

The Stinger



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Students create city signage

Photo credit: S. Davis

By Janalise Jimenez
Stinger Reporter

Returning Zion students may have heard about the contest in 2021, where students were asked to send in their own designs in a competition to create the sketch of welcome signs for Zion. Some of the winners were Jonathan Chavez (class of 22), William Cochrane (class of 23), and Matthew Rittenhouse (ZB junior).

The three began the process of bringing their design to reality with the process overseen and assisted by Mr. Davis. With four more signs to add to Zion, Mr. Davis says "I'd like to have...the students that designed it participate in the same way." Referring to the future Zion sign projects. These three students not only designed the signs, but were dedicated to creating it themselves.

The competition was only for the design, however, Mr. Davis says "the



The Zion sign is completed by J. Chavez, W. Cochrane, and M. Rittenhouse.

three students were excited to build their design," which is where the project took off from. When asked what the hardest part of the project was, Mr. Davis responded, "learning how to CNC the aluminum. It was a learning curve for that piece. That was something that we knew in the design phase was gonna be a challenge, but we still wanted to do it."

Another challenge to overcome was splitting the work, a goal of Mr. Davis was, "to make sure all three students had an equal share in it. Some kids

[spent] more time painting and some would weld." He also says, "it was nice on the last day that all three were here to hang the sign up. [It was the] same thing with the design... all three always met at the same time. They built some good friendships."

The group was able to participate together and share the workload that comes with a long project. One of Mr. Davis's favorite memories of the project was, "getting to work with the students over the summer...it was easy fun just getting to joke around almost like old friends." Mr. Davis says it was a team effort to put the sign together, from repeatedly visiting the school after William and Jonathan's graduation, to Matthew's time spent helping assemble the base of the columns.

This team's dedication to the project pulled together nicely, and the finished result was said to look "timeless". The sign can now be seen in person at Sheridan Road and 17th Street.

Photo credit: S. Davis



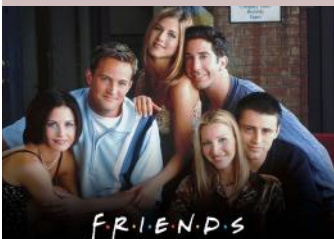
Finishing touches are made the sign by Jonathan Chavez (ZB grad) and Matthew Rittenhouse (ZB junior).



"Principal Livingston has announced that ALL students are required to take the final exams" (page 2).



"Craig Counsell...is the new Chicago Cubs baseball team's manager" (page 4).



"He was such an amazing actor, so it's really sad he passed so soon" (page 4).



"The movie itself was amazing, connecting the dots to other future movies" (page 8).

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Required finals return

By Euriah Williams
Stinger Reporter

As we get closer to the end of the semester, Zee-Bees will once again start to study for finals, and Principal Livingston has recently announced that ALL students are required to take the final exams this December.

For students in the building, this is the first time that finals will be re-

quired for every student. The last time finals were required for everyone was back in the winter of 2019. Once the COVID lock-down was put in place in the spring of 2020, the Governor of Illinois ordered schools to change grading practice to allow students to raise their grades only, meaning that finals couldn't be damaging to a student's grade.

Finals came back in the following year, but only for those students who had less than a 'A' in a course. Last winter administration discussed return to normal required finals, but they ultimately decided not to do so.

The new finals rule returns to required tests counting for 20% of semester grades. (Check out how students feel on page 10.)

Graphic credit: ZB Notice Board

Tuesday (12/19)	Wednesday (12/20)	Thursday(12/21)	Friday (12/22)
Test Taking Skills (2nd) 7:50-8:35	Test Taking Skills (1st) 7:50-8:35	Test Taking Skills (3rd) 7:50-8:35	
1st period 8:45-10:10	2nd period 8:45-10:10	7th period 8:45-10:10	NO SCHOOL
3rd Period 10:20-11:45	8th Period 10:20-11:45	4th Period 10:20-11:45	
5th Period 11:55-1:20	6th Period 11:55-1:20	Test Make-ups 11:50-1:51	

*Buses will take students home multiple times a day.

This year's finals schedule shows test taking skills, final times, and when the busses will run.

