

# COUGAR GC REVIEW

April

THE YEAR OF THE COUGARS

2026

## SB78

BY: ZOEY BLOMBERG

## GC STUDENTS ADVANCE

BY: COUGAR REVIEW STAFF

As Indiana wraps up its 2025-26 school year, many changes are in store for the 2026-27 school year. One of those is SB78. SB78 is a significant education bill that requires Indiana public schools to apply strict “away-for-the-day” policies for students’ cell phones and wireless devices, banning their use during school hours.

Under SB78, schools will be required to create clear policies that keep phones out of students’ hands during the school day. The law requires an “away-for-the-day” rule, meaning students would have to keep their phones stored away from the start of the school day until dismissal. The bill aims to eliminate digital distractions and improve learning environments by requiring, in most cases, that devices be stored away from the first bell to the final bell.

This new policy will affect students starting in the 2026-27 school year. Mr. Wherry, an administrator at GCHS, spoke about the impact. “The problem that is going to be had by this school administration and by the students is that phones cannot be out at all, so therefore any visibility of the phone becomes a consequence.” When asked about student and parent response to the new law, he elaborated, “I think it’s going to be a huge adjustment on everybody’s part. We have a lot of parents who want that availability for their student, maybe for safety reasons or just to inform them of an appointment, but again, that’s going to have to change and become emails.”

The school administration is discussing possible apps that could be downloaded onto students’ devices for communication. One thing is for sure: the new school year will bring change for all.

Two Greenfield-Central students, Esther Bell and Jana Masferrer Rifa, are taking their writing talents to the stage after making it to the final round of the Young Playwrights in Process (YPiP) competition at the Indiana Repertory Theatre (IRT).

The YPiP contest is open to students in grades 6–12 across Indiana and challenges them to write an original short play under 2,000 words that reflects their ideas, experiences, or perspective on the world. The program has been running since 2005 and gives young writers the chance to work with professional artists while competing for cash prizes. Greenfield-Central had four students who made it to the semi-final round: Nolan Roots, Esther Bell, Makenna Hatcher, and Jana Masferrer Rifa, with Bell and Masferrer Rifa advancing to the final round.

Making the final round is already a huge accomplishment, but the most exciting part is still ahead. In the next few weekends, the students’ scripts will be performed in staged readings by professional actors at IRT. Hearing their plays read out loud by real actors will give the students a chance to see their stories come to life on stage.

After the readings, the finalists will complete one last round of revisions before the judges decide who will be named the competition’s grand finalist

For these two Cougar writers, the experience is more than just a contest—it’s a chance to see their creativity take center stage and work with professionals in the theatre world. As the final round approaches, the GCHS community will be cheering them on and waiting to see how their stories shine under the spotlight.



English teacher Mrs. Hodge poses with senior Esther Bell (left) and sophomore Jana Masferrer Rifa (right) as they prepare for the final round of YPiP.



# STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

BY LAYLA LONG

In an increasingly fast-paced world, stress has become a common part of everyday life, yet it remains a topic often overlooked or misunderstood. It's the body's natural "fight-or-flight" response to perceived threats or challenges, triggering hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. Long-term stress can weaken the immune system and exacerbate pre-existing mental or physical health conditions, such as depression or high blood pressure as well as alter brain function and structure.

Stress Awareness Month is a nationwide campaign dedicated to educating people about stress, its impact on mental and physical health and the tools available to help manage it. The month has been observed every April through April 1st to April 30th since 1992. Stress Awareness Month provides an important opportunity to break the stigma around mental health, promote stress management strategies, and encourage healthier, more resilient lifestyles.

In a survey, conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA among more than 3,000 U.S. adults ages 18 and older, 62% of U.S. adults report societal division of significant source of stress in their lives. Half of adults in the U.S. reported feelings emotional disconnection, saying they felt isolated from others (54%), felt left out (50%), or have lacked companionship (50%) often or some of the time, suggesting loneliness may have become a defining feature of life in America. It was not about disagreement; it was about disconnection.

