

A detailed architectural cross-section of a traditional Japanese building, rendered in a green-tinted line-art style. The drawing shows multiple levels of the structure, including rooms, corridors, and a tiled roof. Various Japanese characters are integrated into the drawing, such as '家' (house) on a central wall, '友' (friend) and '友' (friend) on a vertical label, and '美' (beauty) and '和' (harmony) on another. The drawing is set against a solid green background.

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THE
AKADEMIA
POST

EDITOR'S NOTE

Here are a couple lines written in early spring (perhaps William Wordsworth's poem comes to mind?) to introduce our new issue. Looking over the articles in it is like a breath of fresh air. That soft, still cool yet kind air on the verge of a new season. I think it is the budding life of our school that creates this sensation.

Did you know that snowdrops, the beautiful little white bell-like flowers, are thermogenic? This means that they are able to generate their own heat to melt the snow around them and reach for the sun. Isn't Akademeia just like that? With WOŚP, AKAMUN, hiking and ski trips, lectures, academic and sport competitions, we have generated our own heat to break through the winter's gloom.

Enjoy the diversity of topics, just like the diversity of the spring birds and blooms popping up all around you. Always pay attention—to the little things, your community, and yourself.

Read and belong,

Sonia Blank
Chief Editor



MEET THE TEAM!

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WOŚP

Julek Franco Janecki

For the third time, the Akademeia Community hosted a massive celebration for the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (WOŚP). It is the largest non-governmental non-profit foundation that raises funds for different aspects of paediatric and geriatric medical care, each year.

The week leading up to the grand event students organized a bake sale, a soccer and basketball tournament, and participated in a WOŚP charity run! On the 26th of January, the school was flooded with students, parents, and other guests excited to show support for the charity. “The auction was a success, attended by over 30 people, followed by a concert during which our school’s talented musicians performed their music,” said the co-organizer, Pola Krawczyk. Some AHS students even walked around Warsaw with the iconic WOŚP cans gathering donations in weather that was not ideal (to say the least).



We are proud to announce the whole event raised over 100 000 zł! That’s a true testimony of our community’s commitment to making the world a better place.

We want to congratulate the organizer; Pola Krawczyk – Y12 and Piotr Sujecki – Y12, for leading this event. Special thanks to all the volunteers from the entire AHS community for taking part and showing support for such a great cause!

STILL INTO — SKIING —

Julia Jasińska

The melody of ‘Still Into You’ faded out in the background as all of us were reminiscing the memories from the ski trip.

The journey began with a 16 hr drive that, yes, was on a double-decker bus! After a couple of hours of nighttime karaoke, watching movies, and unsatisfactory sleep, we were greeted by a mesmerizing sunrise in the mountains followed by a breakfast in Mcdonalds.

Each day had something new for us in store. The FIS World Cup, apple strudel with a 360 view of the mountains, hospital visits, a birthday party, a backcountry hike to ski on fresh snow, sauna evenings, and much more!



So, here's a poem, to give you a taste of what it was like:

*The time has finally come
For the 6th form ski trip to arrive*

*Skiing, eating, singing on repeat
That's all we did all week
And it wasn't for the weak*

*Skis, boots and goggles on
At 9 we were ready to hit the slopes*

*Shut up and dance, Fireworks, and
Lipstick,
Were the hits that gave us a real power
kick*

*Fritatensuppe and applestruel awaited
every day
And oh man it was the best part of the day*

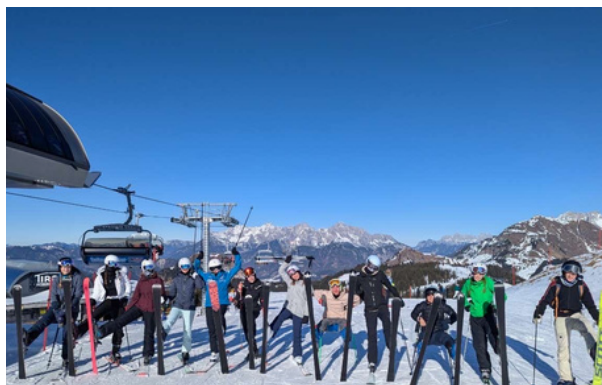
*Math lessons snuck in between the runs
But the slopes and sunshine were far more
fun*

