

The Notre Dame Times

Notre Dame Academy - Spring 2025 - Issue 5

Spillin' the Tea with Maddy P!

By: Nora Bloom

Nora : When did you start playing basketball?

Madelyn : I started playing basketball when I was in 1st grade.

Nora : How is the season going so far?

Madelyn: The season is going very well. We recently found out that we made it to the playoffs!

Nora : What is the energy/ excitement level when you are playing?

Madelyn: I always get hyped before a game. I am always so excited when I get to play basketball with my team.

Nora : Do you play on a travel team?

Madelyn : No.

Nora: What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

Madelyn: My hopes and dreams for the future are to play basketball at a professional level, and to become an artist.

Nora: Do you plan on trying out for the high school team?

Madelyn: Yes.

Nora: What were the emotions at your eighth grade night?

Madelyn: I was really sad and emotional, but I was excited that I got to play with Addison, Bella, and Felicity all together for one of the last times.

Nora : Are you sad to be leaving NDA?

Madelyn : No, because now I can look back on memories with my friends, and make new memories with them in high school.

Nora : What High School will you be attending?

Madelyn : Mount Mercy Academy! GO MAGIC!

Your Best

By: Clara Bookhagen, 4th grade

If you always try your best, it is the best.
Always do your best in whatever you do,
And doing your best means you never stop trying.
Never stop doing your best just because
Someone didn't give you credit.
Do your best and forget the rest. You can't be
Perfect, no matter how hard you try, don't try
To be perfect only try your best at all times.
Doing your best is way more important
Than being the best or better than other people.
Doing your best looks different
Each day of your life. God loves you
Just the way you are right now and always!

Thank you to all of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders who submitted their original writing to the NDA Times. More student writing is featured throughout this issue!



Photo courtesy of Mr. Bartosik.

Magnificent Mac 'n Cheese (And Where to Find It)

By: Madelyn Martz

Throughout my younger years of being a child I didn't like mac and cheese (crazy I know), but after having it for the first time in a few years I unlocked a culinary door that I didn't know could be reopened. So, since that time I have tried mac and cheese from multiple restaurants and I've created a ranking list of the restaurants that I like to get mac and cheese from. Because I am so nice I am willing to show you my top three restaurants I believe have the best mac and cheese. So you better be thankful because these are top secret (not actually).

1. The Barrel Factory

Located at 65 Vandalia St, Buffalo, NY, The Barrel Factory holds the number one spot on my ranking. I would describe this mac and cheese (official name: Mac and Cheese) as creamy and flavorful. The mac and cheese is priced at \$10 (on the kids menu). There are also other food options at The Barrel Factory like: pretzel sticks, chicken wings, chicken fingers, french onion soup, and more.

Aside from food, the Barrel Factory also has history. The Barrel Factory was originally built in 1903 in Buffalo, NY. Within those years, The Barrel Factory was actually a barrel factory (named Quaker City Cooperage Co.) and was a barrel factory for decades. In the factory's prime, 4,000-6,000 barrels were made a day there. It was then renovated and purchased in 2015 and is now what we know today as The Barrel Factory. The Barrel Factory is very convenient because it is close to KeyBank Center, so you can eat there before going to a Sabres or Bandits game, a concert, an event, or comedy show.

2. Griffin Gastropub

The location I went to was 634 Main St, East Aurora, though there are other locations in the Western New York area. The Griffin Gastropub holds the No. 2 spot in my ranking. I would describe this dish of mac and cheese (official name: Smoked Gouda Shells & Cheese) to be creamy and cheesy. This dish is priced at \$21.00, which is high, but you get a big quantity of pasta. The cheese to noodle

ratio was definitely in my favour. The menu at the Griffin Gastropub also includes Thai Ramen, Beef on Weck, a lot of specialty burgers, Potstickers, and more.

Aside from being a restaurant, the Griffin Gastropub is also a brewery.

3. Jack Rabbit

Located at 1010 Elmwood Ave, Buffalo, NY, Jack Rabbit holds the No. 3 spot on my ranking. Jack Rabbit is a restaurant, sports bar, and music venue. If you like semi-loud places, this is the place for you. Jack Rabbit has live music nightly and separate rooms with different vibes. I don't believe this mac and cheese is still on their menu, which is a bummer, but I would describe it as delicious. I also got chicken on mine, which made it even better and the chicken was well cooked. Other options on the menu would include: Eggs Benedict, Loaded Breakfast Tots, Avocado Toast, Caesar Salad, and more. The atmosphere at Jack Rabbit is nice and when you are there at night it has a party vibe.

