan

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Feranmi Odulaja

Bo Omidiran

Lyric Owens

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Abyenezzer Taye

Dallys Taylor

Helen Villatoro

Julian Williams

Morgan

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How To Make Valentine's Special

Activities to make Valentine's Day intimate for your relationship

Lyric Owens
Staff Writer

Across the world, Valentine's Day is recognized as the day of love, both for yourself and to share with others. The day was named after St. Valentine, a Christian martyr who lived during the peak of the Ancient Roman Empire. The holiday follows both Ancient Roman and Christian traditions, which include expressing your affection to your partner. Often, people do this by treating their partners to dates and buying gifts; however, these acts are common and shared by society as a whole. The best way to make Valentine's Day memorable and genuine is to

personalize it for your relationship specifically, making for a thoughtful and unique experience.

Instead of focusing on materialistic gifts, planning an event that allows for shared experiences with your partner is certain to make the day more intimate. It could be something as simple as a walk, a trip to a nearby location you both enjoy or attending a performance together featuring a favorite celebrity. Sometimes

you do not have to go all out! Simply taking time to make someone's favorite food shows consideration and a willingness to go out of your way to please them. Whether it goes right or wrong, it's the thought that counts. On the topic of cooking, getting together in the kitchen to create a shared meal fosters teamwork, laughter, and intimate connection. You're bound to make memories and come together. Although cliché, going back to the basics never hurts.

Writing a love letter for your partner reminiscing about the journey you've taken together, especially if you're not known for expressing your feelings. You can stash the letter in their backpack or an envelope on their desk. Yes, it's a little cheesy, but sometimes it's fun to go back to the crush stage!

Speaking of going back to the basics, sitting at home and watching movies you both enjoy is perfectly fine, too! Remember, the best Valentine's Day is the one that emphasizes your unique connection. It does not have to be for others, as long as it highlights and creates special moments between you both!



How to Enjoy Your Own Company!

The importance of Self-love

Helen Villatoro
Staff Writer

Learning solitude is one of the best things you can do for yourself! It gives you peace and helps you achieve mental clarity that you may think you didn't need. Exploring new hobbies can be a wonderful way to discover new interests. Don't hesitate to take the time to try out different activities that you might enjoy. You never know what you might discover that'll catch your attention! For example, trying out instruments, cooking, baking, gardening, and photography are great hobbies to try that don't require interacting with others. According to The Jed Foundation, "Learning to be alone can give you space to think about your feelings, hopes, problems, and experiences. It's also a great opportunity to get to know yourself better and spend time

resting and relaxing."

Being alone helps you to focus on yourself as well as helping you learn something new in the process. Being alone doesn't mean you have to feel lonely, you can just enjoy self-company. You can become your own best friend and feel your emotions on a deeper level. Learning to be comfortable in solitude is a valuable skill because it means that no matter what circumstances you find

yourself in, you can always have the ability to rely on yourself. Having self-company helps you accept your flaws and have more tranquility with them.

Valentine's Day is just around the corner and instead of feeling bad about yourself because you don't have a valentine, show love to yourself! This day is about love, so show random acts of kindness to the people around you. Show them you care about them or you

can just simply be alone and look at the day as a self-care day to show yourself the attention that you need. Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate love and affection, not just between romantic relationships, but also love among family, and friends. It's a day to show gratitude to those who have touched our lives with their love and kindness. It's a time to express our feelings and emotions and to cherish the relationships we have. Valentine's Day is a beautiful reminder that love comes in many forms, and it's worth celebrating every single one of them.

Generally speaking, being alone is a way of expressing kindness to yourself. It helps you have a clear mind and think thoroughly to make decisions about your life. Having a social life is always good, but expressing your creativity by yourself is always better.



