

HAPPENINGS

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The Cold Season of Winter Welcomed us December 21

Orion Holl - 9

The season of cold weather welcomes us on Monday, December 21, 2020. Before winter even begins, we are still welcomed with very cold weather as we ease into the coldest season of the year. Not very surprisingly, many people do enjoy this season as they get the feeling of the festivities. Christmas, the holiday many look forward to, this holiday makes winter more appealing as snow and cold weather make it feel more like the holiday season.

For the Northern half of the earth, winter solstice annually occurs on December 21 or 22. For the Southern Hemisphere winter solstice occurs in June. The winter solstice day is the shortest day of the year, and after the first day of winter, the days start to become longer and longer. The winter solstice holds significance across a variety of cultures, as it signals the changing of the seasons. Some ancient people even marked the solstice using huge stone structures, like Newgrange in Ireland. The day of the winter solstice, we are tilted as far away from the Sun as possible, which means that the Sun's path across the sky is as low in the sky as it can be. Another way to think of this is that on the day of the solstice, the Sun's path reaches its most southerly point in the sky. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, this means that the Sun's path is as low in the sky as it can get.



Some of the coldest winters in history. The Great Frost, 1683–1684, when the Thames, hosting the River Thames frost fairs, was frozen all the way up to the London Bridge and remained frozen for about two months. Ice was about 10 inches thick in London and about 47 inches thick in Somerset. The sea froze up to 2 miles. 1816 was the Year Without a Summer in the Northern Hemisphere. The unusual coolness of the winter of 1815–1816 and of the following summer was primarily due to the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia, in April 1815. There were secondary effects from an unknown eruption around 1810, and several smaller eruptions around the world between 1812 and 1814. Some further information visit www.timeanddate.com.

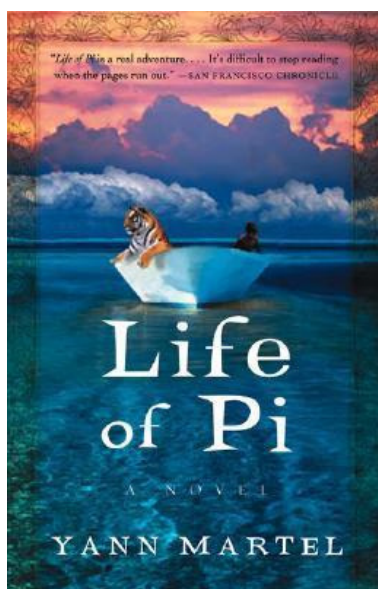
The Life of Pi: philosophical novel: man and animal

Emily Smith - 10

The Life of Pi is a philosophical novel written by Canadian author Yann Martel. It was published in September of 2001 by the publisher Random House of Canada. The novel has won multiple awards, including the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature and the 2003 Boeke Prize, along with selling over ten million copies and being adapted into a film in 2012. The Life of Pi is action-packed novel about a young boy and a Bengal tiger traveling across the Pacific Ocean while they fight to survive the harsh conditions of the ocean as well as adjusting to living with each other.

The Life of Pi is a book filled with surprises at every turn. Pi Patel is a regular teenager from India who travels aboard a ship where he and his family will start their new life in Canada. An unexpected twist arrives when the ship makes its descent to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean along with Pi's family and the majority of their animal cargo from their zoo in India. The only survivors are Pi and a few animals, specifically a male Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. Pi and Richard Parker have to fight off the unbearable conditions of their little lifeboat while trying to keep themselves sane. The dominance of each species in their own habitat tests the wills of both creatures, making for an action packed and somewhat emotional journey of the two characters.

I would recommend The Life of Pi to any person who loves animals and/or philosophical misconceptions. The novel itself may be too graphic for younger audiences, but is perfect for high school students who are interested in diving into psychological thrillers. The Life of Pi is truly deserving of its awards and praise, as it does reveal a new perspective on life itself. For more information on The Life of Pi, please visit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_of_Pi



Commending The Crown

Justin Hoy - 11

The Crown is a show that displays eccentric lifestyles, historical events, and personal royal competition with political intrigue; interesting most of the people interested in semi-historical drama series.

The series, produced by Netflix, was first released in 2016 and is based on the life and influential experiences of Queen Elizabeth II; having high reviews and praise from viewers. While having semi-historical and interesting events occur within the story, the budget that Netflix has given this show, just for the first season, is one of the highest being around 130 million dollars (which includes the set and clothing/ prop costs). The series has continued for three more seasons, having the development and investment company, Netflix, announce that it will continue for two other seasons, seasons five and six. The series also depicts new characters of the royal and other political people throughout the seasons to show the aging of certain characters. Although some critics state (mainly certain historians that study this era of British history) that certain political discussions and royal familial issues and rivalries did not exist, the show still displays great plots with historical drama even if it is not entirely true.