The location is nice because it is near the Richardson Olmsted Campus, which doesn't sound pleasant because it used to be a psychiatric center, but it is nice because the Holiday Market and Fall-iday Market was hosted outside the Richardson Olmsted Campus. This is/was convenient because you can shop at the markets and then come to Jack Rabbit for dinner or for an after-party.



In conclusion, I hope you use these reviews as an opportunity to get some quality mac and cheese. Even if you don't like mac and cheese or if it's unavailable, I hope this article introduces you to other restaurants around Buffalo. Use this information wisely. What are you still doing here? Go get yourself some mac and cheese!

Sonic Heroes Falls Short for this Gamer

By: Connor Prendergast

Sonic Heroes is a game released for the Gamecube, Playstation 2, Xbox, and Windows in 2003. But why am I telling you this? Because the game is so bad that it shouldn't be played by anyone. As a team of three Sonic characters, the player runs through large levels while collecting rings and defeating evil robots. In each team there is a run type, which is a character that can go fast and use the homing attack, a power type, which is slower than the run type but can use different moves more suited to combat, and a fly type, which can, well, fly. You may be asking, what's so bad about it? That sounds fun. I'm going to go through several integral parts of the game and explain to all of you why they are terrible and kindle so much rage within me.

Let's start with what's probably the best thing about the game, the graphics. It looks pretty good, the levels are very colorful and are able to match the aesthetic of the older titles for the Sega Genesis. The character models are a bit off from previous 3d titles, but as there are three characters rendered at all times, this is to be expected. Where the game doesn't look so good, however, are the cutscenes. Most of them are pre-rendered and had to be compressed beyond belief for the game to be able to play them, and the others aren't too much better. The voice acting is also pretty bad, some characters sound fine, but others are extremely whiny and most of the lines just make me cringe, especially when they're repeated MULTIPLE TIMES in the SAME LEVEL. You'll get tired of tails saying "Wow, my head's spinning" and "look at all those Eggman's robots" (I'd like to point out the terrible grammar).

Speaking of levels, there are two levels which share a similar theme in a row, and then a boss, similar to classic Sonic games. The level design is abhorrent, boring, with lackluster spectacle and setpieces which, again, repeat multiple times in a level. Did you just blow up a train? Do it again. Got shot out of a cannon? Do it again. Rode a rollercoaster? DO. IT. AGAIN. The levels are obnoxiously long, and if you get a game over you'll have to restart the whole thing. You'll be begging for a cutscene or something to break up the endless monotony of levels. Enemies also have health bars, meaning you'll have to hit them multiple times, which grinds the pacing into the ground. The worst part—there are two levels with a similar theme one after the other, making them extremely stale.



Nearly every move is extremely situational and can only be used to clear certain obstacles. Why is that? The light speed dash is used to dash along rings whenever they're in a line, which is quite useful in other 3d Sonic games, allowing you to gain speed in an instant. In this game it's barely ever used and when it is it's only ever to progress in the level, not to find hidden shortcuts. Triangle jump, a move allowing you to jump between walls if they're close enough, is almost always useless because when will there be two walls positioned to use this move? The two instances when the game tells you to use it, that's when, and never again, no hidden secrets, no shortcuts, nothing. There are numerous other examples of this. For example, the blue tornado feels like it should be an extremely effective move in combat, but it doesn't do any damage and only

stuns most enemies. Tails flies permanently and can't use any ground moves, which is kind of disappointing. His flying is really weird and he can hang in the air indefinitely, but can only move so far, and this distance is rather pitiful.

Nearly every level revolves around the same basic formula: introduce a gimmick, bombard the player with "puzzles" involving using a certain niche move, throw in a couple of "combat encounters" where you just spam a single powerful move, and then occasionally elaborate on that previously introduced gimmick. I'd like to ask you something, did that sound fun? Did my description of nearly every level in this game sound like a fun experience? I didn't think so.