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Who do you love and why? *Oakland Mills perspective on love*

Nomtai Kurmi
Staff Writer



"I love my mommy because she gives me toys." -Eliana

"I love all my friends." -Ms. Shelley

"I love Justin because we play basketball together." -Cooper

"I love my mom because she's nice to me." -Cole

A Valentine's Day Poem

Juel Collins
Staff Writer

Love is a strange feeling
That sometimes I forget exist

Until I'm next to you
The one that reminds me of this

Happiness is usually the first to appear
Because I see you here

A smile grows on your face
And I smile right back

Speeding up my pace
Because I don't have a reason to slack

You're here
Right here

Always and Forever
And maybe this is just fate

Telling us we belong together

Performing
Arts
UPCOMING
EVENTS

Feburay 24th: Tri-M performance @ Savage Mills

March 7th and 8th: Musical @7:00

March 9th: Musical @2:00 and 7:00

March 20th: Guitar & Piano recital
@7:00

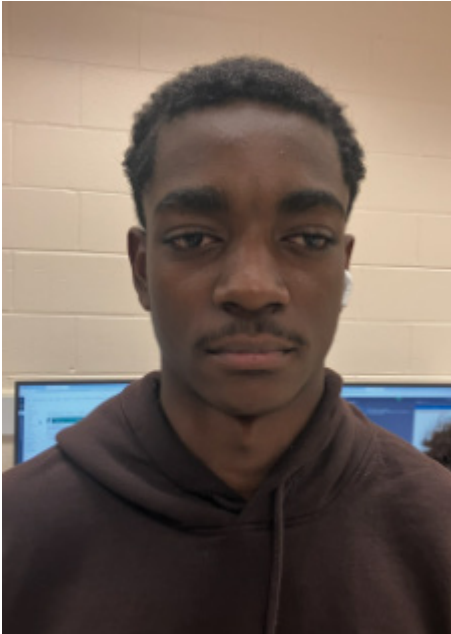
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What is Love?

Oakland Mills perspective on Llove



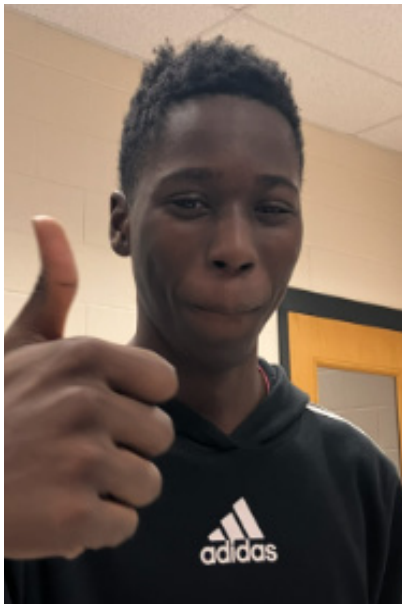
"Love means a lot. It's love. I can't define it. It's truthfulness."
-Sean Hillery, 11th grade.



"Being comfortable with someone where you can joke around and communicate with them." - Leah Freeman, 12th



"Love is God, 1 Corinthians 13." -Lois Boateng, 12th grade



"Love means doing something for someone without them asking for it. Having their back. It's spiritual." -Kevin Aryee-Ankrah, 9th grade.



"Liking someone for who they are. Not just how they look."
-Abi Maja, 9th grade.

Did you know?!?

Carly Arauz
Staff Writer

1. February is the only month that can go without a full moon!
2. February's birthstones are amethyst and bloodstone.
3. February is National African American Month in the United States.
4. February is named after the Roman festival of Februa, which was a time for purification and sacrifice.
5. Originally February was supposed to be the last month of the calendar, but after time it changed.
6. Every four years there's a leap year adding one more day to February, making it 29 days (like this year!)
7. Mardi Gras is usually celebrated, where there is lots of fun down in New Orleans!
8. February is the least common birth month.

OM's Hottest Snack Choices

How to Celebrate National Snack Food Month

Kaden Alston-Akers
Staff Writer

We all know February as the month of Valentine's Day and Black History, but did you know that February is also National Snack Food Month? In commemoration of this year's holiday, OM students responded to a poll about their go-to snack food preferences. We've ranked OM's top ten most-liked snacks to hopefully inspire you to try something new or even an old favorite this February.

#10 - At the end of our snack spectrum are Nutrigrain bars by Kellogg's. These delightful treats don a robust exterior crafted from a blend of whole grain and wheat oats, generously filled with a fruity jelly reminiscent of the shape of a cannoli.

