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Coronavirus and Why It's Important to Have Valid Sources

By: Hannah Werle

Editor's Note: This article is the second and final part in a series. The information that follows is based off of what was provided in the previous installment. To read the first part, you can find it in the November 20th, 2020 issue.

Needlessly to say, Covid-19 is dangerous. According to *The New York Times*, there have been over 200,000 deaths in the United States alone because of coronavirus. Therefore, misinformation about the virus can be just as dangerous. The internet, social media, and the suchlike have their benefits, but these spaces allow for conspiracy theorists and naysayers to publish whatever they'd like and call it truth.



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While beginning my work on this article, I was given the opportunity to interview Dr. James Kravec. Dr. Kravec is a graduate of Youngstown State University and Northeast Ohio Medical University; he has been working at Mercy Health since 2005 and has been director of Mahoning County Public Health since 2016. Dr. Kravec is currently working as the Market Chief Clinical Officer of Mercy Health. On the topic of the dangers of inaccurate information he said, "This [misinformation regarding Covid-19] is true for all areas of science as well as all areas of life in general. With the internet and social media, we need to have reliable and accurate sources of information. The risk of using unreliable information is that knowledge sharing may be inaccurate and poor decisions may be based on this."

Staff Writer:
Riley Myers

Editor Staff:
Theresa Greathouse
Hannah Werle
Elle Airhart

Broadcast Staff:
Bri Callow
Ethan O'Connell
Elise McMaster
Sage Mason

Editor in Chief:
Mr. Backur

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continued... When it comes to Covid-19, poor decisions can lead to sickness, hospitalization and even death. Giving one's opinion is not the issue, but when "opinions" put people in danger, things need to be taken more seriously.

How Do I Know If My Source is Valid?

The answer is simpler than one would think. If you're online, look for websites in which the URL ends in ".org" or ".gov" because this means that the creator of this website is a verified organization or government source. Look for unbiased TV channels and radio stations. Don't get caught up in the drama and the politics, and instead listen to the scientists and the medical experts. These are the people with the data and the education to interpret the data and present advice that is in your best interest.

Another tip would be to avoid social media. Although in this day and age that can be hard, the people you follow, friend, and like will often have sources that are convenient and agreeable. Those traits do not make them factual. If you do find yourself wanting to use something you found on social media, fact check it first. Is the user a verified account? Is the user a scientist or medical expert? Does the user have trust worthy websites, articles, or other sources to back them up?

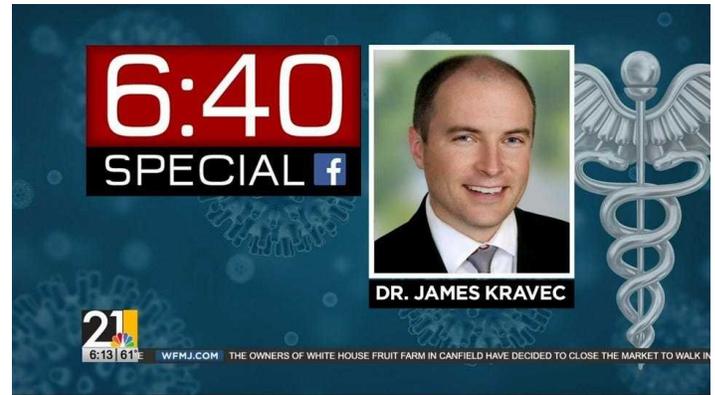
If someone comes to you in person with doubt or different opinions than you, that's okay. Hear them out. Even if you strongly disagree with them, it gives you a new perspective on the issue and maybe they'll have new information for you to consider. Does that mean you should believe whatever your friends, family, coworkers, etc. tell you? Well, no. Even in person, having valid sources behind ideas is important. You may trust the person talking to you, but they could easily be wrong... or right. If they present information that you hadn't heard before, research it. They may have a valid argument, or they may be getting the wrong info. When asked how he handles people who present doubt or controversial evidence to him, Dr. Kravec said, "I have been presented with many individuals who doubt the seriousness of Covid-19. I continue to present facts and I gain factual knowledge by continually reading on the topic and asking many questions of local and national experts. I do not think poorly of others who doubt this, but continue to give the best knowledge I have."

