



## 'Our Town' conveys importance of 'living well in community'

Dorothy Leep

Reporter

Illiana's Drama Department presented Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" on Nov. 7, 8, and 9. The performances brought smiles, laughter, and maybe even a tear or two from audiences.

The play's director, Mr. Jeff DeVries, was very pleased with both the cast and crew's performance, saying they turned out "magnificently."

DeVries said he selected "Our Town" last spring because he wanted a play that would help us "to see the good in people and the importance of living well in community." Through this production, that is exactly what happened. Conveying the idea to embrace life was the goal for this performance and according to DeVries, everyone nailed it. DeVries said, "The show

captured the look and feel we were going for; everyone, cast and crews, did their job really well."

During performances, actors who were not performing sat in wooden folding chairs across the back of the stage. The idea came to DeVries and Mr. Jim Kamphuis, the set designer, as a way of further emphasizing the sense of community the play suggests.

"The play is a bit meta-aware of itself," DeVries explained. "As we watch the story, the play makes us well aware that we are in our world watching a play about another world. Pulling 'off-stage' actors onstage was a play on that idea. The students in our program make up their own community, and so we liked the idea of our community being visibly present on stage as we told the story of another community."



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Seniors Adia Falvey (Mrs. Gibbs), Kate Santefort (Mrs. Soames), and junior Annabel Kamphuis (Mrs. Webb) perform in "Our Town" on Nov. 7 to Nov. 9.

Senior Armaan Sen saw the play twice. Sen enjoyed the performance very much. He added that there was the perfect amount of comedy and seriousness through-

out the play. Sen said, "I thought it was the best play here since 'Clue.'"

109 students participated in the production in one way or another.

## Many historical destinations, views, experiences fill annual senior class trip

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

News Editor

The seniors of Illiana gathered at the school at 5:00 am to begin their class trip to Washington DC. The trip was packed with a lot of fun activities that many of the students enjoyed.

Morgan Smith said, "I really enjoyed the trip. My favorite part was watching the changing of the guard [at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier]. I really liked seeing it because you can feel the intensity and importance of the ceremony."

On Tuesday night the seniors arrived in DC and went to the Iwo Jima Memorial, the World War I memorial, and Bugsy's in Old Alexandria to eat pizza for dinner.

On Wednesday they ate breakfast at the hotel then boarded the buses to head to the Shrine

of the Immaculate Conception where they learned about the basilica and got to explore it.

Khiari Robinson said, "My favorite chapel in the crypt of the basilica was Mother Africa because the statues were beautiful and it told a great story."

Next, they traveled to Lafayette Park to catch a glimpse of the White House while Mr. White told them fun stories about Washington DC. Afterwards, they had lunch at the Kennedy Center. The majority of their afternoon was spent visiting various memorials like Lincoln, Vietnam, and Korean. Most students favorite part of the day was talking and interacting with veterans from an honor flight.

Carter Slings said, "I really liked seeing all of the monuments and memorials, and talking to the veterans was really cool. I got to learn a lot of new things from them."

In addition students stopped at Teddy Roosevelt Island where some went on a hike with Mr. White while others stayed back to rest. Students then boarded the Metro and traveled to the Air Force memorial and the 9-11 memorial. For dinner they went to Pentagon city mall.

Thursday morning started with a tour of George Washington's Mount Vernon. After Mount Vernon they headed to Old Alexandria for lunch at Union Street Public House, when students were done eating they were awarded an hour of free time to look around Old Alexandria.

Abbie Ritzema said, "Mount Vernon was my favorite place overall. I really liked walking down to the wharf and seeing the beautiful view of the water."

When their free time was over they went to Arlington cemetery where they got to see the changing of the guard at

the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Four Illiana seniors, Tobey DeVries, Adia Falvey, Hannah Hammer, and Andrew Calix, presented the wreath. After Arlington they headed to Carmines for dinner and to end the night they went on a walking tour to see the Supreme Court, Library of Congress and the Capitol at night.

Friday morning brought a visit to Ford Theater, where President Lincoln was assassinated, and the Petersen house, where he died. After that the seniors had four hours of free time to explore DC.

Grady Logan said, "I really like being able to ride scooters around DC during our free time. It was really fun and freeing."

When their free time was up they all met up to have dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe before starting the two-day journey back home.

## Illiana holds Northwest Indiana Legislative event to talk about school choice

Isabella Wright

Reporter

Illiana hosted a meeting of Northwest Indiana state legislators, local non-public school administrators, teachers, parents, and students on Oct. 29 to discuss the Indiana School Choice Scholarship (otherwise known as the school voucher program) and the effect it has had on families.

During the meeting, several students and parents attested to what an Illiana education has meant to them. These personal stories were meant to illustrate the blessing of a private school education as the Indiana Non-public Education Association lobbies lawmakers to expand eligibility for the School Choice Scholarship.

Currently, the program provides scholarships to eligible Indiana students K-12 to help with tuition costs. Eligibility requirements include that the student reside in Indiana, be older than 5 and younger than 22, and come from a household with a maximum annual income of \$151,256 for two household members (adding \$39,812 for each additional household member).

At this event, legislators were encouraged to make the program universal by removing that income limit, letting parents have further access to choices in their children's education.

The Legislative attendees were State Representative Hal Slager, State Representative Julie Olthoff, State Senator Rick Niemeyer, and State Senator Dan Dernulc. They participated in a Q&A with the panel of parents and students attending.

Illiana is just one of the many of Indiana's non-public schools hoping for a yes in the vote on universal vouchers. Eleven other states have adopted a universal choice program.



## Is 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' Halloween or Christmas movie?

Now that Halloween is over I think it's time to get down to business. There has been a lifelong feud over what holiday is prime for viewing Tim Burton's classic film, "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

I'm here to settle this dispute and put it to rest.

Some very stubborn believers argue that this

Tim Burton movie is a Christmas movie.

I could understand this point of view from a first glance because it has Christmas in the title. However, if anyone has the decency to watch the movie and dive a little deeper, they'll see very clearly that it is a Halloween movie.

