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Saegertown Jr. Sr.
High School
10879 Mook Rd
Saegertown, PA

The Panther Press

Volume 20, Issue 5

January 30, 2026

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How SHS celebrates New Years

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As we start the new year, and schedules become normal again, everyone finds a fun way to celebrate. Whether that be alone time, with family and friends, or throwing a big party, there's always a way to celebrate. Let's take a look into how people celebrate in Saegertown.

Even in Saegertown alone, there is such a diverse range of how people celebrate the start of the new year. Some, like Mr. Gjovik, start by sharing the same meal with their family each year. For him, that meal is pork and sauerkraut, saying it's "the first big meal we eat each New Year."

While not all people celebrate in this way, just about everyone does celebrate. Some make New

Year's resolutions, others think they're clique. Two examples of this are Mr. Gjovik, who has kept the same resolution for the last 20 years, "lose 10 lbs." While his close neighbor down the hall, Mr. Rutkowski, thinks that "Resolutions are cliché" but has done them in the past with his family.

Another topic that often comes with the new year is reflection on the old one.

Some think of challenges they've overcome such as "Remembering to stay even keeled and positive... with the challenges of getting older" and overcoming "illness from a family member." But on a more positive side,

people also reflect on their favorite things from the previous year. In Saegertown, these memories include thinking, "The economy is finally getting better and is headed in the right direction!" and others that are close calls

however, some students do too. One example of this is Myla Bland, who when asked how she celebrates the new year responded, "We have a party every year to celebrate, and we invite friends and family as well." While

some others, such as Christian Bechtel, said they don't really do anything to celebrate.

A common underlying theme between the students that were asked about how they

celebrate the new year however, was that they don't really do New Year's resolutions. Perhaps it's slowly going out of style.

Madison Muenz was our outlier, saying her resolution this year was to, "Better myself and fo-

cus more on school." But resolutions aren't the only thing that comes with the new year. Looking back at last year, everyone had a highlight to their 2025, Bland's being, "Getting our pool put in properly," Bechtel's was, "Going to Florida." Fun or personal things seemed to be the focus for most students, but for Muenz it was, "Getting into PennWest college algebra program," which is a great accomplishment!

There are so many ways Saegertown celebrates the New Year, and that's part of what makes Saegertown what it is. So whether you celebrate or not, it's worth celebrating our town going into a new year full of new memories together.



Check out our Website



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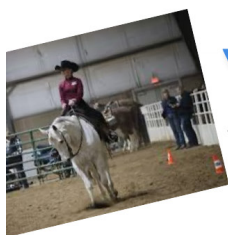
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All about YEDA

Youth Equestrian Development Association

YEDA Show Season

- Includes YEDA point shows and clinics held August through June
- National Championship Event
- Collegiate Invitationals
- NCEA Jr. Medal Challenge

Who can join?

- Riders in 4-12 grade, alumni, and equestrians with disabilities from age 10 through adult
- Western riders from beginner through Advanced,
- No horse ownership required!

Special Benefits of YEDA

- Scholarship Opportunities
- Collegiate Recruitment Opportunities
- Individual Development through YEDA's Core Values



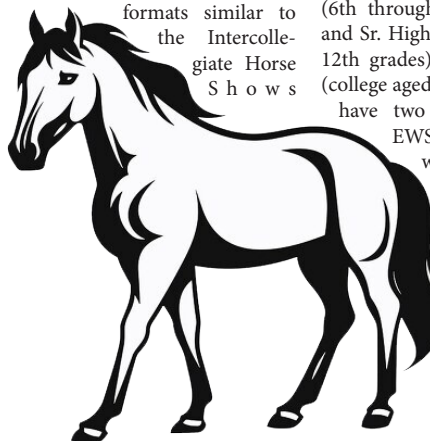
For more information:
ShowYEDA.com

Kaiya Levesque
Social Media Intern

YEDA, Youth Equestrian Development Association, is a program for grades 4-12 providing horse riding competitions, skill development, and state college scholarship opportunities, focusing on life skills and industry connections. Their mission is to provide an equestrian riding program for youth students via both instructional and experiential learning opportunities.

To accomplish their mission, YEDA engages in equestrian competitions, which involve rail and pattern classes, instructional clinics, networking events, and occasions for recruitment that include, but are not limited to, scholarship disbursements. YEDA is a program that encourages the development of riders' skills, emphasizes exposure to scholarship opportunities, and encourages making connections with college programs.

