

The
PANTHER
PERSPECTIVE

NOVEMBER
2024



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**ALICE
IN
WONDERLAND**

WILMOT UNION HIGH SCHOOL
LANCE HASS AUDITORIUM

Thursday, Nov. 7th
7:00 pm

Friday, Nov 8th
7:00 pm

Saturday, Nov 9th
7:00 pm

Sunday, Nov 10th

Tickets here!



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GOING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE: ALL ABOUT THE FALL PLAY



By Jacqueline Rea

This November, let's all go down the rabbit hole as this year's fall play is *Alice in Wonderland*. A story about a young girl who finds herself immersed in a fantastical, wacky land

Wilmot's Theater Department has been working hard on their performance. From costumes and lighting to scene changes, they have put lots of effort into this wonderful play for their audience to enjoy

"This play isn't like your traditional play. It's full of comedy, heartfelt moments, and mystery. Everyone has put so much effort into this performance and I hope everyone enjoys it," said senior Maya Scheel, who plays Alice in two shows.

"If I had to tell the audience anything it would be to come to see the show and see all the hard work everyone has put into it," said senior Kayden Clark, the stage manager.

When speaking with the director of this play, Ms. Ivan, she gave us an inside look on

how she had chosen *Alice in Wonderland* to be this year's fall play, which contrasts this year's upcoming rebellious musical, *Grease*.

"I picked *Alice in Wonderland* because I knew I was going to be doing *Grease* and I wanted to do something kid-friendly. I also wanted a show with lots of fun characters and where we could make bright, beautiful costumes."

But choosing her cast did not come as easy as choosing a play or having a crew to work with. Ms. Ivan faced some struggles when it came to choosing her talented cast.

"It is always difficult to cast a show because Wilmot has a lot of talent. I try to find roles for everybody but the stinky part is I always know I hurt some feelings and that is not a fun part of my job. I will usually allow anybody to be a part of the crew because these are a cool group of people to hang out with and become friends... but I eventually have to limit the number of crew members I have."

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FALL PLAY

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Apart from Ms. Ivan, Kayden Clark, Bella Smits, and Maya Scheel shared what they've enjoyed so far and what they feel is the most rewarding part while working on this play

"My favorite moment during rehearsals is when we're all on stage and a funny mistake happens and everyone just laughs and laughs together," said Scheel.

"The most rewarding part of being backstage is the experience and learning more about some of the inner workings of the theater," Clark said. "My favorite moment of rehearsals has to be the intercom convos between crew and tech."

"Getting to know the new freshmen and seeing how talented they are. I know it's not one moment but there have been many times that they've impressed me," Smits expressed.



The Wilmot Union High School theater department is excited to perform *Alice in Wonderland* as this year's fall play, where the audience will be introduced to fun characters and a beautiful set. Viewers will get to see the start of new performers and soon say goodbye to the senior cast and crew. Come out to watch the play and show some support. Wondering where to get a ticket? Ms. Ivan has all of the information

"First of all, we are selling tickets online! You get to choose your seat ahead of time and you won't have to wait in long lines to buy tickets. Second of all, some of our shows are double cast so if you are looking to see the show for a specific person, make sure you know when they are performing! Lastly, I just want people to know this show is going to be magical and I hope they find the time to come and see it."

Alice In Wonderland will be performed Thursday, November 7th through Sunday, November 10th.

GREASE is the word

Auditions for the Spring Musical "Grease" will be held on November 13th and 14th. If you are interested, join the Google Classroom with Classroom Code: 5whkd2m



MATH DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT



by Maddie Neubauer

Mr. Sepnafski is one of Wilmot's many math teachers, who shared his insights about the math department.

Mr. Sepnafski teaches Financial Algebra, Honors Algebra 2, and Algebra 2. He shared how he makes math engaging for students who might find it challenging.

"I start with helping the student start the problem at their level of understanding and then try to help them make connections to prior knowledge and interests."

Mr. Sepnafski shared how he incorporates real-world applications of math into his lessons.

"It depends on the lesson, but within each unit we incorporate a fictitious scenario that can be applied to the real world."

Senior Alyssa Korus experienced an "aha!" moment in math this year, in Mrs. Glover's AP Calculus class.

"Just last week, Mrs. Glover was teaching

our AP Calculus class about derivatives. It was a weeklong lesson that was structured to make us work with the concept of derivatives before even knowing exactly what they are. By the end of the week I was beginning to get frustrated because I didn't understand what a derivative was, and Mrs. Glover asked me to give her a few minutes. We continued with the lesson, and when we got to the notes at the end she gave us the textbook definition of a derivative. I audibly gasped because what she said had connected all of the dots that had previously been scrambled in my head. I would say that was an "aha!" moment."