So now you see why I despise this game so much and why I wrote this article. This was the first ever game that I gave up on, I thought it wasn't worth my time, and that's saying something. I have played games that people say are poorly designed, games people say are absurdly glitchy, but there has never been a game that I consider bad, except for this one. I think very highly of Donkey Kong 64, Super Mario Sunshine, Sonic adventure 1, and many others that people look down on. Playing Sonic Heroes doesn't even feel like playing a game, it feels like a chore, a slog to get through instead of a fun experience. If at any point during your reading of this article you thought to yourself "how bad can it be?" or "I'll try it out, it can't be that bad, can it?" I would like to say yes, it is that bad and I am urging you to never play it.

Easter Break Baking Challenge!

By: Mary Claire Trudell

Here is a fun and easy recipe to make with your family over Easter break! For our younger readers, you will need a grown-up to help you.

Rice Krispie Treats:

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 package (10 oz., about 40)JET-PUFFED Marshmallows
- OR
- 5-1/2 cupsJET-PUFFED Miniature Marshmallows
- 6 cups Rice Krispies® cereal

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat.
2. Add RICE KRISPIES® cereal (or any other cereal you like) Stir until well coated.
3. Using buttered spatula or wax paper evenly press mixture into a 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan coated with cooking spray. Cool. Cut into 2-inch squares. Best if served the same day.

Do You Remember When...

By Mary Claire Trudell

It seems like a lifetime ago since the last time the Sabres were in the playoffs. For some of us, it was (including me!) In 2011, these popular gadgets, movies, apps, and more were either brand new or did not even exist at all...

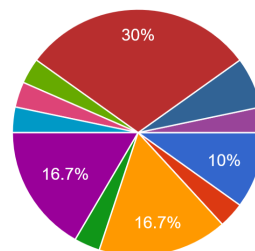


- Pinterest
- Duolingo
- FaceTime
- The Voice
- Uber
- Airbnb
- *The Hunger Games* Movies
- Netflix Originals
- Minecraft
- DoorDash
- Smartwatches
- iPads
- Snapchat
- Siri
- Instagram

Favorite Clothing Store in 2025

By: Ellie Barrett

Nike is the clear favorite in middle school! PacSun and American Eagle tied for second place. Where do you like to shop?



- Gap
- Lululemon
- American Eagle
- Hollister
- Pacsun
- Shein
- H&M
- Zara

8th Grade Trip to Riverworks

By: Allyson Ybarra

In early January, the 8th grade class went on a field trip to Riverworks ice rink. We ice skated, had hot cocoa, and had appetizing food. We left school around nine thirty. The weather was cold and somewhat snowy.

We got to the ice rink and waited to get our skates. Once we got our skates we headed to the rink! Some students also brought their own. We walked down a ramp to the rink, it was somewhat hard keeping balance walking down. We got to the rink and started skating!

Personally, I had a hard time skating because I haven't skated in a while, so I used the walker and used the wall for support. However, my friend Savannah Behr was learning well; Later on she'd skate without the wall.

After some time skating, some went to get some hot chocolate! The hot cocoa was very delicious and chocolaty. But, the downfall was that it cost about five dollars. Overall, it was very good!

Finally, when all the skating was finished we went into the dining hall and played some arcade games! There were claw machines, air hockey, ect. You would be able to play the games by purchasing a "Game Credit Card." There were different prices depending on how many credits you would want on the card. Aside from the games, there was also VR! VR was very popular for the students there.

Then, around twelve thirty, we had lunch! The very nice staff made us pizza (cheese or pepperoni) and boneless chicken with mild and regular flavor. They also provided veggies, chips, and soda.

Finally, it was time to head to school. We gathered and took a class photo. We arrived at around one fifty.

Overall, this ice skating trip was so fun! Even if you didn't skate or were too scared to, it was still a very fun and good time. This trip will be forever memorable for all of us! We can't wait for the next 8th grade trips!



NDA Times Student Writer, Allyson Ybarra (right) with her friend Savannah Behr (left) at River Works.



Pictured left to right: Tyler, Ryan D., Ryan S., and Bentley skating at River Works.



Pictured left to right: Leah, Aubrey, and Mia (Photos courtesy of Mr. Bartosik.)