Over the past several years, there has been incredible growth in youth team riding throughout the country across several formats similar to the Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association (IHSAA) and National Collegiate Equestrian Association (NCEA). Most of this growth can be attributed to students being afforded the opportunity to show horses at the primary school level without the personal burden of owning a horse. Together, a group of equine professionals who have been involved with youth and youth team showing have reached a consensus that there is not enough direction nor development potential for the students within the organizational structures currently available. Due to these feelings and a fundamental desire to see their students reach their absolute potential, they have decided to go in a new direction and have created the Youth Equestrian Development Association, Inc. (YEDA), a program that encourages development of riders' skills, emphasizes exposure to scholarship opportunities, and encourages making connections with college programs. According to the YEDA Facebook page, "We will do this through six levels of riding from Elementary (4th and 5th grades) to Jr. High (6th through 8th grades) and Sr. High (9th through 12th grades) and Alumni (college aged), and we also have two divisions of EWS (Equestrians with Disabilities)



All about YEDA

ties.)"

YEDA includes rail and pattern classes for novice to advanced riders and offers their open riders the chance to compete in both reining and horsemanship. This format develops youth riders to be "complete horsemen," moving through levels to give students the opportunities to go to a national event. The YEDA Facebook also states, "More importantly, by working with a variety of sponsors, partnering with established professional organizations, and strategic investing, it is the fundamental intention of YEDA to provide aspiring equine professionals with financial scholarships to help our members achieve their career goals, whether or not those goals be equine related."

YEDA has been able to award nearly \$2.2 million in scholarship money to their riders through sponsors, incentive funds, and collegiate partners.



Photo Courtesy of Kaiya Levesque

Saegertown students sing proud at district chorus

Trinity Gohn
News & Features Editor

District chorus was recently held from Wednesday, January 7, to Friday, January 9, 2026, with its final concert on January 9th, 2026 at 7pm in Schafer Auditorium at Allegheny College.

Six students from Saegertown High School participated in districts. These students were Landon Unger, Donovan Mascitti, Damien Shampue-Vogt, Nariah Jones, Sophia Tirpak, and Skylar Shields.

To qualify, the students must be a good model of SHS music values, and they must demonstrate good musicianship. To



Photo Courtesy of Lyons

qualify for regions, the students must go through an audition process with judges, and they need to score within the top ten to move on.

When asked about how district chorus went this year, Ms.

Lyons responded with, "It was a great experience; the students were able to make new friends from across the state." Lyons continued, "They were also able to work with a collegiate director, which was pretty cool."

The students that attended were interviewed about how their experiences went.

"I had a very fun time at District chorus," responded Damien Shampue-Vogt.

"The experience was at first very scary, but once I got further into it, it was something I found out I was very interested in," said Sophia Tirpak. She continued, "My first time being at Districts was amazing. I made so many wonderful, talented friends! I honestly expected it to be a lot more stressful, but it really wasn't as they explained everything to you, it became extremely exciting. It was like a waiting game."

Some of the songs that were sung at districts included a German piece called Neue Liebeslieder, an all-men's piece called Passy By, an all-women's piece called Hey Nonny No, and the rest were women's and men's pieces called Remember, Holy Spirit dont you leave me, Hine e Hine, Gloucestershire Wassail, and By night.

If you want any more information about district chorus, go to room 230 and ask Ms. Lyons any questions you may have; she will be happy to answer!

The Groundhog Winter Festival comes to town

Claire Harrison
Broadcast Director

Come to Port Farms and celebrate Tator and Subs' second Winter Festival! On January 30, 31, February 1, and 2 from 12 to 9pm, enjoy activities like wag-



Photo Courtesy of Pixabay

on rides, a hot cocoa bar, and it's Free Admission. On January 30, there's a groundhog movie playing, live music by Joe Kubiak from 5:30-8:30PM, and Food & drink specials at Poverty Knob. When asked, "Which activity would you like to do most?" freshman Kaiya Levesque says, "I

would love to do the horse-drawn rides; it sounds super fun."

Speaking of Groundhog's Winter Fest, did you know groundhogs play a huge part in our state's history, as well as port farms and breweries? Groundhogs play a huge part in farms; their extensive burrowing aerates the soil, allowing better water and oxygen penetration. Their digging mixes the organic matter and minerals deeper into the soil, improving fertility of the soil. Breweries host festivals, attracting tourists and creating community events. They also are a symbol of Pennsylvania Dutch heritage, representing rural life and weather lore, which resonates with local pride. When asked, "Would you go to the Port Farms Groundhog Winter Festival?" Quinton Burchill responds with, "No, I think Port Farms is

for children."