Construction comes to IMC

By Jose Zavala
Stinger Reporter

With all of the redesigning, construction, and classes moved this school year, ZBTHS will also be renovating the IMC to create a MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) space. MTSS is relatively new to the school, only having existed for the past few years. The new space will be built around a new study hall area and create one big learning system for Zee-Bee students that need additional help with academics. Now, many students may be wondering, "will this affect any transportation delays in the hallways?" The answer is "no." According to Dr.

Pawelczyk, "It won't affect students in the hallways at all, renovations are staying in the footprint of the IMC."

This will also be big for many Zee-Bee staff members within the IMC, which hasn't been renovated since it was built. When asked about how she felt about the modification to the IMC space, Mrs. Will, the IMC coordinator, says, "I feel hopeful...I am very hopeful that things would turn out in the end better for students and staff."

The IMC will prepare to start the renovations in December. When asked when will it officially begin, Dr. Pawelczyk said, "Look at it in a couple of phases. Phase one starts

this summer. That's because we are taking part of the IMC and creating the MTSS, hopefully it will be done by the time the real renovation happens in the summer of 2025-26."

Over the recent years, ZBTHS the school has constantly been reconstructed and rebuilt anew for Zee-Bee students and staff. Many students are wondering why there have been many renovations constantly coming to the school. When asked, Dr. Pawelczyk says, "It's kind of like all these dominoes falling...we're kind of done with it, but the part of the IMC renovating is the last part of dominoes."

War in Sudan rages on

By Samantha Whitlow
Stinger Reporter

As the war between Palestine and Israel continues to gain exposure in the news, other wars have been increasing in danger, yet few ZB students seem to be aware of them. Such wars include the one in Sudan, an intrastate battle between two military groups. What caused this war, and why is it now being called a "genocide?"

Before this crisis began, another had ended with millions of internally displaced civilians, most put in camps. However, around 80,000 Sudanese citizens were put in neighboring countries. When Omar al-Bashir, the Sudanese leader, had finally been removed after 26 years in 2019, residents had started to become optimistic

of what was to come with their future government. Could this mean the government would finally be in favor of the civilians? That hope died when, two years later, the military revoked their right to rule. This caused a sequence of tragedies that many consider to be a civil war.

Once the military regained their power, it led to immediate chaos in the economic and political area. At the same time, the weather in Sudan was extremely irregular and caused both floods and droughts. This led to the loss of crops and livestock, damaging food production for families and the harming the economy once again.

On April 15, 2023, Rapid Support Forces launched an attack on the Sudan Armed Forces infrastruc-



Fighting in the Sudan leads to residential building fires in Khartoum.

ture. From then on, Sudan has been at war. Over the span of the past 7 months, 3.3 million Sudanese citizens have been forced out of their homes and have had to seek refuge/asylum.

So what can you do to help? Spreading the word about the war is the best thing you could be doing right now as it is not a

very well known tragedy for ZBs. You can also donate to trusted foundations that will send money straight to the affected people; just make sure that they are legitimate.

Elections begin in early states

By Maggie Mae McCarthy
Stinger Reported

Just a couple weeks ago on November 7th, a number of states held their state legislature and governor elections along with a couple special U.S. elections. Although Illinois did not take a part in the election last month, results can give important insight into the upcoming presidential election.

For the most part, democrats took a victory last month. An Ohio ballot measure was won for abortion rights. Red state Kentucky's Democratic governor Andy Beshear was able to maintain his seat. With a promise to support and uphold abortion rights, a democrat won a seat on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, defeating Glenn Youngkin, a possible late entry republican candidate for president. And

finally, just over the border, Wisconsin's supreme court was flipped back to democratic majority.

Additionally, there were also some historic firsts this election. Gabe Amo became the first black member of congress from Rhode Island

in a special election, as well as Cherrelle Parker who became Philadelphia's first female mayor.

Overall, Democrat's did very well this election, and we'll see whether or not it will lend a hand in the presidential election coming up in 2024.

Photo credit: www.azcleaselections.gov



FINALS REMINDERS

ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE FINAL EXAM.

The TEST TAKING SKILLS periods are NOT optional. If you have a study hall during an exam, you must report there.

Free grab & go breakfast and lunch packs will be available. Food will also be available in the North Café 7:30-12:30 (Tues & Wed) and 7:30-10:10 (Thursday.)

Buses will take students home before and after the last exam each day.