Math may not be a favorite subject for some students but it is a requirement to take during your high school career, so the math department does its best to make math engaging for students so they can get the best grade possible.

Meal Planning on a Budget

By Aiden Spenner



Senior Darren Stephens showcasing the burger his group created for the \$10 meal on a budget project in culinary class

Ms. Jacobson, Wilmot's culinary arts teacher added a realistic-level project to her curriculum this year.

The plan was to create a ten-dollar meal plan with a group called "Meal On a Budget."

"You have to use ten dollars to make a meal, and the challenge is not to go over ten dollars for a family of four."

Ms. Jacobson explained how she was going to set up the project.

"The plan is to create a budget meal that everyone would enjoy, or at least try for a family of four, trying not to go over ten dollars."

We asked if there were any other limitations on the project other than a ten-dollar budget.

"The limit other than the ten dollars would also be how much everything is if it will be good or not and how long it would take to make the food."

Senior Lyzzi Oviedo shared that her group took a creative twist on an old favorite.

"We created sliders on Hawaiian rolls. It was yummy, but instead of patties it was more like sloppy joes," Oviedo stated.

The project wasn't without its challenges.

"The hardest part was figuring out what we were going to make that would taste good, but be under \$10 because the cost of everything is so expensive," said Oviedo.

This was Jacobsen's very first time doing this type of project, and she had never done anything like it before so it was a learning experience for everyone.

"We learned that we could make a lot of good food without having to spend a lot of money," said Oviedo about her biggest takeaway.

Making dinner on a budget is a life-long skill that will always be useful for the students who participated in the activity.

A GLIMPSE INTO HISTORY (THE DEPARTMENT, THAT IS...)

A BRIEF LOOK AT SOME OF THE
SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT AND
WHAT THEY'RE UP TO THIS YEAR

BY ELIZABETH SAFTIG

Last week members of the Social Studies department shared new and upcoming topics in this year's history lessons and some of their favorite historical topics

W.U.H.S.'s Psychology teacher, Ms. White, was eager to share about what topics the Psychology students are learning more about this semester.

"This year I plan on discussing and learning more about personality," stated White.

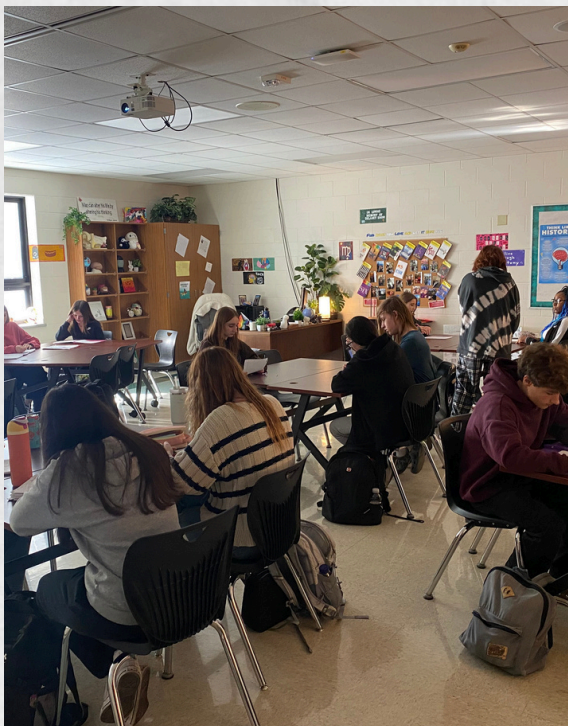
In room 246, Mr. Kochan is very passionate about some of his favorite history topics.

"One historical figure I would like to meet would be Abraham Lincoln, and one historical event I would like to witness would probably be the Moon Landing.

Finally on to the veteran of the social studies department, Mr. Bruton, and he shared what motivates him to be an awesome teacher.

"I think what motivates me the most is the students, and trying to make and help them get better at their learning."

Next month we'll dive deeper and showcase and learn more about the teachers who make up the social studies department.



Students in Ms. White's 6th hour World History work collaboratively to complete their assignments



Mr. Kochan's wishes combined: Abraham Lincoln and the moon landing.

TALKING ELA WITH MS. KERKMAN

BY ABIGAIL JUREY



Ms. Kerkman is one of Wilmot's many English teachers, who shared her insight about the English department.

Ms. Kerkman shares her advice she would give to students who are looking to improve their skills in English.

