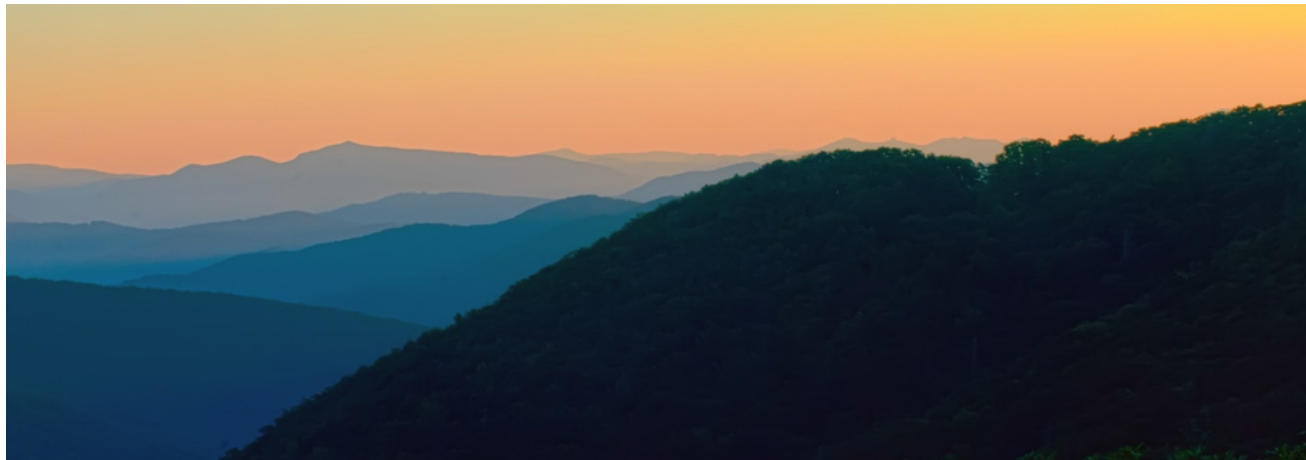


# SEASONAL ACTIVITIES TO SPICE UP YOUR WEEK

BY: NEHEMIAH MENGHISTEAB



*Photo courtesy of Canva*

**The seasons are always changing, but why should any of the fun? Take a look at some activities best done this season in the state of North Carolina!**

## **Ice Skating**

Rapid curls and twisting twirls are what you can expect from a trip to the Extreme Ice Center in Indian Trail! Skating with a group of friends has been... an experience – most of us tried learning how to stop hugging the wall and actually start skating for about an hour straight. However, the most magical part of the night was the fact that we learned how to skate together, and laughed through our mistakes and falls (or my fall but we can forget about that). Point being, this ice skating location is a really special place. Not only because of the fun times one can have with friends, but also the cozy vibe of it all. Down a walkway to the right of the entrance, there's a small seating area where you could buy warm drinks such as hot chocolate after skating in the rink. The vibe was very memorable because it felt so cozy, like some sort of safe haven from the chaos of skating hoards of people coming your way. Despite falls on your butt, the Extreme Ice Center provides a fun, social activity with the right amount of coziness.

