



# OBSERVER

HAVE WE GOT NEWS FOR YOU...

*Happy  
Valentine's  
Day!*

*Relationship  
Advice!*

*What is Black  
History  
Month?*

*The Tic-Tac-Toe  
Legend*

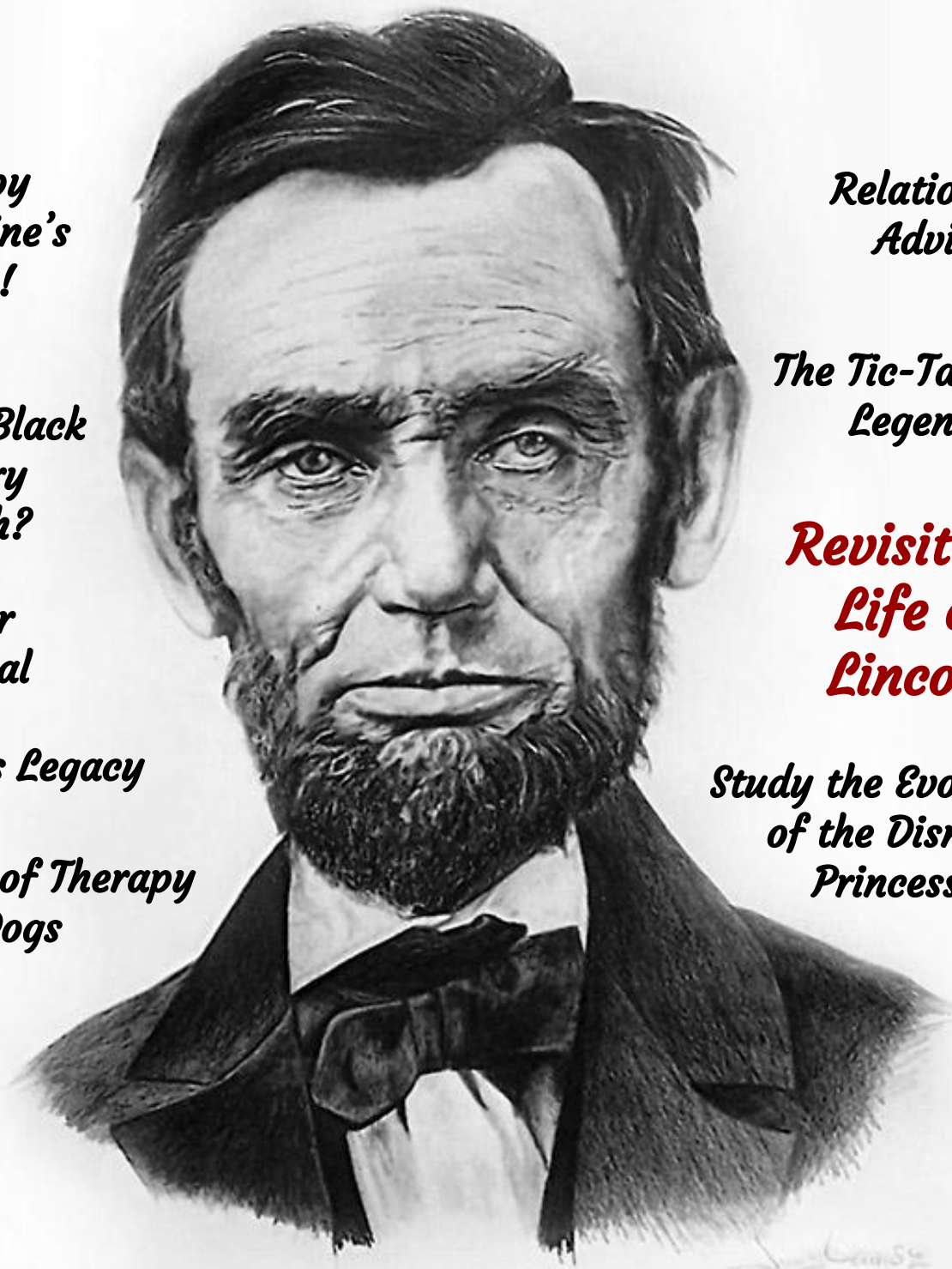
*Senior  
Survival*

*Revisit the  
Life of  
Lincoln*

*Obama's Legacy*

*Study the Evolution  
of the Disney  
Princess*

*Benefits of Therapy  
Dogs*



# FEBRUARY



## Contents

- 3 Announcements
- 4 Black History  
*Jack Castle*
- 5-6 President Obama  
*Alex DeGraff*
- 7-8 President Lincoln  
*Brendan Walsh*
- 9 Jazz at A-A  
*Erin Anderson*
- 10 Behind the Scenes  
*Madge Chroniger*
- 11-12 Faculty Facts  
*Abbey Swackhamer*
- 13 A-A Fears  
*Kalista Calkins*
- 14 Senior Survival  
*Jessica Flaitz*
- 15 Donlon Double: Part 1  
*Justin Berry*
- 16 Academic Stars  
*Madison McCormick*
- 17 Computer History  
*Charles Elliott*
- 18 Disney Evolution  
*Janu Patel*
- 19 Valentine's Advice  
*Cory Olix*
- 20-21 Relationship Hotline  
*Dr. Bill Bacon*
- 22 Puppy Therapy  
*Harry Robshaw*
- 23 The World Cup  
*Dylan Griffin*
- 24-25 Owen's Oscars  
*Owen Curtin*
- 26 Acknowledgements

## Letter from the Editors

Happy Valentine's Day and Black History Month Alfred-Almond! The mission of this year's *Observer* is to provide an entertaining and educational product for the benefit of the students and staff. Valentine's Day has a history of being a somewhat difficult holiday, so our journalists put together some great advice to help you survive the conflict-causing holiday. In case you're preoccupied with school, we also provided you with tips to get through senior year and high school in general: like spending time with well trained therapy dogs. This edition is also packed with incredible articles about Black History Month, Disney princesses, and the legacies of past presidents. No matter what you choose to read, you can be assured a quality article from the writers of the *Observer*. Happy Reading, Alfred-Almond!

*Brendan W.*  
*Jessica Flaitz*

### Have an idea for the paper?

Contact the *Observer* staff:

- Brendan Walsh  
[BW0236@aacsapps.com](mailto:BW0236@aacsapps.com)
- Jessica Flaitz  
[JF2220@aacsapps.com](mailto:JF2220@aacsapps.com)
- Erin Anderson  
[EA1954@aacsapps.com](mailto:EA1954@aacsapps.com)
- Madge Chroniger  
[MC0501@aacsapps.com](mailto:MC0501@aacsapps.com)

## Mission & Vision

### *Have We Got News For You*

It is our mission as the Alfred-Almond *Observer* to provide a well-balanced resource for the purpose of entertaining and informing the Alfred-Almond community. We intend to create an easily accessible and reliable source of both local and national news. It is our goal to leave behind a more informed and knowledgeable student body for years to come.

## Observer Staff

- Editor-in-Chief.....Brendan Walsh
- Editor-in-Chief Lite.....Jessica Flaitz
- Sr. Copy Editor.....Janu Patel
- Copy Editors.....Jack Castle  
Alex DeGraff  
Madison McCormick  
Abbey Swackhamer
- Design Managers.....Justin Berry  
Owen Curtin
- Public Relations  
Managers.....Erin Anderson  
Madge Chroniger
- Staff Writers.....Greg Boardman  
(Bill Bacon)  
Kalista Calkins  
Charles Elliott  
Dylan Griffin  
Cory Olix  
Harry Robshaw



# Dear Alfred Almond

- 2017 Literary Festival entries are due on February 16 by 4 pm. Turn in your original written work to Mrs. Donius in the library for a chance to be recognized for your literary achievements!
- February 9 is National Pizza Day
- SAT Math Review Classes in Mr. Decker's Room from 7-9 PM on February 14, 28, and March 7th
- Mr. Donlon would like to announce his retirement in June of 2033.
- Winter Recess Feb 20-24... No school!
- Don't forget to tune into the 2017 Super Bowl on February 5 and cheer on your favorite team!
- Fun Night will be on Feb. 10 from 4-6pm
- Tune into the 59th Annual Grammy Awards on February 12
- The bump-a-palooza is coming up on March 4. Get your teams made and signed up!!
- The first Academic All-Star match is Tuesday, February 6 at J-T!
- Those interested in doing stage crew should see Miss Acker for more info and a proposed schedule

Love, The Observer

## February Photo Challenge



Find these places around the school! Discover their locations in the next edition of the *Observer*.

## January Photo Challenge Revealed



Left to Right: Elementary entrance to the school above the elementary office, trophy hallway connecting the high school to the elementary, and the art display by the high school main office





# Black History Month

By Jack Castle  
Copy Editor

February is “Black History Month” or “African American History Month.” Many events that represent the impact of African Americans were first recognized globally during the second week of February in 1925. Back then, it was called “Negro History Week.” Carter G. Woodson, who was an African American historian/author and was also one of the first to study African American history, founded the “Association for the Study of Negro Life and History” to highlight the impact African Americans have on civilizations. This week-long event was highlighted by birthdays on February 12 and 14 - President Abraham Lincoln’s and reformer Frederick Douglass’s respectively - that made it easier to understand the importance of what we were recognizing. History lessons followed suit, Black History Clubs sprouted, and progressives took action for equality as a result. Mid-1900’s, the awareness of African Americans’ effects in the United States was enormous. For example, a majority of the white population accepted the African American folk music called Jazz. Additionally, many famous actions, such as the 13th, 14th amendments to the Constitution, and the Emancipation Proclamation, took place during the month of February; therefore, it received the name “Black History Month” in 1976. In his Message on the Observance of Black History Month speech (February 10, 1976), President Gerald Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Therefore, we will now take a look at some of these monumental achievements that have occurred over time in our nation.



