

The Stinger



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"It cost \$2.3 billion; it's blanketed in 580,000 square feet of LED lights" (page 3).



"You can make snowmen, snowballs, go sledding, and eat it" (page 4).



"The film captures her adventure as she navigates through the unfamiliar world" (page 8).



"Your Zion-Benton cheerleaders are having one of the best competition seasons they've had in a while" (page 12).

Locked bathrooms cause stress

By Mia Mitchell
Editor-in-Chief

Most students have noticed the increase in bathrooms being locked or out of order recently. With a limited amount of bathrooms available to students, it's hard to find one that is available to use within a five minute passing period. It's even more difficult for students to be comfortable in class when teachers aren't allowed to write passes within the first and last ten minutes of class. With these problems arising, many students have the same questions: Why are a bunch of bathrooms locked? Is that even legal?

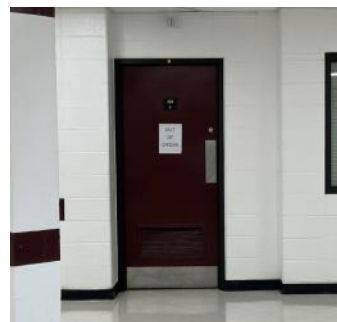
After talking to Dr. King, the new Executive Director of Safety and Prevention, it became clear why bathrooms are often out of order or locked. Dr. King explained, "There are kids throwing garbage down into the urinals, and graffiti-ing up walls, and in order to remove that out of there we have to close the bathrooms, and it's not a quick fix." While most students think that the reason bathrooms are closed is because of smoking, which Dr. King notes is a "huge problem," the main reason is really because of vandalism coming from students.

So, students don't have to worry as much about the smoking and safety aspect of our bathroom issue, as much as respecting those spaces. Dr. King adds, "It doesn't have to be tied to safety; it's more account-

ability. It's treating this place like 'hey, this is my spot.'" So, if students see a peer vandalizing something in the bathroom, Dr. King says, "Don't be afraid to stand up. Stop worrying about what people think of you, and do it with the right mind and right heart."

While changes need to be made by students, many students also feel that changes need to be made with the bathrooms being locked. Even though Dr. King stated, "I have told my staff time and time again, do not lock these bathrooms unless the bathrooms are under some type of maintenance deal," many bathrooms are still oftentimes locked throughout the halls, even though there is no maintenance issue being dealt with in them.

Photo credit: The Stinger



Bathrooms are regularly closed with "out of order" signs.

On Thursday, December 7th, during fourth period, the Stinger staff went to every bathroom to see the difference between locked, unlocked, and out of order bathrooms throughout the school. Regarding Girls restrooms, eight were open, and one was locked. Regarding the boys bath-

rooms however, three were open, two were locked, and three were out of order. Finally, regarding all gender bathrooms (open to use by students and staff), 3 were open, and 3 were locked. Obviously, the bathrooms being unlocked and locked depends on the time of day, so students oftentimes will experience both more bathrooms being locked than unlocked, and vice versa.

With that evidence, answering the other question that is often asked, yes the school is within the legal limits with bathrooms. Since we have approximately 400 staff members, and 2120 students in the building, it might seem like the locked and out of order bathrooms aren't within a legal building limit, but they are. According to the Illinois General Assembly Website, restrooms in a public building must have, "At least one women's toilet stall for every 200 persons in the maximum legal capacity of the place of public accommodation, at least one men's toilet stall for every 700 persons..., and at least one men's urinal for every 250 persons" Even with just the bathrooms open on December 7th, comparing the number of students and staff to the number of stalls and urinals available, ZBTHS was hitting those requirements.

Students have experienced different instances of bathrooms being open

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A year in review.

By Maggie Mae McCarthy
Stinger Reporter

Many major and historical events went down in the year of 2023. Here's what you need to know.

- J A N U A R Y -

On January 7th, 2023 republican Kevin McCarthy was elected speaker of the House. The vote was reached after extensive debate and McCarthy's agreement to comply with far right winged needs.

- F E B R U A R Y -

In February a deadly earthquake struck Turkey and Syria with over 55,000 deaths in total between the two countries. Along with the mass of casualties, many more people were left homeless and injured. This devastation particularly affected Syria who has been in an ongoing civil war for over 10 years. The United Nations enacted a \$397 million appeal to provide "desperately needed, life-saving relief for nearly 5 million Syrians." Despite the help, Syrians still struggled, some were able to gather in tents and makeshift structures, however many were still left without shelter in freezing temperatures. Survivors have struggled to rebuild and are still in desperate need of help.

- M A R C H -

On March 13 President Biden approved the \$8-\$10 billion Willow Project, a 30-year-long oil drilling project in Alaska. This upset many environmental activists as it will release extremely large amounts of CO2 into the atmosphere as the project moves forward. In addition, the drilling will take over habitats and endanger native Alaskan species. Climate activist groups have taken initiative to fight and stop the project before it is underway.

