



The Hellgate Lance

Student-Run Mural Contest Aims to Bring Color to Hellgate's Hallways

Will Hansen
Editor

Hellgate is renowned as Missoula's most artistically gifted high school, and our hallways are a testament to that title; filled with a rich and diverse artists' portfolio of murals from throughout Hellgate's history, murals are just something the city's oldest high school does well.

Murals bring color, inspiration, and school spirit to the halls every day, and can even bring more complicated issues into the minds of high schoolers who otherwise wouldn't consider them. Recently, a student-led project is aiming to bring a new mural to an otherwise

colorless corner of Hellgate. Where some just see a blank wall near the choir room, junior class vice-president Leo Westenfelder sees a blank canvas.

"The idea just kind of came to me one day sitting in Student Government class," said Westenfelder, who's currently serving his first term as a part of Student Gov. "The idea" aspires to fill a section of wall in the third-floor English and choir hallway, just at the top of the stairs, with a student-created mural. The hallway, and areas around it, are completely devoid of any kind of artwork despite being fairly high traffic sections of the school with tall, blank walls.

Westenfelder said he got 11 submissions from Hellgate students of all grade levels. Contestants each painted a smaller mock-up representation of their mural, and these mock-ups were displayed at a community art show at the Zootown Arts Community Center. "The community could come and donate to vote on the pieces," said Westenfelder.

Additionally, the student body voted on which piece they wanted to see in the halls through a Google Form in Office Hours.

"The piece with the most votes will become the mural in the halls, and that piece's corresponding artist will paint it," said Westenfelder. He also said donations from the ZACC art show will fund the student artists' materials, and contribute to a small prize fund.

"We'll be announcing the winner to the whole school on Feb. 24, most likely through the Hellgate Happenings," said Westenfelder. Votes from the Zacc



Sabine Glaser's submission addresses the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women. Photo by Will Hansen.

show will be combined with student body votes to pick the winning mural, but Westenfelder said that community votes will be weighted "between five and ten times" more.

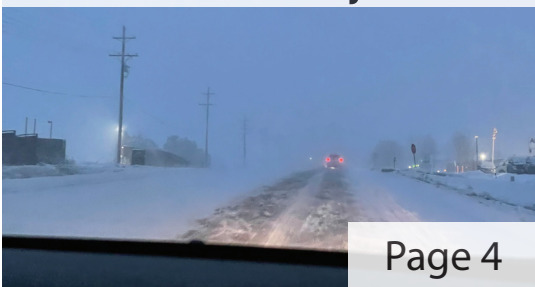
When the painting process actually starts will depend on which student-artist wins and decisions by administration. Westenfelder thinks most of the painting will happen not during school hours, but the mural will most likely affect student traffic in that hallway in one way or another.

No matter which submission is picked by students and community, Hellgate's newest mural will bring both color and student representation to the walls of our school. The project is a creative way to fill a space that has been blank for far too long.



Ava Cundy's piece would bring an abundance of color to the third floor hallway. Photo by Will Hansen.

Snow Days

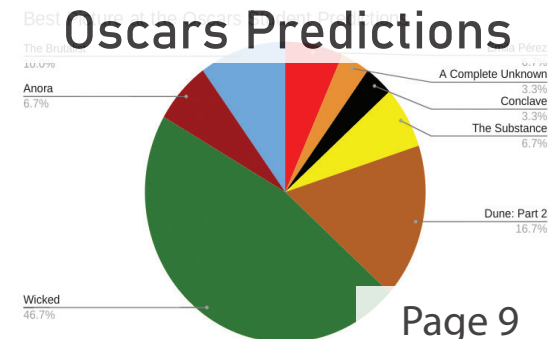


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Class Cup



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How Teachers and Students Feel About Ever-Changing Phone Policy

Eleanor Billingsley
Reporter

On Feb. 6 MCPS had a board meeting where they discussed phones in classrooms, and whether stricter measures needed to be taken. They overall came to the consensus that a more strict policy needed to be implemented. As of now they have taken away teacher discretion in the classroom until they can come up with a more firm plan.

