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By: Lyric Culp

Sprinting Past the Competition

With spring sports in full swing, we have all of our teams in action and they have already competed in a few games and meets. It's still early in the season, so each team is hungry to keep their streaks alive as conference play begins.

Our very own varsity baseball team has been bringing home victories since the beginning of their season. Currently, the team stands first in the MVAC scarlett tier with an overall record of 7-2 (5-1 in conference play). Their only losses came from the Salem Quakers and the Jackson-Milton Blue Jays. The Blue Devils will host the Springfield Tigers on April 18th.



Freshman Joey Cappuzzello throwing his first pitch against Jackson-Milton

The varsity softball team is off to a great start with a record of 8-1, 5-0 in the MVAC making them 1st in the conference. They played an abundance of teams such as Crestview, Jackson-Milton, and Sebring. They look to remain undefeated in the conference as they play Springfield on April 18th.

When asked how she feels about the team's performance so far and heading into some tough conference play, Olivia Colarich replied, "We're playing really well. We have new players joining and we play well together. I'm excited for our upcoming games."

The varsity track and field team has competed in 3 meets, placing in all of them. Currently, they are preparing for the Bulldog Invitational on April 15th and will be hosting their second meet of the season with teams such as Western Reserve, Garfield, and Sebring on April 18th.

The junior high track team has competed in three local meets so far, at Newton Falls, Girard, and hosting one of their own. The team is still getting used to the swing of things and recently placed third at the McDonald MVAC meet.

When asked about her personal performances so far this season, 8th grader Hannah Bishop replied, "It's my first season but I feel like I'm doing good so far and I'm happy with my times."

In This Issue	
Sprinting Past the Competition	1
Editorial: Challenge Yourself	2
Prom	3
Game Review: Little Nightmares 2	4
Game Review continued... Oreo Dirt Cake Recipe	5
Weird History: The Possessions of Loudun	6
Music Review: OK ORCHESTRA	7
Backpage Pics	8

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Editorial: Challenge Yourself

By: Veda Agler

Challenging yourself and pushing yourself to be the best person you can be is very important to growing up. Allowing yourself to settle and not pushing yourself to do better will never help oneself grow. Making life difficult is just as important as continuing to go at the same pace as others.

By forcing yourself to force challenges and overcome them you will grow so much. For example, continuing to do the same thing in math class and not challenging yourself to study and really learn the subject is only setting yourself back. Setting yourself to a comfortable lifestyle shouldn't be normalized.



By normalizing and not challenging yourself you won't continue to learn new things in life, and in school. Then you can start to see many people surpass you and become better than you in many things. An example of this is when a runner proceeds to run ten or more miles every day and another runner proceeds to only run five. The runner going beyond the ten miles will start to have more improvement and start to become a faster runner than the one running five miles.

Pushing yourself more and more every day helps you start to see the improvement and the dedication it takes to become a better version of yourself. Although the improvement of pushing yourself may take time and you may not see results every day, by challenging yourself every day you will soon start to see the amazing results that can come from this.

Challenging yourself doesn't mean doing the most extraordinary things, but doing

something so little can greatly impact your life. Pushing yourself to say hello to someone new every day, maybe going for a walk around the block, or even studying a subject you struggle with is challenging yourself to become better.



Doing little challenges every day can really improve you and how you view yourself and the world. Showing yourself you shouldn't settle for something because it's easy and settling for something that's more challenging can really show how strong you are. Continue to push yourself to become a better person to make yourself proud of you.



Prom



By: Meegan Dockery

As prom approaches, girls grab dresses while guys get their tuxes. Prom is a right of passage and many juniors and seniors have enjoyed the event throughout the years.

This year the prom will be held at the Ciminero's Banquet Center on April 28 and the theme for is "Cloud Nine". With an elegant backdrop and the company of the junior and senior class, Prom 2023 will surely be a hit.



Nolan Agler and his date are ready for prom '22 and bringing bigger better looks for '23 prom.

To reign over the '23 prom, our new prom court has been selected. Representing the boys are Danny Gray, Shane Stoops, Joey Skowron, Sammy Gibbons, and Caleb Domitrovich. Representing the girls, the new prom queen will either be Mirryn Hobbs, Alivia Morrison, Maria Rasile, Megan Zajack, or Megan Hipple. Our new king and queen will be taking over for last year's winners Ryan Henry and Lea Gabrelcik. Congratulations to the 2023 McDonald High School Prom Court!

Senior Bria Rupe says, "I am most excited to be able to wear my dress and eat all of the sweets." Between cookies, cakes, and pastries, baked goods are definitely a fan favorite when it comes to prom foods.