**Barack Obama** (1961- Present): The United States 44th president and also the first African American president. These facts reflect how influential African Americans can be. President Obama made it to the highest possible rank in the United States with an immense amount of support. Obama supported equality throughout the nation. He promoted LGBT rights and fought the same-sex marriage bans across the nation. (see page 5 and 6 for more on president Obama, and his influence on the United States)



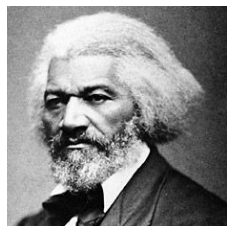
**Jackie Robinson** (1919-1972): Known for his baseball skills, he was named the first African American to join the Brooklyn Dodgers, and the first to play in Major League Baseball or MLB. An honored player and number, in fact the MLB retired his number 42, and was the first pro athlete in any sport to be so honored. The MLB created the tradition on April 15, 2004 called “Jackie Robinson Day” where every baseball player wears the number 42 in honor of his influence on this nation.



**Louis Armstrong** (1901-1971): Renowned for his involvement in composing singing and playing music was a fundamental influence as the common music type now a days called Jazz. Louis was one of the first popular African-American. He was famous because his skin color came second to his taste in music. (Jazz has even influenced classes in High Schools, like ours. See page 9 for a local spotlight on jazz)



**Harriet Tubman** (1820-1913): Also known as “Moses,” Tubman never lost a passenger as she traveled to and from freedom with escaped slaves. After guiding her family to freedom, she liberated more than 700 slaves subsequently. Near the end of her life, she was active in the women's suffrage movement. These courageous actions stood out to the U.S Treasury Department, who has decided to make her the new face, gracing the \$20 bill.



**Frederick Douglass** (1818-1895): An escaped slave who spent the majority of his life fighting for equality, Douglass spoke, wrote, and persuaded through a largely self-taught rhetoric. He was the living proof that slaves were, in fact, smart enough to function as independent and productive American citizens, a common southern argument against emancipation.





# Obama Out

By  
**Alex DeGraff**  
Copy Editor

While much of the media is focused on our newest president, I would like to take a step back to review the history made by our first African American president, in celebration of Black History Month.

Obama's first 100 days were marked by a series of executive orders. As a result of these orders, troops were withdrawn from the war in Iraq. Obama ordered the closing of Guantanamo Bay, but the funds for this were not appropriated by Congress. He also gave more transparency to presidential records in order to give the public more knowledge of the specific actions the government was taking to bolster the then-weakened economy.

Speaking of the economy, the U.S. government passed several measures to ensure the growth of the economy after the subprime mortgage crisis caused a huge recession to happen. Most of these measures were contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, a \$831 billion stimulus package which

increased spending on health care, infrastructure, and education, while also providing the funds for tax breaks, incentives, and direct aid. Economists generally agree that this act did help the economy, as it led directly to job growth, but it is impossible to know if those jobs would have been created without the bill. Overall, under Obama's administration, 11.9 million jobs were created, and the unemployment rate was cut in half, from a high of 10% in October 2009 to the current 4.9% recorded in June 2016.

Another keystone piece of legislation passed during Obama's presidency was the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare. Obamacare has helped over 20 million previously uninsured citizens gain access to health insurance. It has done this by expanding employer coverage and by making it easier for those whose employers do not provide healthcare to obtain it themselves. Additionally, Obamacare gives subsidies to low-middle income households in order to make the insurance more affordable. The act has also led to the expansion of Medicare, a program which helps cover the health care costs of lower income households. This act also required insurance companies to charge the same rates to everybody, regardless of their gender, age, or health conditions. This was funded through an "individual mandate," which fined those who were not insured.

African-American president, Obama was also the first openly pro-gay president. The president championed LGBTQ rights throughout his campaign. He oversaw the expansion of hate crime law to include crimes against the LGBTQ population, as well as the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010, which allowed gays to openly serve in the military. During his second term, Obama urged the Supreme Court of the United States to rule in favor of the legalization of gay marriage, a result which was eventually affirmed by that body in July 2015, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Obama also expanded funds for scientific research and invested in fighting against climate change. He increased funding and support for embryonic stem cell research. He also passed several new regulations on pollution, and invested in sources of renewable energy such as solar panels and wind turbines. Additionally, Obama's administration helped organize and entered the UN's 2015 Paris Agreement, which was signed by nearly every country in the world. Signatories of the agreement have pledged to reduce greenhouse



**Out of Iraq**

*Obama welcomes soldiers returning home from Iraq War*

*Photo from miamiherald.com*

Along with being the first



**The End of an Era**

*Obama's 8 years are up*  
*Photo from torn-republic.com*



# Obama Out, Continued...



## Solar Sea

*Obama gives a speech before solar panels his administration funded*

*Photo from breakingenergy.com*

gases in an effort to curb climate change.

Obama oversaw many changes in foreign policy as well. Obama conducted air strikes on the Libyan government under Muammar Gaddafi, whose authoritarian regime committed war crimes against rebels during a 2011 Civil War. Similarly, he oversaw drone strikes on terrorists in over a dozen nations. These included air strikes on ISIS. Obama also oversaw the task force which killed Osama Bin Laden. Obama and his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, promised a “reset” of relations with Russia, forgiving them for past transgressions and hoping for a new start. This forgiving tone was dropped when Russia invaded and annexed Crimea in 2014. Afterwards, the U.S. and NATO championed sanctions against Russia for its illegal actions. Obama also oversaw the increase of sanctions against North Korea, as a punishment for illegally creating and testing nuclear weapons. While Obama did oversee the increase of sanctions against several nations, he

took actions to decrease some as well. Obama resumed diplomatic relations with Cuba for the first time since Fidel Castro’s communist revolution in the nation. Now, citizens of the United States and Cuba can visit each other’s countries, and certain sanctions have been lifted on items such as tobacco. Obama and his second Secretary of State, John Kerry, also negotiated the Iran Nuclear Deal, which stopped Iran from developing nuclear weapons in exchange for financial compensation.

While Gallup polls indicated that Obama began his first term with a 67% approval rating, and ended his second with a similarly high 59% approval rating, he had an average approval rating of 47%. This was due to a number of perceived issues that plagued his presidency, such as spying on people. Other reasons include IRS, scandal, drone strikes, Obamacare unpopularity, Executive orders, and an unproductive Congress.

While Gallup polls indicated that Obama began his first term with a 67% approval rating, and ended his second with a similarly high 59% approval rating, he had an



## Pride

*White house dons the rainbow after the Supreme Court rules in favor of gay marriage*

*Photo from businessinsider.com*

average approval rating of 47%. These were lowest in August of 2014, at 40%. This was due to a number of controversies that occurred during his presidency. For example, Obamacare proved to be somewhat unpopular, as it forced citizens to pay for health insurance. Additionally, the website to be used to purchase health care was initially slow and poorly managed, making it hard to access the benefits of the new system. The act was also blamed for increasing health care prices. Another scandal included the leaking of documents by Edward Snowden, which revealed that the NSA was working with many communications corporations such as AT&T to record and spy on phone calls and Internet traffic. Additionally, many criticized Obama’s use of automated drone strikes to take out terrorists in countries like Pakistan, which often took out innocent civilians in the process.

In spite of a largely unproductive and partisan Congress, Barack Obama has left a sizeable mark on America’s history as President. He garnered the support of a majority of Americans in both of his elections (53% in 2008 and 51% in 2012.) Much progress was made in health care reform, LGBTQ rights, and renewable energy investments which would not have happened had he not been elected. America has moved past expensive wars and large recessions, and is ready to move onto a new era of history, under Donald Trump, the 45th president of the United States of America.





# THE LINCOLN LEGACY

By: Brendan Walsh  
Editor-In-Chief

Throughout the history of the United States of America, there have been many great men and women who have left a lasting impact on society. Among these men and women are our founding fathers, who took part in the creation of this great country; leaders of civil rights movements, such as Martin Luther King Jr.; leaders of the women's rights movements, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony; and past presidents, such as George Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and many more. Although there are several worth talking about, the month of February is special for one man in particular: Abraham Lincoln. February not only brings about Lincoln's birthday, but also the celebration of Black History Month: a history in which America's sixteenth president served a vital role.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky (now known as Larue County). His grandfather, who was killed by Indians, left Lincoln's father with a tragedy hanging over his head for the rest of his life. Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, grew up with no education. However, he managed to find work as a skilled carpenter and bought three farms in Kentucky. The Lincolns moved to Indiana in 1816, and settled down near Little Pigeon Creek in Perry County (now Spencer County). Here, Abraham grew up on a farm and was not particularly fond of school and education, which he received very little of.

The family then moved to Illinois in 1830 after Lincoln's widowed father married another widow. Shortly thereafter, Lincoln moved to New Salem, Indiana, where he began a life of his own. As Lincoln became older his interest in education became stronger. He eventually became a legislator, then a lawyer, then a U.S. representative. The rise of slavery became a growing problem when he became a U.S. representative. Little did he know it would change his life, and allow him the opportunity to change the lives of many others.

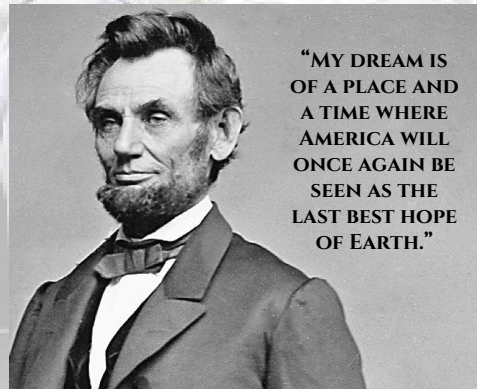
In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, introduced by Stephen A. Douglas. This act allowed for the spread of slavery through the democratic method of popular sovereignty, which is a method of direct democracy allowing for the people of the town to decide on issues. Lincoln had been losing interest in politics up to this point, but the slavery issue reinvigorated his interest. Lincoln was dreading the spread of slavery,

which he believed to be an immoral act.