Shovel Knight Treasure Trove: A Nostalgic Diamond in the Rough

By: David Corbett

In the modern era, video games are quite impressive, with high quality graphics. They're much more complex and exciting than older games, but sometimes, people are in the mood for something a little more...retro. All the way back in 2014, a small indie studio called "Yacht Club Games" created a concept for a game about a heroic hero on a daring quest to rescue a lost love from the control of an evil sorceress. His weapon of choice? A shovel. It may sound goofy, but the developers clearly understood that certain charm that older games had, and this objectively silly adventure was their way of replicating it. Coated with a layer of pixelated graphics and a Nintendo-esque flair, shovel knight was born. Despite being a very humorous concept, the shovel blade he carried had the ability to act almost like a pogo stick, bouncing on evildoers and breaking rock and dirt. This unique ability was inspired by a mechanic from the game "Ducktales" for the super nintendo entertainment system. This was an interesting blend of character appearance and game design that was very unique at the time.

The game was later re-released as a part of a collection titled: "Shovel Knight - Treasure Trove", which contained not only the original shovel knight, but also three more story campaigns based on three fan favorite characters from the original game. These new adventures were: plague of shadows, a difficult and chaotic quest following the secretive alchemist plague knight collecting potion ingredients from fellow members of the evil "order of no quarter" to win over the heart of fellow scientist mona, specter of torment, the tragic tale of a man robbed of his mortality by his own greed, trying to regain his old life and protect his friend's son by building an army for the evil enchantress, and king of cards, a lighthearted and

goofy adventure following the childish, and somewhat selfish king knight, working to become a "King" by defeating the three judges for the popular new card game called Joustus. These three new stories helped to further flesh out the world and its characters, and added a whole new bonus to the already great game.

One big strength of the game is subverting common tropes, and making characters who are both interesting and relatable, and fun at the same time. For example, instead of trying to save some helpless princess, shovel knight's quest involves rescuing his old lover shield knight, who was an extremely powerful warrior, who simply ended up in a very dangerous situation. One character who is widely considered the most relatable is plague knight, the main character of the Plague of Shadows side game mode. He is intimidating and feared across the land,



but is very insecure and lacks self confidence, especially due to his short stature. Aside

from the whole "making potions and blowing up everything" thing, this is an experience many people have had. The game has a very familiar style of play too. I was playing the game one day, and my mom thought that I was playing a game she had when she was a kid. Even an adult is able to recognize that certain charm the art style and gameplay has. The game has something for everyone, so if it sounds interesting to you, go take a look at it! It costs about \$30, and can be bought on most major gaming systems.

Junior Writers Series

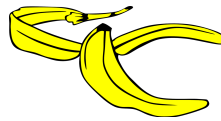
We loved reading all of the original stories and poems submitted by students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade! We hope our readers enjoy them as much as we did!

Ariana's Crazy Day

Original Story By: Mila Clark, 4th grade

Ariana just woke up from her nightmare. She looked at the clock to see that it was 9:30 and she got out of bed and ran to school. When she got to school it was already 9:50 so she went into her class. Then it was time for lunch and she slipped on a banana peel. When she got home, she spilled water on her homework. The next day she went to school and forgot to change out of her pajamas. Ariana got a drink of water and spilled it on herself, so she had to get out extra clothes to

wear. She went to art class and spilled water on her friend's painting. When she got home her backpack was wet because she forgot to put the lid on her water bottle. The next day she went to school. She had a bad day again because she fell and hurt her leg in gym class and had to go to the nurse. The next day, she had a good day and did well in every class until she fell asleep in class and slipped on a banana peel on her way home.



The Bully

Original Story by: Elizabeth Scanlon, 4th grade

Once upon a dream, there was a girl named Violet and she had just moved into a new house. She was excited to move into a new house because she's never moved before, but she was also sad. She was sad because she already misses her friends, on the other hand, she was also excited because she was going into the 3rd grade.

The first day of school was rough. At lunch, she had to sit by herself because she had trouble making friends. There was this one kid named Daniel who would steal student's lunches if you glanced at him. One time he walked over to Violet and called her names. This made Violet really mad, so her face turned red. Daniel noticed and laughed at her.