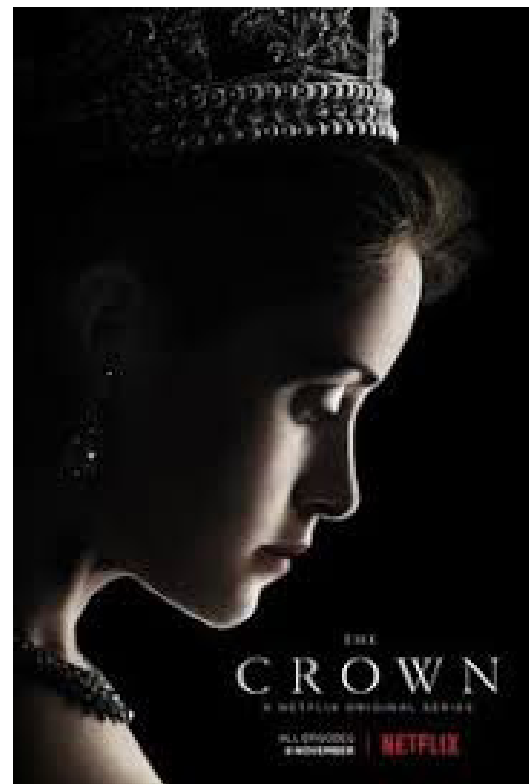
The story of the TV show, The Crown, is not primarily based on one specific story line throughout the episodes in each season, but each season is actually divided into different influential and differing time periods throughout Queen Elizabeth's reign of the United Kingdom. Season 1 first begins with the background of the situation that the nation is in politically, as well as showing the history of Elizabeth's father ruling the country and her marriage to Prince Philip in 1947. The first few episodes are dedicated to explaining Elizabeth's father (a different era), King George VI, slowly dying of lung cancer and attempting to, secretly, prepare Elizabeth for becoming the next ruling monarch of the nation. While in Australia, Elizabeth finds out that her father passed away and immediately declared the Queen, although not formally crowned. Being unprepared, although having political and family advisers around her, she attempts to, and eventually learns, how to suppress her own feelings about political issues to stabilize and be neutral (publically) towards the country.

The first season (from the time period of 1947-1956), after the death of Elizabeth's father, then begins to explain the political situations in the United Kingdom as well as explain a scandalous affair that is occurring between the Queen's sister, Maragaret, and a royal advisor named Peter Townsend. With the political situations occurring in the nation, like Winston Churchill's instability with leading the nation in certain crisis due to his declining health and age (one example being the Great Smog of 1952 in London) and the royal affair between Maragret and Townsend, the Queen attempts to solve the issues while not being partisan or taking a public stance on the issues. Churchill, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, eventually resigns while Townsend and Margaret are split for two years (although this deal is not upheld) for the stability of the monarchy and nation. This first season also explains the three Prime Ministers that Elizabeth has to deal with, having political instability and not very good and stable experience in her first few years as the monarch of the nation (Queen).

Season 2 has a time period from 1956-1963, explaining the Suez Crisis, the birth of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip's (her husband) last two children (Andrew and Edward), the reign of a new Prime Minister in the nation, and the meeting and assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The Suez Crisis is explained as a minor role within the series as a test of the Queen's political nonpartisan skills. The series then explains the stressed and, assumed, scandalis relations between Philip and other women (being unfaithful to Elizabeth). This season also explains the Prime Minister as the time's experiences, politically, as well as the royal family meeting the Kennedys. The royal family also comforts the Kennedy family after the assassination of J. F. K. in 1963. The third season explains the time period of 1964-1977, describing the Silver Jubilee of the Queen, the Apollo 11 moon landings, and the introduction of Camila Shand into the series. This season also changes in the Queen's played-actress, from Claire Foy to Olivia Coleman. Season four's time period is from 1977-1990, and introduces the character of Princess Diana and Prime Minister Maragaret Thatcher. Most of the season is split between the personal unstable relationship between Princess Diana and Prince Charles, and their marriage and children being born (William and Harry) during this time period. It also describes the events and political situations during thistimer period under the premiership of Thatcher, explaining her political policies and events during her reign, like the Falkland War.