"Reading books in class when needed, writing more notes making sure they are clear and easy to understand. Following with making sure they are doing all of their work including formatives, and asking questions or for help when needed."

Ms. Kerkman shares her opinion on how the school community can better support the English department.

"The school community can better support the English department by, lowering class sizes so more students can get the grades they deserve with the learning they deserve. The school community can also supply more books students can use to write notes within the book, without having to worry about getting in trouble."

Ms. Kerkman shares how she encourages student participation and encouragement in discussions.

"I like to make comfortable involvement with my students, I don't like to make them feel uncomfortable. I have them trust value and respect engagement with constant feedback, that way I ensure they are always heard and understand the topic we are discussing."

English may not be interesting for some students but it is a requirement to take, so the English department does their best to make English engaging for students so they can get the best grade possible.



Check Out a Good Book!

The Past and Other Things That Should Stay Buried by David Hutchinson. 2019, Simon Pulse. Dino keeps it together when he begins the task of preparing his best friend, July, for her funeral. But then he REALLY needs to keep it together when she sits up and asks what's going on! Nothing can be more confusing (and smelly!) hanging out with your dead best friend and trying to figure out what's going on. You'll laugh your way through this one!

Q&A WITH MS. CHERNOUSKI

BY AARON BERGUM



Question: What sparked your interest in science and how has it evolved over time?

Answer: I have always loved learning more about how the world works--and it became even more interesting as I got to college and learned more depth about everything.

Question: Can you describe a specific scientific experiment or project that you found especially intriguing or challenging?

Answer: One of my favorite classes in college was my anatomy course. It was focused on the evolution of anatomical structures across vertebrate groups. For this class, we dissected a cat and a shark over multiple weeks

Question: How do you think science education could be improved in high schools?

Answer: I think more access to labs to make learning as hands-on as possible is best for students.

Question: What impact do you think the latest advancements in science and technology will have on society?

Answer: I hope that medical advancements continue to make people's lives easier.

Question: Can you share a personal experience where science has influenced your perspective on a particular issue or topic?

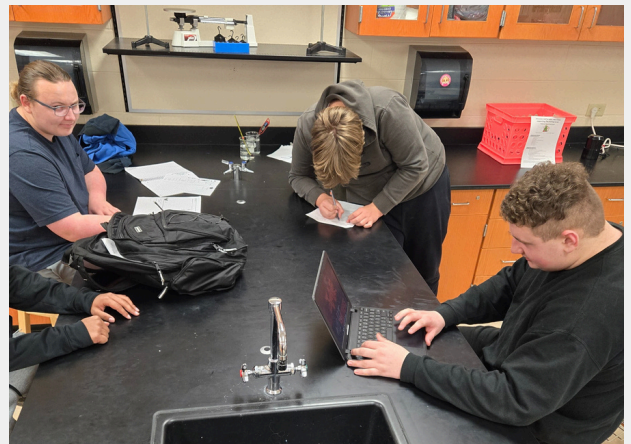
Answer: My knowledge of biology helps me better understand any medical issues I or my family members have had. It's a privilege to already have background knowledge when speaking to medical professionals.

Question: How do you think high school students can get more involved in scientific activities and initiatives?

Answer: Working hard and taking an active interest in your science classes is a great way to start, in addition to looking at filling elective space a science class that seems interesting to you.

Question: What advice would you give to other high school students who are considering pursuing a career in science?

Answer: Try to find university opportunities for research while you are in undergrad--those look great on a resume. Also, building connections with your professors is important too as they can be a great resource to connect you to opportunities.



DISCOVER DECA

PREPARING EMERGING LEADERS AND ENTREPRENEURS



DECA members organize Trick or Can donations

by Lyzzi Oviedo

Students have several opportunities at Wilmot to expand their interests outside the classroom. DECA is for students interested in leadership, teamwork, and preparing themselves for the business world. DECA offers students a chance to build valuable skills, gain real-world experience, and prepare for success in their future careers.

Mrs. Huff is the school's DECA advisor and the first resource for any interested students.

"Some main benefits for students participating in DECA are networking with other marketing students, social events, conferences, and leadership experiences," said Mrs. Huff.

DECA has been actively involved with inviting new members and a variety of events. One event that DECA has done and or has planned for the school year 2024-2025 is the 'Chalk to Walk' event, where students have to be creative and decorate the sidewalks while helping fund at the same time. Another event is 'Trick or Can', where students help donate to the food drive. Even a 'MOD Pizza Day' where a portion of the proceeds goes to support Wilmot DECA, I also heard from the grapevine that this event may occur again this school year. What inspires kids most about joining DECA is that DECA is great for college applications as it is an amazing club to participate in for community services, competitive events, and educational opportunities.