ARRIVE ON TIME for your exams; tardy students will not be allowed to enter exams.

If you miss an exam, you MUST contact your teacher immediately to schedule a Thursday make-up exam.

New Cubs manager brings fans hope

By **Abbigail McLaughlin**
Stinger Reporter

Exciting to some but nerve wracking to others, Craig Counsell, the former Milwaukee Brewers Manager, is the new Chicago Cubs baseball team's manager as of the beginning of November. He is expected to bring new skill, strategy, and success to the next couple seasons for the Cubs.

Last year, the Brewers won 9 more games than the Cubs. Fans hope that what Counsell did for the Brewers to bring them that success will come to the Cubs this coming season. Craig Counsell was given a 5-year contract worth \$40 million, making him the highest paid manager in baseball history.

The Cubs fired former Cubs manager David Ross

with a year left on his contract just to hire Counsell. Ross had been the Cubs manager for 4 seasons and also a player on the team prior to that time for 2 years as a catcher in 2014-16. He had a very good record bringing several victories for the Cubs as well as leading them to the World Series victory in 2016.

Apparently, there is no bad blood between Ross and Counsell, David Ross had texted Counsell before the hiring had become public, congratulating Counsell on the new job.

After asking people here at ZB if they think Counsell will be a good manager, all but a few say he will. Senior ZB student Nadia McCabe replied, "Yes, because he had a great reputation as a per-



Photo credit: deadspin.com

Counsell and Ross have coached opposing teams in the past.

son and was runner up for best manager 3 years in a row." Overall, Cubs fans are very interested and in-

trigued to see what Craig Counsell will bring to the team next season and how the players will perform.

Beloved television show actor dies

By **Esmeralda Vara**
Staff Editor

Matthew Perry, a famous actor who was well known as Chandler in the show *Friends* died on October 28th of this year. In light of his passing, many have been revisiting the popular show.

Friends debuted on September 22, 1994 and people loved it for the funny and energetic feeling they get from watching it. In the show, Matthew Perry was known as the character Chandler, and people loved his humor and acting in the show. One of his most iconic scenes was one that wasn't even in the script. In the scene he was cuffed to a filing cabinet and talking to Rachel (Jennifer Aniston). He was explaining something to her as the filing cabinet fell forward and hit the back of his head; as she looked on, Rachel stood in shock covering her mouth

with her hand. It was so real and strangely funny.

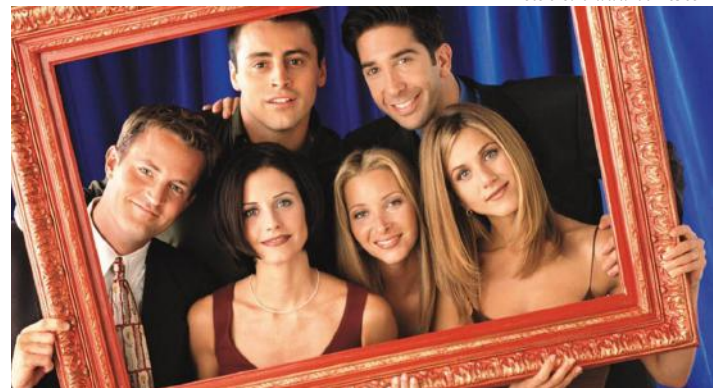
After his death in October, people around the world who watched the show were all heartbroken. Tashi Borko, a ZB senior said that after hearing the news of Matthew Perry's death she was "heartbroken." After his death, she hasn't been able to watch the show very often since "The show doesn't feel the same anymore. He was such an amazing actor so it's really sad he passed so soon. The show will never feel the same." Her favorite Chandler moment was "When he went searching for Monica thinking she was leaving him and he finally found her and pretty much melted."

Ms. Pfeiffer, a history teacher here at Zion has been watching *Friends* for years now. She said "I watched the show more as a kid with my mom, but

I started watching it more after the passing of Matthew Perry." Her reaction to Matthew Perry's death when she found out that he had passed away was expressed with disbelief. She said, "I didn't believe it at first. My mom was the one who called and told me. I started checking news outlets and that's when I saw the headline about his passing. I'm sad that a wonderful actor like him passed away when he was only 54 years old."