There are so many easy and simple ways to fact check a source. Spending an extra five minutes to assure that you are getting the correct information is a small price to pay.

In Conclusion

An astonishing world event and a devastating illness, Covid-19 is the perfect storm for misinformation. Now more than ever, the dangers of inaccurate information are unimaginable. The world is more interconnected than it has ever been. Misinformation spreads like wildfire and in the same manor, misinformation about Covid-19 and how it spreads can be deadly. According to experts in science and medicine, simple steps can be taken to slow the spread of Covid-19; wash your hands often, wear masks in public, and practice social distancing.

Please, double check everything. While fear is never the goal, wisdom is knowing that there are people who are willing to lie to sooth their own ideals. For more information regarding Covid-19 please visit [**The Ohio Department of Heath's website**](#) and the [**CDC website**](#). Stay healthy, McDonald!



Dr. James Kravec, who has been on multiple local news outlets in the time since our interview.

The Beauty of the Holidays

By: Riley Myers

Why do we make holidays so complicated? The holidays aren't meant to be this chaotic. They're supposed to be about spending time and having fun with friends and family. Nowadays, the holidays are so stressful and crazy and even more so in the middle of this pandemic. In a normal year it can be hard trying to find the perfect gifts or a perfect turkey, but with all the sales being so early and the postal system somewhat out of sorts, you run the risk of buying something for Christmas, but a week later finding something they would've liked even more.

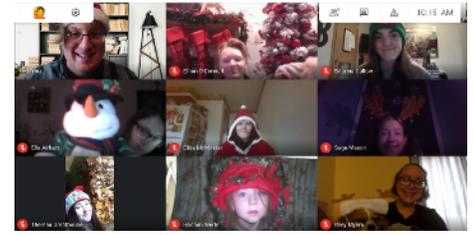
Junior Brooklyn Bokan said, "I think people put a lot of pressure on themselves whether it be because they want to make others happy and buy the best gift or because they see everyone else doing something and they don't want to be left out."

Seventh Grader Shane Myers agrees that finding the perfect gift is a stressful part of the season, "To give everyone the best gift, and to not disappoint anyone is a real challenge." Yes, people want to give the best gift possible to their loved ones. However, it's important to remember that it truly is the thought that often counts most. So, just relax and let yourself be at ease and enjoy the holidays with loved ones; watch it run as smooth as a smoothie.

But let's also get real- the holidays are the greatest time of the year. You have school off for a while, and snow starts to come down. Everybody's indulging in their favorites, from HOT CHOCOLATE to cozy PJ's. We just need to sit back and enjoy the turkey and Christmas songs with our family and pets. The holidays shouldn't be as stressful as everybody makes it out to be. Put that tree up with some colors, and make those sugar cookies.

When asked about her favorite holiday song, Brooklyn replied, "My favorite Christmas song is the *Glee* version of 'Jingle Bell Rock' because it's the song that my friend Sage and I used to choreograph a Christmas dance for the Cheerleaders."

See, we don't have to make holidays so complicated. We need to enjoy the time we have with our families and friends. Share the holidays with people that need someone. Be giving and enjoy the life that we have. Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year! We hope you have a fabulous holiday season.



The Journalism class dressing up for the jolly good ole holidays.

Photo Credit: Mr. Backur

McDonald, Briefly

By: Theresa Greathouse



Congratulations to our selected district golf team members Caleb Domitrovich, Michael Porter, and Anthony Ragazzino. Great job this year guys!

Students eligible to join NHS recently received their invitation to apply from Mrs. Ross. Students who filled out the form and turned it in should hear soon about their acceptance into National Honor Society. Good luck to everyone who applied!