**Gabriella Costello**

**Arts and Leisure Editor**

The story's main character is a skeleton for goodness sake. The movie takes place in HALLOWEEN TOWN and follows Jack Skellington as he tries to find what else he can do with his life. He is tired of doing the same thing every year and wants to change things up. He walks through a forest, finds some trees and appears in the Christmas town. He likes the joyous vibe and he strives to capture that. In doing so, he kidnaps Santa. Jack then makes all the townspeople from Halloween Town make presents so he can give them to all the children. Next thing you know the kids are screaming and crying because they have a snake in their stocking or there's a wooden duck with sharp teeth chasing after them.

The movie shows how horribly Christmas goes because Jack is not meant for that holiday and should stay with scaring the kids during Halloween. If you are still considering "The Nightmare Before Christmas" as a Christmas movie, then let me continue to describe who the majority of the characters are. There's Jack Skellington who is a skeleton, Sally Shock who is a disfigured doll, Oogie Boogie who is a burlap sack filled with insects that tries to kill people, and multiple vampires, werewolves, witches and evil creatures. How is that monstrous menagerie not part of a Halloween movie?

Not to mention that the atmosphere and mood throughout the whole movie is dark and gloomy, with bats and black cats (symbols associated with Halloween), pumpkins and tombstones. The visuals and soundtrack match each other for a spooky setting, the haunted and run down houses, that cloudy gray sky, the maggots and insects, the dead plants. The songs in the movie also suggest a Halloween setting, the Oogie Boogie man sings about kidnapping and killing Santa Claus, Jack Skellington sings about the kids in Christmas Town being busy throwing snowballs instead of heads.

Another point is the movie's release date, which just so happened to be Oct. 13, 1993. I don't know about you but that sounds like the film's producers must have considered it a Halloween flick. If I haven't persuaded you into thinking that "The Nightmare Before Christmas" is a Halloween movie, then just ask the director and composer of the movie. Can't argue with facts.

## Illiana's auditorium makes great progress

Isabella Wright

**Reporter**

The new auditorium's progress is looking exemplary with significant strides made over the past few months. Mr. Lance Davids, Head of School, said, "They're putting the roof on right now." The project is rapidly moving toward completion. With the structural framework taking shape, Davids predicts that the building's shell will be fully enclosed by Christmas, allowing work to begin on the interior spaces early in the new year.

On the funding front, the project is also progressing exceptionally well. To date, \$12.1 million has been raised, and the school only requires an additional \$2.9 million to reach its \$15 million goal. The fundraising campaign is scheduled to conclude on January 1st, 2025. If all goes well, Davids is optimistic that the full auditorium will be ready for use by January 2026.



Photo courtesy of AMDG Architects

The architectural rendition of Illiana's auditorium currently being built.

The new auditorium will be a venue able to host numerous events, including the Illiana musicals and plays, the music program's concerts, and chapel. The current plan means that the school's next two major drama

performances will be in the ARC. Afterward, the auditorium will serve as a much-needed replacement, providing more space and improved facilities for the school's performing arts programs.

When asked about the project's progress, Davids said he feels "excited. It's a long time coming now." He emphasized that the new auditorium will benefit not only students and faculty, but also the community.

## Illiana celebrates Veterans Day with veterans

Levi Alons

**Reporter**

Illiana hosted its annual Veterans Day celebration on Nov. 11 to honor veterans. The day included a flag-raising ceremony before school, special devotions, a breakfast for the veterans, and a special assembly that focused on the Honors Flight program.

Mrs. Terri Schaaf planned the day. Many know her as the hot lunch lady, but she is also in charge of special events at ICHS. She has been in charge of this event for the past 4 years, and she counts the days as special as her dad was in the Navy years ago.

Several familiar faces returned this year, such

as former student Nick Olthoff, who returned to raise the flag. Mr. Bill Venhuizen, a retired Illiana history teacher and a veteran who served in Desert Storm, also returned this year. He has never missed a Veterans day celebration here, and he said he was glad to attend again.

Illiana's celebration began nearly a decade ago, the brainchild of Miss Johnson, whose father was also a veteran. Johnson said, "Veteran's Day is one of the most valuable days that we have here because it is an important time for us to acknowledge what the veterans have done, and it's a good reminder for us to not squander the freedoms and the rights that we have."



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Former Illiana student Nicholas Olthoff raises the flag for the veterans.

## Senior service program helps students serve community, gain experience

Joy Ramsey

**Sports Editor**

Senior service is a hands-on learning opportunity for students that has been around since the late 1990s, placing students in positions where they can serve either at an elementary school or a retirement home.

Students serve at Park Place of St. John and Crown Point Christian School. In the next few years, counselor Neil Zandstra, who runs the class, hopes to get into

public schools as well.

Zandstra said, "My goal for this class is that they experience what it's like to help students and work with elderly people and actually be like Christ to them. A lot of older people are lonely and our students bring them joy. And these elementary students look up to our high school kids in a way they don't look up to their teacher because they're younger and they can be great Christian role models to them."

When at Crown Point Christian students make

copies, put together bulletin boards, grade spelling tests and papers, do small group tutoring, and anything else the teacher needs of them. While at Park Place, students do activities like playing board games, teaching technology, bowling on the wii, and generally keeping the residents company.

14 students are participating this year.

To get grades for the class every two weeks students read a section of the book "Exploring Faith and Discipleship" and answer

questions and relate the reading to their service while logging what they learn and do. This book includes chapters by different Christian theologians and authors such as C.S. Lewis and St. Augustine.

Senior Atikilit Bosman said, "I would definitely recommend it to underclassmen. I have grown so incredibly much as a person and I feel that others can too. It is so rewarding to be able to help others even in the simplest of ways."



# Illiana ponds undergoing restoration to increase biodiversity



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Landscapers recently burned off the lawn around Illiana's ponds to allow a planting of native species in its place.

**Levi Alons**

**Reporter**

Have you noticed those circles of dead grass around the ponds? That's no accident. Recently, the Prairie Restoration Work, led by Mr. Sylvester and Mr. Hillegonds, has begun. The project is designed to increase biodiver-

sity on the campus.