*Smiling, tired and with a broken wrist
We are coming back from an exhilarating
trip*

*Skis, boots and goggles on
At 9 we were ready to hit the slopes*

*Skis, boots, and goggles on,
By 9, we were ready to go go go*

*Skis, boots, and goggles on
By 9, the mountain called us
to come along*



Y11 HIKING TRIP TO BESKID SĄDECKI

Anastazja Rybakiewicz

Helena Jurczak

With backpacks loaded and spirits high, a brave group of Year 11 students left the familiar walls of our school and headed off into the Lesser Poland. Reaching the foothills of the Beskid Sądecki mountains, we began the three days of an exhilarating, adventurous, and unforgettable hiking trip.

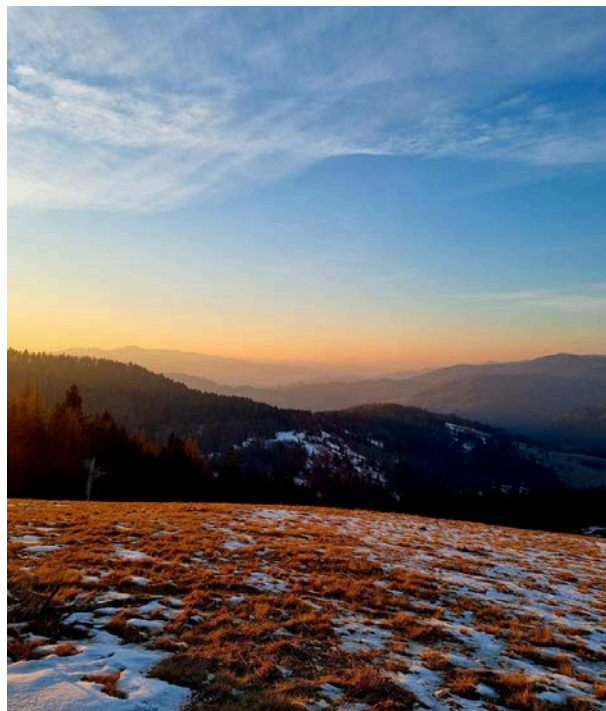
FRIDAY:

After a nice, cozy breakfast, we left Piwniczna Zdrój and began our adventure. Some of us did not have any prior experience of hiking, so the first day proved to be quite troublesome as all of us needed a bit of time to get used to the steep hills. After over thirteen kilometres of walking up the mountain, we finally reached the shelter in Hala Łabowska and stayed for warm soup and pierogi. The dining room was very cozy, with a fireplace, wooden furniture, and big windows. In the corner, there stood a piano and a guitar, which was used almost constantly by other hikers, creating a lovely atmosphere. We got to enjoy it for a long time by playing board games before leaving for our next adventure during sunset. We took our headlamps, crampons, and poles and went for another four-kilometre walk surrounded by blackness and the shining stars. After admiring the night scenery, we came back to a live concert by our amazing duo - Dr. Mikoszewski and Ms. Blank, who made the night truly stand out. As much as we loved the big six-people rooms, there were also some inconveniences (no signal, no hot water, electricity for 2 hours a day, little heating). Nevertheless, all of us were just thankful to have somewhere to sleep.