Ms. Pfeiffer expressed that she had multiple favorite moments of Chandler, but stands out along the others: "The one that stands out to me the most is when Chandler and Ross were trying to bring a couch upstairs and Ross kept yelling "Pivot!" As someone who has recently moved and tried to carry a couch upstairs with friends, we also found ourselves yelling pivot and anyone can connect to that moment in the show."

Photo credit: www.latimes.com



Winter Festivities by Gloria Myers



December Feature: Giving

Gifts for students' siblings

By **Daniyah Anderson**
Stinger Reporter

Christmas is around the corner, and lots of kids know exactly what to ask for this Christmas. For those who might not have a lot to look forward to, ZBTHS has a solution. Every year, Zion-Benton opens the *Santa Pop-Up Shop* so students can bring some holiday magic to their families. The shop is a school-wide holiday store that is free for Zee-Bees. Students can visit and hand-select gifts for their siblings. It will be located in the South Commons, throughout the school

day during finals week.

It was originally started in Student Services as a little store in the conference room about 5 years ago. It included ZB wear, games, and books, and within the 2nd year it was a great success. It was then moved to the church during the year of COVID-19 because it was a huge deal for everyone in the Zion area. It was originally proposed by Mr. Carlson, whose children had so many toys at home. He realized that some Zee-Bees would love to pick out items for the Christmas holiday that could easily be recycled.

Mrs. Villalobos created the wrapping station, and students of all grades volunteered to help out with the store. Mrs. Villalobos plays a role as the main organizer, and she works hard every year to keep the tradition alive. "I know that it makes a good impact on children," she said, "Many kids rely on these activities, and I always receive feedback that the students and their families love it." She hopes that she's making a difference with the small bit that she is able to do.

Now students, teachers, and parents can donate gently used toys, books, clothing items, and more to the shop. They can also volunteer during finals week to help with the wrapping station, organizing, and much more. Unlike other years, it was for people all over town, but this year will be held for only Zion-Benton students on Tuesday, December 19th, and the items are limited to one gift per sibling.



Donated pop-up shop gifts are collected and stored in this trailer.

Giving is key to ZB culture

By **Rebekah Hampton**
Stinger Reporter

The fires in our hearts grow warmer as the temperature outside drops, and winter is known as the season of giving.

We all have our special ways of giving back to those we love and those who we may not even know, but one way ZBTHS gives is by supporting our local food pantries. When asked, Ms. Will, IMC coordinator and ZBFT treasurer, explained, "The Zion-Benton Federation of Teachers, the union for our classified and certified staff donates to two local food pantries: Giving Point

and Abiding Love. This union-led activity is budgeted through our community outreach efforts. The ZBFT (union) contribution along with additional staff donations create a combined donation of approximately \$2,000 each year."

Especially during the holiday season, food pantries can be a lifeline to those who are less fortunate than us in our community, but what exactly is it that a food pantry does? When asking Jaelyn Hall, a member of the Abiding Love Food pantry, she stated, "We're a free community resource that supplies food for our local residents

like meat, dairy, vegetables, fruits, and more. We try to make everyone who walks in feel like family."

Jaelyn Hall, a Zion-Benton alumna, thoughtfully added, "I like knowing that the school I went to supports such a selfless cause that I get to be a part of." Whether it's a toy given to a child or a feast given to a family, giving will always be a beautiful sight to behold.

Photo credit: R. Hampton



Giving from a global perspective

Photo credit: www.pinterest.com

By **Donnie Anilao**
Stinger Reporter

The American Christmas celebration typically has families and friends gather, give gifts to each other from Santa Claus, and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. However, Christmas traditions differ widely across the world, particularly with what and how they give their gifts.

In January, Russian families either attend church services or, for the non-religious families, have a family gathering. It is New Year's Eve/Day when the big family get-together party takes place. This is because, "For many years under the Soviet Union, Russians couldn't celebrate Christmas openly as religion was discouraged or banned. Those who wished to do so had to carry out their traditions in secret"(wise.com). Common gifts during the Holiday festivities would be liquor, preferably Vodka.

Mexicans celebrate their Christmas traditions with frequent parties from the 16th to the 25th of December in an event called "Las Posadas." The act of celebrating with one's family and/or friends, whether it's feasting on traditional foods like Tamales or Romeritos, or re-enacting biblical scenes, is a greater focus than the act of gift giving, despite Christmas's recent commercialization. Most gifts would be greatly appreciated, but, "Candies are common gifts on Christmas in Mexico"(www.ilspanish.com).

