EPSOM MAGAZINE

HALF-TERMLY UPDATES

For epsomians by epsomians



TERM 1, ISSUE 2

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As a school, we are privileged enough to have a year-long series of enriching events that brings joy and adds to the quality of student life here in Epsom! And Term 1 has been jam-packed with activities and fun: with House Music, Colour Run, Halloween, Christmas Dinner and more, read on to relive these memorable moments!

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The world is a forever changing place. As students, it is in our best interest to have an awareness of current affairs in order to develop a better understanding of the world we live in. Read on to find out more about headlining issues today.







EPSOM EVENTS





Sunset Serenade

The Sunset Serenade at Epsom this year was a captivating evening where Year 11 IGCSE Music students took the stage to perform and record their coursework pieces. Held during the evening, as the day transitions into night, the event is framed by a breathtaking golden sunset, which enhances the atmosphere of creativity and calmness.

Each student presented a range of pieces across various genres, from classical to contemporary. This showcases their musical skills across a diverse range of musical instruments and styles, including classical guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, piano, clarinet, flute, and vocals, offering the audience a rich and varied musical experience. This also allowed the audience to experience the unique musical strengths and creative interpretations of each student.

The students worked really hard on their pieces and strive to perfect every performance in order to deliver the audience the best possible experience. Reflecting on the evening, one of the performers, Yunn Xynn, shared her thoughts: "the ambience of the golden shimmering sunset gave me the confidence to produce a performance, that was up to my expectations, other than that, my talented peers performed absolutely flawlessly, providing a breathtaking experience for me and the other audience members. Overall, it was a worthwhile experience for me to showcase my skills and give me a taste of how performing in a more formal event feels like."

The audience, which included family, friends, and teachers, was incredibly supportive and enthusiastic, applauding every performance. This created a warm and encouraging environment, making the evening truly memorable for everyone involved.

Therapy Session

By, ADIMUS HAIQAL

Due to the high success of the group counselling sessions held during Mental Health Week, Ms Pajan, the school's counsellor, has decided to continue the program. However, the sessions will now be held once a month and will be accompanied by Ethan Griess, one of the Board of Directors for the humanities society.

These sessions are usually held during CCA time and held at the pavilion. The sessions are open to all students and provide a safe space for them to discuss their concerns, share their experiences, and learn coping mechanisms. Ms. Pajan believes that by offering these sessions on a regular basis, students will have more opportunities to access support and build a stronger sense of community.

Ethan Griess, a student leader known for his empathy and communication skills, will bring a fresh perspective to the sessions. He hopes to create a more inclusive and engaging environment for students, encouraging them to actively participate in discussions and support each other.

The decision to continue the group counselling sessions has been met with enthusiasm from students and staff alike. It is a testament to the importance of mental health and the need for accessible support systems within the school community.

Kindness week

By, JUN JIE

During Kindness Week, students participated in a variety of activities to spread positivity and celebrate kindness throughout the school. During Thursday's tutor time, each student received a card with their name on it, where classmates wrote kind and thoughtful messages. Every morning, motivational quotes were shared to set a positive tone for the day. Tutor groups worked together to design kindness-themed door decorations, filling the corridors with uplifting displays, with final judging over the weekend and winners announced during assembly. The Academic Prefects also introduced an inter-house Kindness Jar competition invited students to write down acts of kindness they experienced, during lunchtime. Led by the Wellbeing Prefect, these initiatives spread kindness throughout the entire community, making the school a better place.



EPSOM EVENTS - CHRISTMAS EDITION





Christmas Dinner

It's that time of year again – Christmas time! Every year, Epsom hosts its one-of-a-kind Christmas dinner: a fanciful event of seasonal delicacies, time spent with dear friends and festive cheer!

On the very special day, both students and teachers glammed up for the event and most certainly dressed to impress – with sparkly dresses and chic suits fit for the occasion. The dining hall too became almost unrecognisable, decorated in full Christmas glory.

Once the dinner had commenced, it was time for the highly-anticipated Epsom rendition of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" song – a unique school tradition that many have come to adore. The dining hall boomed in a united voice as everyone gave it their all and energetically sang their hearts out, with each section getting louder and louder than before. In between the standing up and sitting down were an abundance of laughter and joyous smiles on faces – proving how this definitely was a highlight for many.