Taking away teacher discretion has led to several new changes in classrooms. There is a noticeable increase of teachers who are enforcing the phones in caddie. This also has also resulted in teachers unable to let students use phones for easier access and certain apps related to the class. One example of this is in the math department. Due to lack of funds the math department has a minimum number of calculators for students to use. Before the policy students were allowed to put their phones into Desmos Test Mode. Because the majority of students at Hellgate have phones they would use them, while those that don't have phones would use the calculators.

This new more rigid phone policy would also put teachers in the position to have to police phones. "Being a phone police is not my dream job and it's something that we have to do," said a teacher. During a staff meeting with all of the staff at hellgate Principal Juddson Miller repeatedly told them that this wasn't going to be a part of their job. This has clearly not been the case and many teachers have had to "police" around students about phones. There are several staff who are worried about how this job will increase with this new phone policy.

The staff aren't the only ones who have grown increasingly tired with this ever-changing phone policy. From the beginning there has been an inconsistency in how things are done in classrooms. Some teachers force students to put phones in caddies while others simply have them put it in their bags, "able to keep them if the teacher can't see them. Only two teachers have us do it," said sophomore Camille Cellier. The talk of a stricter phone policy has many annoyed and confused as to why it's even necessary. However one teacher said, "I have seen a great decrease in students on their phones from last year to this year."

So what do students think would be a good middle ground? "If someone's on their phone and they get asked to put it away, that seems totally fair to me. But maybe Making it a bit more individual could be better instead of having a blanket solution

that isn't very effective", Cellier said. This could be a great solution to reduce the amount of "policing" that teachers are being forced to do as well as put an end to the constant changing of the phone policies.

Classes might never be fully rid of phones, but the previous method had been working a lot better with reducing the amount of phone usage in classes. Changing it could lead to many more questions and problems as the year continues.



These are a few students phones as well as the phone caddies that are seen in teachers classrooms
(Photos by Eleanor Billingsley)

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AI Affects Environment

Quinn Stromberg Reporter

Artificial intelligence has existed since the 1950s, but it has been developing rapidly over the last few years due to faster computers, satellites, the

internet, and increasing amounts of data being collected by sensors. Since these developments have occurred so recently, we're still in the early stages of understanding and adjusting to life with AI. We don't know the full extent of the harm it can cause, nor do we know the extent to which it can aid us.

In 2018, the University of Columbia uploaded an article titled "Artificial Intelligence—A Game Changer for Climate Change and the Environment." The piece is a glowing review of the ways that AI helps the environment due to its ability to detect patterns in data, majorly discussing Microsoft's AI for Earth program, which was launched in 2017. The program aims at using artificial intelligence to address global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity, and water quality/availability. Microsoft supports organizations working on environmental projects through funding and access to technology. Their AI models can help predict climate patterns, as well as doing things like wildlife monitoring which can help prevent poaching and monitor animal behavior.

There is hope that AI can do all this and more in the future, though research suggests that the more it does, the more the environment takes the hit anyway. The electronics in data centers where AI deployments take place are made of raw materials and rare elements. These centers are also large consumers of water and need lots of energy to keep

up with their complex electronics. This is bad for two reasons: One, water is already scarce in many parts of the world, and AI data centers worldwide are nearing the amount of water consumption as the country of Denmark, which has a population 6 million people; and two, in most places, this energy the data centers need is still coming from the burning of fossil fuels.

It's an uphill battle. Every good thing that AI does for the environment is matched with a spur of greenhouse gas emissions and electric waste, and yet, it's still not our biggest concern.

The problem is that when approaching the subjects of AI and climate change, we are completely in the dark. We don't know the full effect of

climate change, nor the effect of AI on it, which makes it difficult to know the right way to handle it.

That's why it's important to educate ourselves on our own usage of artificial intelligence. As high school students, we hear varying opinions from our teachers, parents, and peers about AI, specifically the notorious ChatGPT. What few people seem to understand is that ChatGPT emits 8.4 tons of carbon dioxide a year, which is more than twice the amount that a single person does. Every

question you type into the ChatGPT search bar uses 2.9 Wh (watt-hour) of electricity to process it, which is nearly 10 Google searches.