From Saturday, January 31 (12-9PM) and Sunday, February 1 (12-8PM), activities include a vendor shop in the Events Barn (Sat: 12-8PM and Sun: 12-7PM), free meet and greets with Elsa and Olaf (1-4PM), live ice carvings (1-2PM & 3-4PM), horse-drawn rides (\$), bonfires all day, a snowman building contest (time TBD), wagon rides to the Knob (\$2/person - 2 & under free), a hot cocoa bar (\$), Groundhog's Grand Bonfire (Sat: 5PM), cookie decorating (\$), craft area (\$), live music all day, feed the goats (\$), the 'See His Shadow' raffle, the "Groundhog Day" movie playing in the brewery, and food and drink specials (\$).

**Come Join us at Post Farms
Groundhogs Winter Festival**

Jan 30 and 31
Feb 1 and 2
12-9PM

2055 Stone Quarry Rd, Waterford, PA 16441

Free admission

Happy Groundhog's Day!



YourErie.com interviewed Casey Port, Chief Operations, who says, "We couldn't be more excited to kick off 2024 with our winter event at the farm in partnership with our new brewery. We hope families will come to enjoy this free event, try our food... and overall spend time together making memories on the farm. There really is something for every age." For more information, visit Portfarms.com.

The argument of defamation: Trump BBC Lawsuit

Anna Bradshaw
Editor in Chief

U.S. President Donald Trump has filed a multi-billion lawsuit against the British Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC.

"The BBC is the UK's national public service broadcaster, one of the world's oldest, responsible for providing impartial, high-quality content (news, entertainment, education) across television, radio, and online platforms, funded primarily by the UK license fee and serving a global audience through its World Services," says the World Economic Forum. Yet for being a broadcast so well known, even it has its troubles.

The Panorama documentary titled "Trump: A Second Chance?" Was broadcasted on the 28th of October, 2024, just

a few days before the US Presidential election. The debate of the lawsuit is this small detail: Trump told a Washington DC crowd, "We're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women." More than 50 minutes later in the same speech, he said, "And we fight. We fight like hell."

Yet according to BBC.com, "In the Panorama programme, a clip showed him instead saying: "We're going to walk down to the Capitol... and I'll be there with you. And we fight. We fight like hell."

This small edit received much criticism that emerged more than a year later when a leaked internal memo was published by the Telegraph newspaper. As far as the public is aware, The Guardian sums up the memo well.

"The memo, written by former BBC adviser Michael Prescott, stated that a Panorama documentary on Trump misled viewers by editing his January 6th speech to make him seem like he was calling for violence, and it raised broader concerns about BBC bias, including anti-Trump, anti-Israel, and pro-transgender coverage, leading to Trump's lawsuit for billions in damages over alleged defamation and deceptive practices, though the BBC admitted the "error of judgement" but rejected claims of institutional bias, with executives resigning amid the fallout."

BBC continues by saying, "This led to the resignations of the BBC's director general, Tim Davie, and its head of news, Deborah Turness. BBC chairman Samir Shah apologised for the edit, which he described as

an 'error of judgement'."

Apparently, Trump's lawyers sent a letter to the BBC in November of 2025, demanding that it immediately retract the documentary, issue an apology, and compensate him. The BBC was given the deadline of 14 November to respond.

The letter also added that if the BBC did not comply, the president may file legal action. BBC.com states, "Before that deadline, the BBC apologised to Trump and confirmed the programme was not scheduled to be re-broadcast and would not be



Photo Courtesy of BBC Deadline

broadcast again in that form on any BBC platform, but rejected his demands for compensation." A month later, on 15 December 2025, Trump's legal team filed a lawsuit in Florida. The next steps in this lawsuit involve BBC fighting dismissal, based on jurisdiction (since the documentary aired in the UK, not the U.S.) while Trump's team argues jurisdiction via VPNs and Florida filming.

MTV dies out after over forty years

Vladimir Petrie
Website Editor

After over forty years, on December 31, MTV shut down their music channels (MTV Music, MTV 80's, MTV 90's, Club MTV, MTV Live), and they went off air in numerous regions. This is because its parent company, Paramount Global, has started shifting focus to reality tv and digital platforms.

Paramount has done this due to people starting to shift from traditional tv to streaming services or YouTube and TikTok for music videos.

Another reason for this was

to cut costs. It was too expensive to keep their channels running as they weren't making nearly enough money. Now MTV itself is not completely gone. The main MTV channel continues to air reality shows, scripted content, and events such as the VMAs.

MTV will still stay on tv, but their channel that promotes music videos, which they are known for, has shut down. MTV lost its cultural relevancy due to the rise of the internet, so it ended up turning from a household channel to just another cable network.

