

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

BY: EMMA SCHWENKE

Hello Tech Valley community!

Thank you so much for all your support on our first publication! We never expected you all would be so excited and welcoming to the newspaper, and a lot of people read it and kept a copy. We are so excited to present to you our second edition, and we hope you enjoy it just as much as the first one.

Additionally, we are still looking for new journalists!! The majority of our club is seniors, so if you loved the newspaper this year, please help it continue into next year. While we certainly would encourage you to join the club officially, we also welcome guest contributors such as the students who submitted work from Lit Lab. Thank you everyone, and enjoy the second paper!

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!



JOIN US!

EMAIL US FOR MORE INFORMATION
TVTIMES@TECHVALLEYHIGH.ORG

TECH VALLEY TRENDS!

BY: DALILAH MASSEY

Tech Valley High School is a building brimming with personality. Within these hallowed halls you can find a myriad of patterns; from “Chopped”, to Taylor Swift, to the innate desire to “Ragebait”, trends are prevalent here in Tech Valley just as much as any other school. Within this article, I will discuss the current Trends that can be seen within our school, and discuss the societal events and local cultures that affect them.

In my fine opinion, there are three types of trends that any good high school will develop, these being Physical (Clothes, Hair, Makeup, Items, Technology), Personal (Sayings, Slang, Attitudes, Habits, Opinions), and Media (Pop Culture, Memes, Shows, Movies, Music). All of these trends combine and create what most people would call culture within a set community. The culture of Tech Valley High School is unique because it is a cumulation of many other cultures, with the students all being from their own distinct and subsequent community.

The New York State Education Department says “School culture is the set of common values, beliefs, and traditions that influence how people in the school community act and interact with each other. It shapes the unwritten rules for how things are done and what behaviors are expected.” And while in a traditional K-12 school this can be created from early age and fostered over the years, here at TVHS, we are thrown into the metaphorical melting pot of culture and encouraged to learn how to co-exist. This leads to our culture being very trend heavy, due to a lack of prior tradition and common values (thus come the memes.)

We are so deeply intertwined with the world as a culture that we are affected by it just as much as any other place. We are not alone. We never were, because despite all the amazing things that sets us apart, we are always going to somehow convince our friends into believing something stupid, before bursting out laughing. That is the nature of trends, and that is what makes the trends seen in our school so cool.

Tech Valley High School has gone through far too many trends in just the current 2025-2026 school year. In the general population at the start of the year Songs like Golden - HUNTR/X and DtMF - Bad Bunny were trending, the “bacon avocado” meme had taken the internet by storm, and so had specifically the “six seven kid.” Early October had the movie *Wicked* resurfacing in popularity. November reminded us that burgundy outfits were still in. December brought in the cold as Spotify wraps took over everyone's stories. The new year was full of photo dumps and the Grammys. But that's all just the general population, what makes us at TVHS Special?

That's the thing, Tech Valley High School is not special, as a matter of fact, all of these population trends were seen in this school, despite us being a melting pot of different individuals. We are not immune to the general consensus of social media, despite us having our own unique inside jokes. We cannot escape the fact that we are just as much affected by outside trends as other schools. But think about it for a minute, isn't that great?



SENIORS TAKE ON INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

BY: HAFSA CHOWDHURY

As our time at Tech Valley rapidly comes to a close, seniors wrap up what they've learned here with a culminating project: Innovative Solutions. The project brings together all learning outcomes over the past three years and challenges them to apply it in a real-world setting.

For about a month and a half, seniors worked with business partners to develop solutions to problems the businesses presented. Students met with their partners weekly, conducted surveys, and completed extensive research throughout the project. The experience gave students a closer look at what working in a professional environment is actually like, from communication to meeting expectations— from both the partners and the teachers.

One key part of Innovative Solutions was student choice. Students selected which business they wanted to work with based on their interests, strengths, and curiosity. Because of this, each group approached their project differently. Final solutions ranged from games and websites, to posters and social media posts, all created to demonstrate student learning.

While the projects varied in format, one similarity was shared: growth. Through Innovative Solutions, students were able to strengthen their research skills, collaboration, and problem solving abilities. Additionally, students worked hard to overcome the anxieties of presenting without note cards on the actual presentation day, or speaking to professionals.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2026!!