Aside from never using ChatGPT again, which won't do anything to combat the 1 billion queries the AI model processes daily, individuals can't do much to mitigate its environmental impact, though it is a good thing to be conscious of as you're going about your internet browsing. Pushing cloud processors to transition to renewable energy sources and improving awareness on the subject is the only way to target this problem at the source and diminish its environmental impacts before we inevitably enter uncharted territory.



Site in Northeast Louisiana where Meta is planning to build an artificial intelligence optimized data center using 100% clean and renewable energy

MCPS Snow Day Policies Put People at Risk

Rowan Hull
Reporter

You are more likely to see a polar bear at Hellgate than have a snow day. That may seem like a joke but it's really starting to feel that

way. The week of Feb. 5, every district in Montana issued a snow day because of dangerous outside conditions, but not MCPS. Multiple people had scary experiences driving to school that day with reported crashes. It was snowing heavily with wind chill almost in the negatives.

This is not the first time something like this has happened during the 12 years I've been at school. Last year there was a day where without wind chill it was -16 degrees outside. People who had to wait for the bus were freezing at the stops but school was not canceled. In all four years of high school the only time I've had something resembling a snow day was when the pipes at the school froze during sophomore year and they sent us home an hour or two early because there wasn't any heat.

The only two snow days I can really remember happened in elementary school and middle school. Maybe they think that high schoolers are just able to tough it out, but I feel like when all other schools are having snow days with less snow than we are getting, maybe it's time to reconsider how snow days work.

I think that whoever is in charge of deciding what days are snow days needs to consider the fact that most students drive or walk to school, and also that a lot of our students are coming from places like East Missoula, Bonner, even Patomac and Clinton. Driving in such horrible conditions on the highway is not a safe thing whatsoever, Missoula county even issued an emergency travel only warning and the school brushed it aside.

Seamus Campbell, a junior at Hellgate said, "Driving to school from Frenchtown is usually a very unenjoyable time, it's very stressful having to drop speeds from 80 to 45 mph and also the fear of how cold it will be if you crash. I think we definitely should have had a snow day last week."

Another junior at Hellgate, Milo Sherman said "I have to drive super slow and wake up much earlier than normal. Driving on the highways is also very dangerous because it's much higher risk of injury during a crash." He lives in Bonner West Side Village, east of Missoula.

A senior from the same area, Mattias Remes said, "I feel unsafe when there is a lot of snow and I have to wake up early before the roads are plowed to get to school. The 12-minute drives can turn into a 30 minute drive. Sometimes I stay home from school because neither me nor my parents want to take the risk"

Finally Jackson Tuholske, a senior from Arlee said, "Driving 40 minutes to school can be unsafe. Long trips increase the chance of accidents, especially if the weather is bad or if there is heavy traffic. Being on the road for so long

can also make you tired, which makes it harder to drive carefully. If there is an emergency or a breakdown, it takes longer to get help."

The question they need to ask is whether one day of school is really worth risking the lives of many people. At a certain point it becomes less about the idea of not having the day off school but being genuinely scared to drive to school. I would say I am a pretty confident winter driver and I was pretty scared. Overall I think there needs to be a change in the way MCPS handles harsh winter conditions and really take a step back to think about how it affects other people. I understand education is an essential part of our lives but I'm not willing to risk my life for one day of classes that could easily be made up online like how most other schools around the state do.



Snowy roads with winter conditions can endanger high school drivers. Photo courtesy of Faith You.

Trump's First Actions in Congress are like Nothing Seen Before

Violet Pehan
Reporter

The setting is the US Capitol, in Washington DC. 220,000 people have flocked to the west front of the Capitol Building to see President Trump get sworn into his second term. Dressed in distinguished dresses and suits, politicians, reporters, and civilians alike will watch intently as a new era of presidency begins.

On Jan. 20, 2025 Donald Trump was sworn in as President of the United States. He has now been actively running our country for a little under one month and in that time he has proposed an extreme of amount executive orders. They can be clearly broken up into six categories, showing what the President intends to focus on this term.