Winter Sports Have Come

By: Elle Airhart

Editor's Note: This article was written prior to the county health department's decision to close schools. We felt it was worth celebrating winter sports and hope to see their return in the new year.



MHS bowling team taking their turn at the pins. Photo Credit: 2019 - 2020 season

Winter has come and the sports seasons are blowing in quickly. Fall sports did their best and completed their seasons on high notes but now it is time for a whole new symphony. A bowling and basketball symphony full of the clattering of pins and the whooshes of basketballs flying through nets. Covid is still a problem, but teams and coaches are adapting well to the pandemic and minimizing the spread as much as they can while also having the fun seasons that they all want. For example, temperatures are being taken before every game and practice to make sure everyone has a safe season.

You all probably heard that bowling sign-ups have come and gone. Something they did different because of the pandemic was perform tryouts for the team. There will be 6 members on the boys Varsity team along with a second Reserves team. This is to lessen the amount of exposure and follow the state's guidelines while still being able to have the sports that we love to participate and watch.

The team has also lost the crowd that gathers to watch their matches due to Covid guidelines. Despite this let down, the boys bowling team plans to work as hard as last year and put on a show, even if many won't see it in action.

Senior Danny Barker said, "Everyone is always setting goals to better themselves. Everyone tends to accomplish their goals when they set them on this team and I feel we will do fine this year." He added, "Our team always is a group of people who reach for the top no matter the issue. We do this in a serious manner while having as much fun as possible." Clearly, the team isn't letting anything slow them down and having the best season they can.

The girls bowling team will follow the same guidelines as their male counterparts. They will wear masks as often as possible and wash their hands at every turn among the other rules. They have two teams as well. Along with the hand washing, they will understandingly work around the loss of their audience.

Along with bowling, the basketball seasons have started also. Of course, Covid affects this sport as well, leaving a minimal amount of spectators and people allowed in the gym during the game. The number of spectators have been limited and the requirement of washing hands and wearing masks is always reminded for the teams during games and practices.

The girls' team have had less time to practice in the gym because of the pandemic, which is understandable. However, they still plan to reach their goal. After last year's post-season defeat, they plan on redeeming themselves at Regionals. The girls are pumped to start their season and show that they won't back down. Senior Brooke Lewis says, "We have very high expectations for ourselves after coming off of a tough loss at Regionals last year. We have positive mindsets going into this season and we think of our goals before every practice, making us constantly work our hardest." Watch out for when our Lady Devils rock the court every chance they get.

The boys team also plan to take charge on the court this year. They aren't letting the new precautions get to them. They plan to follow the guidelines like the rest of the sports teams this year and still prepare to dominate like they did last year. While they can't feed off of the crowd like they usually do, they still plan to exceed the expectations of last season.

Get ready MHS, our devils are preparing for their best seasons yet.



MHS boys basketball team heading down court. Photo Credit: 2019 - 2020 season

Editorial: The War on Adjectives **By: Hannah Werle**

What a wild ride 2020 has been! On the twelfth day of 2020, this awful year gave to me: 12 murder hornets, 11 hours of Tik Tok, 10 online classes, 9 lockdowns, 8 election lawsuits, 700 protests, 6 quarantines, 5 Grammys (for Billie Eilish), 4 Oscars for Parasite, World War 3 myths, 2 Taylor Swift albums, and 1 impeachment. Some of those things feel like 15 years ago, not just in January. As we impatiently wait for this year to end, we can reflect on how this year has exposed this nation's system of information sharing. Through all of these events, serious or not, there has been constant news coverage. Depending on where you look, each thing listed in my original piece "12 Years of 2020"©, is covered in a different way. This is where the whole, "War on Adjectives" idea comes in.

