

Maryam Mazroua & Alina Sadat

Winter in the Windy City

A closer look at climate change in Chicago

Chicago, the city infamous for its harsh and biting winters, is experiencing a threat to its reputation. With 2023 already here, it has become clear that the weather is becoming more and more unpredictable, and concerns over Chicagoland’s warming winters are intensifying. Though Lake Michigan has been known to influence Chicago’s unique weather patterns, the changes in recent years indicate that climate change may be gaining greater control over Chicago’s temperatures and water levels.

Among Americans, including Chicagoans, there is a misconception that climate change is not as rampant as environmentalists make it seem, and it is something that future generations will have to deal with. Not only is this untrue, but it also poses a great danger to the current environment. To provide a better understanding of how severe the issue is in Chicago, one can turn to the average winter temperatures. According to an article by Northwestern University, since 1970, winter temperatures in Chicago have increased an average of 3.2 degrees Fahrenheit. It is predicted that by 2050, there will be 22 less days per year that have a minimum temperature of 32 degrees Fahrenheit. To some, 2050 sounds like the distant future, but there are other effects of climate change that are much more glaring now, such as the record high and low water levels of Lake Michigan.

The lake is experiencing fluctuating water levels that are reaching unprecedented highs and lows in a very short span of time. Between 2013 and 2020, the water levels of Lake Michigan fluctuated over six feet—an alarming amount for just seven years.

In addition, as ironic as it may seem, Chicago is also experiencing sudden, extreme winter storms and temperatures. 2019’s polar vortex storm is the most recent example of this, with a record low temperature of -21 degrees Fahrenheit and a windchill of -51 degrees Fahrenheit. Though Chicago continues to warm at a dramatic pace, climate change may bring more abrupt, brutal storms like this one. As the temperature difference between the Arctic’s polar jet stream and mid-latitudes is narrowing, the polar jet stream is weakening, allowing frigid air from the Arctic to move south.

All this is just the beginning, and conditions will only worsen from here on out if there is no reform. Therefore, it is vital that Chicagoans do their part. Staying updated with what is happening is a good start, but spreading the message and getting involved with different environmental organizations is the easiest and most efficient way to make a difference in stopping climate change.

Tahira Bhatti & Zoya Farooqui

The Rise of Anti-Intellectualism

A concerning modern phenomenon

Anti-intellectualism has become a growing trend among younger generations. Most noticeable on social media or in-person, one may find themselves hesitant to discuss hobbies such as reading or writing, even if it is within a group of friends. This hesitance may be due to the lesser known and growing phenomenon of anti-intellectualism. Along with discouraging reading and writing, people have also turned towards media that is less complex and more straightforward. This, in part, is due to the societal pressures that have been placed on the youth of today to conform to capitalistic ideals.

With the promotion of shorter, fast-paced media, it’s become easier for people to access information and form opinions without the guidance of experts. This has led to the proliferation of misinformation and conspiracy theories, which are often spread by people who reject the authority of experts.

The wide availability of information combined with the false confidence of social media proprietors (who proclaim false information with little knowledge) has only strengthened anti-intellectualism across their audiences. Studies have shown that U.S adults who largely relied on social media for political news were more likely to believe in false or unproven news and claims, while also remaining unaware about various topics.



This has led to people sharing information without doing proper research or giving any thought to the content beforehand, only continuing the cycle.

This cycle has led people to believe that quick, easy-to-digest information is the prime source of intellect on the web. To read something longer or more in-depth is considered to be a waste of time, especially if it is for recreational purposes. Enjoying the art of reading, writing, cinematography, poetry, or any other subject alongside these is to “lack better hobbies” if they are not in the pursuit of a higher reward like academic success, financial gain, or other capitalistic gain. This is detrimental to the development and exploration of one’s interests and hobbies, as it prioritizes immediate reward over journey and discovery. While capitalism has always played a part in it, the driving force behind the trend currently has been social media, especially with its increased popularity in recent years. When everything is accessible with the touch of your finger, the slow-paced churn among the pages of a book has become wildly old-fashioned. It is uncertain to which lengths anti-intellectualism will affect future generations. With it growing by leaps and bounds every day, one can assume that it will certainly be a greater point of concern than it is today.



A photograph of Chicago during the polar vortex storm of 2019 (Retrieved from Forbes.com)

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Arwa Khan

The Hijab:

Growing controversy around the world

In the past few years, Muslims have dealt with violence and discrimination in different parts of the world. More recently, Muslim women have been in the limelight for the oppression they are facing. Two incidents that took place in the past year demonstrate the length to which this oppression goes: The death of a young Iranian woman, Mahsa Amini, and the Indian government withholding rights to an education for college girls who refuse to take off their hijabs.

In India, the division between Muslims and Hindus increased after Prime Minister Modi took office in 2014. The division is now evident in anti-hijab policies in public spaces across provinces like Karnataka. Educational institutes in Karnataka stirred the conflict over the hijab after barring it in classrooms or on campus. A month before Muskan Khan, a Karnatak student, was stopped for wearing a face covering, a group of college girls protested for being denied entry outside their college. This event led the case to the high court of Karnataka where the government considered both sides of the argument. Many feared that the potential hijab ban would cause Islamophobia to increase. Ultimately, the Karnataka High Court deemed

the hijab a nonessential religious practice in Islam, thus deeming it unprotected by the Constitution.