Lincoln became a U.S. Senator on June 15, 1858, and stated that the nation would either become all free, or all slave. In his 1858 senatorial acceptance speech, Lincoln declared that "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Two years later, Lincoln took his biggest political step when he officially announced his candidacy for President of the United States. Lincoln went on to win the presidential race, beating his competitors: Stephen Douglas, John C. Breckinridge, and John Bell. By the time of Lincoln's inauguration in March of 1861, seven states had seceded from the nation due to differences in political opinion, and Lincoln's victory. Despite his efforts in his presidential acceptance speech to bind the nation together, he would inevitably inherit a divided nation.

This large scale division of the American people would eventually lead to the Civil War, and Lincoln would be faced with perhaps the greatest challenge of his lifetime: waging one of the most deadly wars in American history, in the hopes of reuniting the American people. The American Civil War began on April 12, 1861, at Fort Sumter in South Carolina. This marked the beginning of Lincoln's greatest challenge as president. Lincoln believed that in order to fix this problem of mass secession, he would have to win the war. Lincoln also believed that a general should run the war, placing his faith in General Ulysses S. Grant, in 1864.



Abraham Lincoln *The sixteenth president of the United States of America. Photo from [heads-up.boyslife.org](http://heads-up.boyslife.org)*





# THE LINCOLN LEGACY

## Continued...

### IN THIS TEMPLE

This decision allowed Lincoln to take a smaller role in the war. Before this date, Lincoln exercised his presidential powers to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, which would allow the president to detain anyone without charge, for as long as he felt necessary. Lincoln believed it would help the Northern cause by eliminating opposition. This was one of many criticisms of Lincoln's presidency because he was removing an important Constitutional right. Another major exercise of his influence was through his Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln realized that in a time of peace it would be very hard to introduce the idea of abolishing slavery, but in a time of war, it just might work. Lincoln drafted his Emancipation Proclamation, producing a final copy on January 1, 1863. This proclamation abolished slavery across the United States (made official later by the 13th Amendment), and also allowed blacks to serve in the military.

This provided the North with an increase in soldiers, and also gave the North a new, and stronger moral cause worth fighting for. Northern Republicans fought to end slavery and bind the nation, and Southern Democrats fought to stay seceded. The Emancipation Proclamation fueled the Northern cause, and was a tremendous step for blacks in America. The Civil War ended after General Robert E. Lee and his southern forces were unable to escape Petersburg, Virginia due to the onslaught of Union forces led by Ulysses S. Grant. Lee surrendered, and signed a treaty at the Appomattox courthouse on April 9, 1865. Hundreds of American lives were lost on both sides, but now that the war was over and slavery was abolished, the nation could move forward and try to mend the cracks. Before this healing could take place, however, Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865, leaving the divided nation on the shoulders of another president.

Although Lincoln did not survive long enough to sew the nation back together, he left a legacy of immense value. Lincoln stood in the face of adversity in order to fight for a cause he believed in. He won the Civil War as president, and also abolished slavery - an enormous stepping stone in the history of blacks in America. This freedom from the bonds of servitude was the beginning of the century long fight for civil rights; Black History Month may never have been celebrated if not for this man. He was strong enough to challenge the centuries of enslavement and help his fellow man. Lincoln believed in a basic fundamental value passed on by the founders of this nation: that ALL men, including African Americans, "...are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." ~ The Declaration of Independence



**Battle of the Brothers** This painting is a depiction of a battle from the Civil War between union and confederate soldiers. Photo from [whyguides.com](http://whyguides.com)

The Emancipation Proclamation The document proposed by Abraham Lincoln during the civil war to abolish slavery. Photo from [stufffromthelab.wordpress.org](http://stufffromthelab.wordpress.org)







# Spotlight On The Jazz Band

By Erin Anderson  
Public Relations Manager

## Jazz at home

Jazz has become entwined into our society as a whole, from coast to coast, and has even come back to our school with a new and refreshed class that was reintroduced last year. Alfred-Almond had a jazz band a couple years ago that had been there for at least 10 years on and off and had met during activity mods and sometimes after school, but its numbers dwindled, and it died out for two to three years due to Mr. Bialecki's busy schedule as Athletic Director. He ultimately brought the band back to A-A, so thanks Mr. Bialecki, we once again have our jazz band, and it is starting to thrive. Standard sized bands have two alto saxes, two tenors saxes, one bari sax, four trombones (including one bass trombone), four trumpets (two trumpeters and sometimes have cornets as well), and a rhythm section that is composed of drums, a bass, a piano, and a guitar. (AA already has two altos, two tenors, a bari, two trombones and a euphonium in our Jazz band.) While our current jazz band isn't as large as a standard band., there are people being added every year. Hopefully, we will get there eventually, which would be an awesome sight to see (and sound to hear)!

## Jazz Band Musical Talks

After interviewing the jazz band members, I got valuable points on their views and feelings about

the ensemble. Laertes, grade 9 alto sax player, said, "Jazz band is a great experience, and it helps to relieve stress at the end of the day by playing some really cool music." I agreed that playing jazz music is stress relieving. He continued to say that his favorite pieces that he has played in a concert were "Alao" and "Doxie," and that the music can be more fun than the concert band music. I asked Laertes if he could play any other instrument in the jazz band, what would it be; he responded with, "It would be the drums or the trombone."

When I approached Hudson, grade 11 tenor sax player and asked what he thought about the jazz band, he responded "What is jazz but thinking in sound form man?" In my opinion, jazz is thinking in sound form, so you go Hudson. When asked *Should people join jazz band?* he replied with kind of a joking voice "Only the free spirited should join." Near the end of the interview I asked what other instrument he would play if not his tenor and he answered with "The didgeridoo." (The didgeridoo is a wind instrument, brass instrument from Australia, related to the trumpet.)

When interviewing Isaac, grade 9 euphonium player, I asked what he thought of jazz band, and he replied "Jazz band is fun, challenging and engaging." He continued, "Jazz band is great

practice for concert band, and I recommend joining for the fun and to fill the holes there will be in your schedule next year." When asked how the music compares to concert band, he told me that "Jazz music is more fun, with more swing and jig. Improvising is fun, and allows for experimentation." With jazz, you can have more freedom with how you play the music than with traditional concert pieces. Wondering what instrument he would like to play other than his euphonium, he answered with, "I would want to be able to play the jazz flute, because a jazz flute is super drizzy."

The jazz band we have was very generous for letting me talk to them, they are a very well versed and talented jazz band and we are happy to have them. I encourage them to continue to play with their hearts in their music and enable us to hear it at every concert for the rest of this year and for many more years to come.



A-A's Jazz Band Ensemble

Back row left to right: Attilo C., Ethan H., Isaac L.

Front row left to right: Vianna K., Hudson L., Laertes C., Sam W.

Photo courtesy of Erin Anderson





# The Hidden Mystery Behind The Scenes

By  
**Madge Chroniger**  
Public Relations Manager

In the mass chaos of the theatre world, there are a few things that people tend to overlook. Yes, there are amazing actors, directors, music, and performances that make the show great. But what if I were to tell you that there's a part to the theatre family that is literally working *behind the scenes*? The production team of any performance puts in the same countless hours that the cast does, but without the direct attention that those on stage receive. The production team, or backstage members, include anyone from the crew and stage managers, to lighting and sound techs, to the pit director and pit band. I am here to give you a little insight into what the backstage world looks like.

The backstage jobs that most people know about are the stage crew and stage managers. These people make sure everything goes on without a hitch during the performances. The crew is mainly made up of 5 - 10 people, but it depends on how big the production is. They are in charge of making sure the set pieces and props are put in the right spots for each of the scenes. A stage manager is the person who makes sure the stage crew is accomplishing the tasks that need to be done. They also act as the backstage directors, keeping any of the mishaps that happen backstage under control so that the show goes on. While talking to Erin Anderson, a senior who has been doing stage crew for eight years, she told me that being a part of the crew is a very frustrating job, and it involves a lot of work under pressure in the dark. She brings up the point that without a crew, you don't have a show;



**What the Actors See** *Where the mass chaos of scene changes occur.*

*Photo Courtesy of Madge Chroniger*

these people are the ones responsible for making a story's setting come to life. Head stage manager, Miss Acker, also had some insight as to what a crew member is expected to do while in rehearsals and performances: assist in the scene changes quickly and quietly. There is a lot of work put into planning and executing these fast changes. A crew member also needs to be willing to do whatever is asked, at any time, which may be difficult when taking direction from their peers. Crew and booth members alike need to be observant, take initiative, and be good problem solvers who think quickly on their feet. The members of the light and sound team are referred to as the booth.



**The Prop Room** *most of the costumes that you see on stage are from our prop room in the basement*  
*Photo Courtesy of Madge Chroniger*

They are in charge of making sure microphones are working properly and at the right times. They also have the task of writing cues for the lighting of each scene, which sometimes involves multiple cues per scene. Owen Curtin, a booth member for three years, said that he enjoys his job, and that his favorite part is getting to bond with the rest of the people in booth. As this is Owen's senior year, there will be a lot of training involved to help prepare those who will take over the graduating senior members' places. The wise words Owen would give to those taking over his job next year are, "Don't slack off; don't be a Daniel." (Daniel McMahon is one of the other senior booth members, alongside Owen and Dustin Kinnaird.) Of course all of the guys that work in the booth work as hard as anyone else in the company. They have one of the biggest jobs, making sure the actors and actresses can be seen and heard.