**THANKS FOR SUPPORTING
US AT EXPO! THE TECH
VALLEY TEA ROOM WAS A
SMASHING SUCCESS!!**





JUNE 8, 2026

TVHS NEWS

MS. VAUGHAN RECOGNIZED FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIRST ROBOTICS

ADAPTED FROM QUESTAR III NEWSLETTER BY: MS. SAM CAVAGNOLO

Congratulations to Ms. Vaughan!! This spring, Ms. Vaughan was recognized for extensive contributions to Tech Valley and the wider community. Ms. Vaughan is a math teacher and a Founding Mentor of the FIRST Robotics program at Tech Valley High School. Throughout her career and work with robotics, Ms. Vaughan has supported, challenged, and inspired countless students. In honor of her leadership and passion, Ms. Vaughan was awarded with the Woodie Flowers Finalist Award at the 2026 FIRST Robotics competition held in Albany's MVP Arena. Be sure to congratulate and appreciate Ms. Vaughan next time you see her!



REFLECTIONS FROM *MAMMA MIA*

BY: MS. SAM CAVAGNOLO

Congratulations to TVHS Drama on an amazing production of *Mamma Mia* this year!! Each and everyone of you gave outstanding performances and the crew demonstrated incredible team work to pull off such a stunning production. Sitting in the audience Friday night was electric and it was so inspiring to see the many alumni who turned up to support the show. Not only did I enjoy watching the production, this year I also had the pleasure to help out the club during Heck Week by walking students over to UAlbany, selling tickets, and sitting in on rehearsals. Unexpectedly, despite the heat that broke 90 degrees, these walks were the highlight of my week. Each day on our walk over, I got to talk to different students about their hopes and dreams, their plans for the summer, and so much more. As my year as a student teacher comes to a close, I am beginning to realize how much I will miss the students and staff at Tech Valley. Even though I will not be returning to Tech Valley next year as a teacher, you will still be able to find me volunteering at the musical next May. Hopefully Mrs. Mac and Mr. Irwin will grace the stage again next year too!!



QUEER MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS

BY: TYLER CORCORAN

Pride month is celebrated each June in the United States to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots, which were turning points for LGBTQIA rights. But we also celebrate pride month to recognize LGBTQIA culture, history, and achievements. We celebrate to promote visibility and fight for equality for those who may not be able to. We also use pride as a moment to remember queer historical figures like Marsha P. Johnson, Harvey Milk, Alan Turing, and Oscar Wilde. Without these incredible people, queer culture would not be what it is today. In celebration of Pride Month, I wanted to share some of my favorite queer media recommendations, each having age ratings if applicable.



QUEER MUSICIANS:

- Green Day, Pop Punk, bisexual (Billie Joe Armstrong & Tre Cool)
- Renee Rapp, Pop, lesbian
- Boygenius, Indie Rock, lesbian (Julian Baker), bisexual (Phoebe Bridgers), and nonbinary (Lucy Dacus)
- Conan Gray, Indie Pop, unlabeled
- HummusVacuum, Midwest punk/emo, queer
- Queen, Pop-rock, Bisexual (Freddie Mercury)
- My Chemical Romance, Emo, Queer (Gerard Way)
- David Bowie, Glam rock, queer
- Cavetown, Indie, Transgender
- Ethel Cain, Alternative Indie, Transgender

FILMS:

- *As You Are* (Not Rated), 2016, starring Charlie Heaton, Owen Campbell, and Amandla Stenberg, follows the story of three teenagers, Jack, Mark, and Sarah, told in the lenses of two of them when a police investigation occurs for a local death. It explores teen romance, heartbreak, grief, and abuse in a beautiful story. And an added plus, it takes place right outside Albany! It's by far, my favorite queer film, and has an incredible cast!
- *I Saw the TV Glow* (PG-13), 2024, starring Justice Smith, Jack Haven, Fred Durst, and Phoebe Bridgers is a queer allegory film that follows Owen (Smith) and Maddy (Haven), two high school best friends who share a love for a mysterious TV show, but when realities start to blur, Owen starts to question what is real and what is fiction?
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (PG-13), 2012, starring Logan Lerman, Emma Watson, Ezra Miller, and Paul Rudd is a coming-of-age film based off of a book about a shy freshman in high school, Charlie (Lerman), who befriends two seniors (Watson, Miller) and is forced to confront his troubled past through their relationship.
- *The Half of It* (PG-13), 2020, starring Leah Lewis, Daniel Diemer, and Alexis Lemire is a comedy-drama film following Ellie Chu, an introverted high schooler who helps a jock ask out the girl he likes, but she doesn't expect to become friends with him, or fall for his crush.