The first category can be labeled as government funding, and Trump passed four different orders around this, many of which include decreasing government funds. The second can be seen as cracking down in immigration laws, and a whopping total of six new orders has been passed. These laws range from suspending the refugee resettlement program to attempting to implement birth-right citizenship. The third and possibly most detrimental to the economy is the tariff orders. Trump has set tariffs for Canada, Mexico (not to be confused with the Gulf of Mexico, or should I say Gulf of America as our new President has declared), and China. While all these laws may seem extreme, they have not yet reached the level of "creativity" we see in the others, so let's take a look at those.

Trump has withdrawn from the World Health Organization and the Paris Treaty, two incredibly important organizations that the US helps to provide financial and political support to, along with the fact that they are about reaching our climate and world health goals as a planet. Going even farther President Trump has pardoned over 1,600 domestic terrorists who attacked the Capitol on Jan. 9. Paired with this order Trump shortened the sentences for the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, two white supremacist groups based in the US. The last and most notably unusual executive order was the fact that the US will only recognize male and female as acceptable pronouns and gender identity's, and not register passports to transgender citizens.

This is not a tragic play about the 1930's, nor is it an SNL skit. This is the reality that the US faces for the next four years. Trump stated in his inauguration speech that, "We will be a nation like no other, full of compassion, courage, and exceptionalism. Our power will stop all wars and bring a new spirit of unity to a world that has been angry, violent, and totally unpredictable." Yet in order to do this he is pardoning thousands of domestic terrorists, and showing teaspoons of compassion to anyone of a separate gender identity.

The democracy of our country is at risk. A president who passed orders that restrict the right to identity and livelihoods is the opposite of the way the US is supposed to function. The right to bodily autonomy has been of great importance over the last few years, with the overturning of Roe V. Wade and the loss of federal rights to abortion and lifesaving emergency surgeries. These past decisions have shown without a doubt the good of citizens that don't profit from the greater agenda are disregarded.

Unless you are a billionaire who will turn out your pockets and morals to support the mass amount of laws being passed, you are of no necessity. A bank doesn't need its customers to be financially comfortable, they need them to be

reliant on those who are gaining from their debts. Sound familiar? A government that is full of only those in the upper class does not need the health of the people, only the patriotic devotion and the need for a sense of safety and financial support, provided by the government, and solely the government.



President Trump's new executive orders will have extreme ripple effects that are yet to be determined. Photo courtesy of the White House.

Hellgate's Class Cup: Keeping Spirit Alive in a Year with No Goat

Will Hansen
Editor

When a major tragedy occurs, it's common to remember the exact spot you were standing, what you were doing, and who you were with. When Hellgate devastatingly lost last year's Golden Goat spirit competition, our student government remembers exactly where they were: on the basketball court of the Adams Center surrounded by their stunned and silent peers as Sentinel lifted Gertie high. They remember the feelings of shock, and the realization that next year there would be no Goat week at Hellgate High School. And while some would sit back and do nothing, at that moment, Student Government decided to make a change.

This year, our Hellgate Student Government brought us a new, weeklong spirit tradition: the Class Cup. Grades competed against each other throughout the week to earn points and prove they were the most spirited class at Hellgate. This creative new tradition was an effort to keep spirit alive in Hellgate's first year without the Golden Goat competition.



On Tuesday, attendance at Hellgate's home doubleheader basketball game against Big Sky was tracked. We saw the biggest student section of the season (so far), with the student body showing up in the theme, Black Out.



Thursday, the pie eating contest, arguably the best part of this year's Class Cup, went down in the entryway. One contestant from each grade was tasked with eating as many mini pies as they could in two and a half minutes. The sophomores ended up taking the win, with Case Procacci eating the most pies.



Wednesday brought us a Hellgate favorite: Freezin' for a Reason. Students could donate money to see their favorite peers or teachers dunked in ice cold water, which combined with the snowy weather and frigid temps made the event all the more daunting.



Friday was the assembly, also known as the "Class Cup Tournament of Champions," according to Junior Class President Gus Darty. Teams participated in dodgeball and shopping cart jousting, and the Junior class was crowned this year's victors.