#9 - Nestling into the ninth spot is Mott's Applesauce. In its soft form, applesauce contains a fruity flavor and is a refreshing and often healthier alternative to consuming yogurts or puddings. The simplicity and inexpensive ingredients

within make applesauce a perfect pairing with other snacks.

#8 - Prepare to be astonished by the rise of PopCorners. Their brand has earned its stripes in the snacking arena, celebrated for an array of flavors. Just as their name suggests, the taste of popcorn is embedded into each chip. Formerly owned by BFY, the publishers of Pepsi bought the brand to expand availability across the globe.

#7 - Ascending to the seventh position is a cheddar-flavored saltine icon—Goldfish. These crispy, fish-shaped crackers have become synonymous with wholesome snacking, catering to taste buds across generations with their delightful cheesy appeal.

#6 - Unravel the classic charm of pretzels, the snack that has secured the sixth spot on the list. This timeless snack boasts a satisfying crunch, with its twisted figure adorned by sprinkles of salt.

#5 - Making a bold entrance at number five is the rolled tortilla sensation, Takis. Their spicy-cheesy combo leaves an immaculate impact on the taste buds. Fun

Fact: Takis originated in Mexico in 1999, before visiting the United States in 2004 which led them to quickly rise in the snack market. Takis' intentional plan was to target Hispanic consumers but ended up being beloved by all.

#4 - A resounding applause goes to Doritos, claiming the fourth spot on our snack list. These triangular crisps are famed not only for their distinctive shape but also for the extensive variety of flavors they bring to the table (pun intended). After all, who can resist a snack that offers diverse tastes?

#3 - Securing the bronze medal of our snack-lympics is Honey Nut Cheerios, a cherished product of General Mills. Despite being categorized as a "breakfast cereal," the appeal of these tiny donut-shaped crisps extends beyond mornings. Glazed with a combination of sweet honey and whole wheat grains, they have earned their place in the top three.

#2 - Standing proudly as the runner-up is Chips

Ahoy, holding memories of grandma's classic batch of chocolate chip cookies. Crafted by Mondelēz International, these cookies uphold the traditional style of a homemade baked treat.

#1 - Drumroll, please! The top spot belongs to another one of Mondelēz's masterpieces, OREO, reigning supreme as the trendiest snack to date. Structured like a s'more, the sugary cream is sandwiched between two cocoa biscuits, creating a delicious fusion that sets OREO apart from the rest, crowning them as the champion.

However you choose to celebrate this February, be sure to enjoy some classic favorite treats as well as venturing out to explore something new.



Working in the Food Service Industry

My experience working in food service

Janiyah O'Brien
Staff Writer

Being a teenager is expensive. There are bills to pay, food to eat, places to hang, and a future to save for. Most of us are getting to that age where we are finding jobs (and some of us already have jobs!) to help pay for the things we need. I work in food service at the Columbia Mall and my feelings about it are complicated.

At first, my job didn't seem so bad when I started during junior year. Throughout the first few months, I started to realize what other people meant when they would mention how it feels to have a food service job. Sometimes there's just not quite enough work

to go around. Customers often come in waves, so when there is downtime with no customers, it can get a bit boring just standing around.

One thing that happens is when the schedule is made up at least a month and a half ahead of time. This causes the workers to not have time to request off, and when we do need that time off, it always seems like it's a problem. Some things are said that shouldn't be said, such as, "Maybe you should've requested off earlier." That's not a fair thing to say to people because things come up in people's lives and we need those days off.

It was stressful dealing with a job and school during my junior year, but having my own money

was nice, so I just dealt with the busy schedule. I would tell myself I wouldn't do certain things at this job because they didn't pay me enough, but me being me, I wasn't that type of person, so I still did it anyway.

Now that I'm in my senior year, we have more freedom at school such as early release options. This means that I can pick up earlier shifts or even work more days than I was able to last year.

There are also things I like about my job. For example, all the co-workers there are cool (even though they may sometimes think they're in charge), but they aren't that bad. In my workplace, we stand up for each other like when customers catch attitudes with us and think they are right. They

think asking for our manager is going to mean that the manager will take their side, just for them to hear our manager say the same thing we had just told them. We have our joking times and we have our serious times, but overall I like most of my coworkers.