Lill Dinelli and Jake Keating promote the "Chalk the Walk" fundraiser.

"What inspired me to join DECA is that it helps prepare you for public speaking. A lot of people I know are in it, so it seems like a cool club. My experience was a lot of fun because I got a medal, participated in a state event, and made many new friends", said Jake Keating, the president of Wilmot DECA.

Students who want to learn more about the profession of business and learn amazing skills for the workplace sign up to join DECA. Students in DECA are taught about leadership, teamwork, self-confidence, networking, and many other skills to be successful in their future careers and goals.

"DECA influences my future career goals because I think I'll do something with public speaking, and it also will help me with owning my own business eventually", said Keating.

DECA incorporates real-world business skills through community services, competitions, and helping the school. DECA allows DECA students to apply for travel and academic scholarships. DECA students get prepared for these

competitions, which helps students become more professionally responsible, experienced leaders, and most importantly academically prepared.

"The most important skills for students to gain from their DECA experience is through our competitive events program. Students take tests and interact with adult judges and business roleplay scenarios," said Huff. Being the President of DECA is an important leadership position. The president of DECA involves developing essential skills for personal growth while also preparing future entrepreneurs to thrive in the competition.

"I oversee projects and communicate plans to get them approved. I also create meeting slideshows and lead meetings. Another thing I'm in charge of is the diamond dash, which is a large list of tasks involving community service to get ribbons at state" said Keating.

DECA is an amazing environment for those who are working on bettering themselves and their future. If interested in joining DECA, reach out to Mrs. Huff or any DECA member.

Welcome to “The Paw”

by Aubree DeMoe

The Paw is Wilmot Union High School's very own school store. It is run by Mrs. Huff and is located in the commons. It is open before and after school for students to buy and sell Wilmot spirit wear.

Wilmot offers a Retailing Principles class that gives students the chance to work in The Paw. The Paw is a gold-certified school-based enterprise.

Wilmot business teacher, Mrs. Huff, states, “As a Career and Technical Educator, I feel it is important to provide students with opportunities to practice real-life skills that they will be able to use in the workplace. Many schools around Wisconsin have school stores that are run by DECA members, so taking on The Paw is a natural extension of that role.”

Mrs. Huff also shares what motivated her to take on the responsibility of running The Paw.

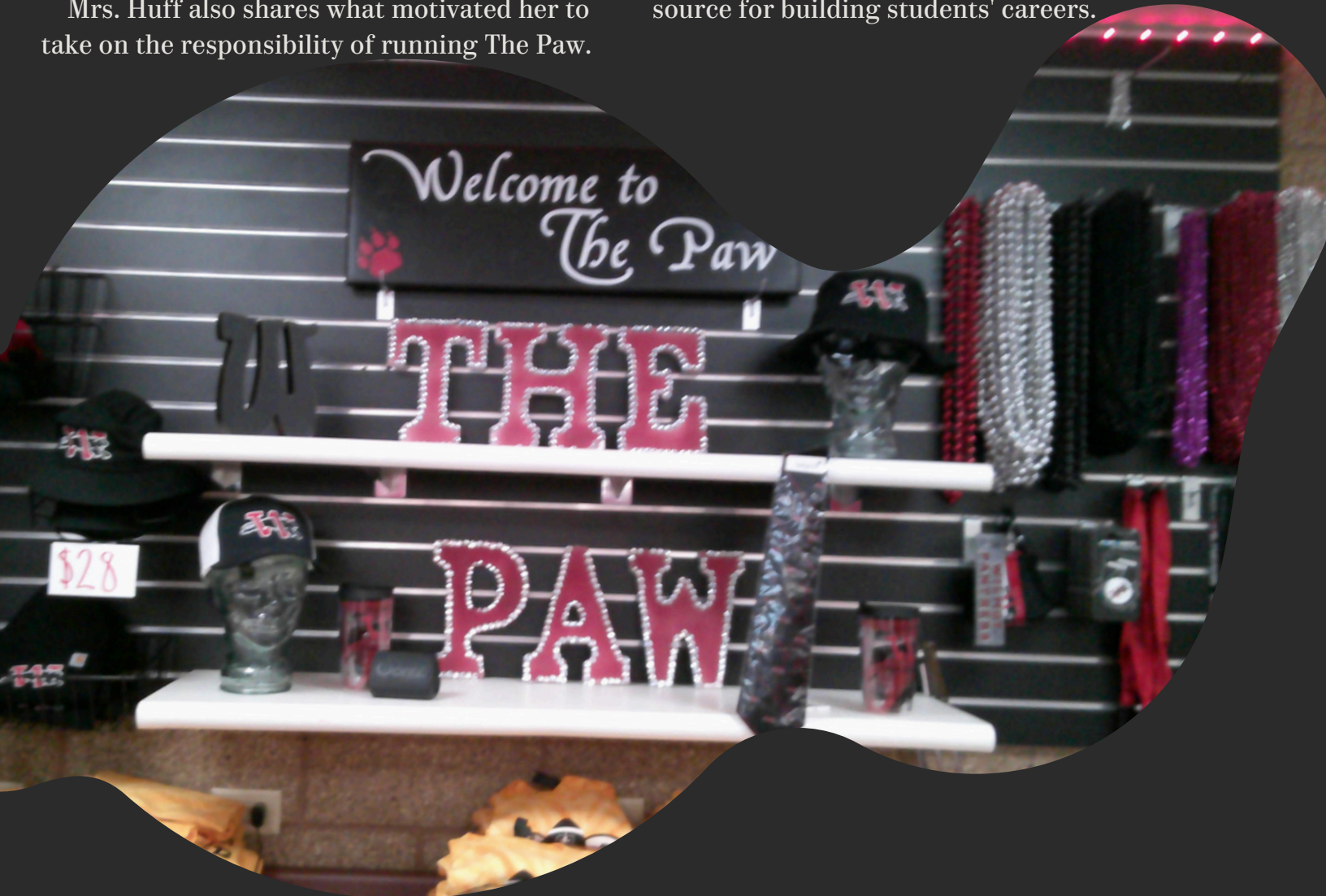
“As a Career and Technical Educator, I feel it is important to provide students with opportunities to practice real-life skills that they will be able to use in the workplace.