So MTV will still be creating television such as Jersey Shore and The Challenge, but no more

music videos. People mainly have gone to YouTube and Spotify for music, heavily due to the higher selection of music and the accessibility of them. You don't need cable for YouTube and Spotify; they're also both free to use for anybody, so the benefits outweigh MTV's lesser form of music.

So in conclusion, MTV hasn't completely shut down, but they have gotten rid of their music video aspect due to the cultural shift to online platforms such as Youtube and Spotify. They still have their television programs on air, but all in all, they've gotten rid of the music aspect of MTV.



Photo Courtesy of Vladimir Petrie

Tensions in Venezuela spark controversy

Vladimir Petrie
Website Editor

On January 3rd, 2026, the United States military carried out operation “Absolute Resolve”

which resulted in the Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. The operation happened due to heightened tensions over drug trafficking accusations. US forces conducted strikes on Venezuelan infrastructure and personnel before extracting Maduro, who was then flown to New York to face drug and terrorism charges.

This operation, involving extensive air power and elite forces, raised significant international legal questions, with some experts and governments condemning it as a violation of international law.

With Maduro gone, Delcy Rodríguez has become acting

president; there are intense legal battles over the intervention, mixed public reactions within Venezuela, significant damage to infrastructure, and a shift in US focus towards controlling Venezuelan oil and drug trafficking. While some Venezuelans celebrated Maduro’s capture, others fear repression, and global powers grapple with the violation of sovereignty and future stability in the region.

The opposing leader of Venezuela, Maria Corina Machado and initially celebrated but faced uncertainty as the US signaled less direct support for her immediate power grab.

One key point is sovereignty,

and the core issue about that is the legality and precedent of US intervention in a sovereign nation. The second key point is that access to Venezuela’s significant oil wealth is one of the US’s main objectives with this whole operation, and the third key point is uncertainty. The future power structure and democratic transition remain unclear, with significant internal and international pressure.

In conclusion, the US sent air strikes on Venezuela and captured their leader, Nicolás Maduro, which resulted in international uncertainty about what will come next for the country.



Photo Courtesy of Vladimir Petrie

Saegertown welcomes incentive to Erie Otters game

Trinity Gohn
News & Features Editor

Saegertown High School is hosting a field trip for students to go to an Erie Otters hockey game, with the opposing team being the Guelph Storm.

Students will have to pay ten dollars if they would like to attend this field trip. The money is to be turned in to their first-period teachers. The money is due by January 30, 2026. Students will be leaving the school around 9-9:30 am on February 5th to go on this field trip.

While students are at this field trip, they will be provided a lunch that consists of a hotdog with chips, a cookie, and water. Students are allowed to bring extra money for concessions.

The requirements for students

to attend this field trip are: no attendance issues, they must have 70% or higher in classes (grades are based on the first semester) and they can not have any suspensions.

There is an unlimited number of students that are able to attend the field trip. If students do not turn in the ten dollars before January 30, they will not be permitted to attend.

The purpose of the trip is to reward students who are meeting schoolwide expectations for behavior, academics, and attendance. Saegertown had the opportunity to go last year, and it was well received by students and staff, and they wanted to go again this year.

The agenda for this field trip is that they will be leaving SHS around 9 am; after taking attendance, they will start heading to

the arena. Once there, students will get their lunches and find their seats. They will get to watch “most” of the game then head back to SHS around 2:15.

“Congratulations to all of our students who qualify for demonstrating what it means to be a Saegertown panther!” said Saegertown High School principal, Dr. Howick.

The Erie Otters in their last games have not been so successful they lost their most recent games, on January 10, 2026 they lost to the London Knights, 4-1. On January 9, 2026 they lost to the Sarina Sting, 9-1. Lastly on January 8, 2026 they lost to the Windsor Spirtfires, 9-1. Maybe this game will be their rebound! Remember to have spirit and cheer for your team. Go Otters!



Saegertown Senior High band bombards elementary school with winter fun!

Sophia Pacak
News & Features Editor

On December 18th, 2025, the Saegertown Senior High School band went down to the Saegertown Elementary School to play festive Christmas music for all of the younger kids! Huddling up inside the elementary school's lobby, the high school students consisted of Ryan Ruff, Kayden Astor, Brady Williams, Sophia Pacak, Eric Streudler, Dominic Dille, Ayden Chamberlain, and Jaiden Ludwick, who were directed by the school's band director, Ms. Lyons. Most of the younger students formed together to form an audience and

were entertained by the six Christmas songs: Deck the Halls, Greensleeves, Bell Carol, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, God Rest Ye Merry, and The Polar Express. During the same month, the school band traveled to the halls as they merrily blessed the junior high and senior high students with the same Christmas music as they brought to the elementary school—and may have interrupted a test.