- A P R I L -

On April 5th, Chicago elected Brandon Johnson as the new mayor. Johnson defeated Paul Vallas becoming the 57th mayor of Chicago.

- M A Y -

COVID-19 was declared to no longer be a national health emergency by the

World Health Organization on May 11th. WHO has closely tracked the data concerning the virus and carefully decided that the virus was no longer a global emergency. Although the virus is declared a non-emergency, the virus is still existing and may continue to mutate into new variants. Tedros, Chief of WHO said, "What this news means is that it's time for countries to transition from emergency mode to managing COVID-19 alongside other infectious diseases."

Photo credit: CNET.com



- J U N E -

In June former president Donald Trump's indictment of 37 counts of felonies was revealed. It is alleged that when leaving the White House he took with him to his private home highly classified material having to do with "defense and weapons capabilities" of the U.S. and other countries. His attempt to cover this up and obstruct the investigation led to additional charges. Trump plead not guilty, denied all allegations, and has remained in the running for the upcoming presidential election despite continuous new accusations and charges.

- J U L Y -

This summer in California's Death Valley some of the hottest temperatures were reported. On July 16 the area reached 128°F.

- A U G U S T -

For the first time in history Spain's women's soccer team won the FIFA Women's World Cup by beating England 1-0. Olga Camora scored the winning goal in the first half and the team stayed in the lead the whole game with passes and shots. Spain also became the second coun-

try behind Germany to have won both the men and women's world cup. Carmona said after the game, "It's really incredible. I don't know why Spain is the world champions, but I think that we deserve it."

- S E P T E M B E R -

After a nearly 5-month strike Hollywood writers officially came to an agreement with studios on September 26th. Boards of the Writers Guild of America accepted the deal from a partnership of large Hollywood studios bringing the strike to an end. Writers then started back up the next day resuming their work, however scripted shows are still on hold with actors still on strike, and no agreements in view yet.

Photo credit: slate.com



- O C T O B E R -

Republican speaker of the house Kevin McCarthy was removed from his position by far right winged representatives after "breaking promises", and making him the first speaker to be ousted. Problems for McCarthy began with his failure to negotiate spending cuts with President Biden. Then after not upholding his promise to bring 12 new spending bills to the floor, Florida representative Matt Gaetz brought forth a motion to oust McCarthy from his position. A majority 216-210 voted to oust McCarthy, removing him from the position.

- N O V E M B E R -

Marvel cinematic universe (MCU) released The Marvels on November 10th, creating their first all female protagonist line-up. In the film

2023

Las Vegas opens giant spectacle

Captain Marvel, Monica Rambeau, and Ms. Marvel team up as *The Marvels*. The movie has received varying criticism and support, however it is another step in the direction of breaking female stereotypes in the film industry.

- D E C E M B E R -
George Santos became the 6th house member to be removed from the United States congress, being found guilty of a number of crimes. Some of these include wire fraud, unlawful monetary transactions, stealing public funds, and lying on federal disclosure forms. Santos secured his position in congress on a number of lies that he used to mislead the public, including claiming that he was Jewish. However, no evidence of Jewish background has been found. On December 1st he was expelled from congress by a 311-114 vote.

By Euriah Williams
Stinger Reporter

On September 29th, 2023, the Las Vegas Sphere officially opened. Referred to as "MSG Sphere," It cost \$2.3 billion to build; it's blanketed in 580,000 square feet of LED lights; it can transform its 366-foot-tall exterior into a gargantuan emoji that astronauts can supposedly see from space.

The venue will host music, film events, and some sports. The Sphere was designed by Populous, the global architecture firm behind many of the world's top sports arenas. According to CNN, "The globe seats almost 18,000 people, sits one long block east of the famed Las Vegas Strip and will be connected by a pe-



Photo credit: www.archpaper.com

The Sphere can be seen from all over Las Vegas.

destrian walkway to the Venetian resort complex." The Sphere is the world's largest spherical structure.

The venue also is equipped with haptic seats that can vibrate to match whatever is happening on the screen, an earthquake, for example and 4D machines that can

create wind, temperature and even scent effects. The Sphere is the main focus in Las Vegas right now. The venue is located just off the Strip, according to DJ Magazine, "Las Vegas' multi-billion-dollar gig venue MSG Sphere has reportedly lost \$98.4 million since its opening."

New Zealand briefly tries smoking ban

By Trinity Camara
Editor-in-Chief

New Zealand passed a law that would ban citizens from smoking cigarettes born on and after January of 2009. They plan on slowly cutting out smoking all together, hoping for a solution to the health issues caused by smoking. However, newly elected government officials plan to repeal this law in 2024 because of the rise in crime rates and the argument that this law conflicts with a person's freedom of choice.