Senior Jack Leskovac says, "I remember having the time of my life dancing with all my friends and partying it up and I hope this year is just as fun." Everyone knows dancing is the most important part of prom, even though it's usually just jumping up and down. Jack's experience is one that is shared by many and with such a great group of students, is sure to be the same.

Senior Nolan Agler says their fondest memory from last year's prom was first walking in and seeing the Shrek Cookies. With last year's prom having a sprinkle of the movie *Shrek* twisted in, the student body is extremely excited to see what the juniors and student council bring to the table. The theme of prom always has a major influence on everything and the character cookies of '22 definitely added a flare to the dance. This year's prom has a lot to live up to!

To help bring this dance together and make it an enjoyable time for everyone the juniors have spent a lot of time and sweat on creating the vision. The junior prom planning committee is responsible for making decorations, setting up the hall, and fundraising. This year some of the members included Bri McCombs, Megan Klockner, and Mariah Bregar.

This year's dance is set to be a blast so make sure to come out and have a good time!



The 2023 Prom Court gathers for a photo. Photo Credit: Mrs. Mason

Game Review -- Little Nightmares 2

By: Adam Parker

The sequel to their hit-game *Little Nightmares*, *Little Nightmares 2* was developed by indie developer Tarsier Studios and published in 2021 by Bandai Namco. The game follows a young boy known as 'Mono' as he makes his way through The Pale City, whilst pursued by horrific monsters of enormous size as he tries to survive and perhaps find sanctuary.



Just like its predecessor, *Little Nightmares 2* follows a linear story line, making way through another 5 unique chapters –The Wilderness, The School, The Hospital, The Pale City, and The Signal Tower, each occupied by a new supply of freakish threats. The Wilderness is occupied by The Hunter, in The School you have to avoid The Teacher and The Bullies, The Hospital has The Doctor and his "patients", and throughout The Pale City you're pursued by the mysterious Thin Man.

Unlike the first game, however, you're not alone. Somewhere near the middle of the first chapter you run into Six, the main character from the first *Little Nightmares*, who becomes your companion throughout most of the game. She mostly helps with puzzles, giving boosts to reach high up ledges and pulling levers, but at the end of the game, in The Signal Tower, we see a twisted, gangly version of Six who pursues you during that final chapter of the game, until the player frees her from whatever the source of this transformation is.

That ties in with my biggest complaint with the game, however. There's clearly a much deeper story than what we see happening in the game's actual gameplay, but it's very unclear what that is. This was also a factor in the first game, but it was so contained that the player could tell that they had the pieces and could certainly puzzle them together and feel like you've a complete narrative. *Little Nightmares 2*, though, introduces us to so much so fast and ends with an absolutely bonkers twist that just winds up confusing and convoluting the previous narrative retroactively.

Now, I usually wouldn't complain about this, I'm well used to convoluted storylines by now, but it was confirmed not long after the game's release that Tarsier was no longer working with Bandai Namco and that *Little Nightmares 2* would be the last in the series, meaning these questions raised –like why is the Thin Man pursuing us, what is The Signal Tower, and even just what happened to the world?– will unfortunately likely never have resolute answers.

On a much more positive note, however, *Little Nightmares 2* continues the first game's trend of very interesting, Dr. Seuss-like visuals, but now taking it to a much more dystopian extreme. It's made very clear through the environments that something happened, that something broke the world, and despite it not being clear what, it does add a very interesting ambiance to the game's world. Also, on the notion of ambiance, the game's soundtrack, in my opinion, is a great improvement to the original. *Little Nightmares's* soundtrack in the first game, though not bad, wasn't much to write home about. The second game, however, brings back some of the more iconic tracks from the original, like a rerecorded version of the main theme and the leitmotif from prison toys, as well as introducing new tracks like "Signal Interference" to the mix.

Little Nightmares 2, despite my issues with parts of the story, is still a refreshing take on indie horror, just like the one before, which takes what was great about the first game and in a lot of instances improves upon them too.

Oreo Dirt Cake Recipe

By: Annabelle Smith

1/4 cup of softened margarine

8 ounces of softened cream cheese

1 cup of sifted powdered sugar

3 1/2 cup of milk

3 1/2 ounces of instant vanilla pudding

12 ounces of cool whip

20 ounces of crushed oreo cookies

1 pack of gummi worms

Mix the margarine, cream cheese, and powdered sugar together in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix milk, vanilla pudding, and the cool whip. After mixing, combine both mixtures. Put $\frac{1}{3}$ of the crushed oreo cookies at the bottom of a pot and then add $\frac{1}{2}$ of the mixture. Add another $\frac{1}{3}$ of the oreo crumbs to the top and then fill the rest with mixture. Put the remaining oreo crumbs at the top. Refrigerate overnight. Before serving, add the gummi worms to the top of the cake.