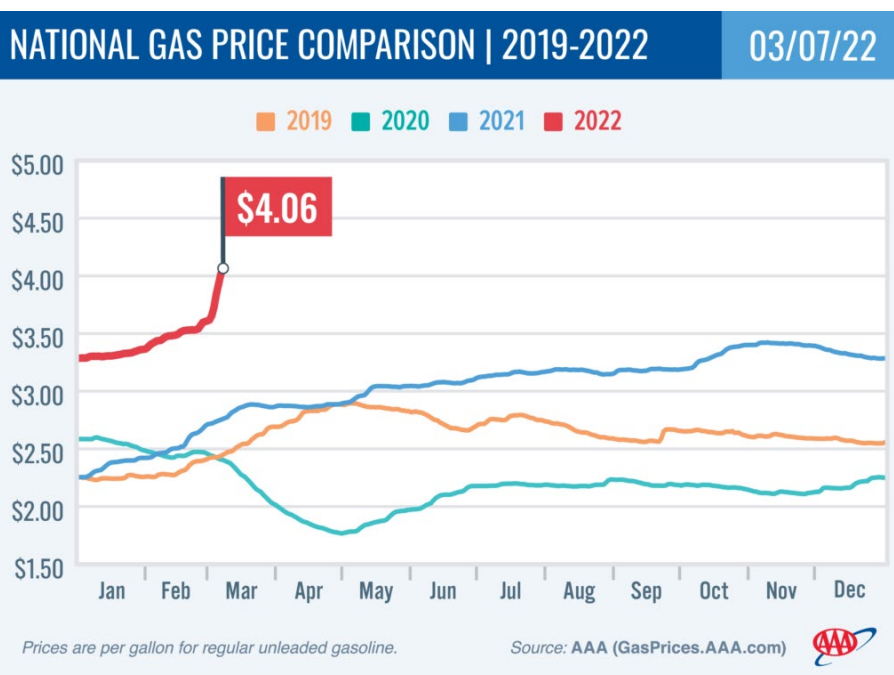
On the other hand, the situation in Iran is dealing with an opposite issue. The most recent uprising against forced hijab started with the death of Mahsa Amini in Iran. Amini was a 22-year old woman who was leaving her home in the Kurdistan province of Iran to visit family in Tehran when she was taken into custody by the Guidance Patrol. They later reported that she had a heart attack at the police station where she was detained with other women. She was said to have fallen into a coma and was transferred to a hospital. However, eyewitnesses in the detention center stated that the officers beat Mahsa. Several leaked scans show signs of cerebral hemorrhage from the blows to her head. The Guidance Patrol denied hitting Amini, blaming her death on a sudden heart attack.

With her death, the biggest protest in Iran since 2009 took place. There was an uproar of protestors demonstrating their support for Amini. More than three hundred people were killed in these protests by Iranian police forces. As a Muslim community, we must remain aware of the global events involving symbols of our

faith. Spreading awareness about what the hijab is and what it means to Muslim women can help others see that it is a life-long journey, not something anyone can decide for women. Some choose to wear the hijab, and some choose not to; it is a personal decision that should not be influenced by political authorities or people in power.



A student protest in India following the hijab row in the Karnatak High Court (2022). Retrieved from CNN.com



A graph designed by the American Automobile Association (AAA) which shows the sudden spike in regular unleaded gasoline prices in the U.S. in 2022. It is the first time since the pandemic began that national gas prices exceeded 4 dollars per gallon.

Nour Elhadi

The Russia-Ukraine War

And its drastic effects on the global economy

Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the ongoing humanitarian crisis following it deeply shook the fragile post-pandemic economy, impacting not only Russia, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe, but also nations globally. The resulting political and economic unrest led to many having their lives upended and finding themselves impoverished. It also resulted in inflation which altered the day to day lives of many individuals, such as the infamous spike in gas prices earlier this year.

Russia and Ukraine are both major exporters of essential commodities; however, as a direct result of the disruption of the global supply chain, the price of said commodities has increased exponentially. While Russia is one of the largest exporters of goods such as gas, metals, and crude oil, Ukraine's fertile land allows for abundant production of crops like corn, wheat, and sunflower oil.

This year's gas prices were already higher than usual due to the post-pandemic slowdown of economic growth. The Russia-Ukraine war resulted in the Russian oil supply becoming more limited and consequently more expensive. Many individuals were shocked to discover that gas prices after the invasion had become over four to five dollars per gallon, making a full refill of gas approximately \$60 for smaller cars and \$80 for larger cars. This increase in the cost of necessities like gas had made the "cost of living" much more expensive.

The Russia-Ukraine war has disrupted markets and economies everywhere, leaving many unable to find products in stores or unable to afford goods due to widespread inflation. The war has left many nations struggling to stabilize their economies and has thrust many into financial instability.