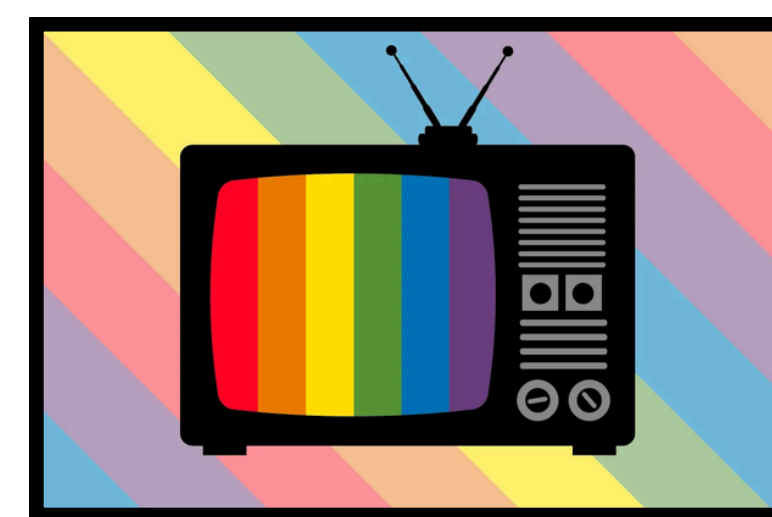
QUEER MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS

[CONTINUED FROM P. 5]



BOOKS:

- *Oranges Aren't the Only Fruit* by Jeanette Winterson (15+) is a semi-autobiographical novel about a girl growing up in an English Pentecostal community who begins to realize she's a lesbian.
- *The Cerulean Chronicles* by TJ Klune (12+) is a fantasy novel (and one of my favorite book series of all time), following Linus Baker, a worker at the Department in Charge of Magical Youth, who is sent to work in a highly dangerous household and realizes that things aren't the way they always look.
- *Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller (15+) is a historical fantasy novel that retells the romance between Petroclas and Achilles through a beautifully heartbreaking and gut wrenching story.
- *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin (16+) follows David, an American living in Paris who grapples with his sexuality and identity as he embarks on a love affair with an Italian bartender named Giovanni, while also engaged to a woman named Hella.



TV SHOWS:

- *Heartstopper* (TV 13+), 2022 by Alice Oseman is both a Netflix romance TV series and a comic book series following Charlie Spring and Nick Nelson through their budding relationship and the relationships between those around them.
- *Wayward* (TV 15), 2025 on Netflix is a thriller series that follows Alex Dempsey and his wife, along with Abbie and Leila, two Canadian teenage dirtbag best friends. When Abbie gets sent to Tall Pines Academy in Vermont where Alex Dempsey is a new cop, and Leila ventures to rescue her partner in crime, both realize that the town holds many old secrets, and no new citizens.
- *Young Royals* (TV 16+), 2021 on Netflix is a romance TV series that follows Wilhelm, the prince of Sweden as he is sent to boarding school, falls in love, juggles romantic relationships and friendships, and his own identity. This show is also originally recorded in Swedish and is so beautiful when watched in its native language.
- *Boots* (TV 16+), 2025 on Netflix is a comedy-drama TV show based off of an autobiography titled *The Pink Marine* by Greg Cope White about a gay teenage boy Cameron who goes to the US Marine Corps summer bootcamp during the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" law, and realizes that though it might not be as obvious as he thought, queer people are all around him.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

BY: EMMA SCHWENKE

International Women's Day was Sunday March 8th, and exists to celebrate women's achievements and educate the public about the various kinds of discrimination and inequality women still face today. Read on to learn about some incredible women from history.

Corazon Aquino

First female president of the Philippines

Aquino came from a large wealthy family and focused much of her time and energy into her education. During college she got married to Benigno Aquino who was elected as the youngest governor in the Philippines in 1961. Benigno was known for opposing the views of the current president Ferdinand Marcos. Marcos was a corrupt president that deterred Benigno's political progress by using martial law, sentencing him to jail time, and rigging the election. Benigno was exiled to the United States and when he returned home to the Philippines he was assassinated. Corazon returned to the Philippines after the death of her husband and continued as an activist against Marcos with more of the community on her side. Eventually an election was called and despite the support for Aquino, the election resulted in a success for Marcos, most likely due to the election being rigged. The decision was protested and Marcos went to the United States for exile, leaving Aquino to be sworn in as the first female president of the Philippines.