This recipe was one of my grandmother's, and she made it for me multiple times. She used to serve it in small unused flowering pots and a small plastic shovel to make it fun. Although it may not be one of the prettiest cakes, it is definitely a fun one. It also tastes really good. I mean, who doesn't like Oreos and vanilla pudding?

Weird History -- The Possessions of Loudun

By: Adam Parker

The Possessions of Loudun, known in French as the "Possessed of Loudun Affair", was an infamous series of witchcraft trials that took place in Loudun, a kingdom of France, in 1634. After the demolition of the walls around Loudun, in an attempt by the Crown to centralize French power, and after an outbreak of plague in Loudun cost many lives, an anxious and apprehensive atmosphere divided the people of Loudun, leading to a discourse that exasperated the issues caused by these "possessions".

In 1626 the Ursuline convent of nuns was opened in Loudun and in 1632 prioress Jeanne des Agnes was in charge of the convent's seventeen nuns. Five months after the outbreak of plague in 1632, the possessions began. Nuns began reporting visions of their recently deceased confessor, Father Moussant, and a series of exorcisms was called for.

The nuns claimed the demon Asmodai was behind the possessions, sent to commit evil and impudent acts. According to the British Psychological Society, in 1634 Urbain Grandier, a priest, was found guilty of sorcery and burned at the stake. The exorcisms and possessions, however, continued. In his summary of the Loudun possessions, author Moshe Sluhovsky reports that these displays continued until 1637. Eventually, though, investigations would come to an end, for a few possible reasons.

The most common answer is that Richelieu, the lead investigator, simply believed he had achieved his initial goal and terminated his investigation, though other sources suggest it was actually Jeanne des Anges who had terminated the investigations, allegedly having freed the convent from demonic possessions.

There have been a slew of post-historical analyses of the possessions of Loudun. English author John Locke wrote, "The story of the nuns of Loudun possessed, was nothing but a contrivance of Cardinal Richelieu to destroy Grandier, a man he suspected to have wrote a book against him, who was condemned for witchcraft in the case, and burnt for it. The scene was managed by the Capuchins, and the nuns played their tricks well, but all was a cheat."

His interpretation that the so-called "demonic possessions" were all a ruse seems to be the common conclusion drawn by a variety of sources, such as Agénor de Gasparin and Augustin Calmet, though the exact specifics tend to vary.

Despite this, however, the possessions of Loudun continue to be one of the more infamous examples of witchcraft and witch trials in Europe and especially France, being referenced or adapted in many musicals and plays in the following centuries since.



Portrait of Grandier

Music Review: OK ORCHESTRA

By: Annabelle Smith



The album *OK ORCHESTRA* was released in March of 2021 by the band named AJR. This indie pop album is AJR's ninth album that they have produced. The band AJR consists of three brothers: Adam Metzger, Jack Metzger, and Ryan Metzger. The oldest brother is Adam while the youngest is Jack. Their first initials combined form the name AJR.

The band has released many albums including *Neotheater*, *The Click*, and *What Everyone's Thinking*. Their most recent album, *OK ORCHESTRA*, has some popular songs like "Bang!", "World's Smallest Violin", and "Adventure is Out There".

Before reviewing this album, I had only heard the song "World's Smallest Violin" because of its regular use on social media. The song really stuck with me due to its happy-go-lucky tone mixed with its more deep and meaningful lyrics. The song is about how, although others may have it worse, that doesn't take away from other people's struggles. It uses the idea of playing a violin as symbolism for someone venting and talking about their feelings and says that even the smallest issues need to be heard.

In this album, it is obvious that one of AJR's strengths is their use of musical instruments. This can be seen in songs like "Bummerland", "Bang!", and "3 O'Clock Things". They use various instruments to create wonderful music that flows really well.

The first song on the album, "OK Overture", is definitely not my favorite. The song is somewhat of a preview for the rest of the album, as it plays a small section of each song before you actually listen to them. At first glance it seems like a great idea, but there is just a lot going on and it is hard to keep track of what is going on when it skips from one song to another. "The Trick" is definitely one of the worst songs on the album. It's pretty weird and just overall not fun to listen to. Other songs like "Humpty Dumpty" and "My Play" were nothing special and were just kind of boring in my opinion.

I would rate this album 5/10. The album has about three good songs on it, but besides that, it wasn't that great. The album was just really weird and not something I would want on my playlist.



BACK PAGE PICS

BY: JASMINE COOTS