Maheen Elahi

British Politics:

Rishi Sunak and the prime minister position

There are mixed opinions following the election of Rishi Sunak, the British Prime Minister. The 42-year-old son of Indian immigrants won the race to replace the famously short-lived administration of Liz Truss. His only remaining rival, Penny Mordaunt, withdrew after falling short of receiving the required 100 nomination votes from conservative lawmakers. Sunak has already experienced ups and downs in his political career. Now, he must clean up the mess Truss made and deal with remarks about his position.

There have been many controversies about Rishi Sunak that have been garnering the attention of the media. More recently, the issues surrounding his wife, Akshata Murty's, status have come to light. The Sunak family had been accused of potentially avoiding paying millions of pounds in taxes because of Murty's "non-dom" status. This term is a description of tax status used to refer to a U.K. resident whose permanent residence is outside the U.K. This status allows an individual to pay tax in the UK only on their UK income, a privilege Murty has been receiving while the chancellor imposed tax rises on the public, as critics say.

However, despite the questionable occurrences surrounding Sunak and his family, it is important to remember that Sunak is the first person of color to be elected as P.M. in British history. Therefore, as the leader of a Western country, he is subject to more backlash and criticism. Despite his controversial actions, Rishi Sunak remains a significant political figure in U.K. history and a symbolism of opportunity for fellow minorities.

Fatima Zahid

Daylight Savings

The link between time & health

*Photo by Ben Hickey / Retrieved from nytimes.com*

A prolonged feeling of jet lag is one of the biggest signs of the beginning of Daylight Saving Time. Daylight Saving occurs between the months of March and November, when clocks are set one hour forward in the spring and one hour back in the fall; it has become a key component of how society's schedule functions here in the U.S.

Despite the fact that 60% of the world's countries now follow permanent standard time for the entire year, the U.S. still participates in this annual time shift. It has been known to most medical experts that these time changes have had detrimental consequences on overall health since it has an impact on the main elements of sleep.

Sleep relies on the balance between two factors: sleep homeostasis (increasing desire to

sleep the longer you are awake) and circadian rhythm (natural 24-hour cycles of the body which also regulate sleep-wake cycle). The circadian rhythm is often a bit longer than 24 hours, but the light exposure from the sun helps to "pull" the biological clock back into place. However, if there is a lack of sunlight as seen in the mornings during daylight savings time, then it becomes difficult for the circadian rhythm to remain in proper sync. Darker mornings make it more difficult to wake up, while longer and brighter evenings make it more difficult to fall asleep, throwing off your sleep homeostasis as well.

According to Northwestern Medicine, the first week after the start of Daylight Saving Time exhibited a 6% increase in fatal automobile accidents, 24% increase in heart attack risks, 8% increase in stroke rate, and 11% increase in depressive episodes. According to the Washington Post, DST in the long term is correlated with "increased risk for sleep loss, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, mood disorders, and even certain types of cancer."

Despite all these health hazards with Daylight Saving Time, there are ways to minimize their effects, such as sleeping an hour earlier the night before DST, spending your mornings before DST in sunlight, avoiding excess amounts of sleep disturbances (such as caffeine and blue light), and exercising in the morning to increase wakefulness. However, the best solution would be having permanent standard time like most other countries.

Usmaan Siddiqi

COVID-19 & The Brain

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on public health, with millions of people contracting the virus and many more experiencing its indirect effects. One area of concern is the potential for COVID-19 to affect the brain and nervous system.

There have been reports of people with COVID-19 experiencing neurological symptoms including confusion, dizziness, headache, and loss of taste or smell. In some of these cases, these symptoms have been severe and have persisted for weeks or months after the initial infection.

While the exact mechanisms by which COVID-19 affects the brain and nervous system are not yet fully understood, research suggests that the virus can directly infect cells in the nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord. The virus may also trigger an immune response that leads to inflammation and damage to the nervous system. There is also evidence that COVID-19 may increase the risk of developing other neurological conditions, such as stroke and encephalitis. Additionally, the pandemic has had a significant psychological impact on many people, with elevated rates of mental health issues such as anxiety.

It is important for people who have had COVID-19 to be aware of the potential for neurological and mental health effects and to seek medical attention if they experience any concerning symptoms. Research into the brain and COVID-19 is ongoing, so there is hope that better understanding of the virus's effects on the brain and nervous system will lead to more effective treatment and prevention.



Tahira Bhatti

The Effects of Painkillers

A tough pill to swallow

Whether they be for bodily aches or the common cold, painkillers have become a staple in everyday life, especially for students. However, like other medications, they may become harmful to your health and cause more harm than good. This article will specifically discuss over-the-counter (OTC) painkillers which ease minor pain from headaches to muscle strains. The most widely used OTC painkillers are Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), aspirin/sodium bicarbonate (Alka-Seltzer), naproxen (Aleve), and acetaminophen (Tylenol). These painkillers can be purchased from any drugstore, pharmacy and/or supermarket without prescription needed. Their easy accessibility may seem convenient, but it also raises some concerns. While available to any paying customer, painkillers may seem most appealing to young teens and early adults. The easy aid painkillers provide to their minor ailments can lead to an unhealthy addiction and long-term health effects.