SATURDAY:

In the morning, we had the chance to taste a few peculiar drinks from the cafe, such as “Czaj (polish version of Chai)” or “Tradycyjna kawa Marokańska,” with which some of us fell in love with (read: Ms. Blank). Right after breakfast, we made our

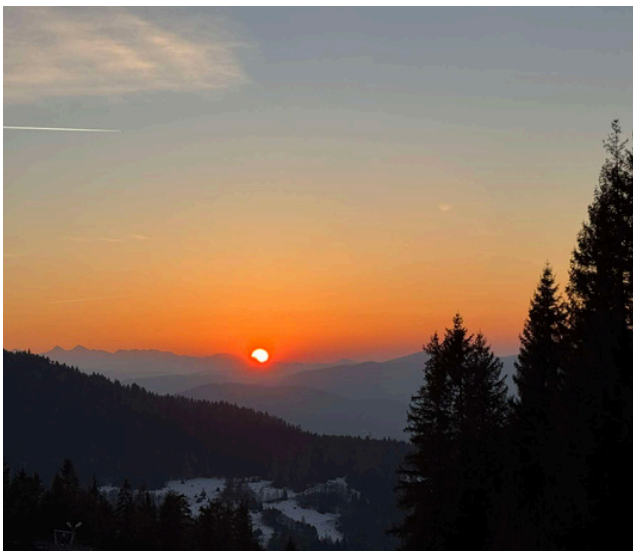
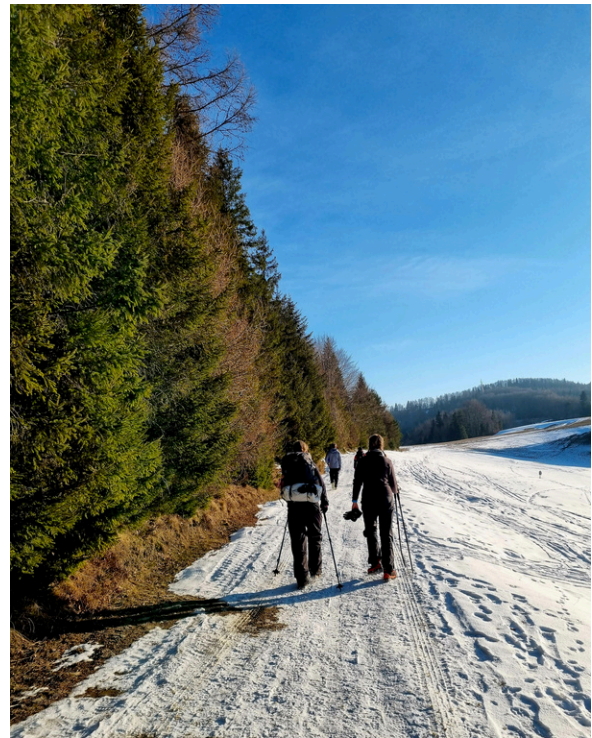
way further up, our paths completely covered by snow and ice. On this day, we had the shortest distance planned, but with the most altitude to overcome. We arrived to Bacówka Nad Wierchomlą in just over three hours; it was a small cottage with an adorable living room and dogs walking around. We left our backpacks and set off for an additional walk of 9 kilometres, passing ski slopes, hills, and forests on our way. After reaching our goal, the sun had already started to set, which created a breathtaking setting with the Tatry mountains and colourful sky in the background. The view was so spectacular that instead of entering the shelter, we sat on benches in silence and admired the layers of mountains piling up before our eyes.



SUNDAY:

We began our last day with a nourishing, abundant breakfast, and an absolutely breathtaking view of the Tatra mountains. In contrast to previous days, we only had six kilometres to walk, but this time, we had both a view wonderful view on Beskid's peaks and ski slopes along our journey. Despite the ongoing season, the ski slopes were not crowded, just like our trail. After our peaceful and serene hike, we took a gondola ride down to Krynica-Zdrój. Once in the

city, we explored its charming promenade, captivated by surrounding landmarks, such as the Mineral Water Drinking Halls. We concluded this quick sightseeing with a relaxing break at a local café, where we savoured delicious cheesecakes and apple pies with coffee and tea. With our energy replenished, we made the most of our free time before boarding a bus to Kraków. After enjoying dinner in Galeria Krakowska, we caught a train to Warsaw, marking the end of our journey. Tired but content, we returned home from the trip, already planning the next one.