The night ended with an upbeat disco that blasted favourite hits and allowed students to let loose after a long, long term of hard work. It was lovely to see students and teachers alike partying, dancing and just simply, having a good time! Many also took this opportunity to snag a photo with friends at the photo booth generously prepared by the Friends of Epsom!

This spectacular event wouldn't have been possible without the tremendous effort of the school's kitchen staff, the Friends of Epsom and many others who work behind the scenes in the days leading up to the event. Thank you to everyone who made the Christmas dinner such a jolly and memorable time for all the Epsom students. The Christmas dinner was truly a night to remember.

Christmas Concert

The Christmas concert was a phenomenal experience prior to the Christmas dinner, bringing everyone in the right joyous headspace of the Christmas spirit.

The event as a whole showcased the astronomical talents through Christmas songs of not only the many gifted students, but as well as our teachers, giving the students a pleasant surprise of how our educators are not only capable of doing one specialised subject, but are also full of other spectacular talents. Both the staff choir and the student choir were outstanding and deserve equal praise, as well as the many performing bands which showcased the dedication and time that both our seniors and juniors put into their arts.

A performance worth mentioning was the prefect choir. As a whole, it was a nice change for our hardworking seniors, who despite having to cope with their stresses of their exams are still able to work towards organising their time perfectly and flawlessly choreographing a fun, synchronized dance that notably combines all the house's signature dance moves from our previous House Music event. It symbolises our student's strong bonds with each other showing us that despite them being in separate living areas they are still able to collaborate and overcome their differences.

The overall atmosphere of the entire event provided an uplifting festive mood for not only students but as well as visitors and staff – emphasising Epsom's dedication and enthusiasm towards promoting our students' hard work and many strengths.

By, YUNN XYNN FONG



Secret Santa

By, JUN HONG GOH

On the 11th of December, Propert House took part in a festive Secret Santa Gift Exchange, where participants exchanged presents unaware of their Secret Santa's identity. The event unfolded in the common room, where everyone gathered with excitement as Dadyo, Khai Zhe, and Naj, the organizers, took charge of distributing the gifts. Smiles lit up the room as everyone received their presents, with gifts ranging from festive snacks and cheerful decorations to even a tyre!

The event brought everyone together, leaving them filled with joy as they came together to share their gifts, perfectly capping off the Christmas festivities with warmth and laughter.

EPSOM EVENTS - CHRISTMAS EDITION

6th Form Christmas Social

By, JULIAN NAJAHAN NORZA





On December 4th, our dedicated Prefect team successfully organized and hosted this year's Christmas Social for the Sixth Form. As the term drew to a close, this highly anticipated event offered Year 12 and 13 students a much-needed opportunity to come together, relax, and embrace the festive spirit.

The Sixth Form Centre was beautifully transformed by our students, who decorated the space with vibrant Christmas cheer, creating an inviting atmosphere for the evening. Tables were laden with a variety of board games, encouraging students to engage in friendly competition and fostering a warm, communal environment. Throughout the night, students enjoyed lively conversations, strengthened friendships, and created lasting memories, with bonds formed across different classes and year groups.The highlight of the evening came when the Prefect team introduced the beloved tradition of Secret Santa gift-giving. In a heartwarming display of the season's generosity, Year 13 Prefects called out each recipient's name as students eagerly collected and unwrapped their thoughtful gifts, exchanging moments of excitement and joy.

To cap off the night, the Prefects treated everyone to an unforgettable Christmas dance performance to the tune of 'Like It's Christmas,' adding a final touch of festive flair. The evening was brimming with laughter, Christmas cheer, and unforgettable moments, providing the perfect way to end the term on a high note.





By, JUSTINA WONG

Roseberry Christmas Dinner

To kick off the festive season, Ms. Spivey hosted the first-ever annual Rosebery Christmas dinner—a night just for us Rosies! The dining hall was transformed by our Social Leaders, who worked their magic with fairy lights, candles, and festive origami, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

The evening began with the much-loved Secret Santa gift exchange, sparking laughter and excitement as we unwrapped our thoughtful presents. After that, we enjoyed a delicious meal, surrounded by friends and plenty of cheer. Singing, dancing, and genuine smiles lit up the room, making the night truly unforgettable.