“Many schools around Wisconsin have school stores that are run by DECA members, so taking on The Paw is a natural extension of that role.”

Senior Cade Crutchfield shares his experience of working in The Paw to meet specific goals and reach new achievements.

“To learn practice when it comes to customer service and promotion, also getting used to the square system, especially for future references in different work environments.”

Working in The Paw may not be in everybody's interests, but for some people, it is a major accomplishment for Mrs. Huff and is also a good source for building students' careers.



GIRLS SWIM TEAM GOES UNDEFEATED



By Brianna Hamel

The girls' Co-op swim team, made up of athletes from Badger, Wilmot, Central, Williams Bay, and Bigfoot, is finishing up an undefeated season.

The head coach Alison Howell has an overall pride for this year's accomplishments.

"We are actually having a pretty good season so far, the girls have been working and have had many personal best times. Lot of successes throughout the season, and great races against our opponents. Feeling very confident this year," stated Coach Howell.

Badger Junior Elle Zawbowski, feels a lot of team support.

"Yes, because every time I am behind the block, I see my teammates ready to cheer for me." Elle Zabowski

Lastly, Julia from Badger, a Junior, is very proud of her time at her favorite event.

"My 2:11 in my 200 free!" Julia Braa

With this year of girls' swim season coming to an end there have been many great times and overall a great season.



The team representing at Badger's Homecoming Parade



Members of both the JV and Varsity teams pose prior to the October 1 Pink Out Game for Breast Cancer Awareness.

A TIME TO REFLECT

By Trynity Simons

The 2025 volleyball season is coming to an end with the final games coming up, and many memorable moments and great performances.

As each of the teams are reflecting on the season, they are analyzing their great moments and bad moments, as well as the team's performance as a whole.

"My favorite part of this season was going to team dinners, and home games getting to be on the jJV benches cheering them on," said Audrey Trams, a Varsity volleyball player.

Although there are many good moments within this year's volleyball season there have also been some harder moments.

"The hardest part about the volleyball season would have to be pushing through frustration," stated Sarah Josko, Varsity volleyball player.

With every memorable moment, and setback there is the one player on the team who is always supportive, and positive that pushes the team to be better.

"The most influential player on the team to me is Ellie Hernandez, because she always has a good attitude, and keeps her head up," Macy Kuper, Jv 1 volleyball player commented.

With the season coming to an end, the volleyball players will take time to rest and get better, and start preparing for the next season with either going to play club volleyball in the off-season or taking time to focus on themselves and taking time to rest.

CROSS COUNTRY MAKES MOVES THIS SEASON

by Jason Freund



Members of the Cross Country team get fired up for the day's meet

This year, the Wilmot Union Cross Country team has aimed its goals high, gaining lots of new faces with an abundance of potential and high-motor working athletes.