The next day during math class, the teacher wasn't looking at Violet and Daniel's direction, so Daniel began to kick Violet's chair. Violet turned around and asked Daniel to stop kicking her chair, however that got Mr. Mike's attention.

"Is there something more important than math right now?" Mr. Mike scolded.

"No, Mr. Mike." Violet replied and turned her head down.

Then in science, they were doing an experiment and Mr. Jake chose Violet and Daniel to be lab partners. When they were following the experiment Daniel made a concoction that exploded all over Violet. Violet got really mad and because of that Violet had to go to detention because Mr. Jake thought that she was the one that made the mixture that exploded.

Soon, Violet came to the realization that Daniel was bullying her because of her reactions. So, the day after that at lunch when Daniel kept tapping Violet's shoulder Violet decided to say something.

"Please stop tapping my shoulder, I don't appreciate it," she asked politely.

Daniel laughed and said, "And why should I stop?"

"Because if you continue, I will tell Mrs. Becky."

This made Daniel nervous and he exclaimed, "Please don't tell Mrs. Becky! I swear I'll never bully you again!"

Because Violet made that realization and chose to stand up for herself, she and Daniel never had a problem again.

The Lonely Island!

Original Story By Natalie Proietto, 4th grade

Once it was a hot sunny day on a lonely island that had dangerous insects on it. The insects could be killers. Some of the insects are the black widow spider and the cow killer. The insects are not nice and I was on the island! How could I escape? I put bug spray on me, but that didn't work. I could run, but the insects are faster than me. "What could I do?" As I was thinking what to do I was getting food, but it is dangerous out there; I still did it and I got bit. It was just one bite. I went to bed; when I

woke up I got nervous because there was a mark. I ate breakfast but I was still a little nervous. I didn't know what to do because I didn't have any medicine or something to help it. So I packed up my things and RAN!!



Da Hamster: Ghost Finders

Original Story By: Douglas Watson

Once upon a time, there was a hamster named Da Hamster. His real name was Noodle but all of his friends called him Da Hamster because he was the coolest hamster at his school. He always brought cool stuff for lunch, but enough about him, let's get into the story. It was a dark and stormy night, and Da Hamster was laying in his bed listening to music while fixing his ghost catcher. All of a sudden his phone rang. It was Jill, his ghost finding helpline server. She told him about a haunted house with a bunch of ghosts. He called his friend Squishy (he was also a hamster).

"Squishy, there's a haunted house that needs inspecting!" Da Hamster said excitedly. He drove his little car to Squishy's house and picked him up. They went to the haunted house to investigate it, but their car broke down, so they had to walk the rest of the way. Luckily, they were super close. Thunder rumbled, lightning



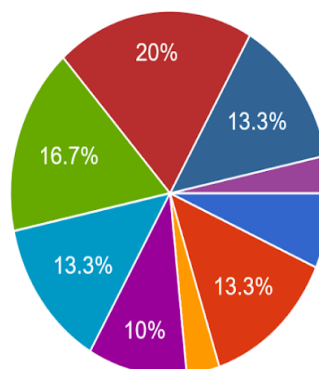
struck, as they arrived at the creepy haunted house. They went in and saw a ghost, but it ran away. They took their ghost vacuum and chased the ghost. (They called the ghost, Ghost.) Ghost ran through the hall as Noodle and Squishy were out of breath.

They had found a ghost but it got away so they called reinforcements: Little Dude and Chunky (they were also hamsters). One went at the end of the hall and another one on the other end of the hall. The two of them went into rooms so when one chased Ghost, there would be a hamster on each side of him. When Noodle chased Ghost to that hall, Ghost went to the other end. But Squishy was there! The ghost ran into a room but Little Dude was there, so he ran into another room but Chunky was ready and waiting to suck him up with his ghost vacuum. Chunky sucked up the ghost into the vacuum and after they left they got \$100.00 for helping to get rid of the ghost.

Middle School's Favorite Disney Princesses

By: Ellie Barrett

I surveyed the middle school to see more of their favorites! Mulan wins for favorite Disney princess. Moana was a close second with 16.7% of voters choosing her as their favorite. Elsa, Rapunzel, and Jasmine all tied for third with 13.3% of the votes each.



- Tiana
- Rapunzel
- Snow White
- Cinderella
- Ariel
- Jasmine
- Aurora
- Moana