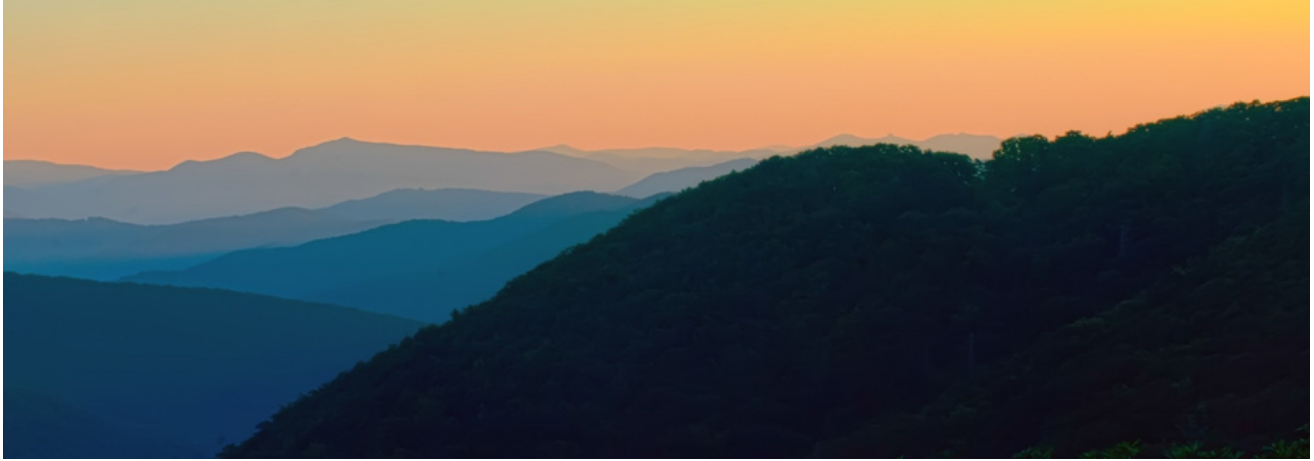
## **Valentine's Day Festivities**

Nothing like spending Valentine's Day with those you love! Whether it be for you, your partner, or simply a group of friends, Valentine's Day is such a cute little holiday. To celebrate this romantic occasion, it might be a good idea to have a picnic in the park. Get a nice big, thick blanket, cover a nice and grassy area with it, and snack on some packaged food while learning about each other. This could work with a big group of friends, or even if you want some 1-one-1 time with that special person. If you do this though, don't forget the chocolates!

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# SEASONAL ACTIVITIES TO SPICE UP YOUR WEEK

BY: NEHEMIAH MENGHISTEAB



*Photo courtesy of Canva*

Another festivity that's always enjoyable is going out to a restaurant for a romantic (or platonic) date night! Many restaurants plan to have Valentine's Day events. Some decide on giving couples 2-to-4 course meals, giving your night a dynamic world of flavors. Some even have special menu items exclusive to the Valentine's season. Valentine's day should be spent with those we care for, and eating with them is one of the most humanistic ways that us humans bond. Why not bond over the flavor of a delicious chicken alfredo?

## **Taking on the Appalachians!**

As a non-native Carolinian, I've unfortunately never lived close enough to high mountains to spend a weekend on them (without driving 8 hours at least). Now that I live in NC and hear stories about what it's like up there, it's definitely on the top of my bucket list. Just imagine it – you're higher in elevation, taller than all those little dots of people beneath you, and there's thousands of peaceful trees surrounding you while you go hiking through a long trail with your friends. You could also imagine yourself skiing down a snowy mountain side and teasing your friends about how they were too scared to go down the easiest route. You can even think about how relaxing a camping trip with your family could be while you cook s'mores over an open flame. The possibilities are truly endless! If you're a nature person, the Appalachian Mountains in NC are the way to go!

# FENNELL SHARES PASSION FOR HEALTH SCIENCE

BY: BROOKLYN BITTEN, ARIAM KIDANE

Emily Fennell, the newest Foundations of Health Science teacher, enjoys teaching something she loves. Born and raised in Georgia, Fennell said she's always had a passion for science. As a kid, she dreamed of becoming a marine biologist and later pursued teaching public schools when she moved to Charlotte. She taught for four and a half years at a hospital in Georgia and worked for Mecklenburg County schools and even did some teaching at Garinger High School.

Fennell attended the University of Georgia, receiving her bachelor's degree in Science and Education. With the background of an EMT and teaching in a hospital, Fennell jumps at any opportunity to help others learn. "I have a passion for it," she said. "Watching students learn something new and seeing it click."

When she's not teaching, she spends her free time watching true crime, shopping, and spending time with her son, a daughter that goes to Piedmont Middle School, and her cat Oliver.

Fennell said the best way she can support a struggling student is doing whatever works best for them. She is determined to provide all her students with the right tools to grow and learn, including trying different activities and having one-on-one talks to ensure that each student is provided with what works best for them.

Sophomore Kendal Maulden said Fennell is always patient and kind towards each one of her students. Fennell will always go over a topic again if necessary and enjoys the connections made with her students.



Photo courtesy of Ariam Kidane

# WOMEN'S TRACK WINS CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY: LINDSEY POWELL



Photo courtesy of Mark Cullen

Piedmont High School's women's winter track team claimed the Rocky River conference champion title on Tuesday, January 30. Along with a first place score of 153, they broke several records in the process.