The pit is also an integral piece of the backstage crew. Made up of musicians, a music director, and the show's director, this incredible group makes sure the cast is accompanied with music so they don't have to sing acapella, and even adds a little musical entertainment during the scene changes. The pit band works many hours making sure the music score sounds flawless; and helps to transport the audience into a different place.

As the cast and crew put in the 88 plus hours it takes to organize a performance, we always look forward to seeing how the show we've helped produce will come together.





# The Inside Scoop: Elementary Faculty Edition

Since *The Observer* has been filled with articles featuring the high school faculty, I decided to turn the focus to the elementary side. To learn a little bit more about the faculty that walk the elementary halls, I asked them a series of questions: What is your favorite ice cream flavor? Favorite quote? Dream travel destination? Lifetime goal? Three words describing yourself? Dream Job? Read on to learn more about the elementary faculty!

By **Abbey Swackhamer** Copy Editor

## Mrs. Powers: Art Teacher

**Ice Cream:** Limoncello

**Quote:** "Whatever you are, be a good one." Abraham Lincoln

**Travel Destination:** Greece

**Goal:** To travel the world

**Hobbies:** Printmaking, painting, reading, gardening, sewing, adventuring

**Three Words:** Spunky, creative, strong

**Dream Job:** Professional artist, children's librarian, museum educator

## Mr. Woughter: Principal

**Ice Cream:** Coffee

**Quote:** "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." - Mahatma Ghandi

**Travel Destination:** New Zealand

**Goal:** To see my sons happy and successful in what they do

**Hobbies:** Hiking, reading, working outdoors

**Three Words:** Father, husband, educator

**Dream Job:** Mountain Climbing Guide

## Mr. Dwyer: PE Teacher

**Ice Cream:** Vanilla

**Quote:** "Failure is not fatal, success is not final: It is the courage to continue that counts." - Winston Churchill

**Travel Destination:** Ireland and Italy

**Goal:** Become an Adirondack 46er

**Hobbies:** Fitness, hiking, biking, hunting, kayaking, snowmobiling, skiing

**Three Words:** Optimistic, enthusiastic, patient

**Dream Job:** PE Teacher

## Mrs. Barron: Teaching Assistant

**Ice Cream:** Moose Tracks

**Quote:** "You can do anything, but not everything." - David Allen

**Travel Destination:** Australia

**Goal:** Travelling to Australia

**Hobbies:** Reading

**Three Words:** Friendly, silly, helpful

**Dream Job:** Psychologist



# Inside Scoop, Continued...

## Mrs. Donlon: Kindergarten Teacher

**Ice Cream:** Grasshopper Pie

**Quote:** "Whether you think you can or can't... you're right!" - Henry Ford

**Travel Destination:** Ireland

**Goal:** To raise kind and happy children

**Hobbies:** Running and spending time with family and friends

**Three Words:** Mom, wife, teacher

**Dream Job:** Teaching Kindergarten

## Mr. Weller: 3rd Grade Teacher

**Ice Cream:** Chocolate Peanut Butter

**Quote:** "When you win, say nothing, when you lose, say less." - Paul Brown

**Travel Destination:** Italy

**Goal:** Be the best parent I can be

**Hobbies:** Watching/playing sports, running, reading

**Three Words:** Sarcastic, sedulous, friendly

**Dream Job:** First baseman for the New York Yankees

## Mrs. Hoeffner: 3rd Grade Teacher

**Ice Cream:** Peanut Butter Sundae

**Quote:** "May your troubles be less and your blessings be more and nothing but happiness come through your door." - Irish Blessing

**Travel Destination:** Ireland

**Goal:** Not really a goal for me but it affects me - I would like for a cure for diabetes to be found.

**Hobbies:** Cooking, baking, watching "I Love Lucy"

**Three Words:** Responsible, organized, devoted

**Dream Job:** Owning my own business - bakery maybe

## Mrs. Dwyer: Kindergarten Teacher

**Ice Cream:** Vanilla

**Quote:** "Today was good. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one." - Dr. Seuss

**Travel Destination:** Fiji

**Goal:** Travel to all the states in the U.S.

**Hobbies:** Cooking, quilting

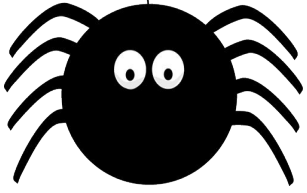
**Three Words:** Happy, patient, caring

**Dream Job:** Other than teaching, travelling to different places around the world

Gym class  
-Cohen  
C.



Llamas  
-Ellasyn  
C.

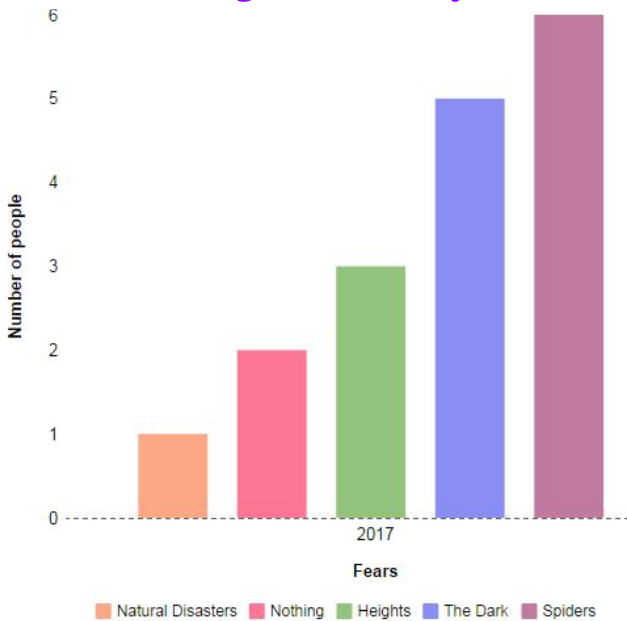


# Fears of the School

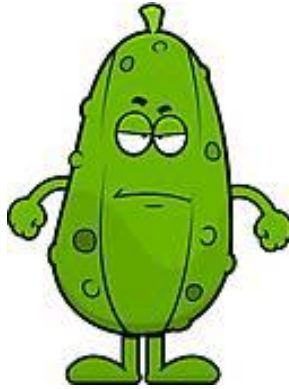
Greetings readers! As I work my way up through the elementary and high school grade levels, I've decided to put a little twist on this article. For my fourth article I wanted to write about second graders', seniors', and teachers' biggest fears. I got some predictable answers as well as some very interesting and fun responses (found in the bubbles). I asked the following question:

*What do you fear the most?*

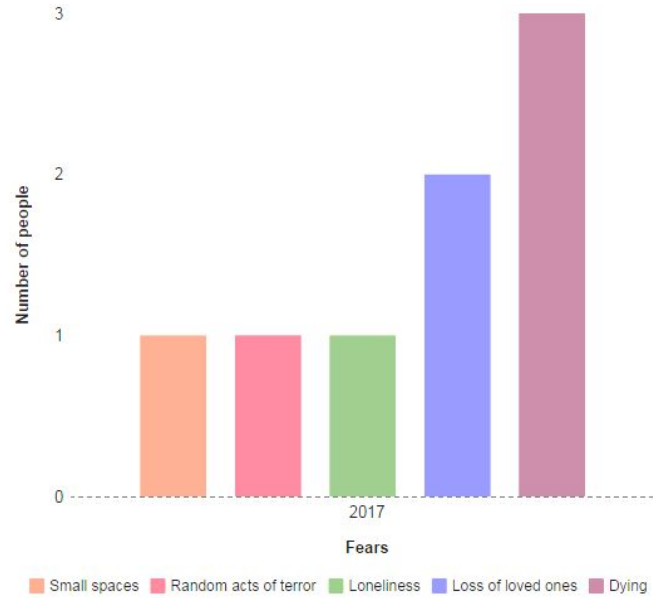
## Second Graders' Top Fears



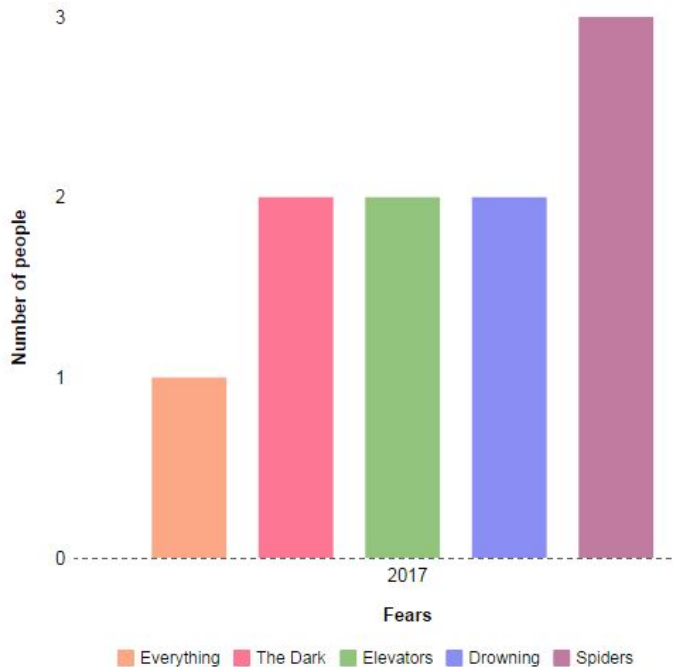
By  
Kalista Calkins  
Staff Writer



## Teachers' Top Fears



## Seniors' Top Fears



Yoda  
-Hannah  
H.



Pickles  
-Allegra  
B.



College debt  
-Brendan  
W.

Brussel Sprouts  
-Ezi  
B.





