



Poly Press

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Mid-Day Madness!

POLY holds pep rally to celebrate the beginning of winter sports!



Giving Back This Holiday Season

By Stephanie Fishkin

Looking for more Service Learning Hours? This holiday season is a great time to give back to your community! Whether, you're interested in helping the hungry, providing a happy presence to someone who is sick, or taking care of homeless pets, here is a list of volunteer options in Baltimore.

Our Daily Bread is a non-profit organization with a mission to aid the hungry by serving over a quarter million meals every year. Currently, Our Daily Bread is looking for volunteers to serve meals or deliver casseroles. For more information, visit <https://www.catholiccharities-md.org/services/our-daily-bread-hot-meal-program/>.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities of Baltimore is a non-profit corporation that provides a safe space for children who are seriously ill and their families. Volunteer activities include being a "House Warmer" (a person who greets families as they walk in) to preparing a home-cooked meal. For more information, visit <https://rmhcbaltimore.org/get-involved/volunteer/>.

The Baltimore Humane Society (BHS) is a non-profit organization that provides a safe home for unwanted/homeless animals in the area. A volunteer at BHS could take care of small animals or help with tasks around the shelter such as cleaning, dishes, and laundry. For more information, visit <https://bmorehumane.org/volunteer/opportunities-and-training/>.



photos: STEPHEN KIM

Christmas: A Global Holiday

by *Luce Marchionni*

Undoubtedly one of the most celebrated holidays in the world, Christmas is a big deal. An originally Christian holiday, Christmas is celebrated mostly in Europe, and North and South America; however, today it is even celebrated in places like Asia and Africa. Christmas has a very big Christian religious connotation. Before Christmas became a holiday, Northern European cultures celebrated various pagan and Norse holidays usually on the winter solstice (December 21st). When Christianity started to rise, especially in the Roman Empire, the new church decided there should be a holiday to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The Pope, around 340 CE, marked December 25th as the date of Jesus's birth, in order to also encourage more Europeans to convert from paganism to Christianity.



Artwork by Jayden Rhodes

Since then, Christmas has always been on the 25th of December. Through time, as Christianity spread throughout the world, so did Christmas. Two billion people celebrate Christmas, even if they might not all be religious. Christmas traditions started popping up and now different countries each have their own ways of celebrating it. In America, Santa Claus is the figure who brings presents to children, inspired by the European Saint Nicholas who does the same, but on December 6th. Christmas in South America varies from country to country in terms of dates and religious association. Many South American and European countries also celebrate "Epiphany" or "Three Kings Day" on January 6th, 12 days after Christmas. In Asian countries, Christmas is secular, introduced by American influence; in places like Japan or Korea, it is their version of Valentine's Day. African cultures have combined Christian traditions with their own cultural traditions. We have traditions like Christmas music, movies, caroling, and stockings here in America. Many people in the world still go to church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, to honor the religious side of the holiday. Celebrated among other winter holidays, like Hanukkah and Kwanza, Christmas is something many people look forward to. It is a time we see friends and family, eat lots of food, and give and receive gifts, a time to relax and spread love.

Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's *A Christmas Carol*: A Review by Madeline Jaffe

With Netflix and movie theaters, Amazon and Hulu, and many more ways to watch, plays are seemingly becoming more and more a thing of the past. Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, however, is busy making them a thing of the future. With a homey, small stage that makes it easy for those in all seats to see, creative usage of space and props, and extravagant costumes on spectacular actors, Chesapeake truly brings *A Christmas Carol* to life. Each and every actor gives an extremely invested performance so that the audience never feels they are anywhere but in the story. Gregory Burgess brings a new, unique comedy to the main character while still staying true to Scrooge's stinginess and lack of mercy. His lines are delivered with intense sincerity, so that by the end you feel as if you have really witnessed a change of heart. The actors at Chesapeake, and in this play in particular, range from young to old, the youngest being a fourth grader who plays a wonderful Tiny Tim. A diverse cast is just one special element of the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. The performance's special effects, including "snow" falling onto the stage, make the audience feel as if they were actually hovering above the story... better than any TV show or movie. The immersion is aided by how fast-paced the plot is, so that it's intermission before you know it. As always, Chesapeake presents a perfect balance of humor, intensity, and love in its performance, the product of the hard work of dedicated actors, the director, and resident artists. This is a great show to go to with the family or with friends; no matter who you're with, the play's spirit will have you singing a Christmas carol on the way out the door.

To learn more or purchase tickets, you can visit their website at:

<https://www.chesapeakeshakespeare.com/>



photo: DC Metro Theatre



photo: Maryland Theatre Guide

Anticipation Builds for the Winter Assembly

by Isabelle Richard

As many may know, the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute Winter Assembly is fast approaching. Assemblies such as these are a wonderful way for students and teachers to take a much needed break and relax before the holidays. This assembly will interrupt the regular flow of school days and together we will be able to showcase and celebrate the many talents held within the walls of this school. The Winter Assembly is much to look forward to for many reasons, one being the performance of our school's concert band. They have been practicing extensively during class and on Wednesdays after school in anticipation of this special gathering. They are excited not only to play, but for the rest of the assembly as well. Katie Fields, a trumpet player, states that she is "personally looking forward to see the different performances, from singing to the Synergy Dance Team." Seeing talents such as these serves to inspire the entire school as well as rise cheery spirits for winter time and the holidays.