The law passed was just the beginning of the New Zealand government's plan. They had hoped to gradually ban all types of smoking and the sales of smoking products. The Washington Post states, "Under the new changes, retailers who sell tobacco to anyone born



Photo credit: www.psymposia.com

on or after Jan. 1, 2009 — those around 13 years old or younger today — will face fines of up to 150,000 New Zealand dollars, or around \$96,000. The ban will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2027, when those born in 2009 will start turning 18." (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/>)

The Washington Post also said, "New Zealand's bill passed through Parlia-

ment 76-43 with support from left-leaning parties, including the leading Labour Party. Members of the right-leaning New Zealand National and ACT New Zealand voted against the ban" Different political parties have strong opinions about this matter of health and safety of the citizens of New Zealand. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/>)

In regards to the in-

creased crime rates because of this new law, people were, "concerned that the tobacco changes 'would have a couple of nasty side effects,' such as fueling a black market of untaxed sales and sparking 'ram raid' thefts at stores" (<https://www.npr.org/>). Crime rates are expected to rise after this law is put into place, which could be dangerous to many, especially employees.

So far, the plan for banning tobacco products hasn't worked out according to New Zealand's plan. A news article stated, "The coalition agreement calls for repealing the anti-smoking amendments and regulations before March of 2024" (<https://www.npr.org/>). The country plans to retract this anti-smoking law very soon because of the backlash it has gotten.

Zee-Bees weigh in on snow

By Esmeralda Vara
Staff Editor

It feels like real winter is finally taking hold in northern Illinois, that means the weather is getting colder, and the ground gets more icy. People tend to start shoveling and trying to stay warm, but others start to play around in snow and make snowmen.

This time of year is when Zee-Bees look forward to outdoor winter activities. But with the snow getting thicker and ice forming, some risk arises. Once snow starts to fully cover trees and the ground,

people start taking photos for aesthetics, while others will just stay away from it altogether. In a survey put out by The Stinger, one Zee-Bee responded, "It's very dreary. I greatly dislike when it melts as well, it's very messy." Another person who had taken the survey said "I like how versatile it is; you can make snowmen, snowballs, go sledding, and eat it."

Asher Loy said in the survey, "I can't grow plants outside while it snows," which is very understandable since it is impossible to garden outside during

the winter with frozen soil and reduced sunlight.

Nadia McCabe said in the survey, "I hate how it gets freezing and how I have to get up early to warm up my car." Students and staff share Nadia's concern.

Many Zee-Bees expected to have the first snow day/e-learning day this

last Tuesday (January 9th) as we expected 6" to 9" of snow to accumulate, but while some schools closed for the day, ZBTHS did not. Our school's proximity to Lake Michigan occasionally reduces snowfall. We will have to wait and see if the opportunity comes again in the coming weeks.

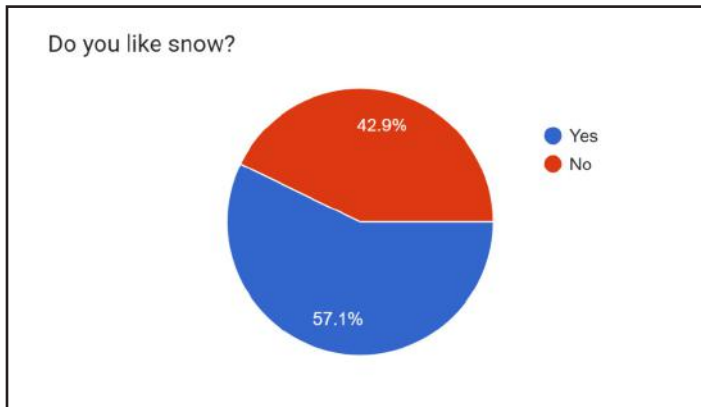
Locked bathrooms cause stress

[Continued from page 1]

and not open, but have recently noticed an increase in the bathrooms being locked. Mariana Renteria said, "I'm pretty annoyed and frustrated. Now I have to walk across the school, and then I get marked tardy. It's not fair." Following up to that Trayvonn Foster stated, "Sometimes it kind of feels like I'm in a prison. I just need to go to the bathroom, but like every door is locked."

All in all, a balance between students and administrators/staff needs to be made. Clearly, admin-

istrators need students to stop causing disruptions in the bathrooms, such as smoking and vandalism, so they don't need to spend the time and money in having someone fix the maintenance problems. However, students also need the bathrooms without maintenance issues to remain unlocked, so they can be comfortable at school without having to walk across the whole building, or get in trouble for being late to class. Hopefully a balance will be met with the new Semester starting.



Surveyed students report that more like snow than don't.

Show about Chicago family worth watching

By Gabriel Acosta
Stinger Reporter

Shameless is a show about a dysfunctional family of 7 from Chicago, consisting of 6 kids - Liam, Debbie, Ian, Lip, Carl, and Fiona - and one deadbeat dad, Frank Gallagher. As the show progresses, we get to learn their backstory and how they became the family they are.

Frank is a deadbeat dad who would, without second thought, risk his children's safety for booze and any type of money.

Fiona takes over the mother role since their

mom left them, and is the oldest sister who struggles to take care of the 5 kids.

Ian is more of a closeted character, he is quiet, is a goody two shoes, and doesn't like to get too close to people.