Although they lost some productive seniors, the team brought in multiple 2+ sport athletes who have shown an immense amount of drive and determination to a sport they've never tried.

One of the new varsity runners on the team, Logan Mikel said, "Not only am I building up my speed and endurance for my upcoming basketball season, I'm having fun and trying something completely new that I've never done before."

That seemed to be a recurring theme for most athletes who were interviewed on this team, they all said that they had fun, during the practices, team dinners, and even at meets they didn't do too well at, they had fun. That's also due to successes that several Wilmot athletes have achieved due to putting in work and performing well.

One runner who found lots of success this year is sophomore Aidan Saunders, who at one of the meets cut his time down from last year by a whole 14 minutes.

"I ran a lot during the off-season which paid off, and I realized I run better with confidence," said Saunders.

Confidence is all that some Wilmot Panther athletes need to find to gain more success during the season. Wilmot had multiple medalists including one stand out, junior Andrew Scharinger, who had multiple top performances including medaling for conference at 11th place and making 2nd team all-conference, Elisabeth Pietluck also was an outstanding performer this year coming off of foot surgery. She beat her all-time personal record and made it onto the Wilmot Union cross-country record book for the top 4 times for female runners.

Wilmot's Cross Country Coach, Ms. Smith had three words to describe her team.

"Inspiring, unity, and celebration," said Smith.

Smith could not have summed this team up any better. This year the Wilmot cross country team was nothing but inspiring to peers and to other runners to try new things and to push themselves, this team had so much fun and celebrated a lot of personal records and great moments as a team and this year will definitely be remembered.

Although the season is over, it won't be one that's forgotten, so many fun memories and moments were created during the season and many accomplishments have been made. This is one of the fastest Wilmot cross-country teams in a while and I'm thankful to be a part of it.





Thanksgiving Poll Results: Mashed Potatoes Take the Crown

As Thanksgiving approaches, it's clear that mashed potatoes reign supreme as the favorite dish among staff and students at Wilmot Union High School.

According to a recent poll conducted by the school newspaper, a whopping 32.8% of respondents selected mashed potatoes as their top Thanksgiving food, beating out traditional staples like turkey and stuffing.

Stuffing took second place with 17.5% of the vote, while turkey, often considered the centerpiece of the meal, surprisingly only came in third at 15.8%. Pumpkin pie, a dessert many look forward to, followed closely behind at 14.2%.

One unexpected entry in the poll was pizza, with 4.9% of voters opting for this non-traditional Thanksgiving food, proving that some of our students enjoy mixing things up at the dinner table. The remaining votes were spread among a variety of side dishes, showing just how diverse and unique our school's Thanksgiving tables are.

In addition to food, students and staff shared their favorite Thanksgiving traditions. Many enjoy cooking with family members, especially dishes passed down through generations. Watching football and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade were also popular choices, with the Parade's iconic balloons and floats drawing attention from all ages. But the overwhelming favorite tradition? Simply spending time with family. In a season often marked by gratitude, it's no surprise that being surrounded by loved ones is at the heart of many Thanksgiving celebrations here at Wilmot Union High School.

Staff Thanksgiving Traditions

by Kayla Grubb

With the upcoming holiday season, it is important to remember the importance of holiday traditions and their impact on family and friends. Several Wilmot teachers shared some aspects of their favorite Thanksgiving traditions.

For some, Thanksgiving is a chance to bring all of their favorite people they're most thankful for together through their love of Thanksgiving food.

"Everyone enjoys how I cook, the food I bring, and it brings everyone together," says Mr. Ripper when asked about the role family and friends play in his tradition of marinating and frying turkeys for his family's Thanksgiving dinner. He also shared that he fries fish for his neighbors and friends the evening after to spread the joy of togetherness for one extra day.

Though food plays a big role in many families' treasured traditions, family and friends are arguably the most important aspects of Thanksgiving.

"I still have my family whether we have turkey, ham, or lasagna," said Mrs. Sekey while talking about the role family plays in her tradition.]

However, though Thanksgiving is one of the most anticipated and planned holidays of the year, for some of our Wilmot teachers the lack of plans the next morning is his favorite tradition.

Mr. Burch says his favorite Thanksgiving tradition is, "The very little obligations the next morning."

The way Thanksgiving is celebrated throughout Wilmot families is very different, it is clear that everyone enjoys the traditions of togetherness with their family and friends that Thanksgiving brings around.