MEET THE STAFF: DR. NATALIYA MARCHYK CHEMISTRY INSIDE OUT

LOOK INTO THE LIFELONG PASSION AND FASCINATING EXPERIENCES OF OUR CHEMISTRY TEACHER DR. MARCHYK!

Lena Szlaga

Chemistry is often seen as a complicated subject full of complex equations and captivating laboratory experiments, but for Dr. Nataliya Marchyk, it is a lifelong passion that connects research, innovation, and the education of others. Her experience is defined by multiple countries and projects. Ms. Marchyk has experienced chemistry as a student, researcher, and a teacher. In this interview, she shares her journey, the challenges she overcame, her insights on teaching, and the future of chemistry.

RESEARCH & ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

1. What inspired you to pursue a doctoral program at the Compiègne University of Technology in France?

When I graduated with my master's degree, I wanted to do a research project. I decided to go to France because I am fascinated with the French language and culture. I started looking for opportunities in France and Belgium.

2. How did working with research groups in Jena and Amiens shape your research?

In France (Amiens), I was doing research about synthesis, completely another area of chemistry. In Jena, I was applying my research, where I was able to try different areas of chemistry application. I enjoyed it greatly.



3. What do you find most fascinating about molecularly imprinted polymers, and where do you see their future applications?

My topic was interdisciplinary with multiple areas combined together: experimental design, synthesis, and application of the product. It was a spontaneous choice. I didn't want to have just pure chemistry and biology, but rather something more interdisciplinary. There are multiple applications, such as drug delivery, gas sensors, and monitoring.

4. What were the biggest challenges you faced during your doctoral studies?

There were many failures, but I was very motivated and inspired. My colleagues inspired me, when I saw that they failed as well, but they kept moving. I continued my work, and it has paid off.

5. How has your research experience influenced your approach to teaching chemistry?

I like interdisciplinary projects and combining different disciplines. Seeing the links and being open to challenges is important to me, as well as my aim is to keep on learning.



TEACHING & CAREER PATH

6. What motivated you to transition from research to teaching?

Chemistry is a beautiful science and I wanted to see the spark in the eyes of the students. Natural sciences can be fascinating, and I wanted to embrace that through my teaching.

7. How did you come to teach at Akademia High School?

I am here almost from the start of the school. I was in another school when Boss (Mr. Domoradzki, the PE teacher) told me there was an amazing school in Wilanów. I decided to try it. I have been teaching in Akademia from 2018, going into my 7th year.



8. What do you find most fulfilling about being a chemistry teacher?

I love seeing how students are fascinated with chemistry, the development and how they change their mind about the subject.

9. If you could offer one piece of advice to students interested in chemistry research, what would it be?

If the student hesitates whether to continue their journey with chemistry, they should focus on whether they are truly enjoying it. A chemist should have passion to learn something new and go beyond. If you decide to continue your chemistry studies, you shouldn't give up. In chemistry, sometimes you have to do everything in your experiment from scratch – when the reaction doesn't happen you simply need to try again. All in all, never give up.

Dr. Marchyk's journey highlights the diversity of perspectives and experiences that our passions can provide us. For her, chemistry is not just a science - it is a way of thinking that fosters perseverance, interdisciplinary learning, and passion for learning. Whether in a laboratory or a classroom, her dedication remains unwavering. Her story serves as proof that curiosity and persistence are significant for growth.

AKADEMEIA SEMINAR

CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN SOCIETY AND THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL FACTORS THAT HAVE SHAPED IT

Lea Fisher

Our school had the privilege of hosting journalist and author Jakub Benedyczak for an interview and talk on “Contemporary Russian Society and Socio-Historical Factors That Have Shaped It.” As a specialist in Russian politics and culture, Mr. Benedyczak provided insight into the political views, personality, and mentality of many Russians, as well as the historical factors that have shaped them.

SOFT AUTHORITARIANISM TO DIGITAL NEO-TOTALITARIANISM

Mr. Benedyczak discussed the gradual transformation of Russia’s political system under Vladimir Putin. He described the first two decades of Putin’s rule as soft authoritarianism, a period when the government maintained control while allowing some political and personal freedom. However, he argued that in the last 2 years leading up to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia transitioned into what he called digital neo-totalitarianism.