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have any power to change, but it is during these times that the recommendation is to change your approach to situations, like recognizing when you don't have control, and let it go and try to avoid situations that could trigger anxiety and stress. It is important to take breaks when your body needs it, talk to people you trust, like a parent, friend, or another trusted source, and recognizing when you need help.

## STRESS AWARENESS 101

INFO FROM THE NYDCCBF

### WHAT IS STRESS?

STRESS IS THE BODY'S PHYSICAL AND/OR MENTAL RESPONSE TO AN EXTERNAL CAUSE. STRESSORS COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES. THEY MAY BE A ONE-TIME EVENT (CAUSING ACUTE STRESS), OR A RECURRING SITUATION (CAUSING CHRONIC STRESS). COMMON CAUSES OF STRESS ARE JOB PRESSURES, FINANCIAL CONCERNS, AND FAMILY ISSUES. TRAUMATIC STRESS CAN OCCUR AS A RESULT OF FAMILY LOSS, VIOLENCE, AND/OR NATURAL DISASTERS, AMONG OTHERS.

### HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT ME?

STRESS TRIGGERS OUR "FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT" RESPONSE, INCREASING OUR HEART RATE AND RAISING OUR BLOOD PRESSURE. AS STRESS LINGERS AND PERSISTS THIS RESPONSE CAN LEAD TO A NUMBER OF DETRIMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, SUCH AS:

EFFECTS OF STRESS ON YOUR BODY:	EFFECTS OF STRESS ON YOUR MOOD:	EFFECTS OF STRESS ON YOUR BEHAVIOR:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HEADACHES</li> <li>- MUSCLE PAIN AND TENSION</li> <li>- CHEST PAIN</li> <li>- FATIGUE</li> <li>- UPSET STOMACH</li> <li>- SLEEP PROBLEMS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ANXIETY</li> <li>- RESTLESSNESS</li> <li>- DIFFICULTY FOCUSING</li> <li>- FEELING OVERWHELMED</li> <li>- IRRITABILITY AND ANGER</li> <li>- SADNESS AND DEPRESSION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OVEREATING/UNDEREATING</li> <li>- ANGRY OUTBURSTS</li> <li>- DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL MISUSE</li> <li>- TOBACCO USE</li> <li>- SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL</li> <li>- EXERCISING LESS OFTEN</li> </ul>

### HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS

- TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. THIS INCLUDES GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP, EATING HEALTHY MEALS, AND EXERCISING.
- TALK TO OTHERS. SHARE YOUR PROBLEMS AND FEELINGS WITH A FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER, COUNSELOR, DOCTOR, OR PASTOR.
- TAKE TIME TO UNWIND. ENJOY SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ACTIVITIES (WATCHING A FAVORITE MOVIE, PLAYING A FAVORITE GAME, SPENDING TIME IN YOUR FAVORITE PARK, ETC.)
- UNPLUG. SET BOUNDARIES ON THE TIME YOU SPEND READING THE NEWS AND ENGAGING ON SOCIAL MEDIA.
- AVOID DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND CAFFEINE.
- PRACTICE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES SUCH AS DEEP BREATHING, MEDITATION, YOGA, AND GUIDED IMAGERY. TRY OUT DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES AND SEE WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU.

BENEFIT FUNDS



# EASTER: MORE THAN CANDY

BY DONNIE BLACKBURN AND BRYSON MINTON



Many people know Easter as the day Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, the traditions associated with the holiday, such as decorating eggs and the Easter Bunny, have deeper historical origins that many people may not realize.

One popular Easter tradition is decorating eggs. This practice dates back to ancient times. The ancient Egyptians painted eggs to celebrate their spring festivals because they believed eggs symbolized new life. Over time, Christians adopted the egg as a symbol representing Jesus' resurrection and the promise of new life.

Another well-known symbol of Easter is the rabbit, commonly known as the Easter Bunny. The rabbit became associated with the holiday because it is a symbol of fertility and the rapid creation of life in spring. In earlier traditions, rabbits were linked to a spring goddess who represented fertility and new beginnings.