The area around the ponds will be brought back to how the land looked when the settlers first arrived and buffaloes roamed the plains. The project is expected to take over six years to complete, as the land will be returned to completely original state.

This was a group idea,

partially inspired by Mr. Hillegonds' affinity for prairies. "Some of my earliest memories are spending time with my dad, who loves prairies," said Hillegonds.

Working with Sylvester on this project are the Honors Biology and the Regular Biology classes, as well as the Integrated Science class, for-

merly known as Agricultural Science. They are currently in the planning stages, researching what types of plants will be planted around the ponds, as well as learning more about them. They, at time of writing, have begun looking into acquiring the seeds.

More than twenty native plant species, all grasses and

flowering plants, will be added to the area around the ponds. No trees or bushes will be included.

"There's always going to be some kind of color there," said Sylvester.

The lawn previously around the pond was sprayed with grass killer to clear room for the new plants. Some of the new plant seeds will be harvested from plants already growing around the school.

The ponds hold water runoff coming from the school grounds to prevent flooding. Sylvester said that the insect and bird population in the land around the ponds will likely increase as a result of this project.

The project is temporarily on hold as the seasons change. The seeds will be planted so that when the snow falls on them, they will sink into the ground as it melts in the spring. Once the plants begin to grow in the spring, they will be mowed for a few years afterward in order to ensure that no invasive and unwanted weeds grow up in their places.

## New electric sports introduced to Illiana students

**Natalie Tambrini**

**Reporter**

Late in October, it was announced that Illiana is forming an esports team that is going to be coached by Mr. Kyle VanderHelm.

Esports, or electronic sports, are a growing activity in the United States. Many colleges and high schools are beginning to offer esports. Esports are treated like typical sports in which tryouts are held and university scholarships can be granted.

Details are still being worked out, so VanderHelm isn't sure when the team will be able to compete. He still is deciding which league the team will play through, which games will be offered, and what equipment will be needed.

VanderHelm said he is deciding between two main high school leagues that offer different games. The team is going to compete in the games Fortnite, Super Smash Bros., and Rocket League.

When asked why he decided to form an esports

team, VanderHelm said that when he was in high school, the only extracurricular activities offered were sports and drama. For people who aren't involved in either, he said that he "wanted to give them one more opportunity" to be involved.

VanderHelm said that 40 students expressed interest in joining the team. Once details about the league, games, and equipment are settled, VanderHelm is going to host tryouts for the team. He is planning on having 2 to 4 players per game for the team.

## Illiana's admissions process begins earlier than usual

**Aneyah Barnes**

**Reporter**

For the first time, Illiana is starting the admission process earlier than in years past.

The process usually starts in October, but because of some challenges faced last year, admissions began a week earlier. Mrs. Jenna Dutton, the school's Director of Admission, is in charge of the admissions process, and she handles everything from open houses to first contact, to follow

up calls.

Dutton explained that the increasing number of students coming from non-partner schools has led her to move the process earlier.

News students who previously attended a partner school (Calvin Christian, Crown Point Christian, Highland Christian, Lansing Christian, and Protestant Reformed Christian schools) can simply apply, but students from other background need to go through an interview with a school board committee as

part of their admission process. The number of such students has increased significantly in recent years.

Dutton said, "We had nearly 56 families to interview last year, and interview nights were being an extra week, it allows us to do 3 time slots with 3 families which is 9 families per interview night."

Dutton added that pastor recommendations are a part of the admission process, and waiting on those recommendations can also slow the process.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior Lydia VanderLaan sits patiently while she gets her blood drawn.

## Annual blood drive beats goal

**Aneyah Barnes**

**Reporter**

On October 29, Illiana hosted a Blood Drive from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and collected 41 units of blood.

Illiana's student council hosted the event where anyone 16 or older could donate blood. The goal was to collect at least 25 units of blood. Student council sponsor Ms. Sara Johnson, who helped organize and run the drive, said, "The event went very well. We collected 41 units of blood, which

will impact 123 lives."

The reason Illiana hosts the blood drive is because the risk of blood shortages is increasing. However, having so many blood donors helps to decrease this risk.

Junior Aliyah Lanting, who donated at the drive, said, "I really liked giving blood. It was very relaxing to get out of class and give blood to people who need it. I would 100% recommend it to other people. It was a very simple process, and it didn't even hurt that much."



# Cochlear implants open world of sound to young girl

Marissa Krause

Feature Editor

Senior Victoria VanderZee, inherited a recessive gene from both of her parents that causes her to not produce enough protein to keep the hairs alive in the cochlea. At age 4, she experienced hearing loss in both ears that was continually getting worse with time. VanderZee said, “We tried hearing aids.... It helped a little bit but my hearing loss was still continually getting worse.” Hearing aids help amplify existing sounds, but for VanderZee, whose hearing was slowly dying in both ears, amplification did not help as the conduit from ear to brain didn’t allow the signal to pass.. So there needed to be another option, cochlear implants.

At age 5, VanderZee went into her first surgery. “My parents were a bit uncertain and did a lot of research to learn more about cochlear implants...; they wanted to choose the right [brand], she explained. There were also some risk factors involved. “My

face could have been numb or deformed a bit if they hit a nerve the wrong way, so it could have been nerve wracking.”

However she explains that as a child she didn’t quite understand what was going on. “I knew I had hearing loss, and I knew I needed surgery but I just remember there was one point where there is this line that the parents can’t cross and you have to cross with the doctors to get to the surgery room, and that was a bit more emotional.”

After VanderZee’s first surgery she was deaf out of the right ear for about two weeks until she first put the sound processor on. “I think when I first put it on it was a lot of noise I haven’t heard before and even walking out of the hospital with it my dad noticed [the difference]. I took a drink out of the water fountain—’oh I can hear the water running’ and ‘oh I can hear my footsteps’—just the little things that I didn’t realize I was missing

## ‘Don’t know what I would’ve done without her’

*Sophomore Brice VanderZee, second in family to need cochlear implants, follows path paved by his sister*

Marissa Krause

Feature Editor

Brice VanderZee, a sophomore and younger brother of Tori VanderZee, also inherited the recessive gene and started

developing hearing loss at a young age. VanderZee said, “I was so young that I don’t actually remember there ever being a realization. I know my hearing started decreasing exponentially but I don’t actually remember it. Tori being first led [my parents



Photo courtesy of Tori VanderZee  
Tori and Brice VanderZee play in the hospital bed after his first surgery.

