

Happy Birthday Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist pastor who fought for justice and equal rights for marginalized communities. His powerful speeches, especially “I Have a Dream,” and his nonviolent activism sought justice for African Americans under the law.

King’s birthday is a federal holiday that is celebrated on the third Monday in January, and this year, the holiday fell on his actual birthday, Jan. 15. Born in 1929, King would have turned 95 years old. The holiday is a time to honor his legacy and continue the work towards a more just and inclusive society.

As a prominent leader in the 1950s and 1960s, King’s efforts led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

On April 4, 1968, King was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn. when he was shot and killed. The assassination shocked the nation and profoundly affected the civil rights movement.

Celebrating King helps keep his message alive and creates a just and equitable society.



Escalating Tensions in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

By Caly Estrada

POLITICAL WRITER

In recent weeks, the long-lasting issues between Russia and Ukraine have escalated, raising global concerns about the possibility of a full scale conflict. The situation’s direction is shaped by military decisions, diplomatic exchanges, and international reactions.

Rooted in political, ethnic, and territorial disagreements, the conflict’s historical complexities include the 2014 takeover of Crimea by Russia and the ongoing strife in Eastern Ukraine involving Russian-backed separatists.

Recent events have heightened the delicate relationship between the two countries. Reports indicate an increased buildup of Russian military forces along the Ukrainian border.

“Efforts to address rising tensions diplomatically keep going,” says Hasan Wells, an Aerospace student. “As a student, I hope for a peaceful resolution in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, recognizing the impact it can have on our shared global future.”

The international community swiftly responded, with nations working to restrict Russia’s military buildup and expressing support for Ukraine’s sovereignty. Sanctions against Russia are being considered to deter further aggression, and NATO-member countries closely monitor the situation, engaging in discussions about the alliance’s response.

Julius, an Aerospace student, said “The Russia Ukraine conflict is a stark reminder of the complexities in our world. Diplomacy should be the priority to prevent further escalation and promote understanding.”

“The Russia-Ukraine situation is a wakeup call for us as students,” remarked Kieran Fournier, a high school student. “It highlights the importance of staying informed about global affairs and the role we might play in promoting peace and unity.”

The evolving situation in Russia and Ukraine has broader implications for regional and global security, potentially reshaping political decisions and affecting other countries and alliances. The potential for a worldwide conflict looms large.

Gypsy Rose Freed From Prison After 8 Years

By De’Jiah Otero

STAFF WRITER

The infamous Gypsy-Rose Blanchard was recently released from prison after serving eight years of her 10-year sentence for murdering her mother, and she has expressed remorse for her involvement in the crime.

Since her release on Dec. 28, 2023, she has been adjusting to life outside of prison, and is working on rebuilding her life. Blanchard, who is now 32, was found guilty of second-degree murder for conspiring with her then boyfriend Nicholas Godejohn to kill her mother.

Her mother, Claudine “Dee Dee” Blanchard convinced others that Gypsy-Rose suffered from a range of severe medical conditions.

However, it was later revealed that Gypsy-Rose was not actually sick and had been a victim of Munchausen Syndrome by proxy, a form of abuse where a caregiver fabricates or includes illness in another person for attention or sympathy.

As Gypsy-Rose grew up, she began to realize the truth about her health and the extent of her mother’s manipulation. Feeling trapped and desperate to escape this abusive situation, Gypsy-Rose conspired with Godejohn to murder her mother in June 2015.

After Gypsy-Rose and Godejohn planned and carried out the murder of Dee Dee, they fled to Wisconsin. Gypsy-Rose pled guilty to second-degree murder. Godejohn was found guilty of first-degree murder and received a life sentence. Now that Gypsy-Rose is a free woman, she is working on personal growth. She is currently married to her husband Ryan Anderson and they live in Wisconsin.

Alternatives to College

By Brandon Bourne
STAFF WRITER

Many Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) seniors are unsure whether college is the best route for them. They are considering the non-college route and choosing alternative plans for their future career choices.

Taking a gap year after high school or going to a trade school are attractive options for these students who are interested in plumbing, mechanics, army, etc. A few seniors have already made up their minds that traditional college isn't right for them and their future life goals. Nazsere Minnefield explained his decision.

"I feel that wasting four years in college is a waste of time, while doing two years in trade school would teach me real-world skills I will need. This process will allow me to keep building my career continually."

Jayden "JR" Ramirez already has an alternative route planned.

"I think taking a post-graduate year rather than college is better for me because I can focus on another year of sports and focus on getting my GPA up. I feel that high school is a place where I can get easily distracted."