Lip is up there with Fiona and is second in command to keep the kids in line. Even though he seems to stay out of trouble, there are instances he can not avoid and has a high IQ, which he uses to cheat people and make money.

Carl, the trouble maker, is the one who seems to love chaos. As the show progresses through seasons, Carl seems to calm

down a bit and takes a more mature approach.

Debbie, 3rd to youngest, is more of Fiona's sidekick. She's smarter than her brothers even though she is the youngest and seems to outsmart anyone in the family when it comes to ideas and problems.

Liam, the baby brother, is more of a side character since the start of the show. The Gallaghers learned how to fend for themselves and do anything they can for money, rent, and for their family to be whole again. With their good friends Kevin and Veronica, always there for them, the Gallaghers are

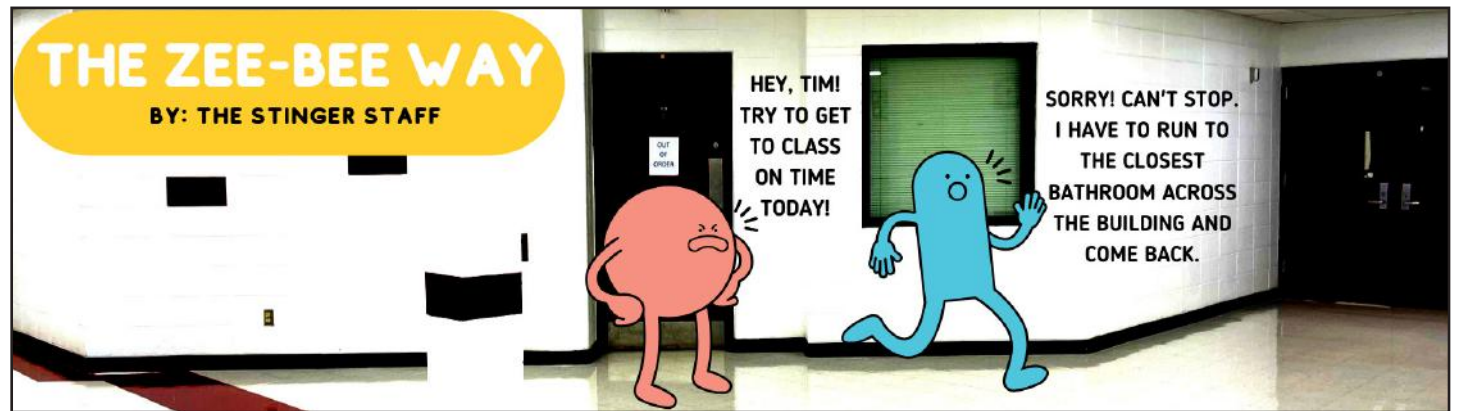
on track to being better as a family and as people.

What's my opinion of the show? *Shameless* is really good if you want a refresher from watching lame shows with no action and comedy and it really shows us that different people and families are experiencing different struggles. *Shameless* is a show you will love. Alexandra Garibay says "It's a nice show with a lot of attention-seeking parts that I've come to love rewatching." *Shameless* has been out since 2011, and it regained its popularity due to TikTok. Consider watching and forming your own opinion.

Back to School! by Gloria Myers



The Zee-Bee Way by Stinger Staff



CALLING ALL CREATIVES

We would love to publish your work in an upcoming Stinger issue!

We accept letters to the editor, comic strips, short stories, poetry, photography, painting, sculpture, jewelry, and more!

We are also always looking for ideas for articles. Let us know if something interesting happened that you want us to feature!

Email submissions to jeffrey.sevener@zb126.org!

January Feature: Resolution

The first resolutions

By **Jairo Rojas-Magallon**
Stinger Reporter

As everyone would know, New Year's resolutions are a great way to start fresh and set personal, long-term goals. New Year's resolutions are about personal commitment or goals that someone sets for themselves at the beginning of the new year. It's a way to make positive changes in your life and really strive for self-improvement. People will often make resolutions related to either their health, career, or personal development. It is a great way to start the year with a motivation and a fresh mindset.

But how exactly did New Year's resolutions be-

come a thing? According to www.britannica.org, they originated in about 2000 BCE from ancient Babylonian traditions. People would make promises to their gods at the start of the year to improve themselves. The Babylonians are the first civilization to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the new year. The Babylonians were an ancient civilization that existed in Mesopotamia and according to USHistory.org, "the Babylonians built the city of Babylon and had a significant influence on the development of civilization in the region." They were known for their advanced knowledge in a variety of fields: astronomy, mathematics, and as well

as law. They developed the concept of the zodiac and made significant contributions to the study of celestial bodies; they also created one of the earliest known legal codes, known as the Code of Hammurabi (theconversation.com).

All in all, the history behind the Babylonians who created New Year's resolutions is very interesting. It is fascinating to think how long the tradition has been around for; it's been over four thousand years, and will likely not go away for a very long time. So, the next time that you are thinking about coming up with a New Year's resolution, think about how you're contributing to a long-lasting tradition.