Abusing OTC drugs in order to self-medicate for minor ailments can lead to complications such as cardiovascular issues, heart attacks, bowel obstructions, and hemorrhoids. In respect to short-term effects, it can cause stomach and intestinal issues within a few days such as continuous

or abnormal constipation, bloating, and abdominal distention. When compared, the consequences of overuse outweigh the benefits. While one may believe they are curing their pain with a 200 mg pill of Tylenol, they might just be doing the opposite. Therefore, it is of utmost priority to be mindful of one's indulgence of painkillers. The World Health Organization has set a defined daily dose (DDD). This assumes the average maintenance dose per day for a drug which helps establish a precedent for every consumer to indulge in a healthy amount.

Although 1,000 mg is the recommended dose per day for one pill, creating a daily habit of using painkillers even within the required dosage can be harmful. The common motto is to take when necessary although many take this lightly, they should adhere to it more carefully. Painkillers, especially those over-the-counter, have become so common that they are not taken with the same seriousness as opioids despite many medical and pharmaceutical companies detailing the side effects for both as the same. Painkillers should be taken occasionally and even then, only due to absolute necessity rather than an easy way out of small ailments which could cure on their own shortly.



English artist Omar Esa (left) , Nigerian artist Rhanizan Days (right), and Canadian artist Siedd (bottom). Retrieved from omaresa.com, soundcloud.com, and lakeheadu.ca, respectively.

Arwa Khan

Rising Nasheed Artists

The genre of modern Muslim-friendly music

The urge to pop in those AirPods and play a song or two while studying is real. As a student, I can attest to the need for something playing in the background as I anxiously make flashcards for chemistry. Without getting into the different opinions regarding music, why don't we give nasheeds a try this winter! As our world has become more and more advanced, so have the ways of acapella. There are currently many rising nasheed artists who produce hundreds of melodious tracks, fully vocals only!

One of the more popular artists is Usama Syed, a Canadian Muslim whose lyrics are on spot. He is of Pakistani origin and better known by his stage name, Siedd. His nasheeds are the perfect alternative to music. He's even written and produced covers for popular American songs, all based on a message of faith.

Omar Esa, a well-known vocal artist from London, has recently started releasing catchy tracks about some of the crisis' we see in the Muslim Ummah. He has even made nasheed covers of Bollywood songs!

Another rising artist, invited to the Night of Vocals in England this year for the first time, is Rhanizan Days! He is a Nigerian based vocal producer, blending English, Spanish, and his native tongue Yoruba to create his beautiful, raw lyrics.

Faisal Latif is yet another amazing artist as well as a motivational public speaker. Not only does he have some excellent Islamic covers of songs, but he posts breathtaking Quranic recitations on his channel as well.

A personal favorite of mine, Nadeem Mohammed is someone I've been listening to since I was eight years old. His tracks have a calming and soothing touch to them, perfect for an exam-cram environment. He has also created background audio, with vocal sounds mixed with natural sounds, like fire crackling and rain.

Muad Music, despite the name of his channel, only produces vocal tracks now. He has collaborated with other artists, like Siedd in his nasheed "Grateful." These tracks lie more on the upbeat side, with different vocal sounds merged together.

Last but not least, here are a few more names that are not as popular yet, but in a few years, we can expect the opposite: Muhammad A. Official, Naeem Rahman, Sultan Nasheeds, Mo Khan Official, Saaim Ahmed, and Abu Adam. These Muslim artists deserve much support and love, as they are spreading the message of the deen far and wide; they are helping create a new American-Muslim culture without asking us to compromise our beliefs.

Zoya Farooqui

New Year's Resolutions:

Our priorities as Muslims

With New Year's over and January at an end, New Year's resolutions have already been set by many. However, as Muslims, there are goals that we should keep consistent throughout every year. Here are some daily goals that we can implement into our lives in 2023:

- **Dhikr with the daily five prayers:**

Many people tend to undermine the value of dhikr that follows our Salah. Just reading Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, Allahu Akbar, and Astaghfirullah 10 times each after each prayer can increase your good deeds by the thousands.

- **Reading Quran in the mornings:**

Be it a few pages or a few ayahs, it is vital that we maintain a routine for reading Quran. Keep an alarm that is a little earlier than your usual one and use the extra time to incorporate Quran into your day. Start with just 5 or 10 ayahs, and then gradually increase the amount that you read.

- **Remaking wudu for each prayer:**

With schoolwork and housework constantly consuming our time, we may find it difficult to remake wudu before every prayer. However, putting in the effort to do so can be very beneficial to the quality of our prayer and the amount of deeds we garner daily.

- **Tahajjud:**

Because it is still early in the year, Tahajjud time ends much later in the morning. Waking up just an hour earlier can give us some time before Fajr to dedicate to Tahajjud.

- **Morning duas on the way to school:**

Although this is already a common practice, it is something that we are quick to forget when in a rush. However, reading duas in the morning can bless the rest of your day and make your day easier for you.

- **Nafl fasts:**

Winter has also made fasting easier. Since Maghrib comes earlier, it provides a perfect opportunity to get some nafl fasts done before the timings change.

- **Implementing the sunnah:**

Though there's no doubt that many of us already practice various sunnah, having a set amount that we try to incorporate into our day can make us more religiously conscious. In addition, we can build on this practice by adding on different sunnah as time passes.