A standout moment was Ms. Spivey's special rendition of "Twas the Night Before Christmas," which she reimagined just for our sixth form. Her creativity and humor added an extra festive spark to the evening.

This first Rosebery Christmas dinner was fresh, fun, and full of joy—a perfect start to the holiday season and a tradition I'm already excited to see continue in the years to come.

House Updates

House swimmin

By, IAN LEE

The stands were filled with anticipation as the Inter-House Swimming Competition was recently held at the Epsom College swimming pool. Many swimmers had participated on this very day, eager to show off their swimming prowess and many spectators had attended in hopes of seeing some of their friends compete.

The races kicked off with the juniors swimming laps along with the accompaniment of loud music, the bright, vibrant colours of the T-shirts and waving flags of the six houses and the deafening roar of the crowd. Another crowd of swimmers began to gather around the sides of the pool to ready themselves. Suddenly, the races began to pick up the pace and swimmers began to look more and more competitive. Races went by faster as the cheering grew louder.

Eventually, Mr Miller called my name and I had to come up onto the diving platform. Surprisingly, no anxious thoughts have rushed to my head despite the immense pressure of being the only Year 11 representative for Propert. Upon swimming the first few strokes after diving, I realised that my competitors swam much faster than expected and I found it hard to muster enough energy to keep up with their pace. Throughout the event, I found myself coming in second place multiple times. At first, it was frustrating but as I competed in more races, I realised that perseverance matters just as much as skill to finish first. In the end, this competition has given many competitors, including myself, motivation to train to become a stronger and faster swimmer.





House basketball

By, SKY WONG

This year, the House Basketball competition was an event that highlighted skill, teamwork, and determination. The excitement started long before the games, with players spending hours practicing and preparing for the big day. Everyone feels the buzz as the competition gets closer, building up the spirit of each house. On the court, every moment is exciting. Players show quick moves, strong passes, and brave shots, giving their best effort. Each play is a challenge, with teams showing solid defense, great teamwork, and impressive individual moments that keep everyone watching. Layups, three-pointers, and tough rebounds show how much effort the players put in to help their teams win. Every house in this competition displayed strong teamwork, sharp plays, and solid defenses. Besides that, the audience too, played an important part in the competition, bringing energy and support to the game. Every point scored gets loud cheers, and housemates shout encouragement that helps the players push harder. The crowd's excitement makes the event even more special. This competition is more than just about winning, it's about the fun, unity, and school spirit shared by everyone. The cheers, hard work, and great moments on the court made this year's house basketball competition an event to remember.

By, ELLIE JUN

Global Events

KOREA'S NEW MARTIAL LAWS



South Korea is currently going through a large political crisis. On December 3rd 22:27 at local time, Yoon suk-yeol, the president of South Korea stated through television that he was imposing martial law nationwide. He reasoned that the opposition party is currently doing "anti-state activities" and is cooperating with North Korea's communists to destroy the country.
This declaration of martial law caused all political activities to be suspended. Freedom of speech was restricted and the press was under control of the government.

Martial law
Martial law is declared by the president when there are emergencies happening in the country such as rebellion or war, the time when public safety cannot be preserved. It allows the military to substitute the civilian government and have unlimited authority to make and enforce laws. The martial law can happen only under the parliament's agreement.

South Korea previously went through martial law 9 times, which all led to the dictatorship of presidents. The martial law announced by president Yoon disturbed the peace and democracy of the country that was maintained over 45 years.

The end of martial law
The martial law was ended by the National Assembly of Korea. Even though there were armies and police guarding around the parliament not to let anyone inside, members of parliament entered the building successfully; some with help of citizens and others even climbed over the fence. The martial law army tried to stop them afterwards, however every entrance and windows were already blocked and defended. The 190 members inside passed the resolution for the president to lift martial law. This process was done under 6 hours, showing how fast and desperate they were.

Following consequences
Many politicians, experts and citizens believe that martial law was declared to defend the president himself from political attacks. The president was accused of treason and his approval rate dropped to 13%- the lowest in the entire world. Millions of people are protesting for the impeachment of the president all over the nation.