Time to improve as students

By **Jose Zavala**
Stinger Reporter

All grades of Zee-Bee students are finalized along with finals, ending the first semester of the 23-24 school year for ZBTHS. Over the course of winter break many Zee-Bee students may have noticed their grades from semester one and reflected on how they should approach coming into the second semester. However, some students may have felt dissatisfied with the grade they earned and felt that they could have done better.

When asked what students should do to ensure that they achieve the best grade they can possibly get in their classes, Dr. DiGangi the Executive Director of Academic Excellence says, "Showing up everyday on time and working hard are the magic ingredients that all students can do to achieve

and excel at high levels when believing in themselves and working hard."

Some Zee-Bees may have found that there were obstacles and difficulties that challenged them back in the first semester, especially with finals being implemented again. When asked, what the "biggest hurdles to a students' success" are, Dr. DiGangi says, "I think the biggest challenge is that when students don't understand something. I think knowing how to find success, what to do, what resources to access, and how to get out of that is challenging."

The end of the first semester also marks the last semester Zee-Bee seniors will have before graduating from ZBTHS. Many seniors felt that the school year went by faster than usual. Some are just ready to graduate. When asked how they feel about first semes-

ter grades and having only one more semester until graduation, Zee-Bee senior Juan Villanueva says, "My grades are decent, if I locked-in, I could've gotten good grades, but they were not bad. I'm Happy that we only have 1 semester left. I just wanna graduate already so I can focus on mechanical things and get money."

A brand new start to the semester means a fresh new beginning for grades, creating new ways to manage time, finding new activities, and learning to find a working space that is best to achieve success with education. The revelation of the new year and school returning brings new habits, a positive mindset, and new goals to reach and yearn for in the second semester for ZBTHS. The Stinger staff wishes everyone success in the new semester at ZBTHS.

Resolve to try new things

By Janalise Jimenez
Stinger Reporter

At New Years, most people create a list of resolutions having to do with health and exercise, though those are great resolutions, they usually happen every year. Would you be willing to try a new experience? Make this a year of self-reflection and getting out of your comfort zones. Comfort zones are what we call the stressless feeling when doing a common activity, with no pressure to perform a certain way, or an everyday activity. To push past these areas of comfortability you'll likely feel, to some degree, slight stress. However, stress can benefit your performance.

Some Junior students did just that for their AP English Language class in December. The assignment was to do an activity that

you normally wouldn't want to do and do reflection before and after. Students wrote their expectations of their chosen experiences, and they wrote again after completing the activity.

One student, Lauren Hamilton, chose to go to a sit down restaurant by herself for the duration of one hour. Prior to the assignment she says, "I choose this as my project because I have gone out to fast food restaurants by myself before, but the thought of going to a sit down restaurant by myself has always made me uncomfortable and seems socially awkward." Afterward she added, "I would recommend other students to try this because you may find a relaxing way that you could spend your night and it's good every once in a while

to take yourself on a little date." She was able to find a new way to spend her time and enjoy the calmness of it. Showing you can always find a new activity to step out of your comfort zones, and it may become more enjoyable as you'd originally thought. She also hopes to continue new experiences in the new year as she says, "Although school work is important, a goal of mine is to find more hobbies or activities that I enjoy doing to give me a break from the stressors of life." Finding a new way to be alone, something that was once uncomfortable, can give you more choices to spend your time and even boost your mood.

Becoming uncomfortable and stepping out of these usual activities can lead you to increase con-

fidence and reliability. It means you can become a dedicated individual who accomplished their goals, despite the stressful start. An article by Harvard Summer School, *Is It Time To Leave Your Comfort Zone?*, says to start with goals and steady action. For long term goals flexibility and continuity are key to success. You will need to adjust to conflicts and continue making new goals for the future; keep challenging yourself as you complete each step. Getting out of your comfort zone is a process that requires mental preparation and facing stress. However, you may find yourself prone to challenging yourself more, creating better habits, and experiencing successes often. How do you plan to start the year?

Your Two Cents



"Get my grades up, try to improve and become a better person."

Josselyn Flores

What is your New Year's Resolution for 2024?



"Practice harder on basketball, and work on getting in varsity by my sophomore year."

Cashius Collins



"Improve diet, get fit, and work on saving money for my college tuition and get a head start on my future."

Jake Mitchell



Photo credit: istock



"To improve in school and make new friends."

Promise Speed

By Daniyah Anderson
Stinger Reporter

Mean Girls returns and returns

By Rebekah Hampton
Stinger Reporter

With the new release of the *Mean Girls* movie just around the corner, the famous pop culture icon seems to be popping up everywhere. Not only in movie theaters, but also in our theater here at ZB. Starting on November 7th of this year, ZB's theater director, Mrs. Regnier, started a musical countdown on our ZB Encore Players social media accounts, and the big reveal of this year's musical was released the day before Thanksgiving break. *Mean Girls* auditions are going to be on January 16th, so if you're interested in being a star, find Mrs. Regnier or Mrs. Rickert for more information on auditions. Although prior experience in theater is al-

ways a great benefit, you don't need any experience to be a part of productions here at Zion-Benton.