Filipino Christmas, known as "Pasco," gradually starts from September, when the decor is set up in most households, all the way to the end of the week of New Year, where joyful carols still hummed. Christmas starts to be celebrated this early since, "Most Filipinos are Christians with about 80% of people



A parol is a traditional Filipino Christmas star decoration.

being Catholics" (www.whychristmas.com). On Christmas Eve, the whole family would get together, give cards and hand-selected gifts, and have a

feast of Filipino foods like Lechon or Pancit Malabon. However you celebrate the season, The Stinger staff wishes you and your families all the best.



our Two Cents



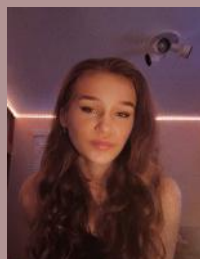
"The best part about giving a gift to someone is seeing the joy it brings them."

Trinity Camara
Editor-in-Chief



"Watching the people who I give gifts to get excited while unwrapping them!"

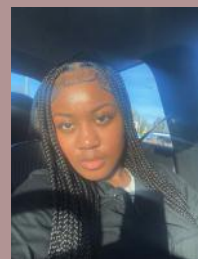
Mia Mitchell
Editor-in-Chief



"The best thing about gift giving is the mutual feeling of appreciation."

Rebekah Hampton
Stinger Reporter

What is the best part of giving a gift to someone?



"Having the opportunity to bring excitement into someone's life."

Euriah Williams
Stinger Reporter

New Blink-182 album still rocks

By Trinity Camara
Editor-In-Chief

The rock band commonly known for their music produced in the 90's, Blink-182, released their newest album, *One More Time...*, on October 20, 2023. The popular band first got together in 1992, but rose to fame in 1999 after the release of their album, *Enema of the State*. The band eventually broke up in 2005 but announced their reunion almost five years later.

The genre of their newest album is considered to be rock or pop-punk. The overall style of the album sounds a bit different than past albums. There are many similarities when being compared to older albums, but there are some slight differences. For in-

stance, it sounds like an updated version of their old songs. It still sounds similar, but it seems as if their music style has been altered slightly to be more relevant.

The new album's setlist contains 19 songs.

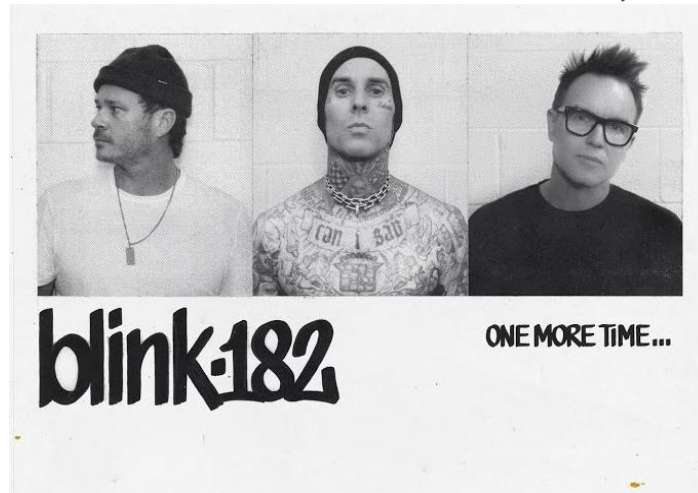
One of the songs on the album, "Anthem Part 3," is a continuation of their past songs, "Anthem," and "Anthem Part 2." When those songs were released, it related to their lives at the time. So the inspiration behind "Anthem Part 3"

was to relate to the band members lives as of now.

The beloved band continues their lives of fame after announcing their 2024 tour. They already toured in 2023 and will continue to do so next year. They will be traveling in multiple different countries outside of the United states. Visit the website, blink182.com for more information about tour dates.

Overall, the newest album has many positives, but it is not as favored as their past albums. It is still very popular though, as it had over 30 million streams within the first week after its release. Try giving it a listen because the album is still enjoyable despite its differences when compared to the band's past albums.

