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The Ridellion

November 2022 Vol. LXXV Issue 1

Here's a "Clue" To River Dell Drama Club's Fall Production

by Naomi Roth

Six guests arrive at the remote Boddy Manor for dinner. The main course? Murder and blackmail.

Based on the famous murder mystery board game and the 1985 film adaptation, River Dell's fall production of *Clue* follows six, unsuspecting dinner attendees – Miss Scarlet (Nina Interiano & Katrina Matoni), Mrs. Peacock (Ashley Chang & Gisele Domingues), Mrs. White (Shannon Lynch & Sophia Martinez), Colonel Mustard (Christian Yarrar & Mark Rittgers), Professor Plum (Jeffrey Jeong & Leah Winiger-Cotto), and Mr. Green (Ben Weinberg & Bobby Cook) – as they race to identify their host's murderer. Joining them are the mansion's "uptight" British butler, Wadsworth (Brian DiNallo & Joey Amapani), and French maid Yvette (Gianna Pantano & Chloe Lee). To determine "whodunit?", these amateur investigators take the audience on a journey of comical moments, intense interrogations, and puzzling alibis.



Source: www.pngitem.com

For everyone in the twenty-two-member cast, *Clue* will be their first play. Historically, River Dell Drama Club has trended towards performing musicals, even during the earlier months of the pandemic when their ability to rehearse in person was limited. Last fall, the drama club performed the Broadway-hit *Annie* – a production filled with iconic songs and animated dance numbers.

Thus, the absence of a mu-

sical soundtrack and an intermission – both of which typically appear in River Dell's performances – highlights the importance of, as Ashley Chang, a junior playing the role of Mrs. Peacock, puts, "keeping them [the audience] engaged". The frequency of "new murders" combined with the eccentric, distinctive personalities of each character will help ac-

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Measuring River Dell's New Security Measures

by Audrey Gang

In the beginning of the school year, Mr. Pepe announced that the administration would be implementing several major adjustments to RDHS in order to provide a more secure environment. Of these changes included limiting the entrance to the set of doors in the Oval and only allowing seniors to leave campus for lunch. The policy was made after collaborating with the Oradell Police Department, Mr. Pepe said, who recommended that there be a single point of entry to the school building. The administration is also requiring students to complete a digital hall pass whenever they leave class, a step many schools are moving towards.

We surveyed students' and staffs' opinions on these new security measures through an online Microsoft form, receiving 102 responses in total. Overall, these policies earned an average score of 4.65 out of 10, with 10 being the highest rating. Quite a few respondents

held extreme opinions on the subject: 25% rated it a 1 out of 10, believing that there were no upsides to the new system whatsoever, and 7% rated it a 10 out of 10, seeing no drawbacks at all. Yet the majority had a more neutral stance, recognizing both pros and cons.

Of the changes mentioned, the digital hallway pass seemed to cause the most grievances due to the frequent inconveniences. Many students cited the tediousness of having the complete the form every time they exited and reentered the classroom, which was exacerbated due to the long list of teachers' names they often needed to scroll through before pressing "Submit." "If I really need to go to the bathroom," a student remarked, "the last thing I want to do is fill out a form just to [do it]." Of course, this sentiment is usually magnified by the presence of hallway monitors stationed throughout the building to double check the students' whereabouts.

Teachers who have been hallway monitors have also noted that it is quite tiresome to go through an ever-growing Excel spreadsheet to check the latest student's responses.

Several respondents commented that the digital hall pass was not very secure, either, pointing out a loophole in the form. Since there was nothing to double check the information a student entered, a sophomore commented, it would be easy to circumvent this just by inputting false information into the form. Thankfully, there have been few cases of this throughout the school.

Students also mentioned being uncomfortable with their every move being tracked, even if it is for security purposes. Now, a student has little to no privacy or freedom at all, and it can be aggravating. "We are all 14-18 in high school," a freshman said. "I don't see why we need to fill out a hall pass like elementary school students."

Besides the digital hall-

3. Teacher Last Name *

Select your answer

- Aliano, M.
- Altman, S.
- Alvarez, D.
- Anneccchino A.
- Anneccchino K.
- Arlak, K.
- Baranello, N.
- Barkachi, C.