A few thespian members were asked what they were most excited for when it came to the musical, and Antonio Neal responded, "I'm excited for pink, singing, dancing, and mean girls." Bailee Young stated, "I'm so excited for

costumes, and how they're gonna look on everyone". When asked the reasons behind her choice, Mrs. Regnier said "To be honest, I had no idea there was a new movie coming out. We chose *Mean Girls* because we thought it was a better vehicle to both showcase and challenge our students' abilities." Not only is our *Mean Girls* pro-

Photo credit: www.broadwayworld.com



duction going to be performed on April 18th, 19th, and 20th, but it also might be submitted for adjudication through Broadway in Chicago High School Musical Awards. This would be ZB's second time submitting a performance from our drama department. Earlier this year, our fall play was the production of *Just Great: A Retelling Of The Great Gatsby*, which was the first to be submitted. Sadly, our production was not chosen but it was a great learning experience for our theater department. With all of this in mind, returning thespian are ready and eager to show off their talents again. We may wear pink on Wednesdays, but I can assure you our ZB Theater Department is not full of mean girls.

Ghibli's gift to animation

By Kassie Barbanida
Stinger Reporter

Animated films have the ability to bring abstract ideas and imagination to life in a way live-action cannot. As these films are easier to visualize, it creates an immersive experience that is much more exciting.

Studio Ghibli, founded by Hayao Miyazaki is a Japanese animation studio that is known for its captivating animation style accompanied by powerful soundtracks. Every detail is made with close attention, and the distinctive art style makes it recognizable in an instant. Since 1985, the animation studio has created a variety of films such as *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), and *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989). The studio is best known for *Spirited Away* (2001), winning sever-

al awards, notably the 2003 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. The studio's success has left a lasting impact on other animation studios.

In the film *Spirited Away*, a ten year old girl named Chihiro and her parents discover an abandoned amusement park. The rich smell of the food caught her parents' attention, and they ignore Chihiro's pleas to stop and indulge. They then turn into pigs, full of greed with no remnants of being human. Chihiro then finds herself trapped in the spirit world. A mysterious boy Haku explains to her that the park is where supernatural beings rest from their time on earth, and that she must work in order for her and her parents to leave.

In the film Chihiro navigates the unfamiliar world while also facing the

Photo credit: hypebeast.com



Spirited Away's Chihiro and Radish Spirit

sorts of challenges people face today: overcoming the troubles of youth, self-identity, and embracing change. Throughout the film, there are symbols that illustrate an important message. In particular, the main antagonist and sorceress, Yubaba, takes control of her workers at the bathhouse by stealing their names unless they

can remember them. Her acts show the importance of remembering one's true self and not forgetting the motives that drive people to move forward in life.

Spirited Away is a great introduction to Studio Ghibli movies and animated films in general, and is definitely worth watching. The depiction of an ordinary protagonist venturing through a completely different world resonates with people of varying audiences. Additionally, there is a live stage adaptation that was released in 2022 and can be viewed on streaming platforms online, though it doesn't capture the passion of the actors compared to in-person. On December 25th, 2023, an English version of the stage performance came to Max (formerly HBOMax) along with a Japanese language version.

Zee-Bee Poet Showcase



Janalise
Jimenez

Smudged Pages

We are all written in the pages,
words and wisdom drawn into us
by the edge of someone's pen.

Constantly revisited when in need,
brought back only when pages
are flipped or skipped over.

The reason we return page after
page, our story left open
for the reader's amusement.

We can try to get them to return,
but they will always leave once
your story is over.

Now sit and wait, until they open
the story when they've forgotten
the way you made them smile.



Mackenzie
Wacyk

Opposites

Gazing up at the sky on a beautiful morning
I wonder as I look up at the sunrise if you could see it too.

The perfect sunrise where there's just enough pink, purple, and blue.

The clouds compliment the sun like the purpose of their being is to make the sunrise shine brighter.

Then I remember

You're my opposite

I'll drain rivers and lakes and ponds, mainly oceans

I'll expose all of the dirt and soil and everything that underlies it.

I remember when I see a sunrise, you see a set

And I wish we could be synonymous

I think if we met in another life we'd be friends rather than newcomers

I'd listen to all of your problems and cry with you

Rather than like strangers who briefly knew each other during a class project

Whenever I learn of you I only think the opposite

Because I only remember the dark

But you remember mixing the stars in

We run around in circles but instead of meeting through the diameter we live on opposite sides

Living opposite stories

With opposite feelings

And opposite priorities

I wish for once you'd choose to be my synonym



Deontia
Hill

Getting Older

Growing.

How could something so fundamental be so painful
sometimes?

The older I get the more my eyes are open to what things
really are.

How difficult life really is

Not as bliss

As I thought it would be.