Many of these symbols are connected to ancient spring celebrations that took place long before Christianity spread throughout Europe. Pagan festivals celebrating the spring equinox often included symbols of fertility, rebirth, and the return of life after winter. As Christianity grew, some of these traditions became incorporated into Easter celebrations.

Early Christians were originally Jewish, and the story of Jesus' resurrection is closely connected to the Jewish holiday of Passover, also known as Pesach. The Last Supper, which took place shortly before Jesus' crucifixion, was a Passover meal called a seder. Because of this connection, the events of Easter and Passover are historically intertwined.

For Christians, Easter has a very important religious meaning. The holiday marks the third day after Good Friday and celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This event is described in the Bible and is part of the story of the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

The word "Easter" is believed to come from Eostre, or Ostara, an Anglo-Saxon goddess associated with spring and fertility. Over time, the name became linked with the Christian celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Today, Easter combines both religious meaning and cultural traditions. While it remains one of the most important holidays in Christianity, many of its symbols also celebrate the themes of spring, renewal, and new life.



# APRIL 15

BY HAYDEN KING

April 15 is a date that many people immediately recognize as Tax Day, the annual deadline to file federal income taxes, but it also marks National American Sign Language Day. While it may seem like a day mainly meant for adults and paperwork, the impact of April 15 still reaches students and families in the Greenfield community in more ways than people might expect, especially as families, teachers and students move through a busy spring season.

Tax Day is the deadline for most Americans to file their federal income taxes. Even though many high school students are not filing taxes yet, it still affects daily life at home. Families may be more focused on finances, paperwork and budgeting around this time, which can add extra stress during an already packed season of school, spring sports and activities. For students in Greenfield who have part-time jobs or plan to work soon, Tax Day can also be an early reminder of real-world responsibilities like understanding paychecks, W-2 forms and how taxes affect income.

At the same time, April 15 is also National American Sign Language Day, which celebrates ASL and raises awareness about deaf culture and inclusive communication. The day recognizes the founding of the first permanent school for the deaf in the United States and encourages people to learn more about accessibility and communication differences.

In a school environment, this connects directly to student life. Learning basic sign language or becoming more aware of inclusive communication can help create a more supportive and respectful atmosphere for all students. It also ties into the school's focus on community, awareness and making sure everyone feels included.

Having both holidays on the same day highlights two important ideas students can relate to: responsibility and awareness. One focuses on financial habits that affect families across Greenfield, while the other encourages students to think about communication and inclusion within their school and community.

As the school year continues into a busy spring stretch, April 15 serves as a reminder that national observances can still have local meaning for students and families in Greenfield.



As Tax Day approaches, Uncle Sam serves as a visual reminder for citizens to file their taxes.



Sophomores Hayden King and Addie Brunsting sign "GC" in sign language.

# EARTH DAY: WHY IT STILL MATTERS 56 YEARS LATER

BY: BELLA LANE

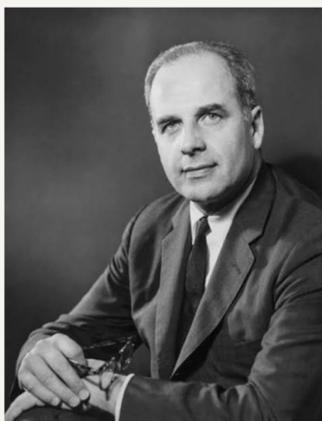
*April 22nd is recognized around the world as Earth Day. The event has been celebrated annually for the past 55 years, with 2026 marking its 56th celebration. As Earth Day approaches, many people still ask why this day matters and how did it first begin?*

*Earth Day started in April 1970 when the U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson created the event to bring national attention to environmental issues affecting the United States. Nelson hoped to unite anti-war protesters and citizens who were passionate about protecting their environment.*

*The movement quickly gained massive support. Millions of Americans participated in the first Earth Day, helping lead to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Since then, Earth Day has become an annual tradition focused on raising awareness and encouraging people to think about the long term health of our planet.*