Photos courtesy of Will Hansen, Elliotte Banziger, Leo Westenfelder, Kate Hansen, and Jill Derryberry



Hellgate Sophomore Lauris Reintjes Makes Sculptures to Bring Awareness to Animal Endangerment

Kingston Kimpell
Reporter

Artist Lauris Reintjes is a sophomore at Hellgate who was welcomed to display his realistic animal sculptures at Confluence in Missoula on the First Friday of

February.

Reintjes recently started making his sculptures out of paper mache clay. Paper mache clay is a mixture of blended up tissue and toilet paper, drywall joint compound and glue or whatever sticky stuff he can find. Many of Reintjes' sculptures are made from other materials such as polymer clay, faux fur, felt, but he said most are just made from papers that have been taped together.

As Reintjes is making animal sculptures, he listens to animal podcasts. In his art there are many issues regarding endangered species and extinction, and below every sculpture there was a page that touched on what the animal was and how it may be endangered.

Reintjes' life is full of animals. At night he is reading books on animals to gather more information about them. "I have a list of quite literally thousands of animals that I want to make, but they're all at risk of extinction."

Without the pressure and consumption of school, Reintjes is in the studio from as soon as he wakes up until 9pm. In a week with no school it takes him about five to six full days of sculpting to finish a project, but with school it takes him around two and a half weeks.

Reintjes lives in the old house of Nancy Erickson, who was a famous textile artist in Missoula. His family moved here specifically for the studio, which Reintjes shares with his father who does geometric paintings. His mom is a ceramic artist, so his life is quite literally surrounded by art.

Reintjes' artwork is full of life, shocking every viewer when they find out it is a paper mache sculpture. Only words of astonishment come to my mind whenever I see something Reintjes has created.

Though I enjoyed every piece, my favorite piece was the giant clam (*tridacna gigas*). The clam's situation is very underrepresented in the media. Most media on the giant clam leads to false senses of security involving the clam. The species has faced a population decline of 80% over the past century, which is very abnormal. The human race has traded the abundance of giant clams for the short term reward of harvesting them.



Artist Lauris Reintjes.



Reintjes' giant clam sculpture (*tridacna gigas*).

I found this story to be very compelling and am so proud to hear that there is an artist who cares so deeply about the lives of such endangered species.

The inside of the giant clam is painted with an orange and red gradient and blue dots adding an abstract and playful feature to the piece. The outershell is crazy realistic and a true showcase of Reintjes' skill sets.

This showcase of Reintjes' art was unbelievably compelling and I can only look forward to seeing more of his art at future shows across town. I recommend you check out more of his work whenever he is having a show.



Oscar Nominations Recognize Variety of Films and Actors

Elliott Banziger
Editor

The 2025 award season is in full

swing, with the Golden Globes, Grammys, and many other award shows already having happened. One of the most anticipated shows, the Oscars, will premiere on Mar. 2, Nominations came out on Jan. 23, presented by Bowen Yang and Rachel Sennott, and were full of some incredible names.

There are ten films nominated for Best Picture: Emilia Pérez, A Complete Unknown, Conclave, Nickel Boys, I'm Still Here, The Substance, Dune: Part Two, Wicked, Anora, and The Brutalist. The Academy seems to have a lot of love for Emilia Pérez as it has 13 nominations, but Wicked, The Brutalist, and Conclave are also considered front-runners by many.

The nominations for Best Actor are Ralph Fiennes (Conclave, 3rd nomination), Sebastian Stan (The Apprentice, 1st nomination), Timothée Chalamet (A Complete Unknown, 2nd nomination), Colman

Domingo (Sing Sing, 2nd nomination), and Adrian Brody (The Brutalist, 2nd nomination). The two front-runners for this category are Timothée Chalamet and Adrian Brody.

For Best Actress the nominees are Fernanda Torres (I'm Still Here, 1st nomination), Demi Moore (The Substance, 1st nomination), Karla Sofía Gascón (Emilia Pérez, 1st nomination), Cynthia Erivo (Wicked, 3rd nomination), and Mikey Madison (Anora, 1st nomination). The race seems to be between Demi Moore and Fernanda Torres, with Moore having a slight lead.