Having a job is not bad whether it's retail, food service, or whatever else you can find as a teenager. There will be times when you will have good experiences and will most likely have times when it won't be the experience you wished for. But having a job is an important experience for us at this point in our lives. I've learned how to manage my time, get along with others, act polite when I don't feel like acting polite, and experience the joy of financial freedom.

The End of the American Performance Car?

Why all the American performance cars are being discontinued

Carter Keenan
Staff Writer

At the end of 2023, many companies including Chevy, Dodge, and Corvette, announced plans to discontinue their popular lines of cars including the Camaro, Corvette, Charger, and Challenger.

At first glance, this decision seems weird and out of the blue, but I decided to look further into it. I found that these brands are not so much discontinuing the cars, but more rebranding them to newer electric and hybrid-based models.

This may be because high-performance cars can have a large carbon footprint. For example, Dodge's popular Hellcat can be fitted with 6.2L V8s that use a lot of gas to turn out the 700+ Horsepower. With all the gas used, the car's

emissions are exceptionally high, something mitigated with an electric motor engine.

The topic of electric cars versus gas cars is a controversial and divisive topic, so I went out to get a few student

they're watering down the most red-blooded American vehicle." It's good to know some people still care about the state of American cars.

Back to the positives of electric cars, Senior David

But all jokes aside, the opinion on the change from gas to electric cars is a topic that everyone has a different opinion about, and whether you hate the new electric models or love them, the popular cars will stick around just in a different form.

It is important to note General Motors has teased the idea of discontinuing their popular Camaros and Corvette more than once, although they have never come out and stated what the replacement would be in this case.

Ford's CEO stated on X (formerly Twitter) that they will continue their Mustang cars even if they are "the last company making V8s."

The new electric models of Challengers have already been spotted in some places across the US, but most are expected to debut sometime in 2024 or early 2025.



opinions on the decision.

Senior Liam Cornwell said, "I like the switch to electric cars, they're much better for the environment." Conversely, Junior Greyson Ogden, specifically on the topic of Hellcats switch, said, "I think it's stupid how the Hellcats are switching over to electric vehicles,

Millision said, "[It] Makes sense, electric motors can reach their top speeds far faster than traditional gas engines," and in all fairness, that is a solid point. My only problem is how am I supposed to intimidate the family of four in a Honda Civic if my car sounds like a vacuum?

The Driver's Test

Be prepared and don't overthink it

Noah Curwen
Staff Writer

In the state of Maryland, you are legally allowed to own a driver's license at age 16, making you eligible not only for driving but also for a car. This means that many of us are looking for cars while we are in high school. But where do you go to take a driver's test? How can you properly prepare?

One of the first things you must know is where you are going to be taking your driver's test. In situations like these, it's better to plan ahead so you're ready for anything. You don't want to find a place that is known to be easy to

pass (you do want to be prepared for the real world after all!) and you don't want to find a place that is known to be hard to pass either. "Practice with your kids until they can drive safely enough to pass the most stringent test. This is a public safety issue, and it doesn't do any of us any favors to have unprepared teens on the road," said one parent in a forum on the DC Urban Moms and Dads website.

Now, how you can properly prepare for the test? Practicing with a guardian is a necessity. This will increase your chances of passing because you aren't going in completely blind. You get to learn how to navigate the road comfortably with someone you know and trust. Maybe they can give you personal pointers along

the way, seeing as they have the experience. Studying the law is also important because it will help you become more aware so you don't slip up on the test or in real life. Better to be safe than sorry! And most importantly, remember to stay calm. No matter how much you know or how much you've prepared, if you aren't calm and collected during the test, you will have a very difficult time. Though it may be corny, try telling yourself positive and motivational things during the test to keep your confidence up. Know that you've got this!

Most people start out with cars given to them or handed down by their parents or older siblings. That's okay! No one starts with their dream car, but with hard work and determination, you can save up for the car of your dreams by the time you're comfortable on the road!



NBA All-Star Weekend

Who wants to win?

Hayes Bishop
Staff Writer

The NBA All-Star Weekend begins this coming weekend, and fans are very excited to watch! During All-Star Weekend, many events go on, including the Rising Stars and the Ruffles Celebrity Game on Friday night, the Starry 3-point competition, and the AT&T Slam Dunk competition on Saturday night.