The martial law also had an impact on other things. The exchange rate of won and dollar dropped drastically and numbers of countries were not accepting won for exchange. The military discharge was postponed temporarily, which caused even more hate for the president.





By, LEAH KIMURA

Global Events

LUIGI MANGIONE, SHOT

UnitedHealthcare CEO's Death

Brian Thompson, the CEO of UnitedHealthcare, was fatally shot outside a luxury hotel in midtown manhattan on December 4 in what has been described as a premeditated attack. The alleged shooter, 26-year-old software developer Luigi Mangione, was arrested in Pennsylvania days later after a Mcdonald's worker called it in and will face charges including first-degree murder. Investigators have been led to believe the attack as the three bullets were found to have inscriptions - delay, deny, depose - phrases widely known as critics towards the health insurance industry including companies like United Healthcare. Law enforcement sources say this may be a reference to the "three D's of insurance" - tactics used by companies to reject payment claims by patients.

Brian Thompson, 50, was a prominent figure in the healthcare insurance industry as the chief executive officer of one of the largest insurance providers in the United States. However over recent years, since he gained control, his company has gained public criticism for allegations of unethical practices and people claiming how the company denied claims and refused to provide compensation for medical bills, leading to outrage and dueling further hatred for the healthcare system. This incident has sparked debates about the inadequacies surrounding the healthcare system and how private insurance companies in the US are only profit-driven leading to further discussions of the reform needed in the future.

Suspect and arrest

The suspect, Luigi Mangione, is a 26 man originally from Maryland was born to a wealthy and prominent family having been sent to a prestigious private school before graduating as valedictorian and attending an Ivy League school. According to friends he seemed to have 'everything going for him' raising questions about his true motives and intentions. Friends and acquaintances of Mangione have been left stunned following his arrest, claiming they 'never expected him to act out violently' saying it was completely out of character for him.

While his motive is still unclear, and he is not a recorded customer of United Healthcare, people alleged after a surfing accident from his time in Hawaii and his debilitating back pain from the incident his views of the medical care system has significantly changed, perhaps leading him to resent individuals like Thompson.

December 9th - On monday after a Mcdonald's worker in Altoona, Pennsylvania called 911 to report a sighting of the UHC CEO killer, police quickly apprehended him and claimed he was in possession of a 'gun, bullets, multiple fake IDs and cash'. Mr Mangione also had a handwritten document that expressed "ill will" towards corporate America and included writings such as "frankly, these parasites had it coming", according to police.

Public reaction and support for Mangione

Public opinion has been mixed on Thompson's death. Although many people have expressed their condolences for his family, there has been an apparent outpouring of compassion for Mangione on the internet. Social media platforms have developed into platforms for people to share their own experiences with inadequate healthcare coverage, financial difficulties, and claim denials. Mangione has become a reluctant symbol of frustration with the American healthcare system for some because of his alleged crime. Maybe people have dealt with similar difficulties regarding insurance agencies and the healthcare system, causing people all over the nation to share their support and sympathy for Mangione. He has also gained national attention for his good looks with people all over making 'edits' of him, he has successfully captured the attention of many, a new heartthrob in the making?



Significance of incident

Frequently criticized by the public, UnitedHealthcare has been the subject of legal action and accusations of unethical behavior, including refusing care to elderly people. Although the company promised to fully cooperate with authorities and offered condolences to Thompson's family, the event has sparked calls for major reform in the healthcare industry.

The murder has brought to light long-standing resentment towards the healthcare sector, which many believe puts profits before people. The attack has become a focal point for conversations about healthcare reform as to its symbolic aspect and its direct criticism of company practices. Sympathy for Mangione and public sorrow over Thompson's passing highlight how urgently fundamental changes must be made.

The future: looking forward

Luigi Mangione's trial will be remembered as a significant event, and the outcome is unpredictable where Luigi could either end up a free man or on death row. After facing court in Pennsylvania he is expected to be extradited to New York where he will face charges of first degree murder among others, something his lawyers hope to avoid. He has also recently hired a new attorney, the former chief assistant district attorney of NY, who is interestingly married to Sean 'Diddy' Combs' attorney.