"I always love hearing the band and chorus's music," said Mr. Steiger. "It reminded me of when I was in chorus and chamber singers back in high school. Singing Christmas songs was always a great way to engage and give back to the community."



Photo Courtesy of SHS Facebook



Photo Courtesy of Vecteezy

Snowy Dad Jokes

What do you call a snowman in summer?
 A puddle.

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?
 Freeze a jolly good fellow.

What's white and goes up?
 A confused snowflake.

Why did the boy only wear one snow boot?
 There was only a 50% chance of snow.

By Anna Bradshaw

Superstitions and Myths of New Years



Photo Courtesy of Pexels

Aurora Petrie
Managing Editor

Rorie Howles-McBeth
Social Media Editor

For many people, a new year brings a lot of reflection to oneself, usually surrounding their life, love, family, and career. So understandably the end of a year and the start of a new one is a common time for goal-setting. From dirty laundry to broken dishes, there's a lot to prepare for ahead of the New Year to encourage good luck and prosperity.

Besides your basic goal settings and new agendas for the new year, many people practice superstitions surrounding the

New Year's holiday that they feel will bring them good luck in the new year. For example, have you ever walked around with an empty suitcase on New Year's? Probably not. Some believe that if you carry around an empty suitcase on New Year's, you'll welcome new experiences and traveling in the new year. So if you're hoping to travel more this year, you know what to do!

Another interesting superstition based on the new year's weather, according to ancient folklore, is that the forecast for the first 12 days of January is said to predict the weather for the year ahead; for example, if it rains on January 2, then you might expect rainy weather during the second month of the

year, February.

The last example I'm going to give— these are cool huh— is that in some European cultures, some people throw couches, fridges and more from their windows at midnight on New Year's Eve. This may look like a chaotic dispute to you, but to them, they're simply doing away with the old and welcoming in the new.

So just a reminder, if you think the steps you're taking to fulfill your renewed agenda are weird and don't make sense— that's okay, because there's someone out there in the world not washing their clothes on New Year's Day to avoid washing away good luck for the new year.

New Year's resolutions have a personal and economic impact

Lincoln Flowers
Panther Paw Editor

With an exciting new year comes attempts at new habits for people around the world. The start of the new year is a great opportunity to identify and eliminate bad habits to cut out and adopt new ones. The real deciding factor of these resolutions is their implementation and dedication, however.

New Year's resolutions don't just have an effect on individual people; they also affect businesses as well. For example, the new year brings in a large new crowd of people into gyms, whose resolutions are to get into shape, get fitter, stronger, etc. Additionally, stock prices for fast food restaura-

rants could shift as a result of people whose New Year's resolutions are to cut out unhealthy food.

The New Year is the largest synchronized economic event around the world. Thus, there are many side effects of this large event, such as business closures, as a result of the celebration of the New Year, especially in China. These temporary closures often lead to decreased supply and increased pricing and demand.

According to deseret.com, an estimated 31% of Americans planned to set New Year's resolutions. Among those people, the most common resolution was to get fitter, holding 25% of the popular vote. Other popular resolutions include eating healthier, saving more money, and being happy, making up the



Photo Courtesy of Pixabay

majority of the responses. The four least common resolutions included moving, volunteering more, showing up on time more often, and getting more involved politically, each holding roughly 5% of votes.

According to Forbes, only about 8% of people actually stick to their New Year's resolutions. Factors such as overly ambitious goals, lack of planning, and lack of accountability can be attributed to the low number of

successful resolutions. A good way to combat failing your New Year's resolutions is to set achievable goals and stick to a manageable plan.

Symbolism of New Years

Aurora Petrie
Managing Editor

New Year's celebrations across the globe are shown in traditions and symbols, with each element chosen to represent new beginnings, reflections on the past, and optimism for the future.

The most fundamental symbol of the new year is time itself, which is universally represented by the stroke of midnight. The clock and countdown essentially embody the moment of change, which creates a global focus on the passage of time. Calendars too can be powerful symbols of New Year's, with the final page representing a fresh start.

In many cultures light is a critical symbol for New Year's, such as fireworks, candles, and festive lights. Fireworks have a spectacular display of light and sound, which, to some, symbolizes the driving away of evil spirits and the welcoming of light. Candles and festive lights in homes or in public spaces represent hope, warmth, and triumph over darkness.

Many traditions, such as cleaning the house or making New Year's resolutions, involve symbolic acts of purification and preparation as a way to ensure a prosperous year ahead. Cleaning the house is a common tradition in many cultures; it can symbolize sweeping away mis-

fortune and clutter from the past year in order to make room for good fortune. New Year's resolutions symbolize a personal commitment to self-improvement; this can allow people to shed past habits and embrace their new goals.