The Starry 3-point contest involves the league's best 3-point shooters competing against each other to see who can score the most 3-point shots. In this event, one 3-pointer made is worth one point, and a "Moneyball" (which is the last ball at each of the five spots on the 3-point line) is worth two points. There is one full rack of "Moneyballs" in one of the five spots. In addition, there are two Starry balls that are farther than the other racks, both worth three points.

Historically, there has been one shooter in the NBA who is seen as the best shooter in all of the league's history: Stephen Curry. His highest number of points scored in a 3-point competition was 31 in 2021. This past year, someone different beat his record, but not who fans thought. Sabrina Ionescu, a WNBA player, scored 37 points in the WNBA's three-

point competition. After seeing this incredible performance, fans of the WNBA and NBA have begun to wonder: is Stephen Curry the best three-point shooter? Both basketball associations responded to the question, and their answer was "let's test it." Both of the elite shooters agreed to compete against each other for the crown in this year's competition during NBA All-Star Weekend.

Also on Saturday, there is the AT&T Slam Dunk competition, which has been a very exciting event in the past. With some of the greatest players of all time facing off against each other, players will show off their elite athleticism and competition to see who makes the fans and the judges the happiest with their dunks.

Finally, on Sunday, there will be the 73rd annual All-Star Game, which has 24 of the best NBA players competing in a real basketball game. In the past couple of weeks, there has been voting for the all-stars. Voting from the fans makes up half of the votes, while the other half is made up of current players and a small group of media representatives. In the first round, most of the frontcourt picks were fan favorites and returning all-stars like LeBron, Kevin Durant, Nikola Jokic, Anthony Davis, Kawhi Leonard, and Paul George in the West, Giannis, Joel Embiid,

Jayson Tatum, Jimmy Butler, Jaylen Brown, and Bam Adebayo in the east. In the west, there are some picks that people were surprised to see, like Alperen Sengun, a 21-year-old leading the Houston Rockets at the center position, averaging 22 points, 9 rebounds, and 5 assists. Victor Wembanyama, who is only a rookie on the San Antonio Spurs, is performing well, averaging 20 points, 10 rebounds, and 3 assists. Another rookie, Chet Holmgren, was ruled unable to play during the 22-23 season, but came back strong, averaging 17 points, 7 rebounds, and 3 assists.

In the east, Mikal Bridges is averaging 13 points, 4 rebounds, and 2 assists, competing with Kristaps Porzingis, who is averaging 19 points, 6 rebounds, and 2 assists. In the Western Conference's guard category, there are also very clear favorites, which include Luka Doncic, Steph Curry, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, James Harden, Kyrie Irving, Ja Morant, and Devin Booker. The people who are not exactly favorites, but have great numbers in the voting, are De'aaron Fox, who has only

been an All-Star once, and Klay Thompson, who has not put numbers that are nearly as high as they have been when he was an all-star previously, making some people believe he is not all-star caliber. In the Eastern Conference's guard category, the favorites are Tyrese Haliburton, Trae Young, Damian Lillard, Donovan Mitchell, Lamelo Ball, Jrue Holiday, and Demar Derozan. Three players have never been selected for the All-Star Game in their career: Tyrese Maxey, Jalen Brunson, and Derrick White. Tyrese Maxey is averaging 25 points, 3 rebounds, and 7 assists while playing for the 76ers this year. Jalen Brunson is averaging 29 points, 4 rebounds, and 8 assists leading the New York Knicks this year. Derrick White has been averaging 14 points, 4 rebounds, and 3 assists for the Celtics. In the 2nd return, not many spots changed, only the bot-

tom three or four spots were rearranged, with no new additions. In the 3rd vote return, there was one addition to the western frontcourt, Domantas Sabonis, who is averaging 15 points, 10 rebounds, and 5 assists. No matter who becomes a starter, make sure to tune in to the events this weekend!