Source: www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/corazon-aquino

Josephine Baker

Performer, spy, activist

Born in Saint Louis Missouri, Josephine Baker was a performer popular known for her unique dancing and her singing. She first became popular in New York City but became highly sought after in France. When the Germans invaded France Baker joined the fight against the Nazis by sharing military secrets to the French military that she heard while performing for Nazi soldiers. She would write messages on her music sheets using invisible ink, becoming a crucial informant during the war. When she returned home to the United States she faced segregation and racial discrimination. She became an activist and refused to perform in segregated clubs which often forced them to integrate.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

[CONTINUED FROM P. 7]

Nellie Bly (Elizabeth Cochran) Journalist

In the 1800's in the United States, employment for women was very limited and not widely accepted. After the death of her father, Elizabeth Cochran's family suffered financial struggles. Despite having more education, she had less job opportunities than her brothers. This led her to submit a writing piece to a newspaper about the unfairness of options for women in the workforce, taking on the pen name Nellie Bly. She eventually moved to New York in search of more opportunities in journalism but struggled to find employment in a male dominated field until she was challenged to report on one of New York's most notorious mental asylums. Bly faked mental illness to be admitted as a patient and witness first hand the horrible conditions of the institution and the mistreatment of patients.

After the impact of her article from this time, Bly continued to write articles about major topics such as corruption in the legislature, the black market, and experiences traveling the world in 72 days.

Alice Coachmen Olympic athlete

Alice Coachmen was born in Albany, Georgia, at a time when the American South was still segregated. At the time, women competing in sports was very controversial and they had very limited opportunity and were not accepted. Coachmen didn't consider sports as a career but continued doing track and field through college winning records nationwide. She went to the Olympics in 1948 and became the first ever black woman to win an Olympic gold medal as well as the only American woman that year.

Who is a woman in history you look up to?



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

BY: EMMA SCHWENKE

June is men's mental health month. Although conversations about mental health are becoming a lot more common, many men will not talk about their own. The root problems in society and acceptance of men's mental and emotions needs to change.

40% of men say they will not talk about their mental health. A major reason men do not ask for help with mental health is the lack of acceptance. There is a lot of stigma around the topic, making men's mental health a topic of shame or weakness, and creating a fear of being judged or not believed. Seeking therapy or counseling may be viewed as something men shouldn't need. This leads to worse mental health and dangerous consequences. 75% of suicides globally are men, and 1 in 10 men suffer from anxiety or depression. Men also have higher rates of substance abuse than women.

Signs someone may be struggling with their mental health include increased illness or fatigue, aggression, and escapist behavior. If you are worried about someone's mental health, start a conversation about it. Ask them if they are okay and offer to help and be a resource for them. Alternatively, you could talk to an adult such as a school counselor about your concern.

If you are struggling with your own mental health, talk to a friend or trusted adult. There are also free resources available such as the crisis hotline 988. The Trevor project has an LGBTQ+ specific text hotline at 678-678 and Alateen is a resource for those suffering as a result of the alcoholism of someone close to them.

It is okay to need help. It is okay to ask for help from others. If you are suffering it is better to face it and have someone help you through it than to ignore it and let it control your life. It does get better.



THANK YOU TO MR.
O'LEARY WITH YOUR
HELP RESEARCHING
THIS ARTICLE.

THE WINTER SOLSTICE OF 2025

BY: MAYA RIVERA



Have you ever noticed that during the later months, the sun seems to come up in the late morning, and set earlier? Do you feel as if you've gone to school in the dark, just to come home to seemingly even darker skies? Well, this is the work of the Winter Solstice!

The 2025 Winter Solstice happened on December 21, where we had the longest night and shortest day of the year; and that meant that the sun rose at ~7:15 A.M. and set at ~4:34 P.M. EST for us Northerners! This also marked the first day of winter.

On the solstice, the Northern hemisphere tilts the farthest away from the sun, creating the lowest appearing sun in the sky, with the smallest angle to Earth, also making us receive less sunlight and warmth. After the Winter Solstice, the days very gradually become longer, and the nights shorter.

The next major weather change was the Spring Equinox around March 19-21, when the sun crosses the celestial equator; this day also marks the first day of spring. So "weather" or not you're waiting for the sun to peak out again and make the days longer and warmer, or you're basking in the cold wind and inches of snow, you can thank the sun for it!