"We had some amazing performances. We weren't just getting points from people, we were getting wins from people we didn't expect," said Head Coach Jim Smith. "I couldn't be more proud."

Senior Makayla Hill broke the 55 meter dash record. Having danced around it all season, her 7.75 time at the conference meet finally earned her the victory. Sophomore Kaela Tyson also bettered her 55 meter hurdle record, dropping her time to 9.04, an almost half a second improvement from last year.

"I have improved over this season in many ways," said Hill. "One goal I had coming into this winter track season was to qualify for the 3A State Championship. It was a wonderful feeling to know our hard work paid off!"

While track is an individual sport, Hill's favorite part of the season has been bonding with her teammates. She saw improvement in every single athlete over the course of this season, and, as a senior, she has cherished every moment with them.

Tyson started the season off with an injury, but that didn't stop her from coming back and hitting a new personal record every meet, including qualifying for both states and nationals. "[Conference] exceeded mine and everyone's expectations," she said. "Being conference champions was exciting for all of us!"

Men's track took third place at conference.

"Third place is nothing to slough off. It's still really good, but we were hoping for a little more," said Smith.

For senior Kaleb Bigham, conference was still his favorite memory of the season, despite the outcome. "Though I was frustrated about how I did in my performance that night, my teammates not only were trying to uplift me but created an environment in which I was able to focus on the positives," he said. This season, he fell back in love with the sport and grew closer with his coaches and teammates.

As the spring season approaches, Smith hopes to bring home two trophies and qualify as many people as possible for the state competition.



# BIOLOGY TEACHER PRICE BEGINS FIRST YEAR TEACHING AT PIEDMONT

BY: LINDSEY POWELL

Piedmont High School welcomed several new teachers this semester, including biology and physical science teacher Maggie Price.

Price grew up in Unionville and graduated from Piedmont High School before attending N.C. State for Biochemistry and Biology. From there, she explored several career paths, the most recent of which involved working in a toxicology lab.

"The lab was very solitary, people didn't speak much, and you could go an entire 10-hour shift without even having a conversation," said Price. "I decided I wanted to do something more meaningful in life and try a career where I could have an impact on those around me."

Enter the idea of working as a teacher.

"I always loved being in school, I loved learning, and I loved having homework. Being a teacher, I get to impact people, learn every day, and I even feel like I have homework again!"

Price's love for learning was what initially drew her to the science field, and now she hopes to spark that same love in her students. "The purpose of science is to expand knowledge, so, naturally, if you love learning, you'll love science!"

A first-year teacher and naturally shy person, Price has already had to adjust to a new environment and step outside of her comfort zone within the past weeks. "All of the teachers both in my department and around the entire school have been extremely welcoming and supportive. I couldn't have survived my first week without them and look forward to spending the rest of the school year with them," she said.

Her goal this year is to improve in the classroom and become the teacher her students need. In return, she hopes her students will put forth the same effort and hard work in her class.

With one month under her belt and several more to go, Price is hopeful about her first year of teaching and excited to connect with the people around her.



Photo courtesy of Lindsey Powell

# BOOK REVIEW: THE HUNGER GAMES

BY: NEVAEH RICE



*Images courtesy of Canva*

In a dystopian world where children are picked to fight in an annual tradition, where winning means fame and fortune and losing means certain death, 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen makes a big sacrifice and volunteers for The Hunger Games.

The ruins what was once known as North America is now the nation of Panem. Panem is divided into twelve districts, in which two children are chosen to fight on live television for the Hunger Games each year.

Young Katniss takes her sister's place in that year's reaping ceremony, and while there's no telling what can happen in the games, survival is second nature for her. There is nothing in her life she hasn't for, but fighting in the Hunger Games now comes with the harsh decisions between survival, humanity, and love.

The author's writing is so mesmerizing that you'll be completely absorbed into Katniss's world. Despite the slow start, it's essential to understand the story's setting to fully appreciate the plot. Trust me, once the story takes off, it's an absolute roller coaster ride! You won't be able to put it down until you've reached the end. This heart-pounding plot will have you on the edge of your seat, and you'll be left clamoring for more.