Heartbreak in Baltimore

The Baltimore Ravens 2023-24 Seasons Recap

Bo Omidiran
Staff Writer

The Baltimore Ravens played a total of 17 games this season; they won 13 and lost 4 of them. They finished as the first seed in the AFC, with their only losses coming against the Cleveland Browns, the Pittsburgh Steelers twice, and the Indianapolis Colts. Their last regular season game was against the Pittsburgh Steelers in which the game finished with

a score of 17 to 10, sending the Steelers to the playoffs.

With such a promising season, many Ravens fans were looking forward to the playoffs and hoping to make a run to the Super Bowl. The Ravens have won two Super Bowls in their short franchise history, and this year they were looking to win a third. The last time the Ravens reached the Super Bowl was in 2013 when they defeated the San Francisco 49ers, 34 to 31.

The Baltimore Ravens started

the postseason out strong after their first-round bye, beating the Houston Texans 34-10 in the NFL Division Round. Unfortunately, they lost to the Kansas City Chiefs 17-10 the following week in the NFL Conference Championships. A win against the Chiefs would have taken the Ravens to the Super Bowl. It was a tough loss for Baltimore since the game was played at home at M&T Bank Stadium and most people were expecting the Ravens to win. Unfortunate-

ly, things did not turn out the way most fans had hoped, but most fans remain optimistic about next year.



2024 NFL Pro Bowl

NFC Wins 64-59

Isaiah Johnson
Staff Writer

Well, here we are, we've made it to the end of another NFL season. The end of the NFL season means that the Pro Bowl Game, playoffs, and all pro teams have been finalized! This year, the Pro Bowl Game took place in Orlando, FL at Camping World Stadium on Sunday February, 4th. In addition to the game, there are mini games and other activities that test players'

skills throughout the week.

On Thursday February 1st, the NFL held their annual skills showdown, in which the players participated in various mini games and challenges to earn points for their respective conferences. The NFC led the AFC in total points and was winning before the flag football game on Sunday, February 4th. Winning in almost all categories, the NFC outmatched the AFC in everything but

kicker tic-tac-toe which was won by Baltimore Ravens kicker, Justin Tucker. This was his seventh appearance in the Pro Bowl in his 11-year career. Speaking of the Baltimore Ravens, they had seven total Pro Bowl nominations: MVP front runner, Lamar Jackson, Center Tyler Linderbaum, Linebacker duo Patrick Queen and Roquan Smith, 2nd year Safety Kyle Hamilton, and Defensive Tackle Justin Madibuike.

While this may seem like a lot, the 49ers were actually first in Pro Bowl nominations with nine total. Notable players include QB Brock Purdy, DE Nick Bosa, and Running Back Christian McCaffrey. While we won't get to see the 49ers players in action due to them making the Super Bowl, it is still interesting to see how the top teams in the NFL continue to produce talent.



Spring Sports Are Coming!

Tryout Information You Need to Know

Ryan Malinowski
Staff Writer

Interested in joining a spring sport this year? Tryouts for all spring sports start in just a couple of weeks on March 1st. The list of spring sports includes baseball, track and field, boys and girls lacrosse, softball, allied softball, and tennis. If you're interested in any of the spring sports options, be sure to attend tryouts or contact Mr. Stevenson, our Athletic & Activities Manager.

If you have any sport-specific questions, feel free to ask the coach about what you can do to prepare. Coach Gonzales (outdoor track) says, "We're looking for hardworking people who are disciplined, willing to put in the work, and people who push themselves." This attitude applies to every sport

this spring, so prepare to meet these expectations.

Preparation is important. First, it's important to have good grades to be eligible to participate in your sport. Eligibility is based on your second quarter grades, and you have to have a GPA of 2.0 or above with no more than one E. Equipment can be an important part of your sport, so it's smart to ask your coach what type of equipment you may need.

Good luck to all of our spring athletes, and go Scorpions!



Photo Cred: Kaiden Lee

Coaches:

Baseball - ben_silverman@hcpss.org

Boys Lacrosse - Bryan_Cole@hcpss.org

Girls Lacrosse - Jamie_Twardowicz@hcpss.org

Allied Softball - Nicole_Pickett@hcpss.org

Softball -

Tennis - Anthony_Felder@hcpss.org

Outdoor Track - Christopher_Brewington@hcpss.org & Renato_Gonzales@hcpss.org

Coaching Staff - troy_stevenson@hcpss.org

Introducing OM's newest team-Pom's

You can't spell Pom's without OM!