A REVIEW OF *PROJECT HAIL MARY* BY ANDY WEIR

BY: KIERNAN RUSSO

Imagine the end of humankind. You may think it will be at the hands of humans or maybe an asteroid impact. What if it was at the hands of aliens? Not the little green men you may immediately think of, but instead a non-sentient microorganism, Astrophage. In *Project Hail Mary*, Astrophage threatens the very existence of humanity, by eating the sun.

Project Hail Mary begins in space where the main character, Ryland Grace, a middle school science teacher, wakes up alone on a space ship. Ryland has no memory of how he got there or what he's supposed to do. *Project Hail Mary* explains the backstory behind Ryland's presence on the Hail Mary and his heroic role in saving Earth despite his reluctance through a dual timeline of present day in space and flashbacks. Ryland aims to save Earth/the sun (Sol) from Astrophage which threatens to trigger a global extinction event by draining Sol of its energy and lowering the global temperatures. To save Earth, Ryland is sent on the Hail Mary, a space ship headed to the Tau Ceti star system to find out why its sun is immune to Astrophage and hopefully, find a way to save Earth. Thankfully, Ryland may not have to complete his entire journey in the Tau Ceti star system alone as he encounters an alien named Rocky, an 'Eridian,' also in the Tau Ceti star system aiming to save his planet just like Ryland. *Project Hail Mary* is a story packed with science, survival, and friendship.

I think *Project Hail Mary* has some great strengths, such as its accessibility and realism. *Project Hail Mary* manages to make complex ideas such as orbital mechanics, relativity, and biology seem interesting and understandable. *Project Hail Mary* manages to do this without spending large amounts of time doing so either, it explains its complex topics through its problem solving rather than using a standard didactic or lecturing manner. Rocky and Grace also have a very wholesome friendship dynamic as they learn more about each other and their cultures/species. They build a bond based not just on desperation due to the dire situation at hand, but mutual trust and curiosity. Andy Weir manages to keep the book interesting and exciting most of the time using this dynamic.

The book, like every other, also has some weaknesses of its own. The book can feel a lot like other sci-fi books: "man in space meets alien" which can make it feel too familiar and predictable. The book's plot feels very predictable and simple despite the complex topics used, which can be seen as both a strength and a weakness. Ryland as a narrator also uses humor that some may not find entertaining, his use of dad jokes as well as his use of sarcastic comments can lead to some annoying moments, especially due to the high stakes setting of the book. He was a 5th grade science teacher on Earth and his humor is very reflective of that. Ryland also doesn't experience major character growth throughout the novel, and he does not experience that profound of personal growth. One common criticism with the book that I also agree with is that Ryland and Rocky build a common understanding of each other's language way too quickly and it would realistically take way more time. They also do this with little disagreement which is quite unrealistic.

The book is similar to other sci-fi works, but stands out amongst them for feeling much more plausible and realistic. The book also bears similarities to another work by Weir, *The Martian*. Both follow a man stuck in space attempting to solve something. While the books are different, you can see similarities in many aspects, from the main characters to the setting. Both Ryland and Mark (main character of *The Martian*) are problem solvers who both aim to efficiently solve problems and also highly intelligent scientists who end up stuck in space alone. Also, both characters are light-hearted and optimistic despite their circumstances.

Project Hail Mary is overall a solid book with an interesting yet semi-predictable plot. While its problem solving can feel repetitive, the story's main plot is interesting and the friendship between Ryland Grace and Rocky is enjoyable to read. *Project Hail Mary* is a very light-hearted book with a fun and fast paced approach to human-alien cooperation which is very different to how it's usually portrayed in a lot of media. The heart of *Project Hail Mary* lies in its light-hearted humor and a charming, optimistic collaboration between very unlikely friends despite the gloomy scenario. Overall, *Project Hail Mary* has some surprising moments that, along with its light-hearted approach to a dire situation, will keep your eyes glued to the pages.

A GOTHIC EXPLORATION OF FEMINISM

BY: CHEYENNE SHUTTER

As I was eating my breakfast this morning, I hadn't expected to be enthralled by a captivating yet heartbreaking story about a woman's oppression and insanity. Yet, here I am writing a review for a short story that resonates over a century later.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is a short story published by *The New England Magazine* in 1892. It is considered to be a gothic, feminist, horror short story. Although this story was published over a century ago, it is a significant story whose themes remain relevant today.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is about a woman who suffers from postpartum depression and falls into psychosis as her husband's "rest cure" takes a tremendous toll on her mental well-being. As she is trapped within a room with sickly yellow wallpaper and barred windows, she secretly writes about her experience as she becomes more and more obsessed with the wallpaper until she has a complete mental breakdown.