Christian Campos preferred the military route, because of the "vast benefits that come with the military. I won't have to worry about financial needs as much if I go into the military service."

The class of 2024 is at the halfway mark, and seniors will need to decide what direction they plan to go in after graduating in June.

Shark Tank Presentations

By Sydeny Clark
STAFF WRITER

Each year, Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) seniors are required to do capstone projects and present their findings before a group of judges called sharks.

This year, all seniors are taking senior seminar classes where they are conducting research for half a semester instead of in previous years where capstone lasted an entire school year.

In late December, seniors entered the "Shark Tank" (classrooms) and presented their capstone proposals before groups of AAE and CREC Central staff members, who gave each student constructive feedback on their budding projects, which are required for graduation. Students briefly explained what their projects were about, whether it is a conflict to address or a call to action.

Shark Tank presentations are a tedious process that had students overwhelmed and filled with mixed emotions. Students had to show the progress of their research using multiple documents. The shark tank presentations took place in various classrooms on different floors over several days.

Nazsere Minnefield said that his project is about illegal drug overdose in Connecticut. His goal is to understand why people choose to take those substances, knowing that there is a possibility that they can kill them. His call to action is to solve drug addiction and overdose. He claimed that during his process of this research, it was a hard topic to read about and it was very emotional.

College Acceptances

By Teigen Green
STAFF WRITER

It's around the time when seniors start hearing back from colleges and receiving acceptance letters from the schools of their choice, making way for their future plans.

Brandon Bourne said he got accepted into Howard University, Norfolk State University, and Morgan State University. He plans on majoring in business. In the future, he wants to be an entrepreneur and create a clothing brand or start his own real estate business.

Dylan Singh said he got accepted to Eastern Connecticut State University, Western Connecticut State University, Mitchell College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, and University of New Haven. He hopes to attend the University of Connecticut and plans on majoring in business administration. After college Dylan plans to enter the workforce.

Ariana Murray said she got into Morgan State University, Quinnipiac University, Central Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, and the University of Hartford. She hopes to attend either Quinnipiac or the University of Rhode Island. She plans on majoring in nursing and possibly becoming an ultrasound technician.



Snow Monster Visits AAE

NBC Meteorologist Anthony Carpino, a former Academy of Aerospace and Engineering student, visited the school on Jan. 8. He arrived at AAE in Snow Monster the day after the first snowfall of the season.

Carpino gave a presentation to journalism students about how meteorologists look at computer data to build the weather forecast for the following day. They use the College of DuPage, which is a numerical weather prediction model that uses computer simulations of the atmosphere. They use an analysis of the current weather as a starting point and then project the state of the atmosphere in the future. Another tool they use is the Weather Prediction Center.

Even with this data, Carpino said weather predictions are still difficult to make even one week ahead because of unexpected changes in temperatures and the amount of rain and snow.

Carpino gave some students and staff a tour of Snow Monster, which is a 4x4 Jeep Wrangler with a ground temperature sensor that provides data on winter road conditions. The weather vehicle gathers and delivers meteorological data for accurate weather information.

Equipped with nine high-definition cameras, Snow Monster drives into the eye of the storm and gathers 360-degree angles of weather and road conditions.



Pictures by Mr. Copeland

GOP Presidential Race Narrows to Two

By Jonathan De Caro

POLITICAL WRITER

Following the recent exits of Vivek Ramaswamy, Asa Hutchinson, and Ron DeSantis the GOP Presidential field has narrowed to two candidates for the nomination: Nikki Haley and Donald Trump.



Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina Governor and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has positioned herself as a strong contender to the incumbent-like candidate: Trump. She has distanced herself by pushing a “no-nonsense” approach that appeals to a broad spectrum of Republicans, as well as many independents and democrats. Donald Trump, the former president, leads in the polls with a loyal base as he pushes his “MAGA Agenda.”

AAE Senior Mita M. expressed, “I see this as a defining moment in American politics and will determine if we will see more of the same or a new generation leading this November.”

The sudden departure of Vivek Ramaswamy, a conservative commentator and entrepreneur; Asa



Hutchinson, former Arkansas Governor; and Ron DeSantis, Florida’s current governor, cuts the race down to two top contenders. Their exits reshaped the dynamics of the primary season, but were not enough to topple Trump’s lead.

AAE Junior Namiyanzi E. expressed, “Even as the candidate pool narrows it surprises me how Trump is able to maintain a strong lead in the polls.”

The Haley vs. Trump duel goes beyond policy differences, representing a pivotal moment for the GOP’s identity. Each contender embodies distinct facets of the party, and the outcome will likely shape the course for its near future.