“Russian propaganda leading up to the war,” he explained, “has been fuelled for the past 10 years,” - no longer confined to state-controlled television but carefully intertwined with pop culture and “transmitted into the Russian brain.” Over the past decade, Russian society has been affected by a constant influx of propaganda, subconsciously preparing the population for war long before it began.

When asked about Russians’ views on the war, he acknowledged that while much of the population has been deeply influenced by propaganda, public opposition remains extremely dangerous. He stated that if he were Russian and opposed the war, he would not express his true opinion, knowing that

the FSB (Federal Security Service) would be at his doorstep within minutes. Additionally, he noted that Article 282 of the Penal Code, which criminalizes “extremist activity,” has been widely used to silence any opposition, making it nearly impossible to determine how many Russians actually oppose the war.



AUTHORITARIANISM IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

According to Mr. Benedyczak, authoritarianism is not a recent emergence in Russia, but a long-standing system that has been infiltrating the nation throughout history. He explains these tendencies by referencing back to the Bolshevik Revolution, arguing that the country chose Lenin’s totalitarianism over the aspirations of the emerging middle class. He explained that this choice is what “transformed the country in the most horrible way possible.”

He also compared the roles of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches in resisting oppression. He mentioned that unlike the Catholic Church, which has been creating social teachings for centuries, the Russian Orthodox Church is “a very emotional faith” and that it hasn’t “created any interesting thoughts based on its ideas” - lacking an educated past. Therefore, it is too weak and vulnerable to stand against the Soviet system.

THE RUSSIAN MENTALITY

One of the most peculiar parts of the talk was Mr. Benedyczak’s explanation of the Russian mentality, specifically the culture of communal suffering. He explained that due to hardship throughout Russian history, Russian society has created a culture based on pride in being able to “suffer like no one else” - a mindset that is now used to justify “fighting for their imperial goals in Ukraine” and to endure sanctions.

He explained that “since they (Russian society) do not have a vision of good on our earth,” they seem to believe they are allowed to “lie, cheat, do unfair things”, justifying it with phrases like “жизнь такая” (life is like that), a way of saying “it is what it is.” Russian society tends to believe that everything is out of their hands - if life is difficult, they simply suffer through it. If one day they sit next to a Ukrainian as a brother (which Mr. Benedyczak referred to as false sentimentalism), yet the next day they are told to conquer them, they accept it because “it is what it is,” believing that nothing depends on them. He also noted that Russia is fixated on its past, particularly its victory in World War II, but lacks any clear vision for the future.

Yet, he also mentioned that an aspect of this mentality was something he appreciated about the Russian people during his time living in Russia. He said that while living in other countries, he did not like the distance between people and felt that people were nice to each other in a false way - what he called “being nice in a capitalistic way.” In Russia, he said, there is a close connection with people as soon as you meet them, and that there is “no sh*tty small talk.”

However, he also linked this back to the false sentimentalism he had previously mentioned, and that the next day, none of this “realness” could be relevant anymore.

THE FUTURE OF WAR IN UKRAINE

Mr. Benedyczak explained that he does not think there will be a clear resolution in the ongoing war in Ukraine. While there may be chance for

a ceasefire, he believes that Russia would just use it as an opportunity to “get reorganised,” and that it will continue seeing Ukraine’s occupied territories as Russian. Moreover, he mentioned that Ukraine has given a lot of blood to their independence, both during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the past, referring back to The Maidan in 2014, which became known as the Revolution of Dignity, and decisively broke ties with Russia. Therefore, Mr Benedyczak said, it would be difficult to justify “making an agreement” with Russia and giving up almost 20% of Ukraine’s territory.