Although the series can be somewhat boring at certain points in certain events within the story (attempting to explain all parts of the specific situation, the causes and effects of the situation), this series is one of the most interesting drama shows that I have watched in a long time with the political rivalries that occurs every episode.

To learn more information visit: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4786824/plotsummary>



Real Christmas tree vs. fake Christmas tree; which is better?

Alison Gassert - 12

Ten students were asked, "Do you have a real tree or fake tree at home for Christmas?" and seven out of ten reported having a fake tree instead of a real Christmas tree.

Each year debates arise surrounding the question of which is better, a real Christmas tree or a fake Christmas tree? Many families ponder this question along with, which is healthier? Which is better for the environment? Which is less expensive? According to the survey conducted by The American Christmas Tree Association, in 2019, 81% of Christmas trees displayed in the U.S. were artificial while 19% were real. It is clear that the

United States overall prefers an artificial tree, but there are some things that are impossible to get with an artificial tree. There is something about the act of looking for a Christmas tree with family that really brings out the holiday spirit in everyone.

The pros of a real Christmas tree is that they support U.S. farmers, their employees, and the overall U.S. economy. Artificial trees mostly come from

China and therefore, do not benefit the U.S. It is a myth that an artificial tree is better for the

environment because before the real tree is cut down, it is alive and growing for seven years which benefits the United States' air quality. These trees also provide homes for birds and other types of animals, and even after the tree is cut down, seedlings are put in its place to start the cycle all over again. There is just something about going with family to find the perfect Christmas tree that helps relieve stress and screams holiday spirit, let alone intimate family time. Nowadays Christmas tree farms have other attractions such as wagon rides or music which make the experience so much more special. The cons of Christmas trees cannot be ignored though, and some things that may prevent a family from getting a real tree are allergies and real trees are a fire hazard.

The pros of an artificial tree is that they are overall less work and maintenance; many of them are pre-lit and they do not require daily water or lose pine needles that would need to be cleaned up. For the most part, artificial trees are less expensive than a real tree. This does depend on the place where the tree is bought though, but realistically an artificial tree can last several years which saves money over time. Artificial trees nowadays can look very realistic, that is if it is not a blue or white tree, so the appearance of a real tree will not be lost. Some cons of an artificial tree are that they are coated and made with several different harmful chemicals, which could be unhealthy. They are also bad for the environment because of the way they are packaged and transported across the country which creates twice the amount of greenhouse gas emissions than a real tree. Just like real trees, artificial trees are also a fire hazard which is always a risk.

Overall, on paper, artificial trees are less expensive over time and require less work, but they also contain harmful chemicals. Real trees are more expensive and they require work, but they are healthy for the environment and support U.S. farmers and the economy. Either way there are pros and cons, and ultimately whichever tree is chosen, the act of decorating the tree with family and loved ones is a fun way to reduce stress and get into the holiday spirit. Merry Christmas!



Band Spotlight: Okkervil River

Wyatt Holl - 11

Many bands make music that have powerful meanings, but few take this to the level that the band, Okkervil River does with every song, and at times even entire albums, telling a story that perpetuates a greater meaning.

If one is unfamiliar with Okkervil River, then they should know that Okkervil River is an indie/folk rock band that is led by lead singer Will Sheff. The band is made up of over ten other members, who each play many pivotable roles such as using different instruments and designing song/album covers that make the band truly unique. Okkervil River came together in the year 1998 in Austin, Texas where they chose their band name which was based off of a Russian short story that is set along the river named Okkervil in the city St. Petersburg. Overall, they have remained somewhat under the radar in today's music because of their old style genre that sounds like something out of the 60's or 70's. But to anyone interested in taking chances and looking for music that is different from all others, Okkervil River is the way to go.

What was surprising most to me when I first heard a piece of Okkervil River's music, was just how strong and passionate it all sounded. Every lyric displayed seems to have been meticulously thought out and placed to form a cohesive piece of musical literature. One of the band's top songs, Black, found in the album, Black Sheep Boy, describes a person who is trying to protect his female friend from the horrors of her past but is failing to do so. Not only did the lyric hit hard, but the fast paced and meaningful instrumentals behind it all that is like nothing I have ever or will ever listen to again. Will Sheff, the lead singer and songwriter, ensures that the music relates to something that can reach home for someone out there listening to it. Another example of powerful language is in the song, Plus Ones, that is found in the album, The Stage Names, that refers to other songs found in the album. The entire album is connected and one song can be called a sequel to another while still sounding completely different. The genius behind this band's use of pure word choice which goes without saying, is incredible.