Some students are displeased by the form's "tediousness", referencing the long list of teachers' names they must scroll through

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editorials

River Dell's New Security Measures

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way pass, students and staff have also mentioned their discontent with how difficult it is to enter the building this year. For seniors, this is particularly problematic when they return to school after eating lunch off campus.

After lunch, a senior shared, it has become more difficult to get to class on time. "Seniors have fewer parking spots available this year," he said. "And we can only enter through the main entrance, so it takes up a lot of time."

Still, most agree that there are many advantages to the new policies, even though it may not be noticeable all the time. The security measures do keep the students safe and, in the big picture, the minor inconveniences pale in comparison; indeed, 30% of respondents agreed that the pros of the system outweighed the cons.

"I am glad not anyone can walk in and out of the building at any given time," shares Ms. Stuber. "[It] feels more secure." Of course, much of this is in thanks to the Facility Aide in the front of the building every day!

A student echoes this sentiment, stating that, "It definitely makes RD feel somewhat safe now that they are regulating who can and cannot walk in and out of the school, and they monitor who is in the hallway."

Students and teachers saw another major benefit of the digital hallway pass: it keeps a record of who is going where, which provides instant student location during emergencies. Students have also added that the hallway pass "makes [them] feel safer about being in the bathroom during a school emergency," especially since the security system is organized in one place.

Some teachers remark that the digital hallway pass also holds students accountable for their whereabouts, decreasing the probability of wandering around the building or cutting class—especially since these issues will be addressed by not only their teachers and the hallway monitors, but also by the administration.

Still, there are several recommendations made by both students and teachers

to improve the new policies.

Several students have advocated to returning to the "big binder," although some concede that might not be the best decision despite being more convenient for students.

Another senior also asked that the administration open a few more doors to allow students to enter the building. "It can be a little difficult to get into the school with all the doors locked all the time," he said.

Ms. McNamara provided a great solution: "I would love to see a swipe reader on every door and all students have IDs," she said. This would allow them to "swipe in and out for attendance, class, and more."

As can be seen, there is no one solution that will assuage everyone's concerns. For now, perhaps it is best to stick to the safer option despite the smaller inconveniences. "Change is always difficult," Mr. Pepe said. "I am happy to share that we are in a routine now and the students and visitors understand the new protocols to making the high school campus a safer place."



Dunkin' Donuts Closing Ruins Students' Plans?

by Patrick Kelly



Source: www.foxbusiness.com

The Dunkin' Donuts on Kinderkamack Road has been a longtime favorite among many River Dell students due to its close proxim-

ity to the school. Its closure, therefore, was a tragedy for all coffee loving and sweet-toothed students. What will River Dell students do now

that they can't get their morning coffee and donut?

Many students have resorted to finding replacements for the establishment. When considering what

other options could be, who else better to ask than the students and faculty of River Dell?

As junior Sean Golden shares, "[Dunkin] was a cool place to grab a bite to eat, [but we've] still got Hot Bagels though." Another junior, Jose Martinez, said, "I would want a Starbucks to be [established] in place of Dunkin'." When speaking to English teacher Mr. Reich, he explained that "I make my own coffee but it's a shame they took that place away for the teens sake." Personally, I think there should be Wawa of some sort, a place where students can get snacks, drinks, and slushies after a long day.

Dunkin' Donuts was a great spot for teens to start and end their days. Instead of leaving it empty during this school year, I wish the town hall would do something immediately about it to fill this gap!

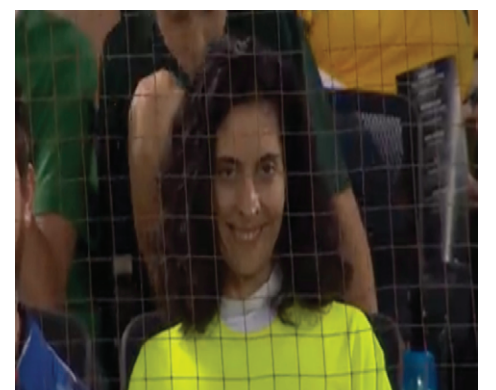
Smile Actors Infiltrate Baseball Games

by Drew Vaccaro

As the summer came to an end, Major League Baseball fans noticed a strange occurrence within the stands. People sat frozen and wide-eyed behind home plate, holding creepy grins for the duration of the game. While these people weren't there to watch a good baseball game, they did have a purpose. Sent to promote the new *Smile* movie (which came out in theaters on September 30th) these ac-

tors incited a viral internet craze. Many asked, "What were these people doing? Why were they doing it? Why weren't they moving?" MLB fans, amongst thousands of other intrigued onlookers, took to the internet to voice their confusion. When it was revealed that they intended to promote *Smile*, news articles rapidly broke out, fueling the movie's popularity. In fact, the film had a box office

opening night of \$22 million, proving the advertising attempts successful. The question now is: in the light of the *Smile*'s marketing team's successful work, will other movie marketing teams take on similar, unique approaches?