GEARING UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY SHOPPING: A POLL

With the holiday season just around the corner, the recent school poll reveals that students are already gearing up for the shopping rush. According to the poll, a significant 74% of students plan to participate in holiday shopping deal days this year, tapping into annual traditions and budget-friendly discounts.

Among those who partake, it seems Black Friday remains a favorite, with nearly half (48.5%) of student shoppers waiting eagerly for the midnight sales and early morning openings. Cyber Monday also has its loyal followers, with 26.2% preferring to shop from the comfort of their homes. And for the ultimate deal-hunters, 25.3% won't choose between the two—they'll shop on both days to snag the best prices.

When it comes to spending, 48.5% of students have set aside more than \$100 for their holiday shopping, while the remaining 51.5% are planning to spend up to \$100. In the world of high school holiday shoppers, strategic budgeting is essential. Whether hunting for the best gifts or simply looking for good deals, students are working within their budgets to make this season memorable.



STUDENT TRADITIONS

Early Bird Shopping: For some families, Black Friday means heading out as soon as the doors open. "The girls in my family hit the stores first thing in the morning," one student shared. "The guys sleep in and then join us around 9 or 10 a.m. to catch the later deals."

Chicago Shopping Trips: A tradition for some families is an annual shopping trip to Chicago, where they can enjoy the city's festive atmosphere and wide variety of stores.

Holiday Pajamas: One family tradition involves buying new pajamas each year, setting the tone for cozy holiday mornings together.

Harry Potter Marathons: Some students ring in the holiday season by watching the entire Harry Potter series with family, building on that magical spirit throughout December.

These traditions bring a unique twist to holiday shopping, as students find joy not just in the deals but in the memories made with loved ones.

SHOPPING SEASON HAS ARRIVED

by Mikayla Mc Caffrey-Turbin

As the holiday season approaches, shoppers are gearing up for the annual retail extravaganza that is Black Friday and Cyber Monday. These two major shopping events mark the unofficial start of the holiday shopping season, offering consumers a chance to snag incredible deals and discounts both in stores and online. With retailers both competing to offer the best bargains, shoppers can expect to find significant savings on a wide range of products, from electronics and appliances to clothing and toys. This year's Black Friday and Cyber Monday promises to be bigger and better than ever, with many stores extending their sales beyond the traditional one-day events to capture the excitement and spending power of eager consumers.

When considering the pros and cons of Cyber Monday and Black Friday, it's essential to ask what consumers prefer more.

"It is more convenient to shop online than in person." This was coming from a person who has a preference for being socially distant and wanting a more peaceful shopping experience by shopping online, Wilmot's very own Mrs. Sekey.

Other buyers prefer to see the items they are purchasing in person and have more of a thrill shopping at stores.

"Black Friday because I enjoy going out more and making a day out of shopping," said senior Noah Canella, who prefers a traditional Black Friday shopping experience.

No matter how you prefer to spend your shopping experience, make sure you stay on budget deals, and consider great prices that are given on these special holidays. It's also important not to worry too much about spending money for the holidays, as it is all about the holiday spirit and enjoying it with those you love.

Seasonal Depression

by *Jianna Ziembra*

As the winter months start to begin the change in weather can have a big impact on your mood. During winter, shorter days and less sunlight can decrease serotonin levels, leading to feelings of sadness, often referred to as the "winter blues" or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

For some, people enjoy winter for the fun, and colder activities, and others get less motivated. "Being in the winter makes me depressed just by looking outside, I feel it gives me more time to prepare for summer," said senior Alex Romero.

Although some are less motivated in winter others are motivated in the daylight during summertime.

"Yes, the winter months affect my mood. I'm less motivated in winter, but more motivated in daylight," stated assistant principal Mr. Norwick.

Many people feel a lack of motivation as the days get shorter and the nights get longer during the winter, which they usually relate to the lack of sunlight and the warm, hibernation-like atmosphere that the season brings.

"It gets colder and darker earlier, which is a lack of vitamin D, and my mental health decreases because of less activities," explained in-house substitute, Mrs. Sekey.

Students or staff who feel especially overwhelmed by SAD should reach out to student services who can provide a variety of ways to help with the mental health challenges that come with the changing of the season.

School Resources

Care Solace: 888-515-0595
Samantha Meyer: School Social Worker
Susan Fennell: School Psychologist



Seasonal Mood Swings: How Winter Affects Our Moods and How We Cope

With shorter days and colder temperatures approaching, many of us find that winter brings more than just a chill in the air. In a recent survey conducted among students and staff, a striking 64% of respondents said that their mood changes with the seasons, most often leaving them feeling happier in the warmth of summer and lower during winter's long, dark months. The survey also revealed that 66% specifically feel sadness or a drop in mood during winter, a time when the natural world slows down and daylight becomes a precious commodity.