The Best Director nominations include Coralie Fargeat (The Substance), James Mangold (A Complete Unknown), Sean Baker (Anora), Jaques Audiard (Emilia Pérez), and Brady Cobert (The Brutalist). Notably missing is Jon Chu for Wicked, but many people believe that he will be nominated for Wicked: For Good next year. Brady Cobert is favored by many to win, with James Mangold falling close behind.

In the Best Supporting Actress category are Zoe Saldana (Emilia Pérez, 1st nomination), Felicity Jones (The Brutalist, 2nd nomination), Monica Barbaro (A Complete Unknown, 1st nomination), Ariana Grande (Wicked, 1st nomination), and Isabella Rossellini (Conclave, 1st nomination). Zoe Saldana is favored to win, but it is considered such a close race that no one is really sure.

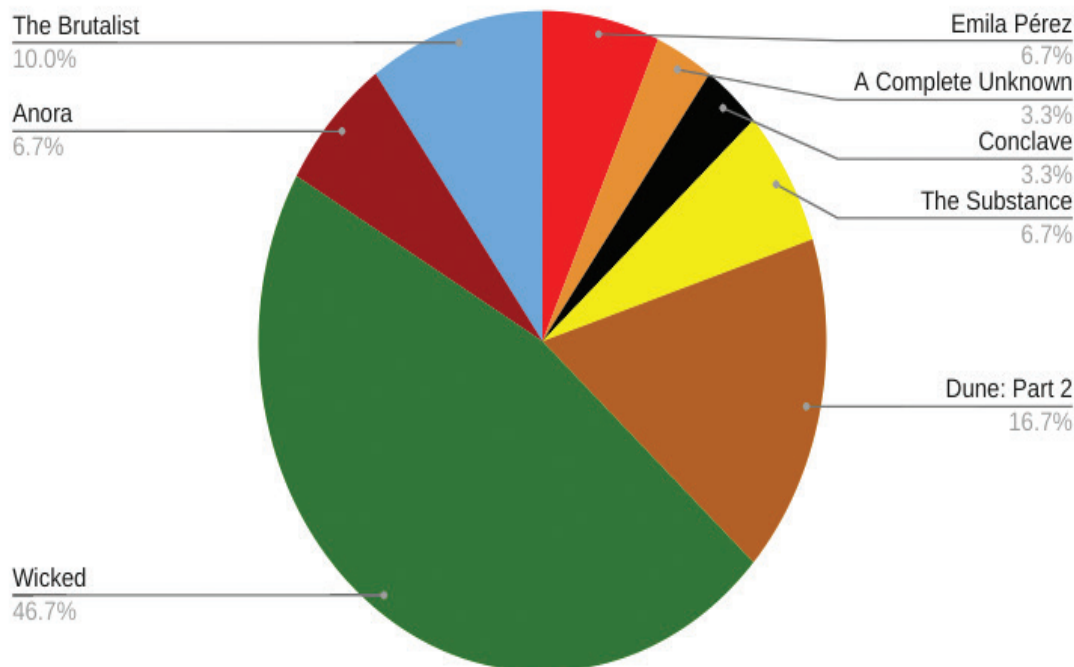
For Best Supporting Actor the nominees are Guy Pearce (The Brutalist, 1st nomination), Yuriy Borisov (Anora, 1st nomination), Edward Norton (A Complete Unknown, 4th nomination), Kieran Culkin (A Real Pain, 1st nomination), and Jeremy Strong (The Apprentice, 1st nomination). This race seems to be between Keiran Culkin and Edward Norton.

2024 was a stacked year for movies and many incredible films were nominated for the Academy Awards, though these nominations weren't without scrutiny. Many people were upset about the lack of nominations for Challengers, which was very popular during the beginning of the year and had glowing reviews in many categories such as Best Original Score and Best Leading Actress for Zendaya. The public was also upset about the numerous nominations for Emilia Pérez, due to the controversy with the making of the movie, the use of AI for both acting and vocal editing, the racist/xenophobic tweets from the lead actress, and the general foul taste the movie left in many viewers' mouths.