Did you know that certain foods play a significant role in New Year's symbolism? Specific food items are believed to bring luck and prosperity. Round foods like cakes, certain fruits, cookies, etc. represent the cycle of the year. Legumes, such as Blackeyed Peas and Lentils represent coins and financial luck due to their shape. Long noodles (mainly in Asian cultures) symbolize a long life and must be eaten with-

out breaking them. Grapes are a Spanish tradition where twelve grapes are eaten at each stroke of midnight to symbolize luck for each month of the coming year.

Ultimately, each one of these symbols breaks down to one central idea: opportunity for renewal. Globally the new year represents a moment for humanity to collectively reflect and look forward with a shared sense of optimism for the future no matter how differently we all celebrate it.

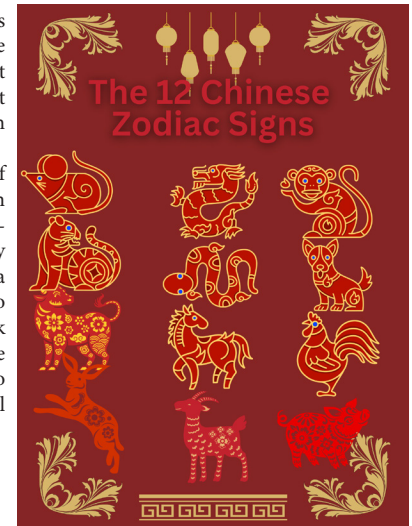


Photo Courtesy of Aurora Petrie

Origins of New Year's Traditions

Kaiya Levesque
Social Media Intern

People around the world have been celebrating the start of each new year for at least four millennia. Today, most New Year's festivities begin on December 31, known as New Year's Eve, the last day of the Gregorian calendar. The question is, "How did New Year's originate?"

The earliest recorded festivities of a new year's arrival date back about 4,000 years ago to ancient Babylon. For the Babylonians, the first new moon following the vernal equinox—the day in late March with an equal amount of sunlight and darkness—heralded the start of the

new year (History.com).

A festival, called Akitu, is a celebration that involves several different rituals on each of its 11 days. Akitu also served an important political purpose. A new king was crowned, or the current ruler's divine mandate was symbolically renewed.

Over time, civilizations around the world developed increasingly sophisticated calendars, typically pinning the first day of the year to an agricultural or astronomical event. In Egypt, for instance, the year began with the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius. The first day of the Lunar New Year, meanwhile, occurred with the second new moon after the winter solstice

(History.com).

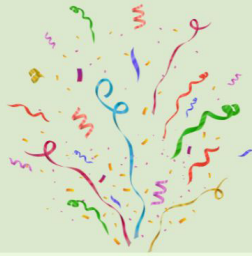
The Romans later shifted the date to January 1st. The early Roman calendar consisted of 10 months and 304 days, with each new year beginning at the vernal equinox; according to tradition it was created by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in the eighth century B.C. A later king, Numa Pompilius, is credited with adding the months of Januarius and Februarius.

However you celebrate and wherever you're from, the new year brings with it new celebrations and new resolutions.

An infographic titled "THE HISTORY OF NEW YEAR'S DAY" showing key historical events from 46 B.C.E. to the present. The events are: 46 B.C.E. Julius Caesar developed the Julian calendar with a 365-day year and a leap year every four years. This calendar was widely used for over 16 centuries. 1582 Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar to correct inaccuracies in the Julian calendar. Ten days were removed to realign with the solar year. Catholic countries adopted it immediately. 1752 Great Britain and its colonies, including North America, adopted the Gregorian calendar. Eleven days were removed to sync with the solar year, and New Year's Day shifted from March 25 to January 1. 1867 Alaska transitioned from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar after being sold to the United States. The International Date Line was moved, aligning Alaska with the Gregorian system. PRESENT New Year's Day remains a time for celebration, a symbol of new beginnings, and hope.

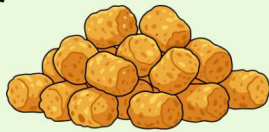
Photo Courtesy of History by Mail

Upcoming National Holidays!



National Tater Tot Day

February 2



National Umbrella Day

February 10

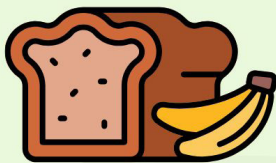
National Tortellini Day

February 13



National Banana Bread Day

February 23



Infographic by Lincoln Flowers

Global new years traditions around the world

Rorie Howles-McBeth
Social Media Editor

Around the world, people celebrate New Year's in slightly different ways. As we know, we celebrate by gathering with family and friends, hosting a small gathering, watching fireworks, and watching the ball drop.