# Hacks and Facts to Survive

## Senior Year

By Jessica Flaitz  
Editor-in-Chief (Lite)

How exactly does one survive senior year? This seems to be a common question, that doesn't ever have a clear answer. Well, I was getting tired of having no answer, so I decided to take it upon myself and give some advice on the best ways to survive and thrive throughout your senior year.

To start, I interviewed those closest to me...literally. Janu, Abbey, and Brendan helped me look at the simple things in life in order to survive senior year. Abbey's advice: "Lots of naps and dancing." When I first heard this, I was a little surprised at how simple it was, considering senior year can be a very complicated time. Thinking about this a little more, I understood what she really meant. During senior year, with all the stressful decisions that could affect the rest of your life, it's easy to get lost in the sauce. To elaborate a little bit more, it's easy to get overwhelmed and not let loose, so it is good to just have fun sometimes. Therefore, lesson one to survive and thrive throughout your senior year comes from senior, Abbey Swackhamer: **Take naps to help wind down and relax, and when in doubt dance it out.**

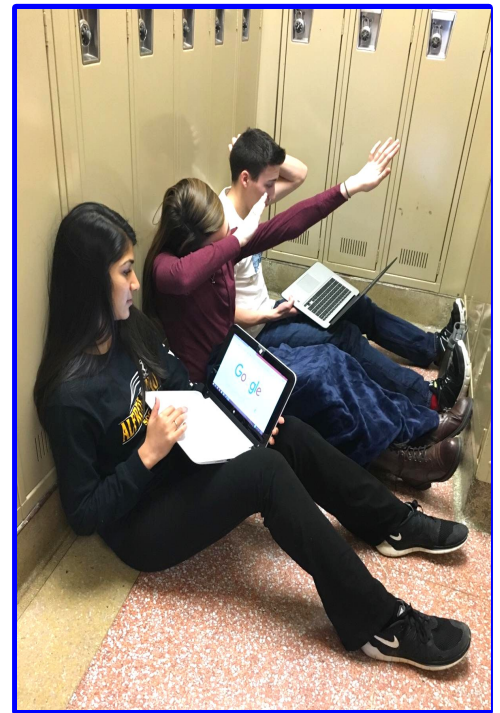
After Abbey, I turned my head to another senior and trusted friend, Janu Patel. I have known Janu since sixth grade when she first moved here from Canada. When I

asked Janu what has helped her get through senior year, she told me, "Laugh and Google." At this point I realized these answers were probably going to be short and sweet, but with a meaning behind them all. I found what she really meant from this advice pretty quickly. So lesson two to survive and thrive throughout your senior year comes from senior, Janu Patel: **Always remember to laugh to relieve the stress, and don't be afraid to use your resources.**

Finally I turned my head to your very own Editor in Chief for the Alfred-Almond Observer, senior Brendan Walsh. Brendan has never failed to surprise me with some of the things he says on a daily basis. Some are good surprises and some are a little peculiar, but that's a different story for another time. When I asked Brendan the same question, I didn't know what to expect. Without even taking some time to think about it he says, "Luck. Nobody knows...not even me." Like I stated above, these answers were very short and required some elaboration and thought on my part. Despite the strange answer, I came to a conclusion and thought it was very good advice in the end. So, lesson three of how to survive and thrive throughout your senior year comes from senior and Editor-in-Chief of the Observer, Brendan Walsh:

**There will be things out of your control, whether it pertains to life or college or sports. Sometimes just letting fate decide instead of stressing about it can be the best thing to do.**

Hopefully these pieces of advice help you if you're a senior now, or help underclassmen in the future. Even if they didn't, always remember to try to avoid the contagious disease of procrastination, stay positive, and enjoy your last year!



*The Office* Seniors Abbey, Janu, and Brendan are hard at work in their office every journalism period. The office is located in the elevator cubby if you need to reach them

Photo Courtesy of Jessica Flaitz



## THIS JUSTIN: DONLON DOUBLE FEATURE

By  
**Justin Berry**  
Design Manager

Siblings don't always see eye to eye but the bond shared between them is unbreakable. Anyone with a brother or sister understands those feelings quite well. Being a twin, I most definitely understand that. This natural connection leads to a great deal of similarities. In this rendition of *This Justin*, I'm going to tell you amazing readers about two teachers who have a great deal in common but still manage to be completely different and fantastic human beings. In these next two articles, we're going to talk about the Donlon brothers. Two teaching rock stars who never cease to amaze.

Now the real question is who should I cover first: Mr. Donlon or Mr. Donlon? In my heart I know that Mr. Donlon is the right choice. Mr. S. Donlon has been my history teacher for the past three years. His passion for the subject and the genuine care he gives to teaching makes it very obvious why I gave him the *This Justin* treatment. Mr. Donlon looks after all of his students like they were his own kids, and hopes to instill in those students the same morality and sense of responsibility he was taught by his own parents. When asked, Mr. Donlon said that his parents played one of the largest roles in making him who he is today. They guided him, loved him, disciplined him, everything a parent should do. It can't be downplayed how necessary it is to have guidance, particularly as a growing teenager. So the way Mr. Donlon treats his students is very inspirational and shouldn't be taken



**Dank Donlon** *Just by looking at him, you can tell Mr. D is a rad guy* Courtesy of **Justin Berry**

for granted. Some advice he has for any students reading this is that success is based on your own happiness rather than material belongings, even though society can make us believe otherwise. This advice helps solidify Mr. Donlon's consideration when it comes to his students.

When asked to describe himself in one word, **optimistic** was the first one to come to mind. Mr. Donlon always tries to see the best in people and situations. Some of his best traits that he characterizes himself as, alongside his immense optimism, are his dependability, trustworthiness and loyalty. All of these characteristics help to show how much of a humble, hardworking man he truly is. Someone you, dear reader, should aspire to be. In Mr. Donlon's free time, he enjoys running, lifting weights, playing guitar and even cleaning the house. His hobbies help to demonstrate the different sides of his personality: his determined side, responsible side, and even his artistic side. A few fun facts about Mr. Donlon are that

he is the **master** of tic tac toe, he's had the same girl since eighth grade, and lastly he was born directly on Friday the 13th, in July. Despite that last fact, he'd probably describe himself as an incredibly lucky person. Speaking of which, make sure to wish him a early birthday next time you see him. Mr. Donlon and his positive influence on everyone he meets cannot be overstated. He teaches his students a lot more than just history, though he's undoubtedly fantastic at that as well. His classes instill an incredible work ethic into anyone who truly wants to learn and grow as a person. Mr. Donlon's Advanced Placement class was personally one of the most enriching experiences I have ever had and I'm sure that the majority of people who took it would agree as well. When faced with Mr. Donlon's intensity and strength of character, it's hard not to be inspired and always try your best. Alongside his incredible heart is a golden sense of humor, every single word that comes out of his mouth during class is comedy gold and I challenge you not to laugh when he's pouring everything into his teachings.

Overall, it was a pleasure to interview Mr. Donlon and describe to you beautiful readers why he's such an extraordinary teacher and person in general. His impact on me in particular just helps to demonstrate how amazing he is. He is a unique blend of funny, stern, and legitimate caring. His brother from the same mother is just as exceptional, but that's for another day. This double feature will be concluded in the next issue. Thank you for reading this first part of the third edition of *This Justin*. See you next time.





# ★ Academic All Stars: An Inside Perspective ★

By Madison McCormick Copy Editor

With four divisional titles and a record of 31 wins and 8 losses in the past six years, Academic All Stars is as successful as most of Alfred-Almond's sports teams, but many people don't know much about it... I intend to change that. One of the first things that people should know is that Mr. Donlon is the advisor and the club meets in his room every activity mod between January and April for

everyone prepare for matches and partially determine who will play in the next match. Questions

correct answer is one of Mr. Donlon's favorite moments with the team.

**"uncultured swines"**

range from academics, to sports, to current events. One of Mr. Donlon's favorite things about the team are the light-hearted and fun-filled practices. One of the ongoing jokes is that whenever no one knows an answer to a question Mr. Donlon thinks we should know, he calls us "uncultured swines." I asked members how they would describe the team in one word, so naturally one of the responses was "uncultured." Some of the other words used to describe the team were, "energizing," "challenging," and "intense."

Another piece of advice I received was about confidence, which is something that players sometimes lack. Sophomore Katy Elliott says "don't always second guess yourself, you might know more than you think." One veteran suggests that downloading *Trivia Crack* and making Quizlets about topics you don't know about are both excellent ways to prepare. As a four year veteran, I like to prepare myself by watching Jeopardy.

**"it gives us a chance to showcase what we know"**

practice. One does not have to be knowledgeable about everything to be a part of the team; every person has something specific that they offer. Different people contributing their different backgrounds are the reason why the AA Academic All Stars team does so well. Sports aficionado Christian Powell states "it gives us a chance to showcase what we know." With a current roster of 40 students, playing time is limited and heavily coveted. The questions asked at practices help

Many players are nervous for their first match; I asked veteran members for Advice on this, and the general consensus was that after the first question, the nerves will start to go away. Since so many students are nervous at their first match, watching those player's reactions to getting their first

**"don't always second guess yourself, you might know more than you think"**

Whether you join the team because older siblings were on it, because you had friends that encouraged you to, or because you think it will be an exciting experience, you are sure to have fun, meet new friends, and create memories to last a lifetime. Regardless of if you plan on ever joining, you can come support the teams at their only home match on Monday, February 27 at 7:15 in the auditorium.

### 3 Minute Round

- 25 questions
- 3 minutes
- Can pass questions
- 1 point for correct answers
- Lose 1 point for incorrect answers
- Both teams do this at separate times



The 2017 Academic All Star Team Photo Courtesy of Alcen

### Buzzer Round

- 25 questions
- First buzzer answers
- 2 points for correct answers
- Lose 1 point for incorrect answers
- 10 seconds for a normal question
- 20 seconds for a math question





# History of Computers Timeline

By  
Charles Elliott  
Staff Writer

**1946.** The first computer was the **ENIAC**, which stands for Electrical Numerical Integrator And Computer, it was basically just a calculator that took up a whole room.