New Video Games

Devon Nance

STAFF WRITER

For those who enjoy playing videogames, there have been a lot of exciting games that have dropped in the past few months and some have released downloadable content (DLC), which is additional content gamers download for video games after their initial release. This content may include new levels, characters, weapons, or skins for you to enjoy.



Kicking off on December 12, 2023, God of War Ragnarok released new DLC Valhalla. A PlayStation overview stated, “In this epilogue to God of War Ragnarök, Kratos enters Valhalla, a new location in the God of War Norse saga. Faced with echoes of his past, he fights to overcome the trials within himself and walk the path laid out before him”.

When it comes to new gameplay, “Kratos will have access to his weapons, skills, shields and abilities, but each new attempt will reset his Stats, Runic Attacks and Perks. As Kratos progresses through each attempt, you will be presented with choices between rewards that will help you push deeper into the mysterious depths of Valhalla while building resources toward persistent upgrades.”

When it comes to the fighting gaming community, there’s a lot of content to explore, especially with Mortal Kombat 1 and its consistent DLC. First, it was the Omni Man, which was released on Nov. 9, 2023, and then on Nov.16, 2023, the Kombat Pack was released for everyone. It included six new characters that get released every two to three months. A new character, Quan Chi, came out on Dec. 21, 2023. The other characters don’t have release dates yet, but they should be coming our soon.

Suicide Squad: Kill the Justice League, will be released on Jan. 30, 2024. It is an action shooter game developed by Rocksteady Studios and published by Warner Bros. Games. The game takes place in the same universe as the Batman: Arkham series, and is a follow-up to Batman: Arkham Knight. The game features four playable characters: Captain Boomerang, Deadshot, Harley Quinn, and King Shark. While it can be played solo, the game also features a four-player cooperative multiplayer mode. It is your job as these four to kill the Justice League members like The Flash, Batman, Superman, Superman, and Green Lantern. If buyers pre-order the game, it comes with both classic and rouge outfits.

Wonka Movie Review

Victoria Ortiz

STAFF WRITER

Wonka, which opened on Dec. 15, 2023 is about a man named Willy Wonka who is a chocolatier. He arrives in a new town with no money but looking to open a business selling chocolate. He tries to introduce and sell his magical chocolates on the street, and as it gains popularity and recognition, he gets sabotaged by three other chocolatiers. They are fearful that Wonka will knock them out of their own chocolate businesses.

After many obstacles and several envious people trying to knock him off his path, he meets new friends along the way that try to help him and remind him to never give up. In the end, Wonka gets everything he wished for.

Mrs. Kelly, team leader for the 11th grade at the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE), planned a field for juniors to Cinemark Buckland Hills Theater to see Wonka.

Three 11th-grade girls who saw Wonka shared their honest opinions about the movie.

“It’s a great movie for young kids, but I personally think it wasn’t enjoyable for our age group, because a lot of people fell asleep during the movie, including me,” said Joana Garcia. “But I did like the part in the movie where the people ate the chocolates and started to fly. I would recommend this movie to young kids and for people who like chocolate.”

Zah-Kneyiah Brown also shared feedback on the movie.

“I wish the movie didn’t have so many songs because I didn’t know any of them,” stated Brown. “But if I did know the songs I would’ve liked it more because I would’ve been able to sing along with the characters in the movie. My favorite character in the movie was a girl; her name was Noodle. But overall, I’m glad that the school decided to take us on this trip.”

National Pizza Week

Franchi Serrano Cuevas

STAFF WRITER

National Pizza Week is an exciting and delicious celebration that brings people together to honor the iconic and versatile dish that is pizza.

During this special week, pizza enthusiasts, pizzerias, and communities across the nation join in the festivities to indulge in their favorite pizza varieties and explore new flavors. It serves as a time to appreciate the cultural heritage of pizza.

Throughout the week, many pizzerias offer carryout and delivery specials. Some even serve up a free slice of pizza. This year, National Pizza Week took place from Jan. 14 to Jan. 20. No one truly knows when or where the holiday originated from, but vocal media explained that it was “a long time before Christ.”

Americans don’t need a reason to eat pizza; they eat it all the time. But this week is the time of the year when they try all kinds of different pizzas.

Around the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) campus, there is a variety of students, with a wide variety of preferences when it comes to pizza.

“Bacon pepperoni slaps,” said Julius Batchelor.

Jeremy Lopez celebrates pizza week as if it is every single day. He said his favorite pizza is called the “Nando Special,” which has the toppings of pepperoni, jalapeno, and surprisingly, French fries.

“Trust me on this one,” Jeremy pleaded.