Source: www.si.com

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news

A Look Into River Dell's New Phys. Ed. Curriculum

by Yuna Shim

Over the first few weeks of school, students noticed a variety of new implementations within the physical education curriculum. Mrs. Nolan and Mr. Aliano helped answer some questions and concerns regarding these modifications.

Many students were struck by new additions to the curriculum, which were designed to encourage participation and new experiences. They shy away from standard activities and now includes adventure games, mini golf, Japanese glow stick dance, and salsa. Throughout September, students were experiencing their first taste of the new curriculum with adventure games, and many enjoyed them. The health curriculum is also seeing changes.



Source: www.wtap.com

Students can anticipate learning about teen mental health and first aid.

Another change that most students are familiar with is the clothes changing

policy. It has been roughly three years since the last time students were required to change clothes. This year, changing is required to receive credit: everyone

must wear a t-shirt, pants, and sneakers, and the shirt must have sleeves and cover the stomach. As Mr. Aliano says, "no buttons, no innies, or outties."

Contrary to the other modifications, this policy was a controversial subject, as changing has become an inconvenient task for some students. Those who didn't typically wear workout clothes, instead preferring jeans or skirts, felt wronged and complained about the inconvenience and extra stress. Some were uncomfortable with changing in front of others. As a result, most have resorted to going into stalls or the bathroom. Students have also started to plan their outfits around the class.

On the other hand, there

are many who like this new policy. Those in favor of changing advocated for the hygienic aspect of it; the gym teachers seemed to agree with this argument. An anonymous student stated that it helped them separate gym class and the rest of their classes. They also remarked that it was refreshing to change after a long hour of exercise.

Overall, the p.e. curriculum seems to be going in a positive direction. Although there are some disagreements about some additions, most changes are exciting and new. Our teachers are currently going through training for these activities, and students are settling into the policies. The gym curriculum is in good hands.

The Red Cross Club Reaches River Dell

by Avani Dhariwal



Source: www.template.net

This year, a new club has caught River Dell's attention: the River Dell Red Cross Club. Run by Iris Peng, Bobby Cook, Addison Viscardi, Yoon Ji (Anna) Lee, Isabelle Schneider,

and Isabel Lee, the club was created to "educate people about disasters around the world," Isabel Lee states, as well as "how people can help." Isabel Lee is proud of her membership in the Red

Cross Club. She enjoys it, partly because she hopes to have a career in the medical field in the future.

The club also lends a hand to those suffering from global disasters. Member Vishakha Goswami says "this is a great opportunity to get educated and help others, too. This club has so much they can do in the future and as I see the club continue, I know that we are helping participate in a bigger change in the world—not only spreading the word but also taking action...the club has a bright future ahead."

The organization was inspired by the American Red Cross, a non-profit organization created to help those affected by disasters and in need of emergency assistance. Ms. Haemmerle, the advisor, says, "When Isabel Lee approached me about advising the River Dell Red Cross Club, she was so passionate about the idea that

I was happy to be part of an organization whose goal is to serve those in dire need. We are all so blessed to be part of the River Dell community, and I am supportive

of any efforts our students make to 'pay it forward.'"

To join, contact Isabel Lee at Lee125@student.riverdell.org or speak to her or other leaders directly.

**RED
CROSS
CLUB**



Source: www.fairviewhs.com

Introducing Mr. Meang, Chemistry Teacher

by Jiwon Jeong, Seowon Jeong, and Irene Cho

River Dell Regional High School is delighted to greet our new chemistry teacher, Mr. Meang!

While born in South Korea, Mr. Meang lived in Sri Lanka throughout his childhood. To pursue a higher education, he moved to the U.S. and attended Hunter College for his bachelor's degree in arts, and John Jay College of Criminal Justice for his master's degree in science.