Some people in the U.S. eat 12 grapes each second before midnight, a tradition originating from Spain. They say that each grape eaten brings good luck for each month.

In Denmark, one of the most popular traditions is smashing plates. They throw them at the door, and it's supposed to bring good luck, ward off evil spirits, and show affection for friends by leaving the broken china on their doorsteps. The larger the pile is, the more popular and fortunate they are considered to be in the

coming year.

In the Philippines, wearing polka dots is considered good luck because the round shapes symbolize coins and prosperity, as do round fruits symbolizing abundance.

In Japan, Buddhist temples ring low 108 times to cleanse humanity of 108 worldly desires or sins.

In Finland, they predict their future with metal. By that, I mean they melt small horse-shoe-shaped tins and pour it into cold water to form shapes, then they interpret these shapes to predict the coming year's fortune, wealth, and health they call this Uudenvuodentina.

I went and asked some peers of mine to see what their New Year's traditions were, if they had any. One person I talked to was Maddex Coffey. He told me that one thing they used to do was "Eat sauerkraut and kielbasa, but

now they tend not to really do that anymore." But the tradition of eating sauerkraut and kielbasa comes from German and Pennsylvania Dutch heritage. I myself do the same tradition, but we add kidney beans to the meal. We have to eat a little bit of each to have a good year coming.

Almost everybody that I talked to said that they really didn't do anything special. They either said that they hang out with friends and family and watch the ball drop or said that they eat a certain meal. But when it comes to different New Year's traditions, everybody does something a little different. It can be a simple thing like wearing a certain color or eating certain foods and so on, but in the end, everybody just wants a good year filled with good vibes, luck, fortune, and friends, family, and loved ones.



Photo Courtesy of Pexels

“Avatar: Fire and Ash” A New Dawn in Pandora’s Saga

Claire Harrison
Broadcast Director

[Warning: the following article contains spoilers for the “Avatar” series]

The movie that everyone has been waiting for has finally come out, “Avatar: Fire and Ash.” The new movie follows the Sully family as they maneuver through life after their son Neteyam’s death. New threats like the Ash People, also known as the Mangkwan Clan, led by Varang. Colonel Quaritch and Varang join together to take down the Sully family. Lo’ak, the oldest brother after Neteyam, must step up and look after his sibling and become more mature. Confronting internal family strife concerning their adopted human son, Spider.

With a 66% on RottenTomatoes.com, a 7.4/10 rating on IMDb.com, and a rating of

9/10 on IGN.com, the movie stands with some mixed reviews. Some say the installment wasn’t needed, while others loved it. A freshman, Kaiya Levesque, said when asked the question, “What do you think of Avatar: Fire and Ash?” She says, “It looks like a really good movie, but it is on the longer side.”

The cast includes Zoe Saldana as Neytiri, Sam Worthington as Jake Sully, Sigourney Weaver as Kiri, Jack Champion as Spider, Bailey Bass as Tsireya, Britain Dalton as Lo’ak, Stephen Lang as Miles Quaritch, Kate Winslet as Ronal, Oona Chaplin as Varang, Trinity Bliss as Tuktirey as ‘Tuk’, Cliff Curtis as Tonowari, Filipino Geljo as Aonung, and Duane Evans Jr. as Rotox. When asked, “Would you watch the movie Avatar: Fire and Ash?” Sophia Pacak responded with, “No, it looks boring, and it is way too long for my liking.”

There are many different re-

views on “Avatar: Fire and Ash,” some saying it’s too repetitive and lacking originality, while others say the themes and character development are amazing.

Fores.com quotes Rottentomato.com critics which says, “Remaining on the cutting edge of visual effects, Fire and Ash repeats the narrative beats of its predecessors to frustrating effect, but its grand spectacle continues to stoke one-of-a-kind thrills.”

Geerksoumya.com has an article by Soumyajit Das saying that “Avatar: Fire and Ash turns out to be less of a masterpiece and more of a missed opportunity.” In their article, their main point is that “Avatar: Fire and Ash” overhyped a predictable and recycled storyline. She says, “Character motivations feel hollow, with the villains once again being caricatures of corporate greed and military exploitation rather than nuanced forces. Even

new characters, introduced to bring freshness, are weighed down by clichés we have already seen in other big blockbusters.”