*There are several ways people can help the environment right at home this year. Families can spend an hour picking up litter, washing clothes in cold water, using public transportation, or taking an evening walk instead of driving. Other simple actions include repairing items instead of replacing them, turning off electronics when they are not in use, or spending more time outdoors.*

*Every action you do that helps the Earth is positive no matter how small or how big*



*US senator Nelson Gaylord  
environmental activists*

# NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

BY: ADDIE BRUNSTING

*April marks National Poetry Month, a time dedicated to celebrating the power of poetry and the writers who bring it to life. Across the country, schools, libraries, and communities take part in activities that highlight the importance of poetry in culture and everyday life. From reading classic stories to writing original pieces, National Poetry Month encourages people of all ages to explore creativity through words.*

*Across the country, schools and libraries often host special activities during National Poetry Month. These can include poetry readings, writing contests, classroom discussions, and displays of student work. Some schools even share a “poem of the day” during announcements or post poems around the building for students to read between classes. These activities help poetry feel more accessible and fun for students who may not normally read it.*

*For students, National Poetry Month can be a chance to explore new types of writing and express ideas in creative ways. Many classrooms take time during April to read poems from well-known writers such as Maya Angelou, Robert Frost, and Langston Hughes. Teachers may also encourage students to write their own poems, helping them experiment with rhythm, imagery, and personal storytelling. Poetry allows students to share their thoughts and experiences in ways that traditional essays sometimes cannot.*

# APRIL FOOLS IS NO JOKE

BY TREVOR LEONARD

Today, many people celebrate April Fools' Day with harmless jokes and pranks, but the holiday actually has a history that goes back centuries. April Fools' Day is believed to date back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, following a decision by the Council of Trent in 1563. In the Julian calendar, the new year began around the spring equinox, which fell near April 1. When the new calendar moved the start of the year to January 1, some people were slow to hear the news or continued celebrating the new year during the last week of March through April 1. Because of this, they became the target of jokes and were called "April fools."

In France, these pranks often included placing paper fish on someone's back and calling them poisson d'avril (April fish). The fish symbolized a young, easily caught fish and was used to represent someone who was gullible.

Over time, the tradition of playful pranks spread to other countries. In Scotland, April Fools' Day is known as "Gowkie Day," named after the gowk, a bird that symbolizes foolishness. One tradition involved pinning "kick me" signs on friends as part of the joke.

Today, April Fools' Day is mostly about harmless fun among friends, family, and classmates. Last year at Greenfield-Central, one of the most memorable pranks happened in Ms. Walters' B3 AP English class. While she stepped out of the room, students flipped the classroom completely upside down; desks, chairs, and supplies were rearranged to create total chaos. When her B4 class walked in afterward, they calmly sat down in the messy classroom and acted like everything was perfectly normal. When Ms. Walters returned and saw the scene, she couldn't help but laugh. "I thought it was hilarious!" she said. "I was very surprised, but also not too surprised because they are total goofballs."



"I thought it was hilarious!" she said. "I was very surprised, but also not too surprised because they are total goofballs." Ms. Walters

# PROMPOSALS

BY KYLIE WOODSON

*As we roll into April, prom is quickly approaching, as are Promposals. This simple act has become a staple in Prom traditions. Many show up with signs, silly puns, and colorful posters to secure their Prom date.*

*These proposals usually consist of an inside joke written to make it as if they were asking the person to come to Prom with them. Themes usually consist of puns, food, hobbies, or even sports. The posters are sometimes paired with items that go along with the theme, making them just as special.*

*As no surprise, they have become popular among teens, especially on social media. It's a common trend during April and May on apps like TikTok and Instagram. This trend carries on from Homecoming dances, Sadie Hawkins, Winter Formals, and, of course, Prom.*