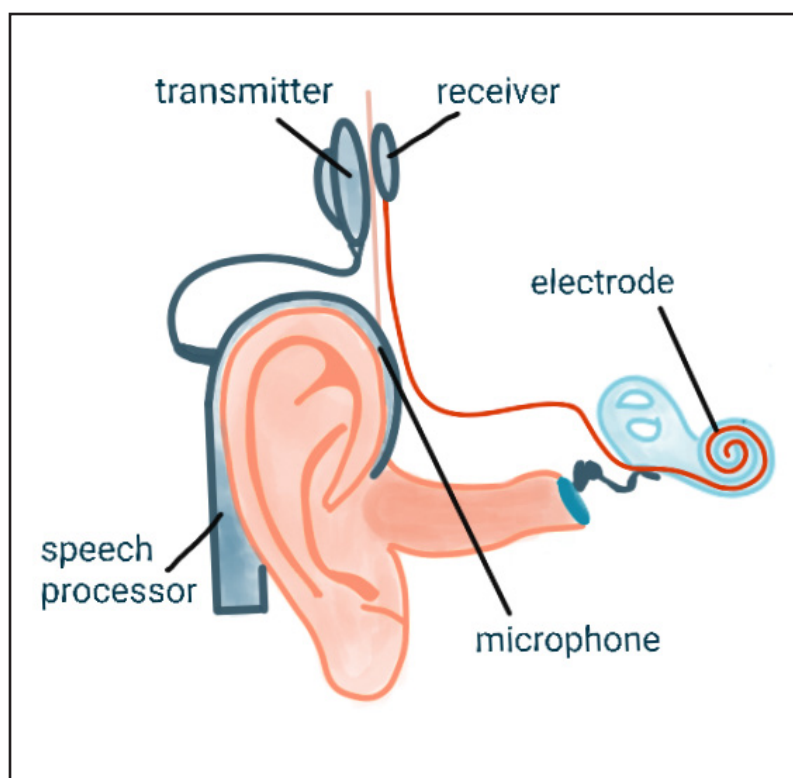


Diagram of a Cochlear implant on the ear

Photo by Brainmatters.nl

out on.” VanderZee eventually had her second surgery at age ten, making her completely dependent on the implants in both ears.

She still has to attend doctors appointments yearly, “Once a year they’ll adjust the pitches in the implant and adjust the volume- they want to get me [hearing] at 100% but I’ll never be at 100% like the normal human ear. But I am like in the high 80s, so I have almost all the normal hearing.” During VanderZee’s freshman year, she needed revision surgery.

and the doctors] to believe it could affect me too. And eventually upon testing by holding an alarm behind me they took notice of my failure to respond and I was declared deaf.”

VanderZee’s first surgery was at age 5, followed by another at age 7. “I don’t remember the age 5 surgery, but I do remember bits from when I was 7. I felt fine the whole time, sometimes kind of happy. It was nice to hear everything louder and clearer. I often tell people that for the first day or so after the surgery, everything sounded like Mickey Mouse and Darth Vader combined. It was weird and uncomfortable. The surgery wasn’t painful, and now I barely notice [the implants] at all.”

Being the second in his family to be deaf, VanderZee felt supported by his sister, Tori. “It was actually very encouraging to have someone close to my age go through all the same things as me. I don’t think about it often, but I don’t know what I would’ve done without her.” VanderZee expresses that he had lots of support from family and friends throughout the entire process. “My parents reacted with joy and enthusiasm that

“There was a defect in the right ear in the inside part of [my implant] some fluids were getting inside of the magnet.” Fortunately for her, doctors caught it right away.

Even though she may be unique, VanderZee makes the best out of it. “I definitely do feel I am different from people because I do need help hearing things and if they fall off I can’t hear out of that ear- so it’s a huge blessing that I am able to hear at all...They’re [also] bluetooth!—like airpods—so it’s pretty fun.”

everything worked, and I was much better off for it.”

Sometimes VanderZee feels the implants are a hassle when doing activities. “It’s a blessing and a curse. It is frustrating to have to wear headbands for sports or take longer to get in the pool and have an increased risk in contact sports. However, they function as 24/7 airpods that teachers can’t take away. I don’t feel uncomfortable swimming with them [either] but it is a bit annoying. My hearing gets considerably worse [in the water], and they fall off fairly often, especially when diving or flipping. It is a hassle to change [the device] to waterproof but it’s just something I deal with now.”

VanderZee’s experiences have inspired him to help others as well. “Sometimes it does seem like a curse and that God hasn’t particularly favored me. However, it remains unknown what the future holds and I know God will be in control...I want to be an ENT (Ear Nose Throat) Surgeon as of right now. I think it would be cool to share my experiences with patients and let them know that they can do anything. It would also be a good opportunity to share the gospel.”

# What are Cochlear implants?

Lydia O’Riley

Editor-in-Chief

According to the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders’ website (Nidcd.nih.gov), cochlear implants are electronic devices that allow deaf or hard of hearing individuals to hear different sounds. Cochlear implants do not restore one’s hearing, they merely create an electrical representation of certain sounds that bypasses the damaged part of the ear as it sends signals to the brain.

The implants consist of an external portion and an internal portion. The external portion sits behind the ear of the person using it, and the internal portion is surgically set under the skin.

There are four parts to cochlear implants:

1.The microphone. This collects the sounds from the environment.

2.The speech processor arranges the sounds that the microphone receives.

3.The transmitter takes the arranged sounds and turns them into electric impulses.

4.The electrode array is a group of electrodes that grab the electric impulses and send them to parts of the auditory nerve.

Cochlear implants work by passing around the damaged areas of the ear and straight to the auditory nerve. The stimulated auditory nerve sends a signal to the brain and the brain picks that signal up as a sound.