Before coming to River Dell, Mr. Meang taught at Mahwah High School, and this year will mark his seventh-year teaching chemistry.

Mr. Meang is a father to one son and one daughter, and enjoys using his spare time to play golf. His favorite Korean snack is Mat-dong-san, or crunchy fried peanut cookies.

According to Mr. Meang, the most challenging part of adapting to his new job at River Dell is learning to use "Microsoft, such as OneNote and Teams."

Aside from this, Mr. Meang is happy to be here; he encourages his students to study hard, and he thinks River Dell is "absolutely amazing!"



news

Here's a "Clue" To Drama Club Fall Production

Continued from page 1

completing this, she adds.

While centered around a generally unhumorous topic, *Clue* contains lots of comedic bits, ones that add a layer of fun and entertainment to the play. "My favorite part would be when Wadsworth [the butler] reenacts everything in the play – he has to do a lot of different impressions, which I think the audience will find funny," says Chloe Lee, a junior playing the role of Yvette.

Just as though they were playing the board game, the audience is encouraged to speculate on the murderer's identity. Chang advises them to pay close attention to "who's onstage and offstage" and monitor the "locations of each weapon".

This may prove to be tricky, however, as according to assistant stage manager Leo Tarascio, there are around 12 different sets being constructed. "This year we're doing something differently. They're called periaktoi; I think it's a Greek theatre thing – basically, they are big triangles with three sides to them that are [each] painted differently... You can spin them without having to lug in big set changes," he remarks. Each member typically puts in four hours a week to design, build, and perfect the set – a schedule that only intensifies as "tech week" draws closer.

Even so, the tight-knit cast and crew cherish the intense,

"nine-hour-long" rehearsals just before the curtain rises, as they help promote a "sense of family" within the club. "Especially during tech week, you really bond with everyone because you're with each other for so long. You can meet a lot of people!" Tarascio exclaims. Chang echoes this sentiment, noting that "the casts [Cast A and Cast B] are each made up of 11 people... It's exciting that you're going to be closer to everyone in the cast because that's the people you're on stage with the whole time."

Cast A of *Clue* will perform on 11/17 and 11/19 at 7 pm and 11/20 at 2 pm. Cast B will perform on 11/18 and

11/20 at 7 pm and 11/19 at 2 pm. Those who wish to attend may reserve their seats using the "seat yourself" link provided on River Dell High School's website.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students, seniors, and faculty. For more information on cast listings, rehearsal progress,



and seating availability, also be sure to follow the RDHS Drama Instagram page (@rdhs_drama). Break a leg, cast of *Clue*!

Rishi Sunak Replaces Short-Lived Liz Truss as U.K. Prime Minister

by David Arturi



Source: www.nytimes.com

After just a month and a half as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Liz Truss resigned on October 20, 2022. She is the shortest serving prime minister in British history.

Truss was elected prime minister after Boris Johnson stepped down after more than 50 members of his own Conservative Party quit. Johnson's numerous ethics scandals were the primary

reason for the mass resignation. He appointed Chris Pincher party whip, who was previously accused of sexual misconduct. He also attended multiple parties during the coronavirus lockdown, which triggered an immense loss of trust from the British public. Begrudgingly, Johnson resigned, and two months later Liz Truss was elected by the Conservatives as the Kingdom's new leader.

Truss made a series of fatal errors in her short span in office that led to her phenomenal unpopularity. Most importantly, her economic proposal significantly cut taxes for the wealthiest Britons. This debt-fueled tax cut caused financial turmoil in Britain; the pound's value fell to its lowest value against the dollar since 1985, which caused the U.K.'s central bank to increase interest rates. Inflation, already incredibly high, leapt again. When asked about the controver-

sial policy, Truss attempted to save herself from some of the blame by claiming the tax cut decision was made by former chancellor of the Exchequer Kwasi Kwarteng; however, Truss made very few public appearances following the economic destruction she helped inflict. In fact, fellow lawmaker Penny Mordaunt, now a candidate for the prime minister position, defended her, assuring she was "not under a desk" hiding. This pathetic defense reduced Truss's popularity even further.