*When asked her opinion on Promposals, senior Chloe Coffenberry explained, "I've never been asked to a dance with a sign, but I think they're a fun and cute way to ask someone out using their different interests. However, some people are just copying what they see online and giving it little to no thought." We asked Kaitlyn Sica what her dream Promposal would be, "I really enjoy when people do ones that have little jokes on them, it makes it worthwhile. I would be very happy to receive a Promposal like that." Another GCHS student said, "Honestly, any proposal would be fine. I've never gotten one before."*

*Promposals don't have to be just a way to ask someone to be your date. Many have even asked their friends to accompany them to prom with this small gesture. Whether it's a friend or a date, there's no better way to show your appreciation to those you'd like to celebrate the end of the school year with.*

# GCHS SIBLINGS

BY ASHER HOOTS

Going to school can be an adventure, but what happens when your sibling is along for the ride? April 10 marks National Sibling Day and many GCHS students share their school days with a brother or sister.

Ethan Greulich said having a sibling at school comes with both good and challenging moments. The two get along most of the time, often playing video games together, and his sibling even drives him to school. However, like many siblings, they also get into arguments from time to time. One of Greulich's favorite memories with his sibling is playing Minecraft together. At school, he said they are sometimes compared to each other, especially since they are both members of the soccer team.

For TayMarion Walker, attending school with her sister Renasia hasn't led to many comparisons between the two. Because they are close in age, TayMarion says they get along well and share a strong bond. In fact, many people at school don't even realize they are siblings, so comparisons rarely come up. One of TayMarion's favorite memories with ReNasia is simply having long conversations about random, silly topics just so they can laugh together.



For Lillye Fillebrown, going to school with her brother, Max, can be a little annoying, but the two still find ways to get along, especially when they team up to mess with their parents. One of Lillye's favorite memories from when they were younger is of her and Max believing that touching an electric fly swatter would somehow give them superpowers. At school, Lillye also says she is often compared to Max, which can be funny but sometimes a little frustrating as well.



Caitlyn Farnell and her brother didn't get along but as her older siblings moved out they moved to greenfield where they spent most of their time hanging out. When Aiydn was about to take his driver's test Caitlyn took him to the school parking lot where he practiced driving her car. She was nervous he was going to crash but to her surprise he did very well.

Aidyn Farnell and his sister get along with each other they like to watch fireworks on 4th of July but one year she got firework shrapnel in her eye and had to be taken to the emergency room. People often confuse him and his sister for boyfriend and girlfriend because they are so close.



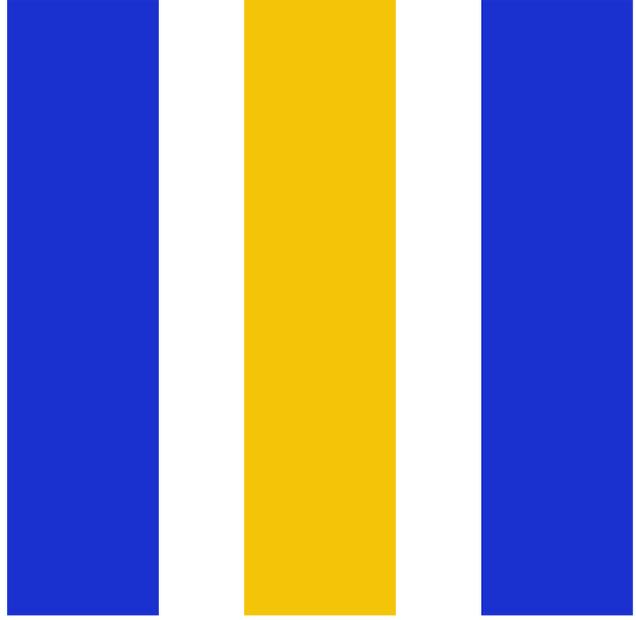
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# **MISSION: SECURE YOUR YEARBOOK**

This year's yearbook is **classified**, and access is limited. Inside this **Top Secret** file are the moments you don't want erased: victories, laughs, traditions, and memories that won't be repeated. From first-day missions to final assignments, this book holds evidence of the 2025-2026 year. Once the year ends, this file closes permanently.

**Order you book now!**



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