Zoya Farooqui & Alina Sadat

Book Recs & Reviews

Scythe by Neal Shusterman

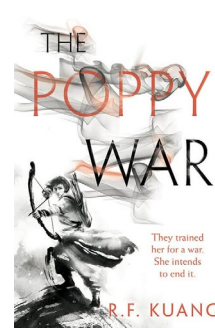
A favorite of our senior class, *Scythe* by Neal Shusterman is an excellent science fiction novel for all high schoolers. Set far in the future in a world where death, war, and disease no longer plague the human race, *Scythe* follows the story of two teenagers, Citra and Rowan. The two are unwillingly apprenticed to a Scythe and dragged into the Scythedom, a society of individuals that are tasked with curbing population growth by randomly selecting people to “glean,” or kill. While the Scythedom appears to be noble on the outside, Citra and Rowan soon discover that there is something sinister brewing among the Scythes. As power play, greed, and violence intensify within the Scythedom, Citra and Rowan are faced with a terrible truth: their utopian world is not nearly as perfect as they thought. This novel is packed with themes about human nature and morality, and it provides an excellent example of how power can corrupt the human heart. In addition, it explores the idea of “utopian dystopia” in an inventive way that is accessible to younger audiences. If you enjoy this novel, make sure to pick up the other two novels in the *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy, *Thunderhead* and *The Toll*.

The Poppy War by R.F. Kuang

The Poppy War, by R.F. Kuang, is a haunting and powerful novel about war, identity, and the cost of survival. It follows the story of Rin, a young woman from the impoverished nation of Nikara, who manages to earn a spot at the prestigious Sinegard Academy. There, she studies under the brilliant but ruthless Master Jiang and becomes embroiled in a conflict that threatens to consume the entire continent. The novel is a unique blend of historical fiction and fantasy, set in a world inspired by China's turbulent history. The world-building is incredibly immersive, and the characters are complex and well-developed. Kuang uses vivid imagery to paint a picture of the war-stricken country. The themes of identity and belonging are especially poignant, as Rin struggles to find her place in a society that sees her as nothing more than a poor, uneducated girl. One of the most striking aspects of this novel is its unflinching portrayal of war and the atrocities committed in its name. The violence is brutal and often disturbing, but it serves to illustrate the horrors of conflict and the toll it takes on those involved. As the novel progresses, Rin undergoes challenges that

force her to question her humanity. An aspect of the story I found especially heart-wrenching was the impact these events had on Rin's relationships. Throughout the novel, Rin forms deep and meaningful friendships with a diverse cast of characters, including her fellow cadets at the Sinegard military academy, her comrades in the war, and even her enemies. However, the friendships that Rin forms are not always simple, and they are tested by the brutal realities of war.

Overall, I found *The Poppy War* to be a thought-provoking novel. I'd recommend it for more experienced readers who enjoy action-packed grimdark and historical fantasy. Because of the mature themes in the novel, I would advise that the book be enjoyed by upper high school students (16+). Be sure to check out the other two books in the trilogy, *The Dragon Republic* and *The Burning God*.



The U.S. hardcover editions of *Scythe* by Neal Shusterman & *The Poppy War* by R.F. Kuang



Promotional poster for *Dr. Stone* Season 1 (2019). Licensed and distributed by TMS Entertainment Co, Ltd.

Amina Ali

Dr. Stone

The best of science-fiction anime

Dr. Stone, written by *Riichiro Inagaki*, is a wildlife along with thousands upon thousands of lifeless stone bodies. The protagonist must harness his science expertise to overcome the challenges of surviving in a primitive environment. In this series we follow Senku and his companions in their plan to kickstart civilization with the power of science! *Dr. Stone* is a very entertaining anime, with amusing character interactions and gorgeous visuals. The anime's popularity also prompted the creation of a second and third seasons, the latter of which will debut in April 2023. Each episode will have you clutching your sides, shaking with laughter. Overall, *Dr. Stone* is definitely a personal favorite, and I wholeheartedly urge you to give it a try!

Manga & Manhwa: This Month's Pick

Chasing Tails by BASHI

A thrilling locked-room murder case that follows 9 college students who are trapped under a collapsed building for 14 days. The twist—everyone's a suspect.



Cover of *Chasing Tails* by Bashi (2021). Licensed and distributed by Naver WEBTOON.

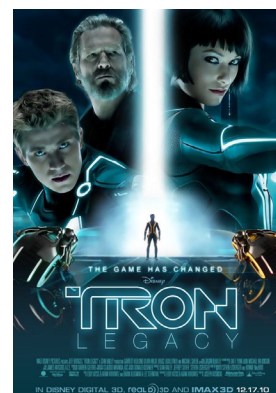
Aamena Asif, Layla Elsheikh

Movie Rec of the Month:

Tron: Legacy

Tron: Legacy is an adventurous, action-packed sci-fi movie. Released in 2010, *Tron: Legacy* was a remake of the original movie, *Tron*, produced in 1982. Using spectacular visual effects, *Tron: Legacy* brings the fantasy of sci-fi to life with the help of its thrilling soundtrack created by world renowned artist Daft Punk. In *Tron: Legacy*, Sam is the son of a virtual world designer who had his father, Kevin Flynn mysteriously go missing. After he receives a strange page coming from Kevin's Arcade he gets trapped in a virtual world that his father's clone, his father, and a clone of one of Kevin's close friends designed. We follow Sam, Kevin, and an AI, Quorra, produced by the game as they try to escape “The Grid” and get back home.