This shift in mood isn't just about the temperature. Researchers have long studied what's commonly known as "seasonal affective disorder" (SAD), a type of depression often triggered by the changing seasons, particularly during fall and winter. While not everyone experiences full-blown seasonal depression, it's clear that a majority of those surveyed do feel at least some influence on their moods from the changing seasons.

For our school community, finding ways to stay positive during the darker months has become essential. Those surveyed shared a range of strategies for lifting their spirits and maintaining a sense of balance, with three main strategies emerging as the most effective.

One of the most popular methods of staying positive was spending quality time with friends and family. In winter, when we're naturally indoors more often, connecting with loved ones can be a grounding force. These relationships provide a support system and a comforting reminder that we're not alone in our seasonal struggles.

Whether it's a game night, a coffee date, or just a good conversation, students and staff alike find comfort in gathering with those who matter most.

Engaging in hobbies also helps many stay upbeat. For some, winter is the perfect season to dive into new books, explore video games, or try out a creative project. With the distractions of summer set aside, winter allows people to focus on quieter pursuits and revisit favorite activities that may have taken a backseat during the busy, social summer months.

Music, movies, and television also provide an accessible escape when spirits dip. A good playlist, a binge-worthy show, or a feel-good movie can turn a gray day around. These activities let us step into a different world for a bit, giving us the break we need to recharge and shift our focus from the challenges of winter.

As we approach the colder months, it's worth keeping in mind that the winter blues are common, and our community is full of ideas for pushing through them. Whether you're someone who thrives in colder weather or someone who misses the sun, there are ways to make the best of the season. So, if the winter weather starts to bring you down, remember that connecting with friends, diving into a hobby, or finding a new favorite song might just be what you need to keep your spirits high.

SNOW DAY SEASON IS AMONG US



by Aidan Saunders

When a snow day occurs, everyone is happy, except for maybe the teachers. That is because snow days are not good for classwork and may cause classes to fall behind, but even if they're good or bad, several steps need to happen for a snow day to occur.

Snow days are not just for fun and games. These days, it happens for safety reasons. If it is too cold or it is too risky to drive a car, school closures occur. If the roads are too icy, cars can slide off the road or not be able to drive uphill. If there is a blizzard, drivers can't see, and that could lead to crashes.

If one school closes, usually multiple schools close. Administrators across the county try to limit calling snow days because students need to be in school. Snow days make everyone fall behind and push back school work a day. This is especially bad for work with due dates, you miss a day of work, which can be devastating for some projects. For example, if students are working on a shelf in woods class and there is a snow day, that snow day will push back everything and the kids working on that self will have to work twice as fast to get it in before the due date.

"Snow days impact what I teach, I have to decide how to make up lost time so we don't fall too far behind," said Mrs. Parochelli, a teacher at Wilmot High School.

Even though snow days can be bad for schoolwork, snow days can be good too. Everyone might need a break every once in a while, especially when school can become stressful.

"They're not completely terrible. Sometimes they are a needed mental health break for everyone," said Mrs. Parochelli.

No matter what, it is important to know that there is a lot that goes into calling a snow day, it is not a decision made lightly and there are a lot of criteria that local administrators consider before calling off school. Ready or not, winter is right around the corner and a day off is inevitably in our future.



Steps that go into calling a day off

Wilmot High School's District Administrator, Dr. Plourde, shared what steps are taken to determine whether a day is called off due to snow or other inclement weather.

1. Watch the weather forecast during the days leading up to the event paying attention to Watch vs. Warning
 2. National Weather Service - Milwaukee webinar for school superintendents during the afternoon the day before the event
 3. Meet virtually with SE Wisconsin superintendents to discuss what districts plan to do
 4. Meet virtually with the superintendents of Westosha Central HS and the 9 sender districts for both schools to discuss what they plan to do. We usually all agree to do the same thing, close or stay open.
 5. Inform the Board of Education
 6. Send notice to families through email, text, website, and social media.
 7. Call the bus company, Dousman Transportation, to let them know what we plan to do
- If the decision isn't made until the morning of, Building & Grounds staff drive the roads to determine whether or not they are safe to drive on. Dousman Transportation may call school off if they cannot get buses started or up some of the steeper hills.
- Not official rules but we usually close when the "real feel" or wind chill is -35F or colder or there is expected to be 5+ inches of snow between midnight and 6 a.m." said Dr. Plourde, the district administrator of Wilmot High School.