This story highlights how in the 19th century, the patriarchy severely impacted how women's mental and physical health was treated. It brought attention to the dangers of "rest cure" and limitations on women's rights to their own autonomy. These themes are still relevant and present in our daily lives, as feminism is a huge topic when it comes to wage gaps, sexual violence, and gender roles in today's society. Because of this story's themes, I believe it is a significant read for anyone interested in feminism and mental health.

It would also be a good read for those who enjoy classics and gothic psychological horror. "The Yellow Wallpaper" is only 6,000 words, meaning that it is a quick read and an easy start for those interested in getting into classics. Another strength of the short story is that it introduces new vocabulary, yet it is easy to read. When starting this short story, I had expected to struggle much more than I did due to when it was written.

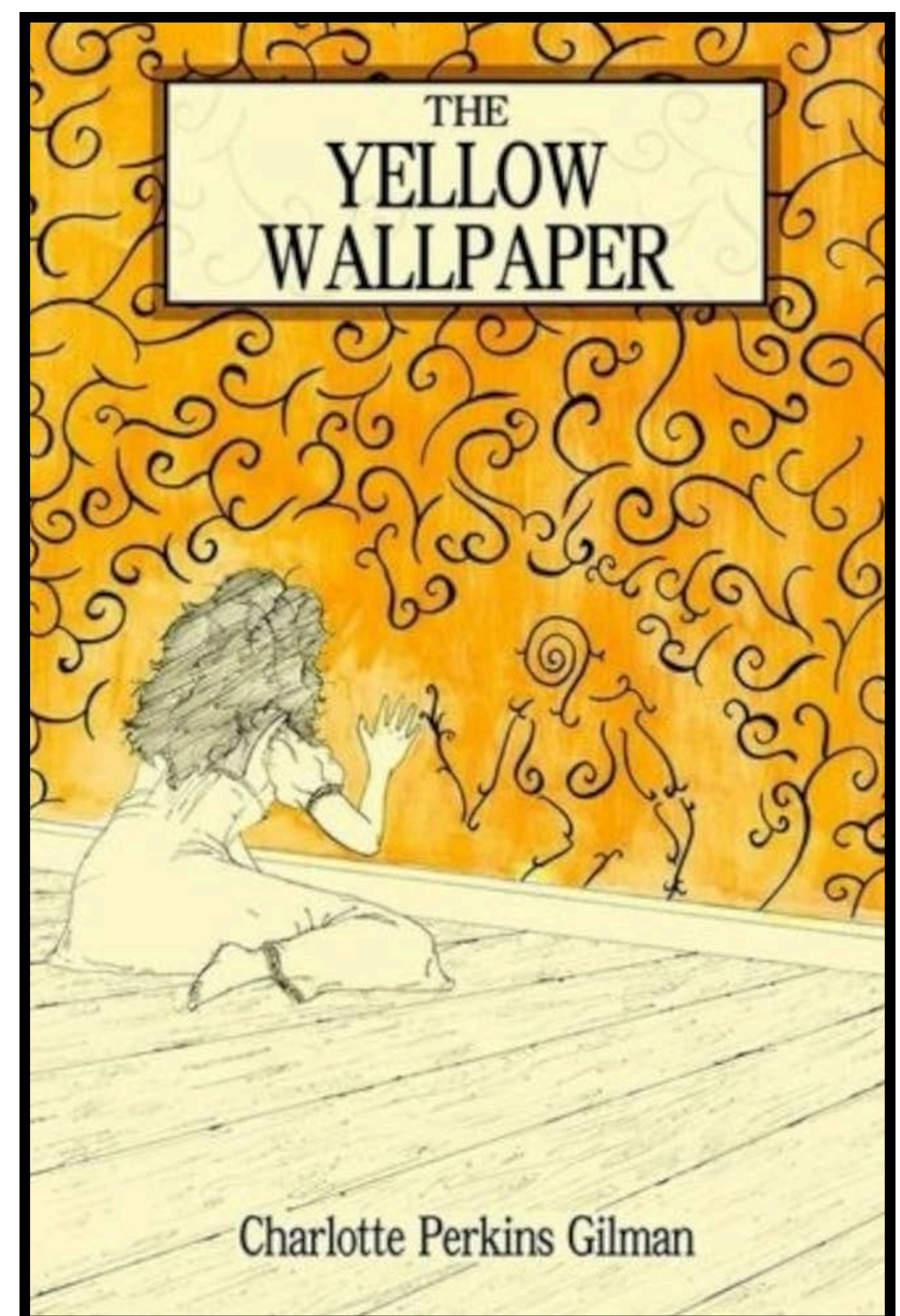
A GOTHIC EXPLORATION OF FEMINISM

[CONTINUED FROM P. 12]