First, let's define what an adjective is: "a word or phrase naming an attribute, added to or grammatically related to a noun to modify or describe it" (Dictionary.com). When used in an objective fashion, adjectives can be helpful, modifying words that add to a reader's understanding of the number and description of an object. However, adjectives are rarely as objective as we think they are. Technically the issue isn't really with the words themselves, but rather how we use them. Reporting, information sharing, and the suchlike are very important parts of a society; there's a reason why reporting is referred to as the fourth estate. The issue comes when reporters use these adjectives to make their readers think of a topic as "good" or "bad", versus just simple fact.



Now, there's nothing wrong with sharing an opinion at a personal level, but when someone presents their opinion as fact or tries to make their audience feel guilty for disagreeing with them, that opinion sharing can begin to cross a line. On a small level, this form of bias isn't particularly hurtful, but if those participating in biased reporting have a larger platform--magazines, celebrities, companies--it can be easy for someone to believe that what's being shared is the truth.

We've all seen the wildly differing reports from channels like Fox News versus CNN. Depending on who reports the most convenient thing, the people will flock to that source. These opposing stories can cause arguments and disputes even among the most well educated people.



So how do we combat--pun intended--this use of biased reporting? Well, we need to focus more on the actual fact than the emotion that may come from an event. Take it back to tenth grade argumentative writing. Use a little less pathos (emotion) and a little more logos (logic). No matter how one feels about the situation, placing a measure of "good or evil" on it is exactly what makes one's reporting biased. The elimination of subjective wording from one's writing can be hard, but in the the long run, it might contribute to a better system of information sharing as a whole.

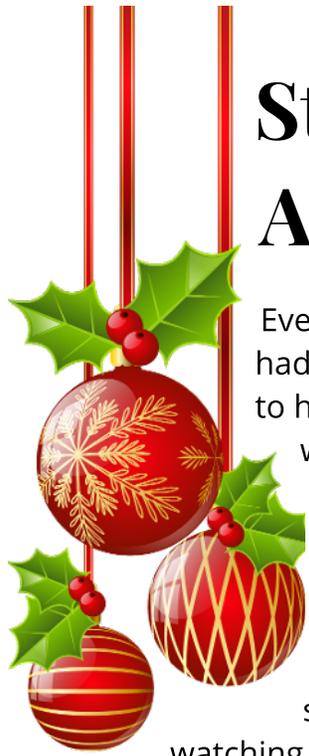
Movie Review- Disney's *A Christmas Carol* **By: Riley Myers**



There was a man that hated Christmas. He was mean and grumpy. He was greedy and took from others, and never gave back. He was so mean that nobody wanted to be around him and he was all alone. In the classic tale of *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge was meaner than usual when Christmas Eve came around the corner. He would say, "Bah humbug" every time somebody wished him a Merry Christmas. As the movie develops, three ghosts visit him and the audience gets answers to questions about why he was so mean and why he doesn't have a family.

My opinion on the Disney version of *A Christmas Carol* is that I think that it could be a better Christmas movie, but I'm not complaining here. I think that the moral of the story is great, but they could have made the movie a little bit more interesting. It was sad at some parts like how Tiny Tim was sick and Scrooge was so wrapped up in his ego that he didn't care about the poor little guy. I think that he deserved what he got during the movie.

Overall, I really enjoyed the whole purpose of the movie. It teaches you a lot about forgiveness and to not be so greedy. But it also teaches you about the Spirit of Christmas (literally). I feel like this movie was made to scare kids with the ghost to scare them into not being so mean to others on Christmas Day. It's rated G, so it is for all ages. Sit down, have a cup of Joe, and enjoy that movie with your family. Why are you still reading... go on. **The Villager**, December 18, 2020 page 5