In addition to Truss's catastrophic economic plan, half of her most senior ministers were fired or quit in one week. On Truss's last day in office the Labour Party, opponent of her Conservatives, suggested outlawing fracking, a method of obtaining oil and natural gas. This topic is controversial among the Conservatives and at first, members were threatened with expulsion from the party if they did not vote against

the proposal. When Conservative leaders realized their party was becoming increasingly divided, they revoked the threat. Conservative Charles Walker called the situation within his party an "absolute disgrace". He attacked colleagues who voted for Truss for only doing so to earn a high-level government position. In the end, the Labour Party's proposal worked in their favor by creating chaos among the Conservatives, causing Truss to step down.

Rishi Sunak was quickly elected Britain's new prime minister, helped by the fact that he condemned Truss's doomed economic plan from the start. He is Britain's youngest prime minister in centuries and is extremely wealthy. Some Britons doubt his ability to sympathize with the working class due to his immense wealth. How he performs remains to be seen.

Juul Investigations Seek Protection For Youth

by Darsh Patel



A concerning large percentage of teens use electronic cigarettes, also known as vapes. That is why Juul, an electronic cigarette maker, will pay nearly \$440 million in settlements resulting from a two-year investigation conducted by 33 U.S. states. In an effort to minimize teen vape usage, the settlement includes a provision requiring Juul to comply with new

marketing regulations and limit the number of vaping product sales.

Connecticut Attorney General William Tong remarks that the settlement money will go directly to programs that work to protect people from using tobacco and nicotine. In addition, Juul must stop marketing its products to youth and portray people over the age of 35 in its advertisements. Consequently, there will be no more sponsorships with paid influencers such as Christina Zayas or free samples of vape flavors. Despite Juul's claim that their products are an "alternative for adult smokers", Tong and

other attorney generals have described the company as "relentless" in terms of their teen marketing strategies.

After Juul's launch in 2015, teen vape usage has skyrocketed. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has described underage vaping among teenagers as an "epidemic." Due to the national investigation, Juul has shifted its marketing focus from young teens to adult smokers, claiming that "we remain focused on our future as we wish to fulfill our mission to transition adult smokers away from cigarettes... while combating underage use." Under this settlement, Juul must

restrict the locations of its products in stores and require age verification for all sales – neither of which was previously required.

Most teens that vape favor fruity flavors and disposable pods like Juul's main product: nicotine pods. But Juul is not the only company in the nicotine market that can sell disposable nicotine pods. A two-year-old L.A. disposable vape company, Puff Bar, stole Juul's spot as the most popular e-cigarette used by high school students. Hopefully, the FDA and attorney generals create a permanent solution to combat this epidemic.

features

A Lifetime In One Summer: Students Share Stories

by Isabella Iturrate



As the school year progresses, we are slowly but surely adjusting. The transition from summer to school is never easy, especially for those whose summers were filled with excitement. In high school, summer is a time to relax, but it can also be a time to try new things and enjoy yourself! Many students did just that this summer and some were even willing to share their experiences.

Many River Dell students went down the shore, got jobs, and spent time with friends and family. Some went to concerts where artists like Harry Styles, Elton John, Machine Gun Kelly, and Paul McCartney performed. Others went on vacations to Hawaii, Maine, California, Japan, and Greece. Then, there were a few students whose summers were especially unique and interesting.

Freshman Tatum Leung did two ballet intensive programs over the summer, one in Central Pennsylvania and the other

in New York City. Both programs required her to audition, and since she was accepted into both, she was able to dance, train, and immerse herself in different environments. She worked with and learned from world-renowned teachers in beautiful facilities; she made friends from all over the country, and even the world, who shared her love for dance. These kinds of experiences – learning and doing the things you love with people who share your passions – are ones you remember for the rest of your life.

One student (who prefers to remain anonymous) did a two-week community service retreat in Southern California. She stayed in

a dorm at the University of Santa Barbara and worked as a counselor for a local camp during the day. In her free time, she and the rest of the group would find fun activities to do, such as bowling and ice skating. While reflecting on her experience, she emphasized how she had a “great time” and met “great people.” Ultimately, the friendships made in a program like this are unlike any other because you tend to grow so close very quickly.