**1950** The **ERA 1101** was one of the first commercialized computer. Mostly used for the U.S. Navy. This was again used as a calculator. This computer could do many calculations such as, Arithmetic, multiplying and dividing, and more. This computer was about the size of a wall.

**1956.** The **Librascope LGP-30**. This was one of the first personal computers, it was basically just a big typewriter, but it was classified as a desk computer. This computer was about the size of a table and very expensive at about \$50,000.

**1964 CDC 6600 Supercomputer**, that could process 3 million instructions per second. 3 million instructions per second meant that it could handle 3 million calculations per second. Since this was a supercomputer, it took up a whole room.

**1974 XEROX PARC alto.** One of the first Graphical user interface, meaning it had a graphic screen. This had a mouse and keyboard as well, it influenced many other computer companies, such as Apple. This computer was a little bigger than the desktops we have today.

**1982 Commodore 64**, manufactured by Commodore Business Machines (CBM), this computer held 64Kb of ram. Sold more than 22 million units, this was sold for \$595. Again about the size of desktops we have today

**1984** Apple releases the **Macintosh**. This was the company's first mass market personal computer. The first mouse driven computer by Apple. The monitor was surprisingly smaller than monitors of today.

**2008 MacBook Air**, a laptop from Apple. This was a thinner as well as lighter model, laptop than other competing companies like Microsoft.

**2011 Chromebooks**, a laptop running a Linux-Based Chrome OS. They have most of their storage in "The Cloud" unlike other computers and laptops that have drive storage. The chromebooks have most of their storage on the cloud. They are cheaper than other laptops as well.





# Evolution of Disney Princesses

By Janu Patel Sr. Copy Editor

The Disney princess empire has been part of many children's lives for 80 years, but as times have changed, so have the Disney princesses. Whether it be their roles as women in society, their personalities, or ethnicities, Disney has created princesses which reflect the cultural norms of their time.

The first Disney princess, Snow White, was created in 1937 and depicted as a “damsel in distress.” She was tricked into going to the woods and then showed her “feminine” traits by cooking and cleaning for the seven dwarfs as they went to work in the mines. She was then tricked again and almost died when she took a bite out of a poison apple and had to wait for “love’s true kiss” to save her. The next two Disney princesses, Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, followed the “damsel in distress” theme where they waited for somebody to save them. They were princesses who were good and obedient. They took what was thrown at them and sang their way through it all while being nice. But in 1989, Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* was created. Ariel was a headstrong, impulsive girl who chased what she wanted. She was portrayed as a heroine when she saved Prince Eric, but continued the “damsel in distress” theme when she needed to find “love’s true kiss” to

regain her voice. Belle, in *Beauty and the Beast* is the only hero in the movie. She saves her dad and ultimately ends up saving the Beast as well. Ariel and Belle are similar in the fact that they are dreamers *and* doers, rather than just dreamers; Belle took daring actions to save her family, whereas Ariel did it for love.

Nonetheless, Disney began to show the shift in the way princesses were portrayed as time progressed. Disney broke through the racial barrier in 1992 when it introduced its first Indian princess, Jasmine. She was portrayed as a strong, independent and witty woman who desired to explore outside the walls of her palace. In 1995, Disney introduced its first Native American princess, Pocahontas, an audacious,

independent, and adventurous women. Three years later Disney created Mulan, the first Chinese princess. Mulan was brave when she disguised herself as her father to enlist in the army because of her father's old age. Mulan’s character empowers women by showing that a woman can do tasks which used to be considered “a man’s job” by being part of the army. Tiana, the first African-American princess was created in 2009. She was a hardworking, ambitious girl with dreams to open her own restaurant. She had a career goal and worked hard to eventually reach it. Moana, the first Polynesian princess was created in 2016, and was portrayed as a fiery and daring teenager unlike the other princesses.

Once upon a time, princesses were depicted as “damsels in distress,” but those days are over. As society has evolved, Disney princesses have mirrored those changes. Linda Wolverton, screenwriter of *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Maleficent* and *Alice in Wonderland*, calls Disney princesses, “a product of their time” and their characters do not stray far from their social representations. As the years go on, and society continues to evolve, what types of princesses can we look forward to? Only time will tell...



**Princesses Transformed** *Disney’s princesses are no longer depicted as petit waisted, timid women, but rather strong, fierce and fit women with goals.*

*Photos from cartoonbros.com and moana.wikia.com*





# Your Guide to the Season of Love

By Cory Olix  
Staff Writer



**Do's and Don'ts** Valentine's Day is soon approaching and you may need some help to make it  
*Photo from InsanityFlows.com*

also do. These gifts are mainly for newish relationships. DO NOT spend too much money because honestly you never know how long this relationship will last.

If your relationship is further along than most, congratulations on making it to this point! In terms of Valentine's Day advice, all I can say is get what you feel is right. Your date will like anything you get them in the end (Well, that's what they like you to think but we all know it's not true.) Perhaps at this point, a trinket or flowers delivered will be the best choices. For anyone at any stage, dinner is always perfect. As long as you don't go to McDonalds, anything halfway decent will do. In my opinion, an Italian restaurant is perfect. Doesn't this just give off a romantic vibe? Well, it's just food, so don't overthink it.

Here is advice from students in Alfred-Almond that give a variety of do's and don't's.

**-“People forget Valentine's Day or go too over the top. My advice would be to judge what you should**

**do on Valentine's Day according to how long you've been with your significant other. If you haven't been together that long, then give them something that both of you could do together. Also, never propose on Valentine's Day.”**

**- “Chocolate is always the answer. Dinner is nice too. Give nice gifts (only if you plan on staying with them - Don't EVER propose on Valentine's Day)!”**

**- “Give them a flower, or ask to take a walk under the stars.”**

This advice supports much of what I've said, besides the proposal part. If you plan on proposing in highschool, my advice is to head down to the School Counselor's Office and talk to your individual counselor about this subject.

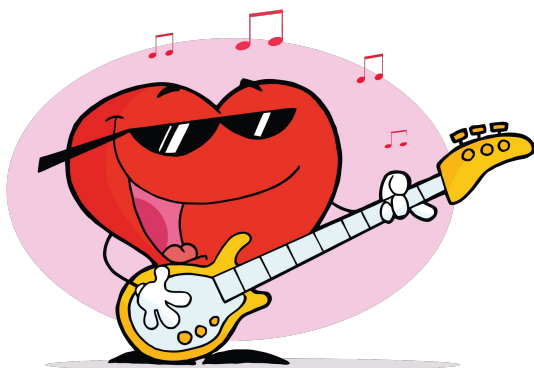
All in all, Valentines Day is not a make or break situation. Whether you stink or do well, it's all up to personal taste and opinion. Your significant other will always appreciate anything you give them, so don't stress. Your relationship is much more than a specific holiday, and if it's not then there's no need to worry. I hope this advice finds you well! Enjoy!



**THIS IS BIG** Your time is now, make Valentine's Day great!  
*Photo from pinterest.com*

To the young people out there, have you ever felt like you stink at Valentine's Day? Well, I've got news for you... it never gets easier. Since many people are tough to please, here are a couple tips from not only me but also some students that voiced their opinions and politely gave advice for those out there who are lost.

First of all, are you with someone on this so called holiday? If not, don't worry about it. And no, I can't get you a date, sorry. If you have been with someone for a short period of time, you're in luck, because this article is all you need. For starters, begin with something small. Once you reach a certain point in terms of gifts, you can never go back. People expect a lot and that will never change. What if next year you really aren't feeling up to this holiday? Well whatever you're feeling, you can never downgrade from the year before. Start with perhaps a card, just a gentle ease into your relationship and gifts. If you don't think a card is quite enough depending on the timing or your emotions toward this person, flowers or chocolate will



**Don't Mess This Up** Some people need particular help for this specific situation  
*Photo from Clipart.com*



# ♥ Relationship Advice Hotline ♥

By  
**Dr. Bill Bacon**  
Doctor and Therapist

Relationships are very powerful and can accomplish wonders, like that time I went to the grocery store and demanded lobster at half price from an employee. He ended up giving them to me for free. When you form a relationship, you have to drive a hard bargain, like I did that taxi into the supermarket. Now they have a taxi, and I have food. Although I secretly borrowed the taxi, and they can too now if they want. Anyway, being a master of relationships as shown, I thought it was only rational to share my experience and advice with the world.

The best way to give you readers more experience in relationships is to see me fix the problems of other people's affairs. One example is a divorcing couple I was an attorney for. I told them, "Sometimes people just aren't right for you and you should take them out of your life completely." Soon after I gave this sage advice, the divorce was rescinded as they were no longer able to find the husband. I can only assume that he decided to rethink the terms and conditions of his relationship after having had this last conversation with his wife.

I have also had experience volunteering as a student of therapy in a far off kingdom of Quite Violent Vikings, Alfred University.



**Hotline** *Artist depiction of my hotline. Secretly borrowed from Starving Artist*

To my surprise, they were shockingly docile, and I found my sword and shield to be useless. My first, and most memorable, case was with Henry and Lucy. They were very open about their emotions and wanted advice. The problem was that they were feeling disconnected from each other. I immediately knew how to solve this dilemma and dove into my bag, bringing out a dozen Chinese Finger Traps with which I used to stick their fingers together. They were silent for a moment and smiled slightly, but were oddly mad when I requested my fee. They didn't pay, the filthy schmucks.