Hellgate students put in their two cents about the Oscar predictions, with Wicked coming out as the clear winner. Many students hadn't seen or heard of many of the nominated movies, but those who did had strong opinions: "Not Anora, that movie was super weird," "Definitely Wicked, that movie was incredible," "Dune: Part 2, it was so crazy to watch," "Nobody better pick Emilia Pérez, honestly, that one sucked." The Knights overall thought it was a great year for movies.

This year's Oscars are bound to be very entertaining and interesting, even with the lack of live performances at the show (though there are rumors of Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande opening with a Wicked medley). There are many incredible films nominated and it will be a riveting race to see who comes out on top.

Best Picture at the Oscars Student Predictions



Director David Lynch Dead at 78

Amity Rogalski
Reporter

David Lynch, critically acclaimed surrealist director and born Missoulian died on Jan. 15 of this year due to his ongoing struggle with Emphysema. He is best known for his work with the iconic television show, *Twin Peaks*, taking place in a town outside of Seattle, Washington, featuring an equally iconic diner that fans can still go and visit. He is also known for one of the most famous American films ever, *Eraserhead*, which is loved by fans of classic cinema and psychological surrealism. Among others are his widely regarded masterpieces; *Blue Velvet* and *Mulholland Drive*.

Lynch's family issued a public statement on Facebook on the day of his death, both sharing the tragic news to fans of his art and asking for privacy and respect for the mourning family in their hard times. In his legacy, he leaves three adult children and an incredible number of films that continue to inspire and entertain many.

David Lynch has had an incredible and unique impact on the world of film. The long running joke in the film world that it is impossible to understand a David Lynch film while watching it, has been both a comedic sentiment towards art that is deeply creative and an inspiration for viewers to try to reach deep inside of themselves to give these films a personal meaning. Lynch said that he did not like to explain his work to people. Not because he felt as though if it needs to be explained, it won't be fully understood, or that his targeted audience will understand his message implicitly. Rather, it came from his opinion on the true purpose of art and what it means to both the artist and the consumer. He believed that the purpose of the films that he created were for people to find meaning, projecting their own interpretations onto his work.

In the wake of his death, many Missoulians and world citizens alike find themselves rewatching films and interviews with Lynch. The Roxy has even gone as far as to host several David Lynch memorial screenings. Through the month of February, they are playing *Eraserhead*, *Blue Velvet*, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, *David Lynch: The Art of Life*, *Lost Highway*, and *Wild at Heart*. Both his film and video interviews bring a unique perspective to life that is extremely reflected in his art.

It is largely known that for the majority of his life, Lynch dedicated himself to the practice of transcendental meditation, which he practiced for several minutes during the day, twice a day, while repeating a mantra over and over again, out loud or silently. This form of meditation, rather than attempting to stop all thinking, welcomes the natural mental flow of thought without an attempt to control the focus. This is extremely tied to Lynch's work, which is focused on a flow of ideas without criticism in its early stages. They also paralleled one another with the degree of personal takeaway that they encourage, meaning very different things to very many different people. Lynch has expressed how improved he has felt since his dedication to it: "It's like pure gold

coming in from within and garbage going out," he said in an interview with CBS Sunday Morning after doing transcendental meditation for over 40 years. He has said that this form of meditation creates incredible inspiration in him.

Lynch is remembered, on top of his artistic ability, for his kindness and friendliness. He is remembered through his good friend and coworker Kyle MacLachlan, the actor that starred in many David Lynch films such as his role as special agent Dale Cooper in *Twin Peaks*, who in a memorial post on Instagram said, "What I saw in him was an enigmatic and intuitive man with a creative ocean bursting forth inside of him. He was in touch with something the rest of us wish we could get to. Our friendship blossomed on *Blue Velvet* and then *Twin Peaks* and I always found him to be the most authentically alive person I'd ever met."

Though the artist himself has died, the impact he left on the world certainly has not. He is a continuing inspiration to those who had known him personally, as well as those that encounter his art and films. His life was full of creativity and lessons that we can all pull from in our own experiences.



David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* is just one of his iconic works.

Hellgate's Speech and Debate Team Makes Us Proud at State

Violet Pehan
Reporter

Hellgate's debate team had an incredible victory at state the weekend of January 31.