Another student, who spent much of his free time hiking with his family,

scaled Mount Washington. Challenging and testing, the entire hike took about 12 hours. He explained how he wanted to turn back and give up numerous times, as a hike of that length and difficulty can be very taxing on one’s body. At some points, it seemed as though if he took a wrong step, he would fall. Despite these obstacles, he persevered and climbed the entire mountain. Once he got to the top, he described the feeling as “extremely gratifying,” with the presence of his brother and their friend making the moment truly special.

Sophomore Jerin Yoo studied abroad this summer for three weeks in Portugal through a program called CIEE. She studied aquatic ecosystems and sustainability in the classroom and by doing fieldwork in Lisbon, Tomar, Caparica, and more. Additionally, she learned a lot about Portuguese culture, the language, and the food throughout the three weeks. Jerin strongly encourages students our age to study abroad like she did, as experiencing a different culture is eye-opening and life-changing!

Another student at River Dell participated in the Brown University Pre-College program. He lived in a dorm on campus for two weeks and took a course called “Solar Energy and Engineering”. There was a final project for the course

that required him and a partner to present a plan for solar installation in a certain place. On the week-

ends, he went on field trips to Pawtucket, Rhode Island and Boston, Massachusetts. During his free time, he did work or spent time with friends in the downtown area. In addition to having this rich experience, he learned to balance homework and have fun – a crucial skill for high school and college students.

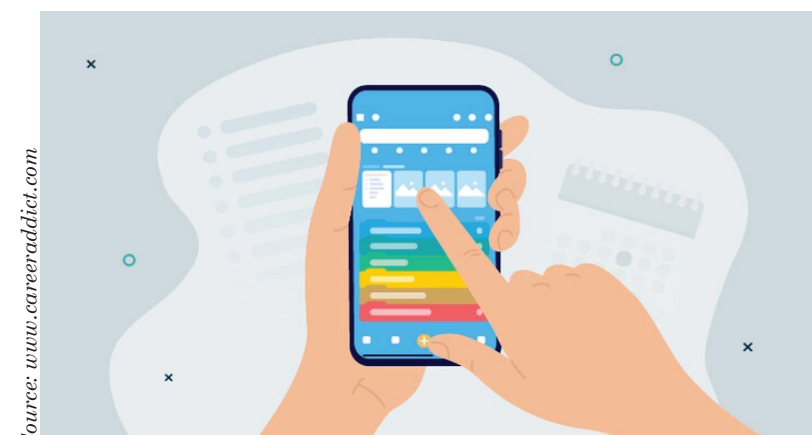
I, too, was lucky enough to do something unique this summer: I studied archaeology in a small town in Spain with 12 other students from all over the world. In the mornings, we went to a live dig site to help excavate a Roman Fortress from the first century, and in the afternoons, we discussed our findings and had class. In our free time, we walked around the town, went to the restaurant or the pool, and took part in the events happening in town (concerts, festivals, etc.). I learned so much in this program – not only about archaeological science, but also about myself, and I made friends and memories that I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Clearly, the students of River Dell were busy this summer. Some did something special, and it is hard to accept that it’s over. For now, we must live in the moment instead of mourning the past. No matter how easy it is to wish for it to be summer again, just remember: whether you did something unique this year or not, try doing something a little different next summer. Push yourself to get out of your comfort zone, even if only in small, simple ways, because in doing so, you can learn so much and maybe even change your life in the process. Now is the time we are discovering ourselves, so we should try new things to figure it all out. So, if possible, travel, volunteer, take classes, meet new people, and do something worth remembering!



Apps to Help You Stay on Track This Year

by Mila Cabanlit



1. Structured

Structured is a time-blocking app that has helped me stay on track and manage my time more efficiently. I recommend this app for spacing your homework and designating time for assignments. The app will notify you when the activ-

ity is starting and ending (of course, you can modify how long that time will be). Once you have completed a task, you can check it off. Although I’ve only used this app for a week or so, I can already see an improvement in the way I manage my time, which in turn has brought my stress levels down!

2. Cramless.com

Cramless is not an app, but a website. Many students have relied on Quizlet for making flashcards, but this year, Quizlet’s “Learn” mode is not free. Cramless offers an alternative: just copy and paste the Quizlet link into Cramless, and it will allow you to study using similar features to Quizlet for free!

3. Insight Timer

Sometimes, school can get stressful; you may need a second to calm down. Insight Timer offers a variety of different meditation guides to help you practice mindfulness, relieve stress, and go to sleep. Insight Timer is very similar to some mindfulness

apps like Calm and Headspace, but it is free.