SAFETY IN RUSSIA

When asked about his experience living in Russia, particularly given his work at a human rights organisation in 2012, he said that at no point did he feel unsafe or unwelcome by the state while working there. However, he admitted that he would be very scared to go back now. He also noted the noticeable lack of human rights and international organizations in Russia, and that his Russian colleagues were likely in a more unsafe position than he was.

This talk, filled with the opinions and predictions of an expert, offered an interesting insight into Russian history, as well as the mystery of what Russia is. For more detail, we encourage you to read his new book, “Oddział chorych na Rosję. Opowieść o Rosjanach czasów putinizmu.”

AKAMUN : THE SEQUEL

Julek Franco Janecki

You might have seen a bunch of teens roaming the halls decked out in suits on a Friday in late January. That was us! The delegates of the second edition of Akademeia Model United Nations. The student-led simulation of the UN took place here at school from January 24th to 26th.

During the General Assembly, which brought together all delegates, ambassadors, and chairs to the front of the secretariat in the auditorium, the former President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski, gave an inspiring speech on the nuance of modern geo-politics and answered several questions.

For the rest of the first day and the entirety of the second, we partook in invigorating debates while following (or trying to) the United Nations Rules Of Procedure. If we did not, our chairs had plenty of fun punishments in store (like Just Dance and throwing cheesy pick-up lines).

On the last day, we all gathered in the General Assembly to present and vote on resolutions we had tirelessly written, with the goal of resolving at least some of the issues plaguing the modern world.

The conference was a great opportunity to expand geo-political knowledge, public speaking skills, debating, and quick thinking all the while making plenty of new friends.



We want to congratulate the students behind this event: Pola Krawczyk – Y12, Aleksander Korobowicz – Y12, Luke Bakic-Pawlak – Y12, Nina Staniszewska – Y12, Oliwia Czarnecka – Y12, and Solomiia Kulachkovska – Y13, as well as Michal Kusiak who attends a different high school.

FUTURE AFTER FIRES: HOW WILL LA CHANGE?

Helena Bruździak

The wildfires raging in Southern California have burned more than 40,000 acres—equivalent to 162 squares—wiping out entire neighbourhoods and making once-vibrant areas appear more like war zones. The Pacific Palisades, a neighbourhood housing 23,000 people and many celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez and Tom Hanks, is an example of a place where such a dramatic destruction took place.

Fuelled by powerful winds and dry conditions, a series of ferocious wildfires erupted on January 7th and roared across the Los Angeles area, killing at least 27 people. Over 15,000 houses and businesses have been levelled with more than 30 billion dollars in losses.

Rebuilding could bring its own set of nightmares including murky insurance policies, material shortages, and potentially higher costs for items such as lumber and bathtubs. According to the LA Times, this situation could be the construction industry's equivalent for what COVID-19 was to the sector.



People are asking what will happen to those who currently live there given the widespread devastation. How will they recover financially? Some are wondering if this will impact their favourite show, the upcoming awards season—including events such as the Grammys or Oscars—or the 2028 Olympics, which will be hosted in Los Angeles.



Delay, Deny, Depose

Before Californians can even think about rebuilding their homes, they must first face the loss of their property—whether it was their home or a source of income for their landlord. To navigate this, they turn to their insurance companies.

Insurance companies in the US are notorious for creating obstacles for Americans, from denying medical care to issuing extremely high bills.



Thus, many have had to fight not only illnesses but also the insurance companies, which refuse to cover the terribly expensive medicine the people need to survive. Due to this and the recent assassination of Brian Thompson, a health insurance CEO, anti-insurance company sentiment has surged throughout the country.

Insurers are re-evaluating their policies, with some increasing premiums, limiting coverage, or outright refusing to renew policies in fire-prone areas. This shift leaves thousands of homeowners in a precarious position as they struggle to rebuild while navigating complex claims processes. For those who are underinsured or uninsured, recovery becomes even more difficult, highlighting the need for systemic changes in how insurance companies address climate-related disasters.