Adults and children can get cochlear implants if they are deaf or extremely hard of hearing. Children are able to receive cochlear implants as young as 9 months old.

Nidcd.nih.gov says, “For young children who are deaf or severely hard-of-hearing, using a cochlear implant while they are young exposes them to sounds during an optimal period to develop speech and language skills.”

Cochlear implants require a surgical procedure, as well as a lot of therapy for its recipient to learn or relearn how to hear.

Nidcd.nih.gov says, “Not everyone performs at the same level with this device. The decision to receive an implant should involve discussions with medical specialists, including an experienced cochlear-implant surgeon.”

The implants have been extremely successful for hundreds of thousands of people, and there are teams who continue to work on making cochlear implants more beneficial than they already are.



# Tasteful treats to tickle your taste buds

## APPLE CIDER DONUT BREAD RECIPE @bunsinmyoven

### INGREDIENTS

#### Bread:

2 cups of apple cider  
 ½ cup butter room temp  
 1 cup brown sugar  
 1 large egg  
 1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups of flour  
 1 tablespoon apple pie spice  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 ½ teaspoon baking soda  
 ½ teaspoon salt

#### Topping:

¼ cup melted butter  
 ½ cup sugar  
 1 tablespoon cinnamon

1. Add the apple cider to a saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook until reduced by half, about 20-30 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool while the oven preheats.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter or grease a 9×5 loaf pan.
3. Add the butter and brown sugar to a mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer until light and fluffy.
4. Beat in the egg and vanilla until combined.
5. Add all of the dry ingredients to the mixture along with the reduced apple cider. Stir by hand until just combined.
6. Pour batter into the prepared loaf pan and bake for 50 minutes or until a tester comes out clean.
7. Let cool in the pan for 15 minutes.
8. Remove the bread to a cooling rack set over a sheet pan.
9. Brush the top and sides of the bread with melted butter.
10. Combine the sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl.
11. Sprinkle liberally over the top and sides of the bread to coat, letting excess cinnamon sugar fall to the pan below.
12. Let cool for 1 hour before slicing and serving.



## MINI PUMPKIN SPICE CHEESECAKES @brighteydbaker



### INGREDIENTS:

#### Optional Toppings:

whipped cream  
 cinnamon or pumpkin spice  
 caramel sauce  
 Pumpkin spice coconut rolls

#### No-Bake Pumpkin Spice Cheesecake:

4 ¼ ounces (½ cup + 1 teaspoon) heavy whipping cream  
 10 ounces full-fat block-style cream cheese  
 5 ½ ounces (½ cup + 3 tablespoons) canned pumpkin purée  
 2 ¾ ounces (5 tablespoons, packed) brown sugar  
 pinch of salt

#### Cookie Crust:

5 ¾ ounces (1 cup plus 7 tablespoons) graham cracker or gingersnap cookie crumbs (use gluten-free if desired)  
 3 tablespoons, packed brown sugar  
 2 ¾ ounces (5 ½ tablespoons) salted butter, melted  
 1 tablespoon molasses

2 ½ ounces (½ cup + 2 tablespoons) confectioner's sugar  
 1 tablespoons + ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1 ¼ teaspoons cinnamon  
 ½ teaspoon ginger  
 ¾ teaspoon nutmeg  
 ¾ teaspoon cloves

1. Make the crust: Whisk together the cookie crumbs and brown sugar in a small mixing bowl. Stir the molasses into the melted butter, and then add the mixture to the cookie crumbs. Mix everything together until the mixture is damp and crumbly, like wet sand.
2. Line a standard 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. Scoop about 4 ½ - 5 (loosely packed) teaspoons of the crust mixture into each liner, pressing it down into a flat, compact layer. Chill in the refrigerator while preparing the filling.
3. Whip the cream: using a bowl and a handheld electric mixer, or a stand mixer, beat the heavy cream on medium high speed just until stiff. Chill in the refrigerator while you proceed with the next step. Beat together the remaining filling ingredients: Using a clean bowl/mixer, beat the soft

ened cream cheese until smooth and creamy. Add the pumpkin puree, brown sugar, powdered sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and salt and continue to beat on medium speed until smoothly and evenly combined.

4. Fold in the cream: Use a rubber spatula to gently fold the whipped cream into the cream cheese mixture, continuing just until the two are evenly incorporated, with no streaks remaining.
5. Layer into muffin liners: pipe or spoon the filling over the crust in each muffin liner, making sure it fills the liner completely with no gaps. Use a small offset spatula to smooth out the top surface of each cupcake. Transfer to the refrigerator to set for at least three hours before garnishing and serving.
6. Remove muffin liners: carefully remove the cheesecake cups from the muffin pan (an offset spatula can help you pry them out if needed!) and peel off the paper liners before serving.
7. Top each mini cheesecake with your garnishes of choice and serve!

## PEANUT BUTTER FROZEN YOGURT BITES Foodess.com

### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup greek yogurt  
 2 tablespoon maple syrup  
 2 tablespoons peanut butter

¼ cup roasted salted peanuts  
 1 ½ cups dark chocolate chips  
 1 ½ tablespoons coconut oil  
 Sea salt

1. Prepare Yogurt Mixture: In a bowl, mix Greek yogurt, maple syrup, and peanut butter until well combined.
2. Shape Bites: Using a spoon, drop 12 dollops of the yogurt mixture onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Spread out a bit to the size of a cookie. Sprinkle with peanuts. Freeze for about 1-2 hours until solid.
3. Melt Chocolate: In a microwave-safe bowl, combine dark chocolate chips and coconut oil. Microwave in 30-second intervals, stirring each time, until smooth.
4. Dip Bites: Remove frozen yogurt bites from the freezer. Dip each one into the melted chocolate, ensuring they are fully coated.
5. Add Toppings: Immediately sprinkle with chopped peanuts and a pinch of sea salt while the chocolate is still wet.
6. Final Freeze: Place the coated bites back on the parchment-lined sheet and freeze for another hour or until the chocolate is set.