Student Poll-Favorite Holiday Activity

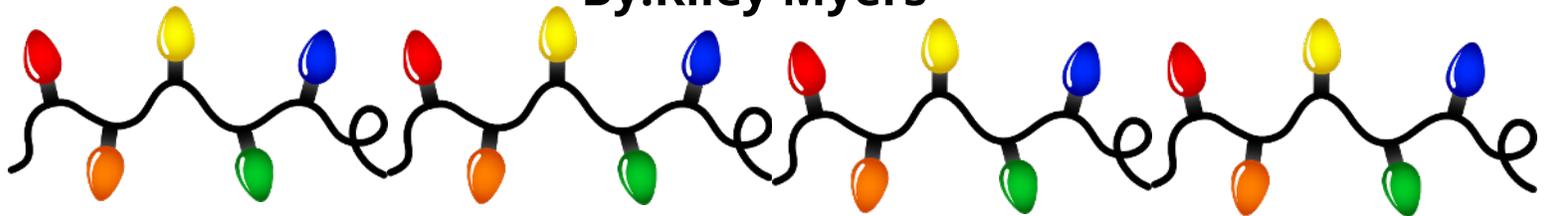
By: Bri Callow

Even though this holiday season has had a rough start, there are still ways to have fun. I asked 23 MHS students what they are doing for fun this season. Coming in first for our poll was looking at Christmas lights. It's a fun and safe activity that you can do from the comfort of your own car. In second place with 6 votes was watching Christmas movies. You don't even have to leave your home to enjoy this holiday activity. Rounding out the last votes were shopping with 3 votes and ice skating with 2 votes. No matter which activities you choose this holiday season be sure to stay safe and wear your mask. Happy Holidays MHS!

Looking at Christmas Lights	12
Watching Christmas Movies	6
Shopping	3
Ice Skating	2

Top 10 Christmas Gifts

By: Riley Myers



1. Socks- Ok, let's get real. Socks are a last minute gift or they just couldn't think of anything else.
2. Candy- I just got candy two months ago for Halloween.
3. An exercise machine- WOW! That's just rude.
4. PJ's- We all know that we're gonna wear them once, and then they're gonna sit in our dresser.
5. Shoes- The one pair you *didn't* ask for.
6. Grandma's ugly Christmas sweater- One word for you- itchy
7. Something that is homemade- It's very thoughtful and something to look back on for the good memories.
8. Food- Nobody would ever give that up.
9. Something that you've been asking for for two months straight.
10. The best gift out of the whole season is to have your family and pets together to enjoy the happy times.



December 18 – January 18 Calendar

By: Elle Airhart

December Birthdays:

December 18: Billie Eilish's Birthday - Billie Eilish is turning 19!

December 23: Finn Wolfhard's Birthday - *Insert *Stranger Things* theme song here*

December 28: Stan Lee's Birthday - Get your tissues and Marvel movie marathon ready!



Holidays:

December 24: Christmas Eve

December 25: Christmas Day

December 26: Kwanzaa

December 31: New Year's Eve

The Weird Ones:

December 19: Hard Candy Day - Grandmas! Where you at?

December 21: Winter Solstice - The date is really only important if you're in a fiction novel with a deadline.

December 22: National Cookie Exchange Day - Ooh, this sounds like fun--nevermind Covid.

December 30: National Bacon Day - Sorry piggies! The holiday says it must be done.



Holidays:

January 1: New Year's Day - Alright, you can throw that resolutions list in the trash now.



January Birthdays:

January 3: J.R.R Tolkien's Birthday - Here you go *Lord of The Rings* fans.

January 11: Alexander Hamilton's Birthday - "ALEXaNdEr HaMiLTon (Hamilton)"

January 15: Martin Luther King's Birthday - I don't have a witty comment about this peaceful human.

January 17: Steve Harvey's Birthday - Everyone's favorite Family Feud host is getting older!



The Weird Ones:

January 4: National Thank God It's Monday Day - Said no one ever!

January 6: National Cuddle-Up Day - I will now celebrate this holiday religiously

January 10: National Houseplant Appreciation Day - Go on, give it a hug. You know you wanna.

January 16: National Nothing Day - That's ironic.

January 18: Blue Monday - That's every Monday. Get your facts straight.



Backpage Pics

By: Hannah Werle

Photo Credit:
Savanah Jones,
Lucy Wolford,
Ethan O'Connell,
Elle Airhart, Jack
Ague, Theresa
Greathouse