When first being told that it was a live action movie made in 2010, our initial impression was that the special effects and graphics would be subpar, but *Tron: Legacy* proved otherwise. Truly, it looked as if there were real-scale models for the ships used, and the graphics were sublime. There are both adrenaline-inducing fight scenes enrapturing the attention of the audience and dramatic scenes inciting teary eyes. On top of it all, the dialogue is very fluid with many intimations of foreshadowing for the audience to pick up on. Lastly, the movie proves that it is possible to leave a semi-open ending to a movie and still have an overall nice conclusion.



Promotional poster for *Tron: Legacy* (2010). Licensed and distributed by Disney.

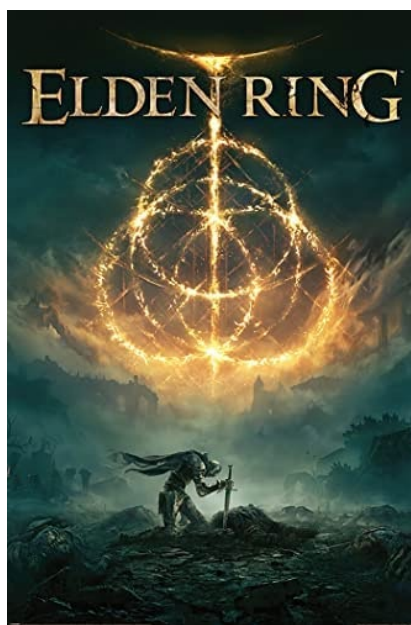
Qasim Syed

Gaming Today: The Game Awards 2022

The *Game Awards 2022* took place on December 8th, 2022. These awards are an annual ceremony honoring various achievements in the gaming industry. Think of it as an *Oscars*, but for video games and streamers. This award show has been going on for over a decade and is always filled with surprises and unpredictable controversies. 90% of the votes are made up of an anonymous voting jury, while the other 10% is the general public. This year did not have a good selection of games, so the awards were more of a battle between two games, *Elden Ring* and *God of War Ragnarök*. Thirty-one awards were given this year, including ‘Game of the Year’ and ‘Content Creator of the Year.’ Many accolades were achieved; however, *God of War Ragnarök* came out on top with a whopping six awards. These included ‘Best Narrative,’ ‘Best Score and Music,’ ‘Best Audio Design,’ ‘Best Performance,’ ‘Best Action/Adventure,’ and ‘Innovation in Accessibility.’ Though *God of War Ragnarök* had six awards to *Elden Ring*’s four, the latter had the last laugh by winning the award of the night, ‘Game of the Year.’ With even a 95% on *Metacritic*, *Elden Ring* was liked by critics and the audience worldwide.

The other half of the *Game Awards* is the content creation end of things. This year had many new streamers who caught the attention of many while also having the veterans hold their ground. However, there

was no debate about the winner. Content creator Ludwig Ahgren easily swept his competition. He has close to 4 million subscribers on YouTube, with 3 million followers on Twitch. He is known for his gameplay and game shows, which feature other streamers and celebrities as guests. He took the award for ‘Best Content Creator,’ and no other nominee for this category stood a chance. Overall, the 3 hours of the *Game Awards* had many moments of anticipation, joy, and sorrow as multiple games, companies, and creators took home their awards only to go back home and work harder to win more next year at the *Game Awards 2023*.



Cover for the 2022 game **Elden Ring**, winner of ‘Game of the Year’ in the Gaming Awards 2022. Licensed and distributed by FromSoftware, Inc.

Mohamed AbdelSalam

Elden Ring: The Best of 2022

As 2022 comes to an end, let’s take a look back at all the releases this year in the gaming industry. Although many games performed well this year, in my opinion, *Elden Ring* was the most sought-after. Released on February 25th, 2022, *Elden Ring* has been awarded game of the year in 2022 and sold over 17.5 million copies! It is a 3rd person POV, action role-playing game focusing on exploration and combat. To start the game, you choose a character, giving you certain attributes, spells, and equipment. You continue to explore the open world and try to defeat the rulers of every region. As you explore the world and advance in the game, the bosses become more and more difficult to defeat. You can also become stronger by utilizing certain spells to enhance your weapons and the Ash of War obtainable enchantments that give your weapon new capabilities. There are also checkpoints called Sites of Grace where you can increase the power of your character's attribute, change memorized spells, and trade Ashes of War. Although someone has finished the game in 2 and half hours, it takes most people over 60 hours to complete. The goal of *Elden Ring* is to defeat the final boss, the Elden Beast. Once you have defeated the beast, congratulations, you have beaten the game!



The audience of the Group D match between Tunisia and Australia waves the Palestinian flag at the Qatar World Cup (November 26th, 2022). AP/Petr David Josek.