# Behind the scenes: 'Our Town'

Dorothy Leep

Reporter

When Illiana puts on a play, a lot happens behind the scenes, from auditions the first week of school to the strike after the final production, many things go unnoticed.

The audition process starts way before auditions even begin. Freshmen Hudson Worries and Ella Anczer auditioned for their first Illiana production this past August, one thing they can agree on is that a lot of preparation goes into auditioning. Worries said, "Watching the play multiple times and memorizing the script packets that we were given is the best way to prepare."

Of course, after auditions is when the real work starts for actors. According to senior Kate Santefort, "Memorization is key. I run through my lines hundreds of times."

Individual preparation is just as important as whole cast preparation. Santefort added, "We all sing together even when it's not a sing-

ing show because it truly brings us all together."

Crew preparation is just as important; therefore, there are Saturday workdays. Mr. Jim Kamphuis, the sets director, hosts Saturday work days for the crew to get in and get ready for the production. These days include putting up the stage extension and tech booth, building and painting sets. Kamphuis said, "These Saturdays are nice, peaceful days of uninterrupted work."

Saturday workdays lead to tech week, a set of four rehearsals dedicated to focusing lights, setting light cues, and working out sound issues, both with mics and sound effects. For junior Levi Schutt, the lighting manager, tech rehearsals looked a little different this year. He explained, "We got a new light board, so setting that up is a small challenge, but nothing we can't do."

All of the preparation comes down to three days of performances, but after the final performance comes something magical, the strike. The strike is when everything gets torn down, everything



Photo by Dan Blom

Members of the tech crew get ready for the final rehearsal of "Our Town."

gets cleaned up, and the ARC goes from theater space back to gymnasium. Kamphuis said a play takes "ninety days to build, ninety minutes to take down."

The months of preparation paid off and "Our Town" is now over, but the community that was built bringing it to the stage lasts. Senior Levi Sliemers said, "Everyone here is a part of something big, and we are all so excited to be here."

As a director, Mr. Jeff DeVries put the whole process into motion

last spring when he selected the play and spent time over the summer considering how he wanted the play to look and feel for audiences. DeVries said, "This year with the play 'Our Town' I wanted a play that would let us see the good in people. Our society right now is so divided, and I wanted a play that would draw our attention back to the little things we all share that make life beautiful. These students have done a wonderful job presenting that vision, and I'm very happy with it."

## Fennema's German classes adventure to Chicago for opera

Gabriella Costello

Arts and Leisure Editor

Mr. Fennema, the German teacher, took his students to see "Fidelio" at Lyric Opera in Chicago on Oct. 10. It was an open invite to anyone enrolled in one of his German classes.

"This is not an annual occurrence, so when the opportunity arises you should definitely take it," said junior Maddy Van Beek.

Fennema has taken students to the opera before. When the Lyric performs a German opera, he will frequently try to secure tickets.

Van Beek said, "It was cool to see what we knew being used in the play and see how much of it we could understand. I didn't get much but I knew enough to have fun."

## Unique Thanksgiving traditions celebrated by Illiana students

Gabriella Costello

Arts and Leisure Editor

There are a select few Illiana students that have some peculiar Thanksgiving traditions that you don't see everyday.

For example senior Lydia O'Riley has homemade enchiladas. Marrissa Krause, another senior, makes a French toast and cinnamon roll casserole for brunch. They also have chicken and steak tamales. Susie Sager, another senior, has a Mexican Thanksgiving with skirt steak and other Mexican food. Jori Davids, a sophomore, sometimes has meatloaf instead of turkey or ham. Piper Constantino, a sophomore, has Filipino dishes like pancit and sometimes lechon. Dylan Eenigenburg, a senior, likes to treat himself with a side of squirr and rabbit sometimes. The Buczkowski's, Nicolas and Paul, like to make polish sausages and sauerkraut.

## Illiana's ultimate Thanksgiving meal

111 Illiana students responded to a Thanksgiving poll. The results were close but this is what your peer's chose as your ultimate Thanksgiving meal. Main course is turkey, four sides consisting of stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, mac and cheese, and lastly a croissant or bread roll. To finish, you have a sweet treat of pumpkin pie or cheesecake.



croissant



mashed potatoes and gravy



turkey



mac and cheese



stuffing



pumpkin pie



cheesecake



# Girls wrestling season begins with 2-4 record

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

News Editor

The Illiana girls wrestling team just started its season with a record of 2-4. On Nov. 9, the team had its first sanctioned

tournament here at Illiana where the team fell short to the majority of teams but they were able to pull through with a win over Portage.

Junior Gabriella Costello said, "This first tournament was a good experience but unfortunately we lost to teams that we

had beaten the previous year. This tournament was an eye opener for us to push ourselves to be better wrestlers. And to make it farther this year than we did last."

There have been a lot of improvements so far this season with some girls getting their

first pins. The team is also enjoying good team camaraderie. The wrestlers have many goals for themselves and the team.

Junior Mackenzie Bell said, "My individual goal is to win as often as I can and become a better wrestler every-day through hard work. A goal

I have for my team is to be unified and work as hard as we can during practice and continue to push each other.

Senior Khiari Robinson, "A team goal we have is to get better at conditioning and push ourselves to better athletes and people."

## Boys varsity soccer advances to regional semi-finals

Kenadie Piepenbrink

Sports Editor

The boy's soccer team advanced to the Regional Semi-Final game on Oct. 17, where they fell in a hard-fought battle to Culver Academy by a score of 1-0. The team ended its season with a record of 14-3-2.

Elijah DeGraff, senior, said, "Our success was not achieved this season out of luck. It took a lot of hard work, perseverance, and teamwork. What really made us stand out this year

was our team chemistry and our drive for success. Overall, I am thankful for the opportunity to play for this team and pray that our program continues to grow and develop."

Henry Lenehan, junior, said, "I think that this season we could have done a lot better and it should have gone a lot better than it did, but it is what it is. For next season I plan that we can focus more and work more on getting better rather than messing around. We need to take things seriously and focus on each game, one at a time."