Ninertimes.com has an article by Olivia Knott saying the colors in the film were spectacular and the graphics on this piece were very well done. It was vivid, revelatory, and surprisingly very sentient, and there was great dialogue in the film that revealed deeper themes and meanings. In the end she says, “Overall, this movie had its ups and its downs. The plot, the themes, and the under-

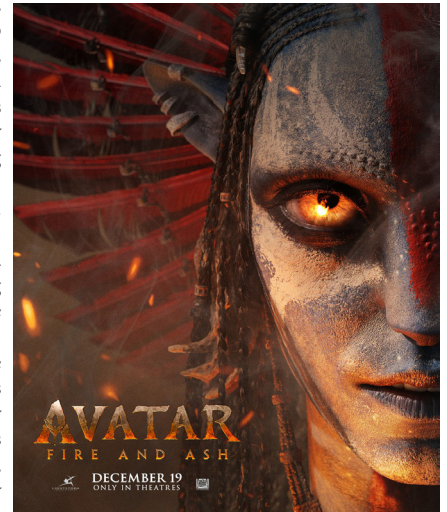


Photo Courtesy of Nitehawk Cinema

lying meanings were touching and thoughtful. However, the pacing of the film was, at times, very off.”

“The SpongeBob Movie: Search for Squarepants” After 25 years, SpongeBob is finally the “Big Guy”!

Sophia Pacak
A&E Editor

(Note: The following articles contains spoilers for the movie.)

On December 19th, 2025, the Meadville theaters released the highly anticipated, “The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants.” Following the often-used trope of a “rescue” film, the movie follows the adventure of the porous sea sponge, SpongeBob SquarePants, as he yearns to find

courage and to grow taller so he can ride the biggest roller coaster in the sea. Taking heavy inspiration from his boss, Mr. Krabs, he listens to the crustacean carefully, learning how he had once used to be a fearful swashbuckler when he was younger and worked with the villainous Flying Dutchman. Taking his curiosity too far, he wanders down into the depths of the Krusty Krab with his best friend, Patrick Star, trailing right behind him. Lurking in the deep basement, the two sea creatures discover the dark secret of the bold boss;

the red crustacean was hiding the Flying Dutchman away from the world.

Awakening the terrifying legend from its slumber by digging through Mr. Krabs’ old swashbuckling equipment, SpongeBob is greeted with a lifetime opportunity to grow bravery and courage by leaving with the Flying Dutchman and accomplishing tasks that would require simple strength and bravery. Leaving Mr. Krabs alone without a fry cook, he plucks Squidward Tentacles from his job and SpongeBob’s pet Snail, Gary, on a quest

to retrieve the yellow sponge and pink starfish from certain death. On the trio’s own journey, they had faced troubling consequences as they tracked down the Flying Dutchman, from gruesome serpents luring them in with their sweet melodies to moody teenagers as they travel through a high school to Davy Jones’s locker. Their quest is almost complete as, through their traveling, they find SpongeBob just about to reach the end of his quest as he finishes his acts of bravery. What he didn’t know? The Flying Dutchman had a

devilish scheme to take the yellow sponge’s soul. What happens next? Find out at your local theater, or wait until January 20th for the digital release to buy it for yourself.



Photo Courtesy of Sophia Pacak

Saegertown varsity boys basketball team fights for the region

Quinton Burchill
Editor in Chief

The Panthers are off to a great season thus far. The Panthers are fighting to be the region champs. They have a great fan base; usually, at almost every home game, the gym is full. The Panthers have an astonishing overall record of 11-2 and a 5-1 record in their region. The Saegertown panthers are standing in

second place in their region behind Rocky Grove. The Panthers face rival Cambridge Spring on February 3 at 7:30 eastern time away. Also, the Panthers take on Jamestown on February 6 at 7:30 eastern time at the Panthers' home gym.

"My favorite part of the season so far is having a winning season with my teammates," said Senior William Shaffer, part of the Saegertown Panthers high school basketball team. Shaffer

added, "Our team bonds together because of the court relationships we have with each other, as well as the team chemistry being very effective due to playing other sports with each other over the years." He continued, "I think we will make a good run on winning the region this year. We are placed second currently, but we have a great chance to win it this year."

Senior Everett Gardner followed William up and said, "My

favorite part of the season so far with playing with my teammates." Gardner added, "The thing that makes this team bond is that we've been playing together for a long time and are good friends... I think we have a good chance if we play the way we should."

Senior Luke Young also added to this, saying, "My favorite part of the season so far is being so successful as a team... What makes this team bond so good

is our [bond] started at such a young age and has continued to this day. Also, a lot of us being multi-sport athletes has given us the ability to create team bonding year-round." The Saegertown senior also added, "If we play with our best brand of basketball that I know that we are capable of, we have an amazing shot for the region."



Photo Courtesy of SHS Yearbook

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