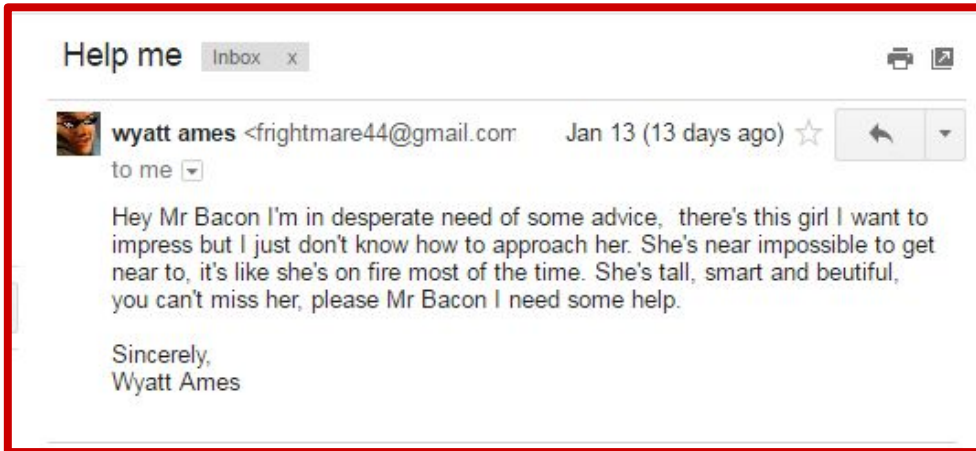
If you want a more recent example of my expertise, my experience with Aidan Looney I had an hour ago is a great example.

After asking for an interview he suddenly became much harder to find and his schedule became increasingly erratic. Eventually, I found him and asked, "Do you need any relationship advice?" -- his answer: "This isn't the time or the place." I then pressed my question again and again, but I wasn't able to hear him through the stall door and the neighboring flushes. I continued my therapeutic session and concluded the biggest problem was that he was very unwilling to admit that there was any problem at all. As a newfound doctor of therapy, I concluded that I could not help someone who denies that a problem even exists.





# ♥ Hotline Continued...♥



**Call for Help** *Lucky for this guy, the doctor was in. Courtesy of myself*

Having a strange shortage of any further volunteers, I went on to check my email, and I had actually received some. The first one was from Larry, titled “Court,” but I knew he was a hopeless case. Never could I even imagine Larry successfully courting a girl. The next email was from Wyatt Ames, with the email shown above. Firstly, good for you for contacting a professional. I too have experience with restraining orders, but I assume you are trying to ask someone out who is on fire. I would recommend greeting her with a powerful white blast from an extinguisher. I think you know how to take it from there. I tried looking for more emails, but most were from some lowly prince

asking for a loan. I also found an email titled “find hot babe” This email offered to take over my service of advice and therapy for free, and it only needed my social security number. Of course, I gave them Larry’s, as I thought he may need the help. Being a Doctor I did not require the services. So I moved on far down the list.

My next email was titled “Valentine’s Day” from Alex Degraff, the Scrooge. It greeted me with, “Hello Crazy Hobo.” This made me question who it was for, but it was in my mailbox, so it had to be for me. I then realized that Crazy Hobo must be an anagram for Arch By Zoo. Why he wants me to go there, I don’t know, but for now I

will answer his email with advice. Dear Scrooge, The best gift to give your girlfriend is on a budget. I for one was able to acquire Valentine’s gifts for free by borrowing flowers from Larry’s garden, although not secretly. You too can borrow flowers from anywhere including public gardens, Larry’s was also public but my prosecutor argues otherwise.

After dealing with the Grinch I tried diving back into the school population for more volunteers, but found that I was suspended for “breaking the peace.” So that brings the end of this article. I know that a hotline technically means that you can immediately receive a response when you contact the service, but it may take about a month for my suggestions and advice to get sent through to you. I do immediately respond; it just takes a month to publish. I should probably pick a better format to run a hotline through.... If you have any questions you can contact me at [ReporterBillBacon@gmail.com](mailto:ReporterBillBacon@gmail.com).





# The Power of the Pups: Golden Relievers



By **Harry Robshaw**  
Staff Writer

There's a new form of therapy on the rise in the U.S. involving people's favorite canine companions! There's no denying that everyone loves a beefy bulldog or a fluffy golden retriever, but did you know that petting a dog can actually be beneficial to your mental and even physical health? A study done by Paws for People says that there many physical, as well as mental, benefits to therapy dogs. Having a therapy dog by your side keeps your blood pressure low, provides comfort and calms people with anxiety and other emotional issues.

Therapy dogs can be especially helpful for victims of traumatic events. According to a story by the National Geographic Channel, after the horrific events that took place in Newtown Connecticut, Tim Hetzner, Leader of the Lutheran Church

Charities K9 Comfort Dog team, took his team of nine golden retrievers and their trainers to Connecticut to help aid the people affected by the Sandy Hook School Shooting. Tim and his team



**Lending a Helping Paw**  
*Libby visiting one of the kids affected by the Sandy Hook shooting*  
*Photo courtesy of David Goldman*

of furry counselors may have traveled nearly halfway across the country, but it made a world of a difference to the kids affected by the unfathomable occurrence that took place.

Tim has made trips all over the country to schools, hospitals, and churches to let the dogs visit with people. He only takes the dogs where they're invited, and is careful to let people approach the dogs on their own terms, in case people are afraid or allergic to dogs.

In most cases, the dogs get across to the children better than adult therapists do, says Tim. More times than not, the kids talk straight to the dog. "The dogs are great listeners and represent unconditional love. They don't judge, ask questions or talk back," says Tim. There are some cases of people with emotional issues living in apartments that prohibit dogs, but would really benefit the company of a therapy dog. To solve this problem, in 1995, the National Service Animal Registry, or NSAR, made it possible to register your animals as an emotional support animal. This allows you to take your animal anywhere in public with you. The only stipulation is that the animal has to be manageable in public, and you have to pay a small charge of \$65.

Then, the NSAR will send you a package full of gear so your dog may be identified as a service dog. After this process is complete your dog can be a registered service dog and go with you everywhere!



**Kilroy Killing Anxiety**  
*Mrs. Chambliss's very own Therapy dog Kilroy comforting.*  
*Photo courtesy of Jeremy Stoelting*





# A World Cup Remix

By  
**Dylan Griffin**  
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, January 11, FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) announced that the 2026 World Cup will be the first World Cup to move to 48 teams rather than 32 teams. The change will wait until 2026 because Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022 are either already in the late qualification stages or have already begun to prepare the host cities for the tournament. The 2026 World Cup is also yet to be obtained by a nation.

The This new format will keep the tournament at the same length of 32 days but will also make the tournament itself better in several ways. The increase in teams will change the format from 8 groups of four to 16 groups of three teams. The top two teams will advance to the round of 32 teams. The number of games will increase from 64 to 80. In my opinion the biggest benefit of the change is that it will allow some of the small teams, like Wales, Egypt, and Tunisia, to qualify for the big event. One of the benefits that doesn't get as much coverage is the financial incentives that come as result of qualification. This gives each country a large sum of money to reinvest in their national teams for the senior level to the underage-11 teams.

## World Cup payout per placement

Finish	Payout
Champion	\$35,000,000
Runner Up	\$25,000,000
Third Place	\$22,000,000
Fourth Place	\$20,000,000
Quarterfinals	\$14,000,000
Round Of 16	\$9,000,000
Group Stage	\$8,000,000

Some of the historic teams to make runs in the World Cup including Cameroon in 1990 World Cup and Bulgaria in the 1994 World Cup. In the 1990 World Cup, Cameroon had qualified at the top of their group with four wins, one loss and one tie. They came into the tournament as an unknown, and the British commentary often butchered the names of the players. Cameroon finished at the top of their group with two wins and an ugly 4-0 loss to the Soviet Union. In the round of 16, they took an excellent Columbia team to overtime before Cameroon ran out of the game 2-1 winners. They then competed against a favorite in the tournament, England. Cameroon was leading the favorites until the 83rd minute, when they gave away a penalty kick that was coolly slotted away to bring the game to 2-2. England would eventually take the lead in the 105th minute as result of another penalty kick. The dream was ended for that team but Cameroon has been to every World Cup since (with the exception of the 2006 World Cup in Germany).

Bulgaria had never won a game in any of their previous matches in any World Cup before 1994. After a hideous defeat in their opening match 3-0 to Nigeria, it looked like the trend was going to continue. However, the Bulgarian National Team rebounded incredibly after the very tough loss with a 4-0 thrashing of Greece. After a 2-0 victory over Argentina, results allowed for Bulgaria to finish second in their



## Russian Bound

*Russia 2018 is the upcoming tournament for summer of 2018. Some of the world's biggest stars will be on display in the nation's biggest cities.*

*Photo from FIFA.com*

group. They played Mexico in the round of 16, where they were even at 1-1 at the end of 90 minutes. Two periods of extra time followed and was played without a goal. Penalty Kicks followed, and Bulgaria won 3-1 after penalties. They then played defending champion, Germany, in the Quarterfinals. There, Bulgaria managed one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history with a 2-1 win. But unfortunately, the semifinals is where their great run came to an end, losing to eventual champion Italy with a final score of 2-1. The Bulgarians still had one last match to play as they competed for third place; they were beaten by Sweden 4-0. After such a successful run in 1994, the Bulgarians have been very unlucky since. The Bulgarians were last seen in the World Cup in 1998, but they have narrowly missed out on every tournament in the 2000s era. The new format on the horizon is one that teams in similar situations will look forward to. The new layout creates the possibility for teams that are similar to Cameroon and Bulgaria to get the funding for their programs to develop into more competitive teams in the future.