Growing means getting older

Getting older means waking up

Staying sober

Rather than being drunk off the dopamine your body
releases when things seem to go cold

Confusing temporary happiness with the feeling of being
euphoric

The words I speak of a true poet who knows this Then
it's stupidity, mixed with humility, forming the inability
to feel your feelings correctly

So yes growing up means letting go and that truly sucks
But we can't stay stuck in those special moments

Because they'll soon lead to a life full of disappointment

So grow.

Grow so you yourself can thrive

In a world that isn't built for us to peacefully survive



Janiya
Diaz

Just a Color

There's many colors no one cares to like, or overlooks
one than the other.

Why can't all colors be beautiful?

My color, the color of my pale skin, is what people favor
more.

But why? Why mine? And not hers?

Why should her beautiful skin define who she is?

Her lovely brown skin comes with hatred, with a dark
meaning. When the color of her skin is just a color and
nothing more.

But my veiny, pale skin is what people favor more.

Why? Why when hers is flawless but brown.

Just because of the color? Or because she's different from
you?

Her skin is just a color or yet... even more.

A ZEE-BEE YOU SHOULD KNOW

By Mia Mitchell
Editor-in-Chief

While we have had many new staff members this year, a notable one is Dr. King, the new Executive Director of Safety and Prevention. With his experience in working for the police department, as well as other schools, he is a great fit at Zion.

Dr. King hopes to bring more communication to the building, and hopes students and staff get to know him better. Dr. King stated, "This door is always open for you guys. So utilize that door. See me in the hallways (not to get a pass to class or excuse for a tardy, but you know, legitimately like

a 'we don't know you.'" Most students have probably seen Dr. King in the halls, and he encourages students to talk to him. "If you see me around the school, I'm always speaking to everybody. Why? Because it doesn't cost to speak. It doesn't cost to be pleasant. And those are the two things that I believe I can provide," Dr. King said.

Dr. King also hopes that communication can grow between the students, and eventually build a foundation for tradition here at Zion. "I see that you guys have so much potential. When you guys have the opportunity to make a difference in your community, and this

is your community, you don't take it. Some of you don't take that ownership of saying this is my school right here." Dr. King hopes communication, and doing the right thing throughout the school will grow more coming from students.

Dr. King also hopes school spirit and traditions will start to grow. "I just love tradition. I haven't seen school spirit at the games. We were just at the basketball game. No school spirit, right? So what's the Zee-Bee Way?" Hopefully, students will help in creating more school spirit and traditions not only at sporting events, but also just on a daily basis.

Clearly, Dr. King is

very enthusiastic about making Zion a better place, especially regarding communication and school spirit. It's exciting to have him here, and have him help out in the process of creating a rich tradition for Zion-Benton.

Photo credit: Lifetouch Photography



Dr. King, Exec. Dir. Safety & Prevention

ZEE-BEE FOCUS

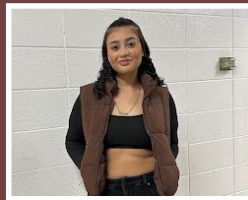


By Daniyah Anderson - Stinger Reporter



Tyeshia Hollins

"Honestly, I'm tired, but motivated because I'm near the very end. I can't believe that we'll all be graduating soon, but don't want to leave yet."



Jennifer Castro

"I feel happy but sad because I'm not going to be in highschool anymore or school, and I will basically be an adult, so I know it will be harder."



Daisy Rosales

"I'm ready to see what the next chapter for me will be like. I can't wait to grow and learn as I go."

"How do you feel about being so close to graduation?"



Ashtin Fitcher

"I think it's a blessing because I have lived through all the experiences I did in highschool. COVID made it difficult, and hopefully this a great start to the beautiful transition into adulthood."



Tanasiah Jackson

"It has really been fun, but I'm so ready to move onto new things, but I'll enjoy it while it lasts."



Yadiel Colon

"I feel good I'm bout to graduate soon you know. I've been waiting for this for the past 13 years."



Alexi Santanas

"I want to succeed in basketball and academically."

Club brings students to play

By **Donnie Anilao**
Stinger Reporter

The Board and Card Game Club, located in room 102, is a club that affords its members the opportunity to play board or card games with other game-loving students. The club meets every Thursday unless specified by one of the two sponsors and runs from after school to when late buses arrive (2:37-3:40). The club is sponsored by Ms. Klema and Ms. Sanchez, and the current members have a fun time in the club, building up their ability to strategize on a whim and build team spirit.

Board and card games can be recommended to one of the sponsors for the whole club to play every Thursday. If a game

hasn't been recommended, the always available house favorites of UNO, Here to Stay, and Connect 4 can be played instead. The club is always open to play any recommended game, meaning that anyone can play their favorite board or card game with a group if they join.

The current members of the club make the ex-

perience much more enjoyable with a positive atmosphere. Club sponsor Ms. Klema reiterates this by saying, "The comradery and atmosphere are so great. Everyone here has a great time playing the board/card game of the week no matter the day they had." Two-year member Mahkai Forshaw adds on to this by saying it

is "very friendly. However, at times, it is very chaotic, but in a good way." What he means is that we can all get very competitive playing the games, but that is part of the fun of the experience. This competitiveness in the club leads to better strategy development, especially with the randomness board and card games have. Three-year member Ricardo Flores Barriga adds to this by saying that members improve their strategy development "by playing with a variety of different people, which can give you experience and insight into different styles for the board games we play." The Board and Card Game Club is always looking for new members. Come to 102 on Thursdays to find out more.