Photo credit: www.youtube.com



MCU puts women in the lead

By Jairo Rojas-Magallon
Stinger Reporter

If you're a Marvel fan, and you've kept up with what the MCU has had to offer, then you've heard of a certain new movie that had gotten hate before it even came out. *The Marvels* debuted in theaters on November 10th. *The Marvels* include, for the first time in a MCU movie, a line-up of entirely female protagonists: Ms. Marvel coming from the TV show *Ms. Marvel*, Carol Danvers AKA "Captain Marvel" from her own movie *Captain Marvel*, and Monica Rambeau from another TV show *WandaVision*. Marvel Cinematic Universe has tied movies together into major movies several times; "Infinity Saga" and "Spider-man" are the most memorable.

This movie has received much backlash for

the fact that the protagonists are simply all female. Some recent reviews about the movie include negative comments like "boring film, felt pointless as part of the marvel franchise because why did they need to make *Captain Marvel 1* in first place. The whole thing feels forced in and pointless," "Apparently they don't need men to spend their money on Marvel movies," and "Dear Disney, thank you for politicizing and ruining MCU. Please stay away from *Star Wars*, *Avatar*, *Alita the Battle Angel* and, if possible, Marvel too." These reviews are just a few of many which argue against the fact that superheroes can be women.

The movie itself was amazing, connecting the dots to other future movies. You'll love to see feminism in the movie from

both the female protagonists and the female antagonists (villains). It's about time that all female superheroes are given the recognition that they deserve.

We did get a glimpse of an all-female superhero team in the war scene of *Avengers: Endgame*, and as the MCU expands we hope to see more live-action or animated movies and shows that include female superheroes and supervillains. Mia Mitchell, a ZB senior, spoke about the protagonists being female and the film's representation of women: "I appreciated it, and I thought the movie was good overall. There was some random stuff in it sometimes, but I thought it was really good, and I appreciate the representation. I thought it should've come sooner."

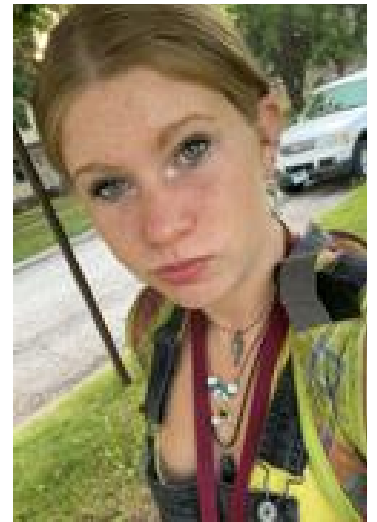
All in all, female su-

Photo credit: www.themoviedb.org



perheroes deserve the recognition just as much as the male superheroes do, not only for the representation and inspiring the future generation of strong women, but also to show empowerment and break down negative and limiting stereotypes.

Zee-Bee Artist Showcase



Clara Kelly

insta: @crafty.tinggs

I usually just get an image in my head or inspiration and then try to create it. I typically have to change my plans and tweak the art as the process moves on so I find making hard plans to be futile. My art is only ever done when I am satisfied with the piece.

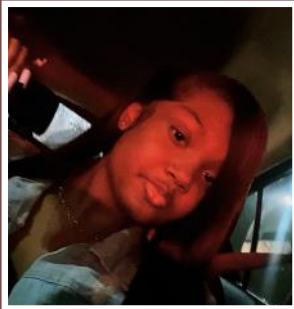


Sydney Wright

I enjoy making people look and feel their best, so portraits on the paper backdrop are fun to do. For my process, the most important thing is making sure I have intent clearly in mind. Good art to me answers, "does it look how it was intended to?" Headshots, studio work, and commercial photography all require me to think of the overall design aesthetic of a project. Hearing that I did a great job keeps me motivated to keep doing it. You can see my work in the CTE wing, the photos on the wall were a project of mine.



ZEE-BEE FOCUS



Na'Ryah Moore

"I feel that finals shouldn't be required, but after-all it's good because it can raise our grades."



Jose Rivera

"I'm a senior this year, and it's my first ever required finals of my life, so I don't really know what to expect."



Fernanda Renteria

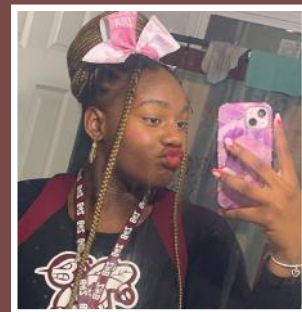
"I think it's unnecessary."