# Owen's Academy Award Predictions

By  
**Owen Curtin**  
Staff Writer



It's that time of year again, ladies and gentleman. Every year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts hosts an awards show and presents trophies to represent achievements in acting, directing, cinematography, art direction, and many more. Taking home an Oscar (or Academy Award) has always been considered an honor to anyone who's involved in the industry. No matter how controversial the Academy can be, whether it's the amount of

African Americans getting nominated (like in past years) or the academy playing favorites, winning an Oscar and being in that club of greats is something that many can only dream of.

Leading up to the event, there is much speculation as to what films will win best picture, best actor, actress, etc. The Oscars is covered by news agencies and critics all throughout the nation. The list below reveals who and what I believe will be nominated at the Academy Awards this year. Now let me clarify, these are not my personal picks for favorite picture, actor, cinematography, etc.; these are simply my predictions for the

Academy's nominations and **winners\*** based on film reviews, the Academy's history, and general Oscar buzz. I did not cover all the categories, just a select few that I think are the most interesting. The film titles that are red and have a line through them are films that I thought the Academy would nominate, but didn't. The titles that are green are films that the Academy nominated that I didn't think they would.

**Key**  
**Movie**=Nominations that I thought would happen that did not.  
**Movie**=Nominations that I thought wouldn't happen that did  
**Movie\***=My predicted winner

Best Picture  
**Moonlight\***  
Manchester by the Sea  
La La Land  
Hell or High Water  
Hacksaw Ridge  
Arrival  
Fences  
Lion  
Hidden Figures  
~~Nocturnal Animals~~  
~~Silence~~

Best Adapted Screenplay  
**Fences\***  
Moonlight  
Arrival  
~~Silence~~  
Lion  
Hidden Figures

Best Actor  
**Casey Affleck\***  
Denzel Washington  
Andrew Garfield  
Ryan Gosling  
Viggo Mortensen  
~~Joel Edgerton~~

Best Documentary Feature  
**13th\***  
I Am Not Your Negro  
~~The Ivory Game~~  
~~Weiner~~  
O.J.: Made in America  
Fire at Sea  
Life, Animated

Best Supporting Actor  
**Jeff Bridges\***  
~~Aaron Taylor-Johnson~~  
Marashala Ali  
Dev Patel  
Michael Shannon  
Lucas Hedges



**Near Perfection:** The Jungle Book earned a nomination for visual effects for blending live action and animation almost perfectly. See that puma? Bet you thought it was real. *Photo from imdb.com*

Best Cinematography  
**Arrival\***  
~~Hacksaw Ridge~~  
Silence  
~~Hell or High Water~~  
La La Land  
Moonlight  
Lion

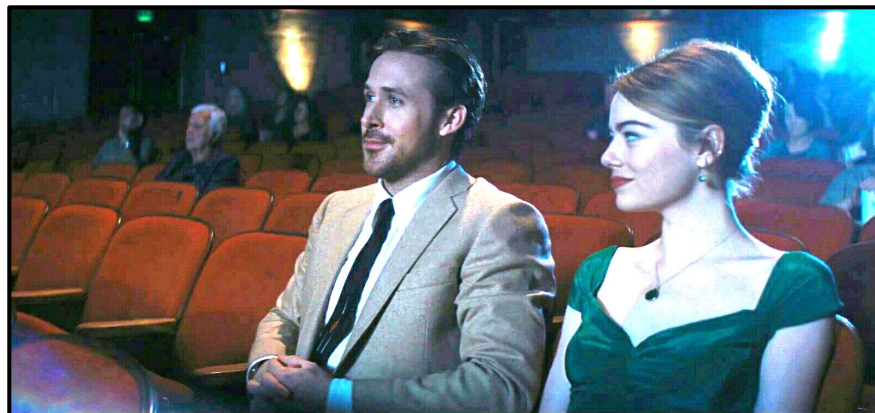
Best Original Screenplay  
**Manchester by the Sea\***  
La La Land  
20th Century Women  
Hell or High Water  
The Lobster

Best Animated Feature  
**Zootopia\***  
Kubo and the Two Strings  
Moana  
~~Your Name~~  
The Red Turtle  
My Life as a Zucchini





## Oscar Picks Continued...



**City of Stars:** *La La Land* earned 14 nominations, tying the record with *Titanic* and *All About Eve*. However, I predict that *La La Land* will win less than what it's nominated for, the competition's just too good. **Photo Courtesy of imdb.com**

Best Actress  
**Natalie Portman\***  
 Amy Adams  
 Emma Stone  
 Hailee Steinfeld  
 Ruth Negga  
 Isabelle Huppert  
 Meryl Streep

Best Director  
**Barry Jenkins\***  
 Kenneth Lonergan  
 Martin Scorsese  
 Damien Chazelle  
 Tom Ford  
 Mel Gibson  
 Denis Villeneuve

Best Original Score  
**La La Land\***  
 Hidden Figures  
 Arrival  
 Moonlight  
 Lion  
 Jackie  
 Passengers

Best Foreign Feature  
**Toni Erdmann\***  
 Neruda  
 Elle  
 The Salesman  
 Divines  
 A Man Called Ove  
 Tanna  
 Land of Mine

Best Achievement in Visual Effects  
**Arrival\***  
 Rogue One: A Star Wars Story  
 The Jungle Book  
 Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them  
 Doctor Strange  
 Kubo and the Two Strings  
 Deepwater Horizon

Best Supporting Actress  
**Viola Davis\***  
 Michelle Williams  
 Naomie Harris  
 Octavia Spencer  
 Nicole Kidman

Best Song  
**City of Stars-La La Land\***  
 How Far I'll Go-Moana  
 This is Your Life-Sing Street  
 Gold-Gold  
 Can't Stop The Feeling-Trolls  
 Audition(The Fools Who Dream)-La La Land  
 The Empty Chair-Jim: The James Foley Story

## Final Thoughts

I was surprised at a lot of the nominations this year. There was some disappointment, some excitement, and a ton of surprise. A big disappointment for me was the lack of love for *Silence*, Martin Scorsese's latest film. I thought the film was brilliant and I expected the Academy to think the same because of the film's smart use of visual symbolism and how it relates to real issues. Scorsese absolutely deserved a nomination for directing; the way he had the protagonist progress through the film was nothing short of genius.

Speaking of direction, I was pleasantly surprised to see Denis Villeneuve earn a nomination. He's relatively new to Hollywood,

so I didn't expect him to get nominated. It's well deserved though; his direction is amazing. What's done in *Arrival* is an example of something that can't be done in any other form of medium. You couldn't do what Denis did in a novel, or a play. He really embraces the filmmaking process with *Arrival*. I didn't expect Villeneuve to be nominated, because of the competition. It's not that other directors this year did a better job than him, but the Academy tends to pick favorites when it comes to their nominations.

An example of this is Meryl Streep's nomination. Don't get me wrong, I think Meryl Streep is a fantastic actress, but the Academy nominates her for nearly every film she does. She has been nominated for twenty Oscars, and

has won three of them. A lot of these nominations could be argued that they're undeserved, this year especially. I think Amy Adams deserves the nomination over Streep; the performance she gave was incredible. The viewer can fully believe her character's passion and devotion in the film. I don't know much about Streep's performance, but it seems that every time she does a film she's nominated, and there are other actresses that should be taken into higher consideration like Amy Adams. These are a few of my final thoughts on this year's Oscar nominations.





# Acknowledgements

By **Madison McCormick** Copy Editor

Thank you **Mr. Mac, Mrs. Bain-Lucey, Mrs. Lehman** and **Mrs. Chambliss** for all of the help in making the semi-formal a success!  
~Abbey Swackhamer

A big thank you to **Miss Karr and Miss Acker** for working hard to help our show come together and making it be a great senior show.  
~Madge Chroniger

Thank you to **Ms. Carretto** and the **Student Government** members for your work with the Food Drive and Winter Clothing Drive. Your use of your roles for showing compassion and helping the community is greatly appreciated and respected.  
~Mrs. Bain-Lucey

Thank you to **Mrs. Bain-Lucey, School Counselors, and Proctors** for helping regents week run as smoothly as possible  
~Jessica Flaitz

**Mrs. Bain Lucey** always wanting the best out of the students and encouraging them to do better.  
~Paige Senear

Big thanks to the **tech department** for putting book trailers on the TV's!  
~Mrs. Donius

A big shout out to the **musical faculty** for helping the people who did All-County auditions and for all the work they do for the music departments at our school and keeping them top notch. You rock **Mr. Bialecki, Ms. Karr, and Mrs. Olix-Anderson**.  
~Erin Anderson

Thank you to the **National Honor Society** for their assistance in setting up and tearing down the semi formal dance. Thank you to following faculty members for their assistance: **Mrs. Bain-Lucey, Mrs. Lehman, Mrs. Chambliss, Mr. & Mrs. Decker, Ms. Carretto, Mrs. Gemmell, Mrs. Shinebarger, and cafeteria staff**.  
~Mr. McAneney

Thank you to **Mrs. Bain-Lucey** for making the senior area larger.  
~Harry Robshaw

**Mrs. Chambliss, Mr. Mac, Mrs. Bain Lucey, and Mrs. Lehman** for all your efforts towards Semi-Formal.  
~NHS

Shout out to the **maintenance crew** for getting the bat out of the library  
~Janu Patel

A big thank you to all the **coaches** putting their best into inspiring and pushing their teams. It's very appreciated!  
~Justin Berry

All the **students** that are doing their jobs. The students are helpful, nice, and follow the expectations of Alfred-Almond.  
~Mrs. Donius

The **staff of the Observer** that does very good work.  
~Sage Empson  
*(Thank you, Sage!)*

Shout out to the **Girls Ski Team** for winning every slalom race so far this season  
~Mr. Bialecki

Thank you to the **teaching staff** for caring about our education and creating a studious environment by banning cellphones in school.  
~Jack Castle