4. Habit

For many, it becomes difficult to maintain healthy habits throughout the school year because we have so much on our plate. This habit tracker is a good way to help you stay on track, reminding you to drink enough water, read every day, etc. You can also set weekly, monthly, or even daily goals and personalize them to be anything you want.

5. Flora

Flora is a productivity app that helps you to stay focused—creatively. The app allows you to set a timer. While the timer is running, a virtual tree will begin to

grow; if you get distracted from the task at hand and exit the app, the tree will die. There is also an in which where you can link your credit card to the app, and every time a tree dies, the app will charge you (you choose how much). All of these features are designed to hold you accountable, and ensure that you complete those tasks. Flora also allows you to share your progress with friends and make gardens of all the grown trees that you have “grown.”

Being organized can help you so much throughout the school year, and these apps will help you do just that. Hopefully, they will help you be more productive and stress free this school year!

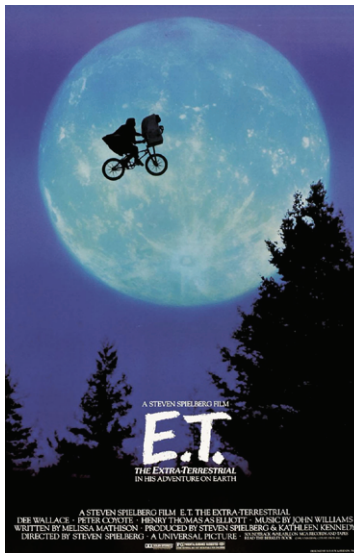
sports & entertainment

Films To Fall In Love With This Fall

by Noa Kizhnerman



POM POKO



1. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022)

Do you ever feel like time is ineluctably running out? Evelyn Wang sure does—she thinks she's wasted years of it. This science-fiction comedy film will answer all the persistent what-ifs running around your head as Evelyn explores the multiverse of her life: every version of her, every choice made differently. As threats arise, Evelyn's efforts to save the world make a mission that often seems so universal and grand look personal and small, even unseen by others. As one of the most critically acclaimed and resonating releases of 2022, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* shows that everything you need might be in front of you.

2. *Pom Poko*

Every year, the cold, forewarning of winter, robs trees of their leaves and their green, just like how *Pom Poko*'s characters are forced into similar changes as abrupt as the changing seasons. Though this animated fantasy revolves around adorable, tightly knit communities of raccoons, they

deal with change and loss just as we do. Studio Ghibli delicately shows that mastering the art of living in a changing world might mean embracing parts of ancient history with the most lovable characters, humor, and lighthearted undertones.

3. *The Corpse Bride*

The Corpse Bride, a dark musical fantasy stop-motion film, tells the story of what happens to a wide-eyed, soon-to-be wife... that's dead! When Victor winds up in the land of the dead after accidentally proposing to the Corpse Bride while practicing vows for his living fiancée, he desperately plots how to escape unscathed, all without shattering the heart of his accidental dead bride.

4. *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*

E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial asks questions whether being far from home truly means being alone when Elliott befriends an alien stranded on Earth. As Elliott and E.T. navigate loyalty and government inquiries, they show how true friendship can endure anything.

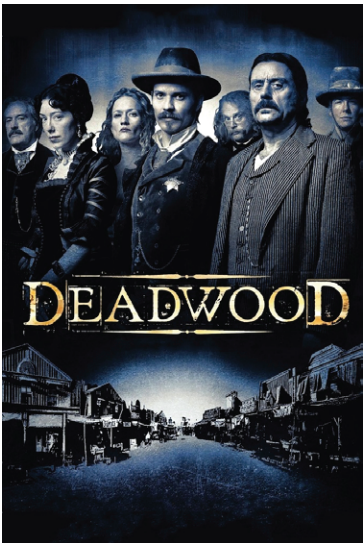
5. *Donnie Darko* (2001)

Deliciously unhinged and morbidly perverse, *Donnie Darko*'s dark atmosphere over an otherwise picturesque town is a great watch as fall rolls around. To his therapist and parents, Donnie's six-foot-tall giant bunny rabbit friend, Frank, is imaginary, but to Donnie, the end of the world that Frank forewarns of is real. In this science fiction movie, déjà vu is more ominous than it should be, and lines between reality and fiction aren't just blurred—they're fully demolished—by Donnie's unreliable narrating. With a brilliantly curated soundtrack, beautiful cinematography, terrific writing, and outstanding actors, *Donnie Darko* will haunt you both on and off-screen. Donnie's struggle to keep his compassion as he descends into madness will leave you with many questions, including: does something 'imaginary' have the power to do something terrible?