Don't miss out on this unforgettable experience!



# WHAT TO WATCH THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

BY: SAVANNAH SMITH

We all have thoughts about Valentine's Day. Whether you love the holiday or hate the whole holiday depends on who you are, but if you are feeling the romance in the air, some movies to watch are a Charlie Brown Valentine, Pretty in Pink, and 10 Things I Hate About You.

## **Charlie Brown Valentine (G)**

Marcie and Peppermint Patty have a small crush on Charlie Brown and want to make him a Valentine. Marcie goes to Charlie Brown's to ask him to be her Valentine. Meanwhile, he has a crush of his own.

## **Pretty In Pink (PG-13)**

This movie is about Andie who hangs out with her old boss, or Duckie, the classmate that has a crush on her. When the popular kid Blane asks Andie out, her world is changed.

## **10 Things I Hate about You (PG-13)**

This movie is about a bet between sisters Kat and Bianca. Bianca can't date until Kat does, so she finds someone to make a deal with the new kid, Patrick, in order to make Kat fall in love with him.



*Image courtesy of Canva*

# FOODS AND NUTRITION TEACHER WATKINS JOINS PIEDMONT HIGH SCHOOL

BY: BROOKLYNN BITTEN, ARIAM KIDANE

“It’s got character. Staff and administration has been phenomenal. If I was at any other school, I think I would be struggling,” said the newest Food and Nutrition teacher, Brittany Watkins. Throughout high school and college, Watkins has always had a passion for food. This led to her own baking business, ‘Pastries and Posies,’ selling pastries and flowers for over five years alongside her two kids.

Born and raised in Charlotte, food helped set up Watkin’s future and reach her goals. She graduated from Providence High School and later went to UNC Charlotte to pursue marketing. With her food experience, Watkins then received a teaching position in Food and Nutrition at Piedmont High.

She explained how she struggled in high school and wants to be there for those that have struggled like her. “I think we all need to be a little kinder,” she said. “I’m just doing my best to stay positive and stick with it for the long run.”

With this being her first year in teaching, Watkins wants to set an example for her students and make sure that she is creating a safe space for all her students.

Kyle Philemon, a sophomore at Piedmont High, described Watkins as caring and eager to teach. Philemon has Watkins for his fourth period and stated that the class seemed inviting. Though Watkins ran into a few obstacles on her first few days, she won’t let it stop her from pursuing her passion and is even talking about a potential culinary class next school year.



*Photo courtesy of Brooklynn Bitten*



# Meet the Staff

**STACY  
VICKERS**

Club Advisor

Mrs. Vickers is an English teacher whose most proud accomplishments include growing student journalists. Outside of school, her greatest pride is her family.

**KIM  
WIDENHOUSE**

Club Advisor

Mrs. Widenhouse lives on a small farm just outside of Locust with her husband, her 2 daughters, and her granddaughter. She loves spending time outside and hanging out with friends and family.

**LINDSEY  
POWELL**  
Editor-in-Chief

Lindsey Powell is a senior at Piedmont with a passion for writing. When she doesn't have her nose in a book, she can be found hanging out with friends, or playing with her three puppies.

**BROOKLYNN  
BITTEN**

Journalist

**MYRIAM  
KEBTANE**

Journalist

Myriam Kebtane is a writer for the Panther Press. In her free time, Myriam enjoys buying books even though she has so many unread ones at home. She also loves going to the movies.

**ARIAM  
KIDANE**

Journalist

**ANDY  
LIN**

Journalist

A debater, a magician, a composer, a violin and piano player. He does a lot of things, but is not a professional at any of them; he works the best he can, but is lazy; loves to write articles and write drafts quickly, but hates to revise the article, and it will take him forever.

**FRED  
LITTLE**

Journalist

Fredrick Little Jr. is a student at Piedmont who has a passion for basketball. If Fred isn't playing basketball, he is working out or making someone's day.

**NEHEMIAH  
MENGHISTEAB**

Journalist

Nehemiah Menghisteab is a Piedmont High School student who loves to see the beauty in things. He takes passion in photography, and participating in club meets.

**NEVAEH  
RICE**

Journalist

**SAVANNAH  
SMITH**

Journalist

**GWENDOLYN  
GRIFFIN**

Journalist