Photo credit: D. Anilao

New wing offers new opportunity

By **Samantha Whitlow**
Stinger Reporter

As the school year enters its second semester, choosing your classes for next year is just around the corner! Whether you are an current freshman, sophomore, or junior, there are loads of options when it comes to electives. Due to the school's new renovations, these courses are offering great opportunities for students to get a feel for what fields they would like to enter in the future. When asking Mr. Stout, Department Head for Career & Technical Programs, what he would say to someone looking for classes to take, he answered, "Be future-focused. Think about your career interests and consider classes that align with your career goals."

A class that could be considered when making your decision is Graphic

Design. In this course, you learn how to use Photoshop and get to put your creativity to work. At the end of the class, you may even be able to become Photoshop certified.

If you aren't a very creative person and need more "structured" work, Pre-Architecture is the class for you. When working in this class, you get to

Photo credit: A. Stout, ZBTHS



Students make use of the new culinary space.

use AutoCAD and create/plan structures based off of the teacher's instructions. As you near the end of the course, you are instructed to build a (mini) replica of a famous piece of architecture.

ZBTHS offers so many courses for a whole spectrum of interests. "For students who are creative, enjoy performing, and are looking for classes that offer a platform for self-expression, we have a broad range of Visual and Performing Arts classes. For students who are interested in the skilled trades there are various courses and programs that can provide hands-on training and practical skills to prepare them for high-demand and high-wage jobs. Whether or not students are interested in enlisting in the military, our NJROTC program offers a number of



Photo credit: A. Stout, ZBTHS

Students learn about welding.

opportunities from scholarships to leadership and character development to a variety of trips and competitions. Each of the departments offer courses that help all students become college, career, and life ready," said Mr. Stout.

Winter cheer starts with success

By **Abbigail McLaughlin**
Stinger Reporter

Your Zion-Benton cheerleaders are having one of the best competition seasons they've had in a while. They took the time to work hard before the season so they could exceed their goals, and it's showing.

Varsity had their first competition on December 2nd in Rockford, IL. After long hours of practice, they placed 3rd while also qualifying for ICCA State. Even with a few last minute changes, they persevered and did very well. The success shows that they are capable of so much even as the season is just beginning.

The following week, on December 17th, the JV Cheerleaders compet-

ed and got a bid to State as well. Continuing their rise to the top, Varsity and JV both placed at the Skyhawk Scramble Invitational. JV placed 3rd and Varsity secured 2nd.

On January 6th the Varsity Bees hit the mat in Springfield at ICCA State. After hours of dedication and hosting a showcase for

the city of Zion to watch, the varsity team placed in the top 10, with 9th place out of 14 teams. Still having several more competitions left, these Zee-Bees can only keep climbing.

The Junior Varsity cheerleaders competed on January 7th, and took 10th place. After asking Coach Jade her thoughts on the

Photo credit: Jade Williams



Cheerleaders competed at the Bank of Springfield Center in Springfield, Illinois.

teams and how the season is going, she replied, "The ZB cheer program is the strongest it has been in years. These teams put their everything into this sport but most importantly into each other. They excel because of their 'all for each-other and all-for-one' mindset. Zion-Benton will be remembered, and it's all due to the athletes here."

Stay tuned for their next competition on January 13th at Grayslake North as well as conference on January 18th at Lake Zurich, and as the team competes at having a chance to go to IHSA State. Sectionals will be held at Dundee Crown on January 27th. After seeing all of this success, it is clear that this cheer team *Won't Bee Stopped!*

Girls bowling rolls to win

By **Megan Galeana**
Staff Editor

Girls Bowling has had good seasons, and this year they're moving forward to bigger and better things. Kelsey Hafford, a sophomore here at ZBTHS, has been bowling since her freshman year. One thing that drew Kelsey to join bowling is "doing it for fun outside of school with my friends every Friday night," she says.

When it comes to being successful in a sport,

people have their own unique way of delivering it. Kelsey's way for setting herself up for success in bowling is by "taking a walk before every game because I get nervous before my games." Kelsey's way of getting better is by "getting more strikes and spares in bowling." Kelsey has progressed in bowling and she states that she is happy, saying, "I progressed a lot in bowling." She says "I went from JV to Varsity this year and I'm very

proud of myself for that."

Kelsey Hafford says, "I want people to know about bowling. It is really fun to do once you get used to it." Girls bowling takes turns in so many different ways.

Throughout their whole year of competing and of their successes, girls bowling has a lot of potential this year just like every other year they've had. They are going to remain in their element to keep their winning streaks increasing each week.

Photo credit: www.emeraldnightphotography.com



Kelsey bowls with her favorite ball.

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