I also really appreciated how the main protagonist within the story was left unnamed. I believe this small detail reflected how her independence was restricted. My only critique was that I wish this story had been longer, only because I had enjoyed it so much.

Since I had longed to read more about 19th-century feminism and mental health, I returned to a journalist in whom I had been interested in the past: Nelly Bly. Nelly Bly and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's works hold similarities in the topics they discussed. Both were women who fought against the patriarchy and explored the conditions women in psychiatric care were trapped within. Nelly Bly was a journalist who took pride in writing about topics that were thought to be inappropriate for women. She once pretended to be insane so that she could be committed to an asylum to report on the conditions in which patients were treated. Her field work and her book "Ten Days in a Mad-house" had brought attention to the terrible conditions within women's asylums, and the awareness directly resulted in the city of New York putting more money into these asylums. I highly recommend looking into both of these women and their work.

Overall, "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a significant piece of feminist literature whose topics remain relevant today. I highly recommend this short story, and I hope others can find the same connections that I did while reading it.



**THANK YOU LIT LAB FOR
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!!
WE HOPE TO
COLLABORATE AGAIN IN
THE FUTURE!**

IS STEPHEN KING'S *IT* THE BOOK FOR YOU?

BY GEORGE HARTMAN

In this day and age, it's almost impossible to have a legitimate discussion about the best horror novels of the 20th century without somehow invoking Stephen King's masterpiece, *It*. This 1,153-page epic, first published in 1986, follows 7 young children as they battle an interdimensional shapeshifting monster that haunts their hometown of Derry, Maine, from the sewers. It also tells the story of the children as adults, as they are called back to Derry to defeat the monster once and for all. Many horror nerds praise the book's scale and grandiosity; it has even been called "the Moby-Dick of horror novels" by a prominent Los Angeles newspaper. Many adults and teenagers, hearing this, are tempted to plunge eagerly into the book without a second thought. However, is *It* really all it's cracked up to be, or does its length and esoteric writing style prevent it from being one of the true "best of the best" horror novels?

Let us start to answer this question by examining the positive qualities of *It*, of which there are a great many.

One of the best things about *It* and in my opinion the aspect that makes it truly memorable, is how comprehensive it is. Over the course of the novel's 1,153 pages, *It* tells the story of its protagonists in a manner that is both thorough and engaging. By the end of the story, you will be able to understand and sympathize with every single main character in the story. Likewise, the antagonists of the tale are brought to life with shocking clarity which somehow makes their horrifying acts all the more haunting. In addition to its impressive characterization, the actual horror aspects of *It* are among the most memorable in the genre. From the opening scene to the epilogue, *It* abounds with unnerving and sinister undertones. The main villain, intended to be a metaphysical representation of the monster-dread in us all, will stay in your mind for a long while after you turn the last page of *It*.

Many other aspects of *It*, including the setting, the action scenes, and the final confrontation (which- spoiler alert-takes place outside of our universe as we know it!) are also worth mentioning here. These elevate *It* from merely a memorable character study to a full-fledged epic of horror.

With all of this in mind, though, I personally would caution against diving right into *It* without first considering a few of the book's qualities that might make it difficult to approach. First and foremost among these is, of course, the book's length. 1,153 pages is, needless to say, an enormous length for a book; if you were to devote a whole hour every day to reading this book, it would still take you over 3 weeks to finish. The way the book deals with interconnected timelines is also unclear in places, and while all is indeed explained in due time, *It* can still be a touch confusing on the first read-through because of this. For these reasons, I would personally recommend reading another popular Stephen King novel, such as *The Shining* or *Pet Sematary*, before attempting *It*.

IS STEPHEN KING'S *IT* THE BOOK FOR YOU?

[CONTINUED FROM P. 14]

You should read *It* if...