Tahira Bhatti

The Qatar World Cup:

How 2022’s World Cup has impacted impressions of the Muslim community

When Qatar won the bid for hosting the FIFA World Cup, it shocked fans worldwide. However, as an established Muslim country, Qatar was quick to put the promotion of Islam as its first priority. With only two days left till the tournament, Qatar announced their decision to ban alcohol from the stadiums. Orators such as Morgan Freeman were invited to speak about establishing a sense of community during the games. The opening ceremony included lectures on Islam and a recitation of Surah Rahman by Quran reciter Ghanim al Muftah. Prayer rooms, halal food stops, and clean bathrooms were also commodities offered and available to all sports fans at the World Cup.

In addition to the Islamic beginning to the World Cup, hadiths were posted on billboards around Doha on various aspects of the sunnah, such as staying clean, importance of family and unity, and proper manners. Doha’s unique structures and sights also piqued the interests

of their non-Muslim visitors, inviting them to explore the city’s rich Muslim history. With the calls to prayer ringing through the alleys and walkways of Qatar, inquisitive fans turned their attention to mosques. Visitors were also allowed the chance to try on traditional thobes, hijabs, and abayas. Pamphlets consisting of information about the pillars of Islam and answering commonly asked questions were located outside various booths and mosques. Another remarkable aspect of the World Cup was its vocality about the Palestine-Israel conflict. Widespread support of Palestine was seen among the crowds throughout the games up until the final. No matter which team was on the field, the Palestinian flag was held high and waved proud by the audience. All in all, Qatar took full advantage of its opportunity to promote Islam through the 2022 World Cup, and it succeeded in pushing a more positive image of the Muslim community forward.

Aiza Shuttari & Inaaya Fatani

Senior Interviews

Getting to know our
graduating seniors

As the first semester of the school year has concluded, the current seniors are inching closer to graduation. So, we decided to interview two senior girls about their time at IFS. Sarah Ateeq is an active member of the IFS community. From yearbook, broadcast, and newspaper clubs to volleyball player and team manager, Sarah has done it all during her time at IFS! All star athlete, Tuba Mahboob, has played on the girls’ varsity volleyball team and the varsity basketball team!

Name: Tuba Mahboob
How long have you been at IFS for? I have been at IFS since freshman year.
Which class was your favorite? Br. Malik’s AP Psychology class.
What’s your favorite IFS related memory? My favorite memory was the Six Flags Trip we took in May of my junior year.
How do you feel about graduating in a few months? High School was good while it lasted but I am ready to move onto another chapter of my life.
Do you have any advice for next year’s freshmen? Some advice I would give for the next year’s freshmen is to cherish the

time you have in these years. Also, don’t surround yourself with toxic people.
Name: Sarah Ateeq
How long have you been at IFS for? I have been at IFS since kindergarten.
Which class was your favorite? Two classes I enjoyed were Arabic level 2 in 9th grade and Biotech in 11th grade, although I enjoyed the majority of my classes in high school so far.
What’s your favorite IFS related memory? I don’t have a set favorite memory, but I really enjoyed this year’s volleyball season. I would say movie night from last year was one night to remember.
How do you feel about graduating in a few months? It just feels weird that I am already graduating from IFS. I don’t feel ready to leave school and the people at this school just yet, but I am interested to see what college life is like.
Do you have any advice for next year’s freshmen? Don’t be afraid to ask for help from those around you, whether it’s the upperclassmen or your teachers. Also, have fun and make the most you can out of these 4 years. Make new friends with those outside your grade and try new things. It might get tough at times, but just know you got this, and one day you’ll look back at that problem and think “hey, that wasn’t too bad.”

Sarah Ateeq

Teacher Talk

An Interview with Mr. Qamar

Welcome to Teacher Talk! In this column, we interview new IFS teachers to find out a little more about them. The teacher that will be interviewed for our first Teacher Talk is Mr. Qamar. He is an English teacher at IFS for middle school and 9th grade. He switched majors 2-3 times in college, before pursuing his passion for English and literature. A fun fact about him is that he has competed in various food contests and has finished the food every single time. His hobbies also include writing, cooking, and riding his motorcycle.

Here are some questions I asked Mr. Qamar:
1.Why did you choose to come to IFS? I chose to come to IFS because of the Islamic setting. I wanted to join a school that taught Islamic morals and values. Not everyone has the opportunity to pray salah during school or work, especially Jumma salah, but Alhamdulillah here prayer is not only accommodated but encouraged as well. That truly is a blessing Alhamdulillah.
2.Have you ever been to IFS before perhaps on a visit or as a sub? I have never attended IFS. I attended public school in New Jersey from elementary to high school.
3.What’s one extracurricular you would like to bring to IFS?: I would love to help Coach a wrestling team at IFS because I wrestled a little in high school, or I would love to be a part of a book club for middle school or high school boys.
4.Did you know you always wanted to be a teacher, If not, what would have been instead? I didn’t know that I wanted to teach. I was originally doing pre-med in college, and then I was in Nursing School for a little while before I realized that I wanted to teach.
5.By the end of the school year, what’s one goal you would like to accomplish? By the end of the year, I would like to get students a little more interested in reading. I want them to see that it can be fun, if they don’t already do so.