Source: www.imdb.com

TV and Movie Recommendations For History Buffs

by Michael Moran in collaboration with Mr. O'Toole



Source: www.imdb.com

History is a highly important subject, as it reveals the how's and why's of our current society. This makes history—in its most basic component—about stories; thus reigning in the interest of many audiences. By virtue of this fact, it is no surprise that there are many historical TV shows and movies out there. However, not all of them are good or trustworthy, so I collaborated with Mr. O'Toole to make a list of films and T.V. shows that display accurate, yet entertaining representations of the past.

1. *Deadwood*

Deadwood—a 36-episode series that premiered on HBO—can currently be found on HBO Max. It is centered around a late 1800s South Dakotan town that formed after gold was discovered in the area and follows enterprising citizens who want to find their fortunes in the west. Being that it is not in any U.S. state or territory, the town itself is something of a lawless limbo—filled with people who want to capitalize off this. Also, the town has conflicts with

the local native inhabitants over the seizure of their land that emerged from the finding of gold. According to Mr. O'Toole, it is an enjoyable, yet dark show that portrays some of the conflicts American frontier life presented.

2. *Letters From Iwo Jima*

Letters From Iwo Jima is a 2006 war film directed by Clint Eastwood, a renowned director of best picture-winning *Million Dollar Baby*. Set during World War II, this movie bucks the traditional American trend of ignoring the Japanese. In fact, the film is spoken in Japanese and follows the story of Japanese soldiers who fight to stay alive during the death-ridden, hopeless battle of Iwo Jima. The film is bleak in tone and gory in combat scenes. Thus, the film is probably not suited for people who have an aversion to war or excessively violent movies, as it is rated R. Mr. O'Toole praised it for being able to bring the Japanese experience of the Pacific war into view. It can be found on Amazon Prime.

3. *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*

Master and Commander stars Russell Crowe, who plays a ship captain during the Napoleonic wars. His character is ordered to take down a hefty French ship off the coast of South America. The movie itself is renowned for its historical accuracy and realistic portrait of na-

val combat during the 1800s (much to Mr. O'Toole's liking). From ships to surgeries, everything is depicted in a historically accurate manner. As a film with a renowned leading man and a pulse-pounding plot, *Master and Commander* is a great film to see and can be found on HBO Max.

4. *Come and See*

Come and See is a Russian war movie made during the 1980s under the Soviet Union. Directed by Elem Klimov, it is one of the best portrayals of the eastern front in World War II. The film follows a partisan named Floyra who initially demonstrates his eagerness to fight for his people and homeland. However, as the film progresses, it shows the bitter details, darkness, and brutality of war. Through brilliant directing and camera work, Klimov illustrates how the horrors of the eastern front grind one child partisan down to his barest level. Keep in mind there are scenes of burned and scarred bodies along with violence against women. While it is not a light movie, I would recommend watching it. It can be found on DVD through the Criterion Channel and on Prime Video.

5. *Conspiracy*

Conspiracy is a World War II film set entirely during the 1942 Wannsee Conference when the Nazi leadership of Germany debated over the

enactment of the final solution. The council was called together by the second hand of SS Reinhard Heydrich to strong-arm leadership into accepting the idea of the final solution. The movie highlights an underrepresented part of the Holocaust, as it depicts the initial bickering of self-important representatives vying to secure their department's prestige. Overall, this film, while containing anti-Jewish sentiment, portrays the bureaucratic side of the Holocaust nicely and can be found on HBO Max.

6. *Rome*

Rome is a two-season-long T.V. show that follows two Roman soldiers as they encounter the death of the republic and the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great. This show is praised for its high attention to detail and excellent recreation of Roman cities. While the show is rumored to be canceled for exceeding its budget, it remains an excellent portrait of Roman life set during vastly turbulent times. Mr. O'Toole praised it for its high-quality production design and attention to the common soldier. It can be found on HBO Max.