"How do you feel about a return to mandatory finals?"



Robert Blankley

"I don't really like it, probably because I'm not used to it. I believe it should go back to the way it was."



Arianna Kennedy

"I think that having finals back is a good and a bad thing at the same time. With finals you can see your growth from the semester, but also bad because you also have to cram and study for lessons you learned in the beginning of the year."



Jordan Lawrence

"Going back to regular finals is unfair, especially to our students who manage to maintain straight 'A' grades and lose it all due to a test. I would appreciate a compromise between old and new finals."



Antonio Neal

"I don't like it. It's good for kids to not skip it, and it can bring back some normalcy, but I don't like tests especially because stuff at the start of the year isn't remembered as well, and it's worth a lot of the grade."

Holiday program comes to ZB

By **Kassie Barbanida**
Stinger Reporter

As the weather gets chillier and houses are brightly decorated, the holiday season is officially starting. The Performing Arts department is welcoming their 2nd Annual Holiday Spectacular, a collaboration between the band, choir, and theatre programs. The event will bring all of the groups together to perform a whole holiday presentation, from a holiday-themed play to musical performances by the bands and choirs.

All three of the concert bands will perform along with the Percussion Ensemble. The show will begin with the Symphonic Band and all of the choirs performing a combined selection. During intermission, the Jazz Band will perform, and an assortment of foods will be available as well as music and an appearance by Santa. Compared to a typical evening concert, this is a significantly larger production

with over 200 students involved. The band director, Mr. Kazmi, noted, "They are a lot of work, but the payoff is an amazing production that will hopefully sell out."

We will hear a variety of Christmas songs performed by the choir between scenes of the play and band songs. The choirs consist of the Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, Beginning and Advanced Treble Choir, New Tech Choir, and A Cappella Choir, each having their own set list. In addition, there is an all-choir song along with a song performed by all the choirs and choir graduates. The alumni will also join in performing the "Hallelujah Chorus." Antonio J. Neil, one of the many performers, expressed his excitement for "both the songs being performed and the quality of the performance." Everyone involved in the production is working hard to make a cheerful show.

Mrs. Regnier will showcase *Santa and Me*, the first play she has ever

Graphic credit: Kelly Regnier

Event tickets are available to purchase by scanning the QR code.

written, a heartwarming story about believing in Santa. She shared that the Holiday Spectacular is a "great way to start the holiday season." With the success and popularity of the Holiday Spectacular, the performing arts department hopes it will become a pillar in the future.

The Holiday Spectacular is taking place only

one night this year on December 8th at 7 pm. Tickets come out on November 20th at 1 pm and can be purchased on <https://zb-drama.booktix.net/>. Mrs. Rickert remarked, "I know families, the community, students, and faculty that attend will all have an enjoyable time." Be sure to get tickets soon and share the holiday spirit!

Animal rights acknowledged this month

By **Megan Galeana**
Staff Editor

According to www.worldanimalprotection.org, "International Animal Rights Day is a day where animals are honored as sentient beings who deserve the same protections as people."

International Animal Rights Day is a signal to action, insisting that everyone revise their way of thinking towards animals and build a more caring society. The day addresses the need to make sure that all receive the help that they need. Every animal should be cared for and never be forgotten.

According to [nationaltoday.com](http://www.nationaltoday.com), the creator behind international animals rights day stated that, "Since animals cannot protest, vote, or advocate for their own protection, it is the responsibility of the humans to do it for them". It also states that "December 10 was intentionally chosen so that international animal rights day falls on the same day as human rights day." On this day, we have to fight and make sure that everyone has an understanding that every fight, step, words, and other actions you do for the animals you are helping save one or more ani-

mals at a time from danger.

Why are animal protection laws so important? According to www.worldanimalprotection.org, "Animal sentience laws formally recognize what science already confirms: that just like us, animals feel emotions like joy and sorrow. These laws change how we view animals from property to beings worthy of care and respect. They lay the framework for humane policies and encourage a societal shift towards ethical treatment."