## Antunez makes wrestling comeback after injuries

Lydia O'Riley

Editor-in-Chief

Senior David Antunez has spent the past two years battling injuries during the wrestling seasons. His sophomore year he fractured his shoulder blade, and his junior year, he fractured a vertebrae. Each of these injuries eliminated him from competition for the majority of both seasons.

Despite these injuries, Antunez is back this season, all healed and cleared from his doctor, ready to face his opponents.

To stay prepared and "locked in" for this season, Antunez made sure to go to his brother's wrestling meets and tournaments, as well as watching YouTube videos and TikToks to stay up to date with all things wrestling. He would watch wrestlers in the same weight class as him to make sure that he is able to keep up with them and be at the same level as them.

When going to the wrestling meets and tournaments, Antunez said that there were some discouraging times. Antunez said, "There were

times I would just sit there and think 'Dang, I wish I could be in there with my team, wrestle with them, and be a part of it. It really stunk, but at the same time I knew I was going to be able to come back. I just needed to keep my team motivated, and I tried my best to coach them and give them tips in areas that I know well."

Antunez is trying to prevent another injury this year and to do so he is dialing it back during practice. He said, "I'm only giving it 70-80% [in practice]; I don't want to get hurt. I'm saving my 100% for the state competitions."

As one of the team captains this year, Antunez is focusing on coaching all the wrestlers the best that he can, while incorporating new moves and techniques that he learned during the off season that he never learned at Illiana

"It feels amazing [to be back wrestling]. I'm ready to come for it all. I've been working really hard since I got cleared this summer, and I'm ready for the season to start."



Senior Abbie Ritzema pumps up the team huddle.

Photo by Cayden Peterson

## Girls basketball cruises past Morgan Township

Kenadie Piepenbrink

Sports Editor

On Tuesday, Nov. 12, the girls varsity basketball team had their first game of the season. The team won against Morgan Township by a score of 41-26.

Kennedy Voss, junior, said, "I think that we had a great start to the

season. We worked really hard at practices for our game and it did pay off. I would say that our defense probably won us the game. I think that if we stay disciplined and keep working as hard as we have been, we will be able to do well this year."

Voss said the team's main goal this season is "to live out our covenant ball." The team and coaches have made a series of promises and commitments to God and to each

other, and "covenant ball" is the idea that they will actively and consistently keep those promises and commitments.

The team is planning on working hard at practices and outside of school just like they have been doing, to be able to accomplish another win in the season. Voss said, if everyone is willing to keep up the effort, there's nothing they can't accomplish.

## Illiana junior takes lacrosse outside of gym class

Joy Ramsey

Sports Editor

After doing jiu jitsu, junior Emma Trivette sought a team sport and is now on Crown Point High School's lacrosse team as a midfielder.

She started playing on a team in sixth grade after her dad suggested it to her.

Her coach, Danielle Hillas-Burikas, said she was

the star of the team even then. She soon developed a love for the sport, so she began lessons and eventually joined travel teams.

Trivette said, "I like the relationships that you make with other people. When you're on a team, you all have a common goal and you want to win. When one person is down, you want them to be doing well, so you all come together."

The team began condition-

ing the first week of November and will continue until late January. Then they will practice every weekday when they don't have games.

A highlight for the team that sticks out to Trivette was beating their rival team last year after losing to them by one point on senior night her freshman year. Last season she

ball. This is not talent alone; this is the result of a lot of hard work."

Trivette really likes to focus on lifting her teammates up throughout the season. She likes to do this in a variety of ways. Last year, she gave each teammate a personalized card with Bible verses along with a donut.

**Illiana athletes who play outside school**  
**OUT OF BOUNDS**



was one of the team's leading scorers with 20 goals.

Hillas-Burikas said, "I most appreciate that Emma knows and studies her craft. She works hard in her spare time to build up her skills with stick work outside of our practices. If someone passes the ball to Emma, I have full confidence that she will catch it and subsequently do the right and unselfish thing with the

Trivette also makes sure to lead the team in prayer before every game.

She said, "I just like to do stuff like that to try and at least show them God because I'm not going to force [my faith] on them, but I want to at least introduce it to them. I've had people ask me about it and it opens up a conversation for me to introduce them to God."



# Editorial

## Victor the Viking's Thanksgiving quest that landed him at Illiana Christian

It was the last Thursday of the harvesting season in the Viking village of Dyer, and a feast was being planned for the greatest viking of all time, Victor. Victor the Viking had returned from his quest across the icy sea with an unexpected treat for the feast. On Victor's ship were giant unruly wild turkeys. He decided to call this great feast "The Day of Thanks and Feasting" in celebration of his new favorite poultry. As word spread that Victor was bringing something mysterious to the feast, everyone in the village decided to bring their best dishes.

Freyja, the village mead maker, was bringing a cauldron full of her infamous Mighty Mead. This mead was different from all of her regular schmegular mead. This particular mead made people really loosey-goosey. When Victor went to get the turkeys off of his ship to prepare them for the feast, he realized that they were gone without a trace. He rushed into the village to try to find them but he couldn't ask for help from his fellow vikings because the turkeys were supposed to be a surprise treat for

the feast.

While Victor wallowed in his own self pity, he decided to go to the tavern to drink some mighty mead to deal with the embarrassment he was about to feel when it would be revealed that he had no surprise treat.

In a random corn field called Illiana a nice man named Mr. Vermeulen appeared and saw Victor and invited him into the school.

While everyone was preparing for the feast in the village common grounds, he heard loud gobbling coming from Freyja's tavern. Inside he found a catastrophic mess with mead everywhere and boozy turkeys running around all over the place. If Victor thought those turkeys were unruly before, he was definitely in for a surprise now.

As Victor tried to run and catch the turkeys he slipped on the spilled mead, while the turkeys fled from the tavern into the forest. Victor went on

a wild turkey chase instead of a wild goose chase. Every turkey was crossing the road. Why did the turkey cross the road? Maybe to prove they weren't chickens. Every time Victor tried to catch a turkey, it would just slip out his hands

time and time again. After 30 minutes of chasing the turkey, he was finally able to catch one turkey while the rest got away. After all of this Victor was tired but he still had to prepare the turkey for the feast. As the horns sounded everyone in the village presented their food at the feasting table, and as they eyed the bounty, each began to say what they were thankful for.