Victoria Williams
Editor-In-Chief

This year, OM welcomed a new team to the list of afterschool activities students can choose from. Introducing POMS, a dance team that incorporates different styles of dance such as jazz, hip hop, and modern. Pom's focuses on technique, as well as sharp and precise movements, as they practice dance routines, offering a unique and different style of performance.

While Howard County has several different Pom teams, including at Hammond, River Hill, and Wilde Lake, Oakland Mills has never had a POM team up until this past year. Captained by junior Rylee Finney and supervised by English teacher Mrs. Hall, POMS has many members as well as routines they hope to perform during this school year, namely at basketball games and pep rallies.

Starting your very own team is not easy, with many factors to consider and kinks to work out, but a key to dealing with it all is good leadership, so I sat down with Rylee and Mrs. Hall, and discussed all things Poms.

Rylee expressed to me how she wanted a team that could

allow all members to have fun and be a part of something bigger while offering opportunities for input and opinions. Rylee says this is an aspect that made her want to start a new team rather than just joining another one, saying, "When joining other teams, things are typically already established since it has been up and running for so many years, it doesn't give you the space and opportunity to be creative and for your opinions to fully be heard because they are so used to the system they already have." So, as they make decisions on music and dance moves, members can share their perspectives and bring their ideas to the table as they collaborate and listen to one another.

Although things seem to be smooth sailing now, that was not always the case. Initially, the team went through many setbacks including finding rehearsal space, performance times, and lack of

funds. Rylee said when the team was first getting started, there was no organization or structure, and with every inch the team was given, it felt as though they were pushed back another mile. She states, "It was not until Mrs. Hall came that they really felt like a team," as her arrival brought organization, structure, and a sense of unity to the group.

Moving forward, POMS hopes to significantly impact our school community. Mrs. Hall says she aims to accomplish a sense of team with a group of students who just like to dance, saying, "You may not be the best dancer in the world, but you just like to dance, and you want to be a part of something that incorporates cheering and spirit for Oakland Mills because it is all about having OM spirit and being able to show it in a way that best fits you." She also hopes someday soon, they can begin reaching out to elementary

and middle schools, giving them a chance to dance, have fun, and experience a positive side of high school. Getting them excited for high school, eliminating the stigma surrounding how stressful or awful it can be, and showing them the good side of high school.

As a former member of the team, I can attest to saying that Pommies are a welcoming, independent, and talented group of girls. By overcoming challenges, advocating for themselves, and showing up and showing out for every performance they have, they have truly made a mark on our school community. For anyone interested in joining the POM's team, do not be afraid to reach out to one of the many Pommies or Mrs. Hall herself, who will be more than willing to help you get on the team. Because they believe at the end of the day, they all make each other better and always hold each other accountable. "I think that is a good way to spend your high school years," says Mrs. Hall, "motivated, together, and held accountable. The Poms team is not just a dance team; it's a community within our school, and I am excited to witness the positive impact they will continue to have on Oakland Mills High School in the years to come."

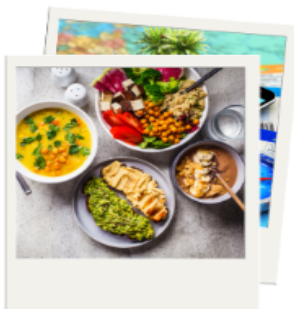


CAREER spotlight

CONSUMER SERVICES,
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

INTERESTED IN IT?

The Consumer Services, Hospitality & Tourism cluster can be broken into two different sections, Sales & Services and Hospitality & Tourism. This cluster is very people focused. You provide people with different products or services. There are so many different entry points, something for everyone!



Upcoming Days off

- Monday February 19th- Presidents' Day
- Wednesday March 13th- Wellness Halfday
- Monday March 25th to Monday April 1st- Spring Break

The Lonely and Single Person's Valentine's Playlist

For all those who are spending this February 14th alone

Kira Hatcher
Editorials Editor

February 14th is Valentine's Day, which means couples getting together for dates, giant flower bouquets that weigh more than a house cat, and an absurd amount of assorted chocolate. It also happens to be the loneliest day of the year for single people. For single people, Valentine's usually means watching couples, maybe a rom-com or two, and lots of self-love. Being alone on Valentine's Day is not always a bad thing, but if you are like me and enjoy listening to music to sob to on the 14th, this playlist is for you.