Some memorable moments from this season’s high school games.

Anonymous

IFS Sports Highlights & Stats

Basketball Season

With basketball season in full swing, we want to highlight some of the season’s most exciting games and moments. We’d also like to congratulate all the athletes on their hard work this season. Go Chargers!

Girls Varsity Basketball
Captain: Mahin Syed, #11
Co-captain: Laiba Hasham, #5
December 9th: Win against CPSA

- 2 points down with 8.5 seconds on the clock, buzzer beater three seals the win
- Final score 27-26
- Featuring Mariyah Syed with the graceful inbound roll, Habiba Ibrahim with the patience and pinpoint pass, and pinpoint pass, and Mahin Syed with the determination and nerves of steel to close out the game! (quoted from the Chargers Athletes Instagram)

Boys Varsity Basketball
Captain: Isa Aziz, #11
January 17th: Win against Hinsdale Adventist Academy (home game)

- Final score 50-43

- Intense and close game until the very end

Individual Stats
January 25th: Isa Aziz, #11, scored 18 points against rival school CPSA in a tough loss
Currently placed 3rd in the Metro Prep Conference!

Boys Junior Varsity Basketball
December 12th: Win against Elgin Academy (home game)

- Final score 32-20

January 23rd: win against Daystar Academy (home game)
Upcoming Events and Games

- Senior night games to be rescheduled within the next few weeks
 - Varsity boys vs. MCC Academy
 - Varsity girls vs. Aqsa School
- February 4th: United Center Tournament followed by the Chicago Bulls vs. the Portland Trail
 - Varsity Girls’ games at 11 am
 - Varsity Boys’ games at 1 pm

Aisha Haider

Writing Tips

A guide for high school students

From writing letters, to forming sentences, to completing essays, writing remains a part of every school's daily curriculum. Whether individuals have a desire for writing or simply a desire for good grades, the struggle of citing evidence, battling writer's block, completing the word count, and avoiding procrastination are common problems that can lead to many stressful nights. However, these struggles can be avoided by implementing these tips:

- Brainstorm - Writing down ideas/thoughts can help the writer structure their essay. By noting the main topics of each paragraph or pinpointing the quotes needed for an essay, the writer is better able to avoid writer's block and complete their essay in a timely manner.
- Eliminate Distractions - For a lot of people, essay writing and procrastination come hand in hand. Being on your phone or working in a talkative environment are two of the most common distractions that may hinder a writer's performance. Some easy ways to avoid these distractions are moving to a secluded room and silencing your cell phone.

- Word Count - When it comes to writing essays, reaching the word count can prove to be difficult. To tackle this issue, writers can use quotes/examples to better explain certain ideas, claims, or statements they are making in their essays. If a writer is composing a piece about the effects of cell phone use regarding teenagers, writers can include several examples about the effects of cell phone use that he/she has experienced. Additionally, writers can research the effects of cell phone use other individuals have experienced.
- Peer Review - Typos and grammatical errors are extremely common and can often occur without the writer noticing. Asking a second person, such as a family member, teacher, or friend, to proofread your writing may be of some benefit, as they can help to spot certain errors or minor mistakes that might have been harder to see initially.
- Take a Break - As a great deal of individuals know, writing can lead to stress, especially if it accompanies a deadline. This is precisely why writers should take short breaks in between extensive writing sessions. Taking a brief half hour break can not only help clear a writer's mind but also relieve feelings of stress and anxiety. During these breaks, writers can spend their time participating in actions that they find comfort in. This can include taking

a walk, watching a show/movie, or spending time with family and friends. As a result, the individual can later continue the writing process with a fresh perspective.



Student Art Pieces



Surah Nahl, Verse 18: "Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful."
Textured painting on canvas by Zainab Raheem, 12th grade



Crocheted birds, polar bear, and cow by Zainab Shaikh, 11th grade.

Our Newspaper Staff

Thank you for your hard work!

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Editor-in-chief & Layout Designer: Alina Sadat
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Editors: Aini Asif, Zainab Raheem, Tahira Bhatti, Usmaan Siddiqi, Ayesha Mirza, & Mahin Syed
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For any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at ifsnewspaperclub@gmail.com. Thanks for reading, and don't miss out on our next issue for more exciting news!

"Journalist: a person without any ideas but an ability to express them; a writer whose skill is improved by a deadline: the more time he has, the worse he writes."

- Karl Kraus

Mohamed AbdelSalam

Did you know?

1. A cockroach can survive up to 9 days without its head.
2. Bees can sting other bees.
3. Cats can't taste anything that's sweet.
4. Russia has 11 time zones within the country.
5. Small intestine is the largest internal organ of the body.
6. No number before 1,000 contains the letter "A".
7. Australia is wider than the moon.
8. Iceland grows 5 centimeters per year because of its moving tectonic plates.
9. Dolphins literally sleep with one eye open because only one of their brain hemispheres sleeps at a time. The left eye closes when the right half of the brain sleeps, and vice versa.
10. The smallest country in the world is Vatican City which is approximately 109 acres.