- You have watched and liked the movie. While the book is different in many ways from the movie, the book is still much much better; *It* is one of the few cases where I will always insist that the book is more terrifying than the movie adaptation.
- You enjoy reading about people instead of events. While *It* does of course contain many harrowing events, its focus is always on the characters, as well as how they grow, change, and evolve throughout the story.
- You have watched and loved the TV show *Gravity Falls*. Many aspects of this show are derived from *It*- in fact, the book at times reads like an adult version of the show. *It* has had a major impact on the pop culture of today.
- You want to read and experience something completely unlike anything you've read or experienced before.



You should not read *It* if...

- You have issues paying attention to one thing for a super long time. *It* is quite the commitment, and some parts do require your full and undivided attention.
- You have issues sometimes with how men write women. Stephen King is undeniably the origin of many of these complaints. To his credit, though, he doesn't discriminate: he often describes men in much the same way.
- You have never read a horror book before. If this describes you, try reading a more approachable horror novel before attempting to read *It*.

HOW SCHOOL TAUGHT YOU TO HATE READING AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

BY ALBERT ST. GERMAIN



Think back to the last time you genuinely wanted to read something. Not because it was assigned, not because of booknotes due next class, but because you actually couldn't wait to find out what happened next. For a lot of us, that feeling has gotten harder and harder to find, and school deserves a fair share of the blame. Reading logs that make people count minutes like a chore. Books chosen by a curriculum committee decades ago. Comprehension questions designed to make sure you suffered through every page. Somewhere between elementary school and now, reading stopped being something you did for fun and became something done to you.

This is not just a personal feeling, it shows up in the data. Literacy rates among young people have been falling for years, and it is hard to ignore the connection. When every book comes with a deadline or a rubric, reading starts to feel like homework even when it isn't. The moment something feels mandatory the wonder drains right out of it. Nobody develops a love for music by filling out a listening log where you can only log approved music. The same logic applies here. Schools set out to build a generation of readers and have, in many cases, built a generation of people who associate books with stress and boredom.

Here is the thing though: reading outside of class is still yours. A graphic novel. A fantasy series. A true crime podcast transcript. A sports biography. None of it is the wrong thing to read. The only thing that matters is that you read it. If this school year you pick up even one book because you felt curious, or a sense of wonder, rather than because it was assigned, that is worth more than any reading log or book notes. Your love of reading didn't die, it was buried under a pile of worksheets; it is still there, waiting.



JUNE 8, 2026

ARTS & CULTURE

STUDENT ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

MALCOLM UMSTEAD



ZEPHO THE LAST OF THE BLESSED SKETCH

BY MALCOLM UMSTEAD

I got bored in class and did a little doodle of Zepho. Zepho is one of my OCs (Original characters) that I've had since middle school. She used to be a hollow knight OC until early this year when she became her own thing and also a sheep somehow.

(PICTURED LEFT)

EASTHEIS MANGA COVER REDRAW

BY MALCOLM UMSTEAD

I did this piece specifically for the newspaper. I wanted to do something more challenging to really show off what I can do and since episode 7 of the witch hat anime came out, I redrew the cover of book 9 of witch hat atelier. The legs were a huge challenge for me but I think they came out ok also his hands were a major struggle.

I hate hands so much.

(PICTURED RIGHT)



TECH VALLEY TIMES CONTRIBUTORS AND MEMBERS

CARTER ELWOOD
EMMA SCHWENKE
GAVIN GARNER
JAYDEN KRAJEWSKI
MAYA RIVERA
MOHAMED AHMED
REECE REYNOLDS
TRISTAN PETERSON

TYLER CORCORAN
DALILAH MASSEY
HAFSA CHOWDHURY
CHEYENNE SHUTTER
ALBERT ST. GERMAIN
KIERNAN RUSSO
GEORGE HARTMAN
MALCOLM UMSTEAD
MS. SAM CAVAGNOLO
MS. SYDNEY ROGERS

Dear TV Times Members,

Thank you for a great year! When we came to Tech Valley as student teachers, we never imagined we would get to advise such an enthusiastic group of students. The whole reason TVHS now has a school newspaper is because you all showed the initiative, passion, and dedication necessary to start one. That accomplishment alone is something to be incredibly proud of. Beyond this, it has been a joy to get to know you all and hear about your classes, your hobbies, your jobs, and your future plans. We've learned so much from you and with you, and always remember, we are rooting for you!

Good luck wherever life takes you!

Ms. C and Ms. Rogers