Then it was time for Victor to present his special treat for the villagers. The people were gobsmacked; they have

never seen a dish like this before. Since there was only one turkey to eat, it was demolished in seconds, leaving many people hangry for this turkey. The village demanded more, but Victor couldn't provide anymore. All the other turkeys had escaped. This angered them even more. The village decided to kick Victor out and not let him return until he brought back more turkeys for them.

All alone Victor went back across the icy sea to find more turkeys, but he couldn't find any. He knew he would never be able to come home ever again. Although he was sad, he decided to find his new home. In a random corn field called Illiana a nice man named Mr. Vermeulen appeared and saw Victor and invited him into the school. Since Victor was looking for a permanent home, Mr. Vermeulen offered him a very important job. He asked him to be the school mascot. This act of generosity lifted Victor's spirit and made him feel whole again. From that day forward Victor the Viking has been a part of Illiana as well as the founder of the very first Thanks and Feasting celebration.

## What happened to old love?

I will never understand how guys choose to live their relationships in this new love way. I want to be loved the way old love was. Let me explain what I mean.

I don't want to meet someone on snapchat by saying "wyll" or someone sliding into my dms on instagram. I want you to come up to me in person and get to know me.



Joy Ramsey

Sports Editor

I don't want you to ask me out over text. I want you to formally be introduced to my parents and ask me out in person. Similarly, don't break up with me over text and block me the next day. Have the decency to end things in person and not in a hateful fashion. I can't tell if guys are getting more lazy as time goes on or if they really think love should be this way.

If I summed up these two ways of love I would say it's best demonstrated through music. In old love fashion a guy would say, "this song reminds me of you," and it would be a melodic love song. However, in new love they would say a sexually explicit rap song reminded them of me.

Dating "rules" have also taken a major shift over time and it's definitely for the worse. Girls want to be treated by guys following the sidewalk rule, paying for more than just the first date, carrying their purses, and holding the door through the entirety of the relationship. I'm sick of living in a society where the guys act completely differently after the first date or once you start officially dating. All of these rules should apply through the entire relationship. Another little detail; don't text me "I'm here." Come to my door and say hello to my parents. It's really not that hard.

Even little details in a relationship seem to have changed, and I'm not sure if guys even realize it. Calling girls hot, fine, or bad are really not compliments at all. Now on the other hand, calling us beautiful or especially complimenting us on our personalities is what should actually be happening. I want to know how terms have changed too. How can a double date turn into a two man? Is the difference between these terms really different or do guys think this means the same thing?

Don't even get me started on talking stages. If you're already friends before dating, why is this necessary? I can understand if you're strangers and you talk for maximum of a month before you start dating, but if you're turning a talking stage into six months, why are you not asking her out yet?

And most importantly what happened to dating to marry? Hearing guys talking about how they're dating a girl just for fun is disgusting to me. The whole point of a relationship is to find with whom you are compatible to marry. I'm not saying you need to marry your first girlfriend, or that high schoolers should be contemplating getting married anytime soon. I'm just saying that if two people know they'd never be compatible in a marriage, then what's the point of their even dating each other?

Now don't get me wrong some guys live by these old love rules and it's something a lot of girls absolutely adore and want in life. It's really not asking that much and I think it's something all guys need to consider and put into practice when being in or looking for a relationship.

the  
**Echo**

Editor-in-chief

Lydia O'Riley

News

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

Feature

Marissa Krause

Arts

Gabriella Costello

Sports

Kenadie Piepenbrink  
Joy Ramsey

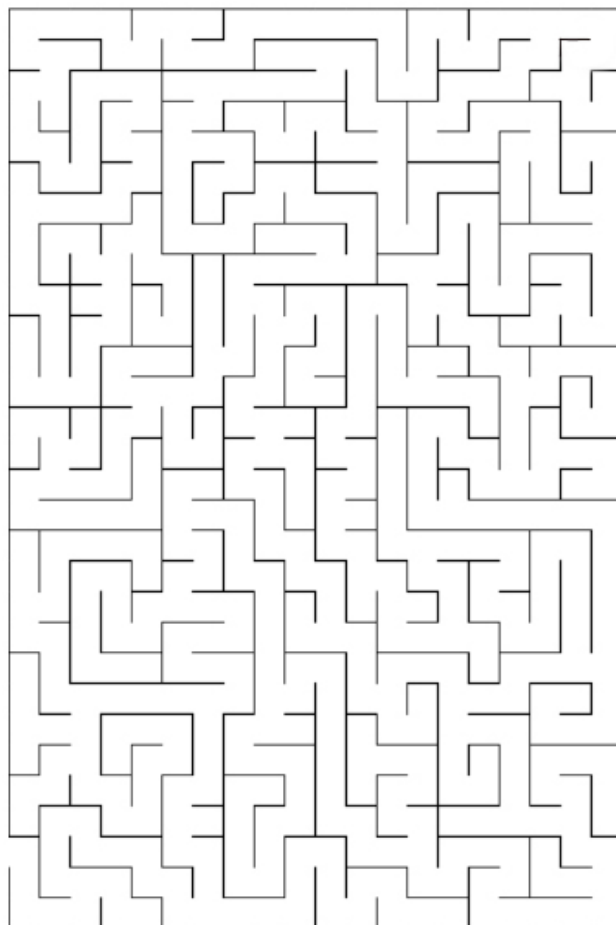
Advisor

Jeff DeVries

Editorials, unless otherwise stated, have been written by an editor and reflect the opinion of the majority of the Echo staff. Opinions expressed are not necessarily that of the administration, faculty, or student organizations.

Letters to the editor can be submitted to the advisor or sent to the school. All letters must be signed and must not exceed 250 words. They will be printed provided there is enough room and content is not offensive to the general public.

Help Victor catch his Thanksgiving turkey!



The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at [illianaecho@gmail.com](mailto:illianaecho@gmail.com)