You can celebrate the holiday by making your own pizza, hosting a pizza party where loved ones get together to order a variety of pizzas and devour them. Or, sharing the kindness and deliciousness with the homeless.

Pizza is more than just a popular and delectable dish, it serves as a cultural icon that transcends borders and brings people together. The week-long celebration provides an opportunity for pizza lovers to share their passion; discover unique toppings and crusts; and support local pizzerias.

Rebuilding AAE Indoor Track Team

Sulo Adziovski

STAFF WRITER

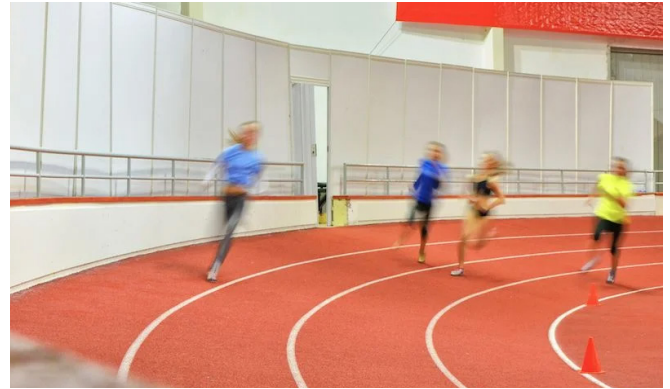
The Academy of Aerospace and Engineering's (AAE) indoor track team kicked off its season with many goals for the New Year. Led by new AAE teacher Kendall Manderville, the young team is working on rebuilding and developing.

"It's a rebuilding year," Coach Manderville explained. "We have a young team of new track athletes as well as returners. The goal for the new indoor track athletes is to find what they're good at and experiment. We have them running different events and trying different things. We want them to find what their thing is."

The team has five meets scheduled for the season with leading runners Pehansa, Arelys, Shya and Giselle. Pehansa is .4 seconds away from qualifying for states in the four-by-two event.

"Our goals for this season are new personal records, qualifying for states and trying to get every event we can in the qualifying time," said Manderville, who is also an AAE special education teacher. "The indoor track team will develop and get better every year."

Coach Manderville is an experienced coach and student favorite. Previously coaching boys' volleyball at CREC Academy of Computer Science and Engineering in Enfield, he was nominated as paraprofessional of the year, where he taught for three years. However, when he started, the school was called Civic Leadership.



National Dress up Your Pet

By Breajhaa Jones

STAFF WRITER

National Dress up Your Pet Day is an opportunity for pet owners to dress up their furry loved ones to show how much they value and love them.

Created in 2009 by Colleen Paige, a celebrity pet lifestyle expert and animal behaviorist, this celebration is recognized in different countries all over the world.

Sarah Borland, a junior at the Academy Of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE), said she dresses up her dog up on special occasions.

"I dress my dog because he looks cool and more human-like," Boreland stated. "But I mostly dress Coco up on holidays because dogs and cats aren't going to want to wear an outfit over their fur all the time."

Yesired Roig, an AAE senior, is also a dog lover. She's had dogs since she was 7-years- old, but one of her older dogs passed away when she was younger. She's a dog lover because they are cute and very lovable, but when she gets older and decides to get pets of her own she said she's only going to stick with three.

"I dress them up my dogs because I find them adorable" said Roig, adding that "they get cold very easily."



Aerospace Jets Boys' Basketball

By Zah-Kneyiah Brown

STAFF WRITER

There are many sports all over the world, but basketball is the most important for some boys and girls because it teaches discipline and great sportsmanship. And, it may even tell a story about the player and the team based on how far they have come and all the sweat they have put in.

Basketball is what some people have grown up playing outside of school. With family and friends, they watched professional basketball legends like Kobe, LeBron James, Michael Jordan, Kyrie Irving, Shaq, and Steph Curry on the big screen. They were inspired by their heroes and strived to be just like them. So, they worked hard and tried their best to make progress.



Basketball is a competitive and interesting sport because it gets so intense. Sulo A. described why basketball is so important to him and how it has impacted him.

“When I was younger, I played the basketball video game 2K a lot and liked to play it, so I gave it a try in real life.” he explained. “I also looked up to Michael Jordan and Jason Tatum.”

The Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) has had a basketball team for more than 10 years, with a diverse and new group of junior varsity and senior varsity boys each season. The boys strive for hard work, dedication, discipline, and respect.

Coach Narcisse has been the team’s coach for four years, and he is also one of the high school’s algebra and calculus teachers. Narcisse is an awesome and respected teacher who helps students understand and reach for greatness because he is all about excellence.