Beyond the judicial system, Thompson's murder has raised awareness of healthcare reform. The incident highlights widespread public discontent with actions believed to be putting profit before patient care. The tragedy might serve as a catalyst for legislators and activists to demand more government-led healthcare solutions, increased transparency, and stronger rules for insurance firms. As the trial progresses, it may act as a catalyst for structural reform, rekindling pressing discussions on corporate accountability and equity in the American healthcare system.

Global Events

By, JUN HONG GOH

SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR

The Syrian Civil War, now over a decade old, has left an everlasting mark on the global landscape. What began as part of the broader Arab Spring protests in 2011 against President Bashar al-Assad's regime quickly escalated into a multifaceted conflict involving multiple international actors, rebel groups, and extremist organizations.

Initially, the uprising was driven by demands for political freedom, economic opportunity, and an end to corruption. However, the Assad government's harsh crackdown on protesters led to widespread violence, transforming peaceful demonstrations into armed rebellion. The conflict drew in various factions, including the Free Syrian Army, Islamist groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, and later, ISIS, which declared a caliphate over parts of Syria and Iraq.
Foreign intervention soon complicated the war's dynamics. Russia backed Assad with military support, while the United States, Turkey, and various Gulf states supported different opposition groups. This international involvement turned the civil war into a proxy conflict, with geopolitical interests overshadowing the original grievances of the Syrian people.







The human toll has been catastrophic. Estimates suggest hundreds of thousands have been killed, with millions more displaced, leading to the largest refugee crisis since World War II. Cities like Aleppo, Homs, and Damascus have been scarred by relentless bombing, chemical weapon attacks, and sieges.

By the late 2010s, the Assad regime, bolstered by Russian and Iranian support, regained control over most of the country, though pockets of resistance persisted. The war has severely damaged Syria's infrastructure, economy, and social fabric, leaving a legacy of trauma and division.

As of now, while the intensity of the conflict has waned, the war's end remains elusive, with ongoing skirmishes, foreign occupation in parts of the country, and a humanitarian crisis that continues to demand international attention. The path to peace, reconciliation, and rebuilding in Syria seems fraught with challenges, highlighting the enduring scars of this brutal conflict.

Global Events

By, Dylan

Wicked's Influence on Media

The recently released film "Wicked" has proved itself to be a cultural phenomenon. Based on Gregory Maguire's Novel titled "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West", the film is a remake of its original 2003 debut, following the events prior to Dorothy's arrival in the land of Oz. Starring huge names such as Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo, Wicked has managed to permeate social media culture. With immense fan engagement, the film is allowing Broadway to reach new audiences.

Continuing its Broadway legacy, Wicked's remake has won seventeen awards across the Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Circle, Eddy and Grammy awards. Its story addresses themes of empowerment, individuality and friendship, making it relatable to almost any age group - a probable factor to its enormous success. A further example of its success is the fact that the film can be enjoyed by anyone - whether you are a long term fan of Wicked or someone who has never heard of it before, you can enjoy it.

Beyond its relatability, the film has also produced songs that have taken the media by storm. "Defying Gravity" and "For Good" are profound examples which have become resounding anthems of resilience and change, sparking numerous TikTok trends. Particularly "Defying Gravity" has taken over TikTok, where users try to recreate scenes from the film whether it be the vocals, choreography or riffs.

Other platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest are also flooding with Wicked content, namely memes, artwork and other creative tributes to the film's characters. Official Wicked accounts on these platforms share engaging behind-the-scenes footage, cast announcements, rehearsal clips, anniversary celebrations and many more. A major example is the #Wicked20 tag to commemorate its 20th anniversary, allowing fans from all over the globe to come together and celebrate its legacy. This content keeps the Wicked community engaged and has allowed it to grow even faster.

This remake also acts as a doorway for younger, and more diverse audiences into the world of Broadway, and the virality of Wicked content has spread this idea to individuals who might otherwise never visit a theatre. Social media in general has created so much noise around Wicked that almost anyone feels a sense of urgency to watch it.



The success of Wicked has allowed Broadway's influence to extend beyond just word of mouth and the Broadway stage. The timeless theme of the film is paralleled by its ability to captivate generations of fans worldwide, even in a modern era dominated by social media.

By the epsom magazine team.