Many have complained that their fire insurance was withdrawn in the months leading up to the fires. Last year alone, thousands of insurance policies have been refused, seemingly due to the increasingly dire drought situation caused by climate change. State Farm, the region's biggest insurer with a portfolio of 250,000 homes in LA County, dropped 1,600 policies in the Palisades in July 2024, and more than 2,000 policies in other LA zip codes.

Building Back Stronger

Those online have criticised the US for not using more durable building materials that are able to withstand difficult weather conditions. In the past, majority of homes were not built with our current fire-resistant techniques, which now needs to be a priority. Unfortunately, this increased demand for materials during the rebuilding process could possibly stress manufactures and make the prices rise substantially.

Rebuilding the damaged buildings will be challenging as the land itself needs to be restored to make it suitable for building. Additionally, the disposal of the piles of debris left by the horrific destruction will be complicated.



Countless people have been worried about President Trump's reaction to the disaster and whether he will support the state. This has come after Mark Harvey, Trump's senior director for resilience policy on the National Security Council Staff from his previous administration, gave an interview during which he stated that Trump refused to approve disaster aid for California after the tragic wildfires in 2018 because the state is predominantly democratic. Trump had to be shown statistics of people who voted for him in California to convince him to send aid.

For now, Trump doesn't seem opposed to sending aid to California, declaring that "The federal government is standing behind you. 100 percent," during a speech. Meanwhile, Governor Gavin Newsom signed a 2.5-billion-dollar aid package for the state.

Even with this aid package, however, rebuilding homes faces the challenge of Trump's tariff plans. For example, the administration plans to introduce tariffs on Canada, America's largest lumber supplier, will inevitably raise prices of the material needed to build the houses once more.

Lumber is the single largest component of home-building materials, accounting for around 15% of total home construction expenditures. In Southern California, builders frame homes with wood imported primarily from Canada.

Production Delays and Industry Uncertainty

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the Oscars will be happening as planned and rumours of them being moved or cancelled are false. The board, which includes four individuals who lost their homes in the fires, extended the Oscar nominations voting window, pushed back the announcement of the Oscar nominations, and cancelled this year's Oscar Nominees Luncheon. These pushbacks in the nomination announcements are why so many on the internet worried about the fate of the awards as a whole.



But overall, few movie productions were directly impacted. Nevertheless, the entertainment industry and its workers—writers, actors, producers, and others—have felt the effects of the disaster.

The 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles are unlikely to be postponed, since the fires haven't yet harmed any of the stadiums, arenas, or athlete housing complexes.



The Los Angeles wildfires have left a lasting scar on the city, destroying homes, testing insurance systems, and forcing communities to reconsider how to rebuild. With billions in damages, soaring costs, and complicated claims, recovery won't be easy. Hopefully LA will prove resilient and receive the necessary aid from the government to rebuild.

Perhaps these fires have helped people wake up to the effects and dangers of rising global temperatures, hopefully inspiring smarter climate policies.

JUSTICE DENIED?

THE KEY LEGAL OBSTACLES IN PROSECUTING ISIS MEMBERS FOR GENOCIDE AGAINST THE YAZIDIS

Zuzanna Skłodowska

In August 2014, the Yazidi community in northern Iraq became the target of a brutal genocidal campaign conducted by the Islamic State (ISIS). Thousands were killed, hundreds of women and children enslaved, and entire villages turned to rubble. Over a decade later, however, justice remains elusive. Despite overwhelming evidence and international recognition of the atrocities as genocide, prosecuting ISIS perpetrators for these crimes has proven to be a complicated legal battle.

So, why does this legal limbo persist? And what does it mean for the future of international justice? The following excerpt from my full research paper titled “what are the key legal challenges associated with prosecuting ISIS members for genocide against the Yazidi population under international criminal law?” examines these jurisdictional challenges, providing insight into the legal hurdles which continue to prevent justice till today:

The key reason why the prosecution of ISIS militants for genocide against the Yazidi community faces challenges are the jurisdictional issues – particularly the role of the International Criminal Court, and complexities of international law. The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established in 2002 by the Rome Statute, which grants the court authority to prosecute individuals for the following four core international crimes indicated in Article 5 of the Statute: war crimes, crimes against humanity, the crime of genocide, and the crime of aggression.