The first song is "My Love

Mine All Mine" by Mitski. Mitski is a must-have on any sad playlist; any of her songs is enough to make someone break down into full-on sobs. "My Love Mine All Mine," released in late 2023 on The Land Is Inhospitable and So Are We, quickly blew up all over social media. It became one of my personal favorites of hers, with its melancholy rhythm and lyrics that make you want to scream. "My Love Mine All Mine" is the perfect addition to this depressing playlist, bringing out the tears you may not have thought were possible.

"love." by wave to earth, is the second song on my playlist. wave to earth is a Korean band that has risen to great popular-

ity in the past year. You may have heard their song "seasons" on TikTok, with its beautiful background instrumental and meaningful lyrics. Even if you do not understand Korean, "love." will surely make you feel all the feels.

Another song on the playlist is "Falling Behind" by Laufey. Laufey has gained an ever-increasing following and rising popularity in the past year with her breakthrough single, "From The Start," another favorite of mine. The chorus lyrics hit hard with, "I'm only getting older/I've never had a shoulder to cry on/Someone to call mine/Everybody's falling in love/And I'm falling behind." When people around you are all falling in love and you're

just watching it happen, you can't help but feel helplessly alone.

Since I could not break down every single song, some of my favorites on the playlist include "If You Only Knew" by Yayyoung, "Pretty Boy" by the Neighbourhood, "For Lovers" by Lamp, "P.S. I LOVE YOU" by Paul Partohap, and "Cry" by Cigarettes After S*x. All of these songs have a special place in my heart, with lyrics that either make me want to cry or smile profoundly. Even if you may not be especially lonely this Valentine's Day, I think you will enjoy the playlist. And hey, you may not feel so alone after a listen! Happy Valentine's Day!



Class of 2024

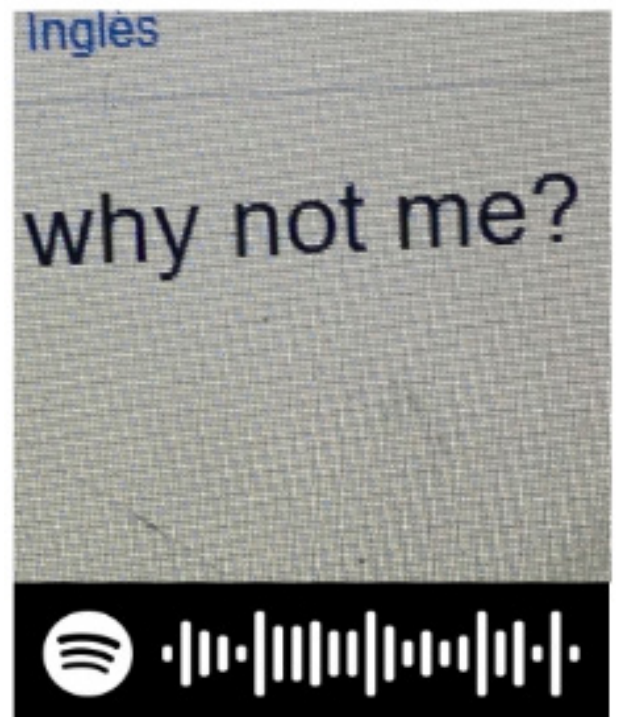
GRADUATION SPEAKER AUDITIONS

Please prepare a speech focusing on the theme of OM's 50 year anniversary.
See Ms. Moore (211) to sign up!

AUDITIONS ON FEBRUARY 28TH,
3:00 PM IN ROOM 211

a lonely person's valentines

Kira



Spotify code embedded!

Brain Games

February 14, 2024

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1. Black History
2. Valentine
3. Romance
4. Superbowl
5. Groundhog day

6. Cupid
7. Love
8. Friendship
9. Heart
10. Chocolates

11. Leap year
12. Voting
13. Gifts
14. Election

Note: Words can be backwards and diagonal.

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