Image obtained via BPI Synergy Facebook

As well as group performances to look forward to, the Winter Assembly contains individual performances. One being a rendition of "To Be With You" by Mr. Big, performed by the guitarist and vocalist Wyatt Lyons. School wide assemblies can help one improve their performance abilities and Lyons says he is, "Excited... to show what... skills I have on the guitar." This season holds much to anticipate, the Winter Assembly included. Have a wonderful winter!

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT!

Ms. Sakmar, 10th Grade Honors and AP American Government Teacher

Interview by Kyla Zurlage

Here at Poly, we are very lucky to have a plethora of dedicated teachers who love to teach. This month, we would like to take time to appreciate these amazing teachers, in particular Ms. Sakmar. Ms. Sakmar is a wonderful teacher who cleverly educates and prepares her students for the HSA and AP exams through fun, engaging, and well thought out lessons. She always has a smile on her face, and knows how to brighten the day of each of her students. To the right, find some wise words and learn more about Ms. Sakmar behind the scenes.



Q: What's one piece of advice you have for students at Poly?

One piece of advice I'd give to Poly students is to not be so consumed with grades. Work hard and focus on learning. Make mistakes. I truly believe growth comes from making mistakes and learning to persevere. Learning resiliency will help students not only in high school, but in college, and in their future careers.

Q: What makes a "good day" at school?

Today was a good day at school. My classes were fully engaged and the discussion was meaningful and productive. My students make me laugh all day long and though I joke around a lot, I truly enjoy my job and am so grateful to work at Poly with my awesome coworkers and amazing students.

Q: What are your hobbies outside of school?

My hobbies include retail therapy, working out, following and discussing politics, hanging out with friends, traveling, reading, attending concerts and sporting events, and walking my dogs.

Q: What are your plans for winter break?

I'm planning on spending time with family and friends, catching up on DVR/Netflix, relaxing, and grading papers.

Counseling Corner: Top 5 Tips for Midterm Exams

from Dr .Christian Lorenzo, BPI Guidance Dept.

Your Midterm Exams make-up 20% of your Semester 1 grades, and 10% of your Final grades. It is very important to put your best foot forward. Doing well on your midterms can make a difference between an 89% (GPA = 3.0) and a 90% (GPA = 4.0).

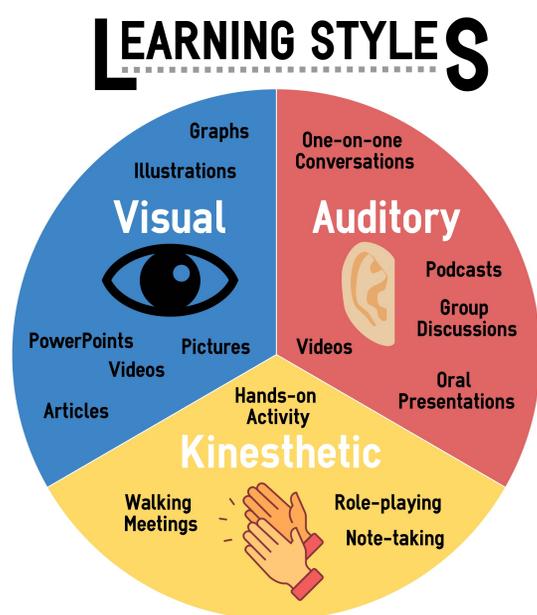
Calculating Semester and Final Grades

Semester 1 Grade = (Q1 (2) + Q2 (2) + Midterm) / 5

Semester 2 Grade = (Q3 (2) + Q4 (2) + Final) / 5

Final Grade = (S1 + S2) / 2

Q = Quarter S = Semester



HopeHealth.com 

Tip 1: Study Now!

Research shows that study sessions are most effective in small, short chunks! Instead of cramming a 10 hour study session a day before the test, it is much more effective to spread it out in to twenty, 30 minute sessions! Cramming is linked to the lowest grades!

Knowing your learning style (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) can help you determine the best ways for you to study. This information can help you with everything from improving test taking skills to choosing a career.

Tip 2: Study as if you need to teach the material!

In a study where individuals were asked to learn a passage and half were told that they were going to be tested while the other half were expected to teach it to other students, students expecting to teach did much better. When you are expecting to teach, your brain organizes material in a much more logical, coherent structure.

Tip 4: Use Flashcards!

Instead of highlighting a text book or passively re-reading notes, flashcards have been proven to be excellent memory reinforcement tools. Flashcards are easy to access during off times like a bus ride home or while eating lunch.

Tip 5: Go to Coach Class to Narrow Down Your Studying.

Even if you have an A in your classes right now, go to coach class! This is your opportunity to ask questions and to ensure that you are studying the right materials for the test. Having a conversation with your teachers ensures that you are not over or under studying.

Video and reference here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p60rN9JEapg&feature=youtu.be>