The outcome of International Animal Rights Day is to help all kinds of animals. Some ways you

could help and support animals is to "Volunteers at an animal shelter. Animal shelters are always in need of volunteers and this is a great way to show your support for animals rights day. Support organizations that fight for animal rights. Look for organizations that fight for animal rights and support them through donations or volunteer work. These organizations are working hard to protect animals from abuse, neglect, and exploitation" (www.holidaycalendar.io). Looking for a New Year's resolution, consider doing what you can for those in need of help.

Girls basketball program grows

By Mia Mitchell
Editor-in-Chief

Women's basketball has gained so much popularity and growth over the past couple years, especially here at Zion-Benton. With the addition of more teams and staff, the growth has continued into this season.

Not only does the women's basketball program here at Zion have a Varsity team, but this year a Junior Varsity team was added. Mr. Cuttill, Girls Varsity Basketball Coach, stated, "We have a JV team that gets an opportunity this year to practice with the varsity team. This allows us to scrimmage and compete for the first time compared to the last two seasons. The previous two seasons, we didn't have enough players to install offense/defense and then

run a scout offense or defense. Everything we did was on air, and you can't do that at the varsity level or all levels to be honest and be successful."

Clearly, the JV team is not only an example of growth in the program, but will also help the program become more successful and competitive with all of their games this season. Another addition to the program that is worth mentioning is a new member of the coaching staff. "With the addition of the JV team, Coach Jaime Haley had been hired on to coach that team. She is a major addition to the program and we're so excited to have her coaching in the program," Cuttill stated. New players have also had an effective role within the program, like, "Junior transfer from Ohio, Keyvon

Wells, who has made an instant impact on our program," Cuttill stated.

With the addition of new players, coaches, and the new JV team, Coach Cuttill hopes to reach new successes this season. Coach Cuttill explained, "My expectations are that we will continue to push this program forward this season. Last season we won 4 games during the regular season and our first-round playoff game, giving us 5 total wins. One of the expectations this year is that we can double our win total to 10 games."

However, Coach Cuttill also expects to continue seeing successes off the court as well. "The most important expectation of this team is to adhere to our 12 pillars of success. In order to 'Stay with us, Play with us and Win with

us' our student athletes are required to keep their GPA above a 2.0, have good character and integrity and support their teammates academically, emotionally, and mentally throughout the season and school year."

While it obviously is important for the members of the team and everyone within the program to support each other, it's also important for the students to join the Swarm and support our Girls Basketball program. Mr. Cuttill expressed, "We NEED you to come out and cheer on the team at all our home games. From the Libertyville's and all the conference games to the Maine East's and non-conference games. We need to have students packing our stands and cheering on our teams." Let's get out there and cheer on our athletes.

Fall sports awards winners

Cheerleading

Most Spirited: Jordan Gaston

Cross Country Boys

MVP: Alex Damitz
All Conference: Alex Dimitz
Sportsmanship: Jarek Uchick
100% ZBXC Leadership Award: Adam Lara

Cross Country Girls

MVP: Lauren Hamilton
All Conference: Lauren Hamilton
A/C Honorable Mention: Rachel Varcel
Sportsmanship: Aniya Burnes
Leadership: Brionne Webb

Football

MVP: Eric Perteet
All Conference: Rmoni Beals
A/C Honorable Mention: Eric Perteet, Jeffrey James

Golf

MVP: Trent Pelli
Sportsmanship: AJ Neargarder
Hole in 1: Ethan Kozlowski

Soccer Boys

MVP: Booker Brown
All Conference: Booker Brown, Brandon Gonzalez, Jared Sanchez
A/C Honorable Mention:

Ronald Bardeles, David Mendoza
Sportsmanship: Anthony Guerrero
All-State: Brandon Gonzalez
All-Section: Booker Brown
All-Section HM: Jared Sanchez
All-Section HM: Ronald Bardeles
NSC Conference Defensive Player of the Year: Brandon Gonzalez
Most Improved: Ronald Bardeles

Swimming Girls

MVP: Alyssa Rodrigo

All Conference: Alyssa Rodrigo, Aubrey Cedillo
A/C Honorable Mention: Xiomara Almendares

Tennis Girls

MVP: Olivia Gundy
A/C Honorable Mention: Olivia Gundy, Ella Neal
Sportsmanship: Maggie Mae McCarthy

Volleyball Girls

MVP: Kennilyn Alexander
A/C Honorable Mention: Kennilyn Alexander
Sportsmanship: LaNigha Victorian



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