Narcisse also played high school basketball, which is why he chose to become a coach. His team motto is “Attitude and Compete,” and his main goal for his team is to “make a run to the state tournament and make it to the tournament at Mohegan Sun.”

The varsity team, comprised of juniors and seniors, is currently 4-1. So far, they have beaten CREC International, HMTCA, South Windsor High School, and CREC Academy of Computer Science and Engineering. The student athletes are excited and stoked for the season and are sure they will make it to the championship in March. They practice almost every day and they practice hard.

Richard Chandler is also pumped.

“I feel good and confident about this season,” Chandler said. “I play basketball because I am very competitive at what I do, and basketball allows me to be competitive. I am motivated by Run to the Sun, which is the state championship, and motivated by my dad, who also played college basketball. And, growing up, I used to watch LeBron James, which inspired me.”

Tsurara Onna—Mid-winter Bride

By Madhumita. Muralidharan

STAFF WRITER

Tsurara Onna are yokai in the form of beautiful women. This yokai (monster) usually inhabits mid-winter and leaves when the spring weather rolls over. They are found in rural areas of Japan. Despite being beings of ice, Tsurara Onna spirits are surprisingly warm and affectionate. It's often really tricky to spot a Tsurara Onna because they just blend in as regular human women. But there's a kind of giveaway – they hate taking baths. You might hear stories about a woman who flat out refuses to step into a bathtub, no matter how much her husband nags her about it. There's this turning point where she finally gives in and takes a bath. Later, all he finds are these tiny ice shards floating in the tub, and his wife has vanished into thin air.

In Niigata Prefecture, Japan, there's this story about a young single guy. Picture this - it's a cold, snowy night, and he's just chilling by his window, admiring the winter wonderland outside. And in that moment, he's struck with this deep desire for a wife as beautiful as the icicles hanging from his roof. And here's where it gets interesting. Out of nowhere, there's a knock on his door. A woman's voice, clear as ice and just as beautiful, calls out to him.

“Hey, I was out on the road, trying to brave this crazy snowstorm, and it just got too much. Can I crash at your place for the night?”

The guy, being a decent human being, was like, “Sure, come on in.” And, no kidding, the woman wasn't just asking for shelter – turns out, she had a face as beautiful as her voice. So, he goes all out to make her stay comfy and cozy.

Fast forward a few months, surprise, they fell head over heels for each other and were living their happily-ever-after.

One spring morning, the young bride headed out for some shopping, but when night fell, she was nowhere to be found. Night after night, the guy waited for her to return, hoping against hope. With the snow melting, eventually, he had to face the harsh truth – she was gone. Time

passed, his heart mended, and he even remarried a local girl. Fast forward to the following winter, and during a snowstorm, he found himself staring at those long icicles hanging from his roof. There's a knock on the door. The gorgeous woman from the previous winter is standing there.

“I looked for you every single day! What the heck? How could you just disappear without a word?” he yelled, frustration pouring out.

And then she hits him with, “Life happens, you know... But we promised to love each other forever. You even compared us to those beautiful icicles hanging from your roof. And now... you're with someone else.”

With a sad look, the beautiful woman walked out. The guy, confused and torn, tried to go after her. But, his new wife inside asked, “What's happening?”

“Nothing, just stay inside,” he said.

Out of the blue, there's this loud crash, followed by a scream outside. The new wife bolts to the front door, and there he is – her husband, lifeless in the yard, an enormous icicle right through his head.

Seniors on Ice

By Justice Kitchens

STAFF WRITER

Throughout the winter, ice skating can be a very exciting experience and activity. The seniors at AAE took a field trip to the Bushnell in Hartford on December 21, 2023.

Ashley said “the ice skating trip was a fun time. There was a lot of falling especially when Carlos was grabbing everyone and pulling them down with him. The music was nice, definitely 2010s music.”

Noah said he also enjoyed spending times outside with his friends on a school day.

“The trip was really fun and it felt like it went quickly,” he said. “It was fun to hang out with my friends and have the day off from school.”

Shruthi said “The ice skating field trip was an amazing experience. It was my first time skating and was very memorable. I enjoyed it with my friends.”



Email fregis@crec.org



Academy Times

Editor in Chief

Mrs. Regis

Layout Editor

Jonathan De Caro

Staff Writers

De’Jiah Otero
Caly Estrada
Justice Kitchens
Zah-Kneyiah Brown
Madhumita. Muralidharan
Sulo Adziovski
Franchieri Serrano Cuevas
Jonathan De Caro

Devon Nance
Brandon Bourne
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Teigen Green