The genre may not be fit for every person, however, because of the semi hardcore and laid back indie tone found in many of their songs. The song, Savannah Smiles, by Okkervil River is an example of a song that is very laid back and more methodical and gentle, than hardcore and upbeat like many songs today. Throughout this whole song, Will is speaking softly and the instrumental is light, so to the blind listener, it may appear bland.

listening to Okkervil River is a must for all people, because this band is more than just music, it's a movement towards something bigger.



Taylor Swift unveils second surprise album - Evermore

Gigi Doklan - 12

On July 24, 2020 Taylor Swift surprised fans with her eighth studio album, Folklore. The album was produced from a home studio with a small team of songwriters, including Aaron Dessner of the National and Jack Antonoff of Bleachers fame. Swift successfully executed another stylistic shift toward alternative, indie production a la Lana Del Rey. Storytelling is at the forefront of Folklore; Swift creates a town where characters Betty, Augustine and James are involved in a thrillingly tragic love triangle.



Evermore was released just shy of four months later on December 11, 2020. Swift described the album as Folklore's "sister," so of course it bears similarities to her previous record. It features the same production style and songwriters as Folklore and expands on the story Swift created on that record. Some highlights include the glittering Champagne Problems, which comments on the mistreatment of mentally ill women. Other notable tracks include No Body, No Crime featuring HAIM and the title track with Bon Iver.

Archer Thomas has been a Taylor Swift fan for a long time and was very excited to hear Evermore. He particularly enjoys the bare-bones production on the album, stating it gives the project a "home-y vibe." His favorites from the album include Gold Rush and Dorothea. Archer hails both Folklore and Evermore as his favorite albums from 2020. "Taylor Swift's music has really helped me through this quarantine," he says. Needless to say, Archer believes Evermore is a great project.

To watch the Willow music video, click here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-sEZmictANA>

All about anxiety

Emily Smith - 10

There are lots of reasons to have anxiety right now. Covid-19, elections, protests, and so much more have hit the United States hard, leaving many feeling uncertain about the future. Teens have had an especially difficult year, as the normal school day does not feel so "normal" anymore. This has given anxiety the perfect chance to wiggle its way into everyday life.

Anxiety is characterized as a mental disorder that causes an extreme amount of fear and worry. There are different forms of anxiety that each affect a person's overall mental well-being. Common forms are OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) in which a person's thoughts are consistently intrusive, then causing them to excessively behave a certain way (i.e. constant cleaning or organizing, counting, hand-washing, etc.), and PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) in which a person who has endured a high-stress experience continually has flashbacks to that event (i.e. car accident, war, death of a family member, etc.). These different forms of anxiety are among the most popular, and affect millions of people each year.

There are many healthy solutions to somewhat eliminate anxiety. Exercise, meditation, getting proper amounts of sleep, and a well-balanced diet each can contribute to a significant amount of calmness. One solution that is very simple and does not require significant changes is deep breathing. Inhaling and exhaling slowly can calm the mind, making it easier to think. Another technique that is often overlooked is talking with a professional. Speaking with a family member, friend, or counselor can help alleviate one's worry and release any negative thoughts that may become a burden.

When overcoming anxiety, it is important to remember that everyone is concerned about the future, as 2020 has been a stressful year. The HAHS counselors are always willing to lend an ear, so be sure to schedule an appointment for any mental health concerns.

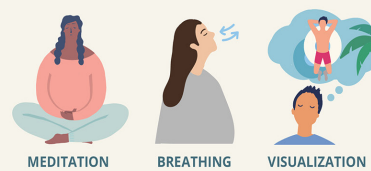
For help on dealing with anxiety, please visit <https://teenmentalhealth.org/> or <https://adaa.org/tips>.

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FOUR CORE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

1. ATTENTION - CENTERING TECHNIQUES

To neutralize anxiety, it can often help to use techniques designed to focus attention beyond anxious thoughts.



2. EXPRESSIVE, CREATIVE STRATEGIES

To channel anxious thoughts or feelings in more productive ways, we might identify specific outlets to express creativity, such as working on a project, drawing, and athletics.



3. REFLECTION EXPLORATION STRATEGIES

To monitor where anxiety arises, become more aware of anxiety triggers, and reflect on anxious thoughts and feelings, we might try strategies that foster self-observation.



4. HEALTHY LIFESTYLE VALUES

To reduce residual feelings of anxiety, it could help to turn attention toward healthy habits, healthy relationships, healthy pleasures, and a healthy environment.