Senior captains Julien Alviar

and Juliet Geilen won the state championship in their event Public Forum, which was a fitting ending to an amazing season.

When walking down the halls of Hellgate, you may stumble upon a case full of plaques, trophies, and awards near the language classrooms. These accomplishments are the product of the countless seasons of hard work that Hellgate Speech and Debate students have put in. The Speech and Debate season is a long one, lasting from October to February, and even longer if you go to Nationals.

Hellgate has been proving itself as one of the most accomplished schools in the debate competitions over the last few years with the help of head coach and beloved Hellgate Spanish teacher Connie Moothart, and debate coach Kail Hollander. They have helped us climb the ranks from being an uncompetitive force to a consistent first place winner, and a school that is recognized for its hard work and tight knit community of students and

coaches.

One of these students is Juliet Geilen, a senior here at Hellgate High School. She has been doing debate for all four years of her academic career, and is one the top debaters in Montana. Debate hasn't stayed the same for these last four years though, as Monatna and Hellgate's debate community has grown. "Debate has really grown over the past four years, especially as we gained more coaches and built a stronger community. It's been exciting to see more people get involved and push each other to improve," Geilen said.

This improvement can even be seen just over this last season. Hellgate's Speech and Debate team placed in the top three a whopping 33 times over seven tournaments, consistently proving their dedication and hard work while reaping the rewards.

Winning is something that feels good in any sport or activity, but especially considering all the work and time you put in. For Geilen, winning state felt like that cherry on top to complete an amazing last season. "I felt super lucky and grateful. It was the result of so much hard work, and it meant a lot to see that effort pay off!", Geilen said.

Hellgate Speech and Debate will continue to grow, both in size and competitiveness in the coming years, especially with the large number of seniors graduating and freshmen incoming. While it is always a sad occasion when friends and teammates graduate, both on a personal level and considering how much they have contributed to the team, it is also an opportunity to pass on the knowledge and experience that they have collected to underclassmen who will only continue to grow into themselves. Geilen shared the nuances of leaving, stating that, "I'll miss the people the most—my teammates, the late-night prep sessions, and all the weekends spent in random high schools. It's such a unique experience that's hard to replace."

Really, it is hard to replace. Speech and debate is like no other club or sport, both in its constant travel and just the basic requirements. Every weekend Hellgate Speech and Debaters travel all over the state to many different highschools to discuss and speak about a variety of extremely specific and complex topics, in order to return toting the title of a winner. It is hard to describe to anyone who hasn't experienced it firsthand, but that is a part of what makes the community so strong. Geilen states how lucky she feels to be a part of it, talking about how, "My favorite part of debate is learning about nuanced issues I wouldn't have explored otherwise. It's fascinating to dive deep into topics like recognizing a de facto African state or policies at the U.S.-Mexico border," she said.

Speech and Debate isn't quite finished yet though. They still have to travel to Whitefish the weekend of Feb. 14th to compete for National qualifiers. Wish your friends and classmates luck this weekend as they continue to prove Hellgate as a winning school.



Hellgate debate captains Julien Alviar and Juliet Geilen celebrate a win at the first tournament of the season.
Photo courtesy of Juliet Geilen

How Do You Keep Your Spirits Up in February?

Eleanor Billingsley & Violet Pehan
Reporters

Say What?!

February is one of the two months that have the largest amount of people with SAD or Seasonal Affective Disorder. SAD is common in places where you go months in cold sunless months, like Missoula in January and February. This is what Hellgate students and teachers do to cope over these dreary months!

Riley Taylor
(sophomore)

“I look at my dog.”



Vahn Theme
(freshman)

“Watching the Super Bowl, and knowing it’s the shortest month helps.”



Eric Ojala
(science teacher)

“Probably spending time outside golfing or hiking with [my] dog.”



Lucia Savoia
(sophomore)

“I like to go outside and ski a lot, hang out with my friends and make sure I get a lots of sunshine when there is some.”



Eli Hamitt
(senior)

“I revel in the cold weather that nobody else is willing to brave.”



Micheal Larsen
(English teacher)

“Getting outside. Skiing, hiking, running, meeting up with friends [and] playing board games.”