Nevertheless, the ICC’s jurisdiction is limited to states that are party to the statute, or those that have accepted the court’s authority through a UN Security Council referral. Although it is party to the UN Genocide Convention, Iraq is not one of the 124 countries that are state parties to the Rome Statute, which limits the ICC’s ability to investigate or prosecute crimes committed within Iraqi territory – this includes the genocide committed against the Yazidis.



The UN Human Rights Council highlighted this issue in its report from August 2016, *A Call for Accountability and Protection: Yazidi Survivors of Atrocities Committed by ISIL*. The lack of ICC jurisdiction over Iraq allows many ISIS members to avoid prosecution and continue to pose a threat to survivors and the Yazidi community.

Aware of these limitations, some nations have attempted to make use of the principle of universal jurisdiction, which enables states to prosecute individuals for serious international crimes committed abroad. In recent years, Germany has emerged as a notable example of this, having successfully prosecuted numerous perpetrators for their roles in the genocide against the Yazidi community. It became the first country in the world to judge crimes of genocide against the Yazidis when in November 2021 Taha Al-J, an Iraqi national and IS (Islamic State) member who extradited to Germany from Greece, was convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

This was a landmark achievement as an IS member was held legally accountable for genocide rather than the usual terrorism, bringing justice to the atrocities committed against the Yazidis. While this case indeed demonstrated how universal jurisdiction is able to hold perpetrators accountable, the fragmented nature of international efforts complicates cooperation between countries, resulting in inconsistent legal standards and potential gaps that perpetrators may exploit.

Consequently, the prosecution of ISIS members for genocide is severely constrained by the absence of a cohesive, international strategy, depriving many victims of justice, and creating a sense of immunity among perpetrators.



REVIVING DIGNITY

FIRST STEP TO REMEMBRANCE OF VOLHYNIAN VICTIMS

Helena Jurczak

The decision about exhumation of the victims of the Volyn Massacre marks a pivotal moment in the long-lasting tension between Poland and Ukraine. After decades of dispute - a chance for healing and reconciliation.

A LONG-AWAITED BREAKTHROUGH

On January 10, 2025, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced his decision to begin exhumation of the victims of the Volyn Massacre. The decision came after decades of tension between Poland and Ukraine over the nature of the tragedy, underscoring the need for healing and reconciliation not only between the two nations, but also with the families of those who perished. Eighty-one years after the tragic events, they will finally have the opportunity to say goodbye to their loved ones. There is shadow of a chance to provide dignified burials for the victims, often left in unmarked mass graves.

HISTORICAL TENSIONS

The Volhynian Slaughter was a genocide against Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Armenians, and Czechs carried out by Ukrainian nationalists, often supported by the local population, which took place mainly in the summer of 1943 on the territory of the former Volyn Voivodeship of the Second Republic of Poland. The aim of the plot was to remove minorities from the Borderlands and destroy their cultural vestiges because Ukrainian nationalists wanted to create an independent Ukrainian state, free of Poles

and other minorities. In the collective memory of Ukrainians, there remained a significant recollection of the injustices perpetrated by the Polish nobility during the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, which also contributed to the massacre in Volhynia. This, and the anti-Polish propaganda spread by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), led to increased ethnic tension and willingness on the part of Ukrainians. Under difficult wartime conditions, the looting of Polish homes was also a motivation for many of the participants in the crime. An estimated 40,000 to 100,000 Poles were killed, as well as 10,000 to 12,000 Ukrainians in retaliation. The attacks were coordinated, often taking place on Sundays during mass, and the perpetrators used farm implements to carry out the killings.



The bestiality of these crimes is unimaginable, with thousands of victims being chopped up with axes, sawn alive or nailed to huts. The slaughter ended in 1944, when much of the Polish population was slaughtered or forced to flee.

SEEKING TRUTH

The exhumations at the massacre sites are so important because they will also provide valuable historical evidence that will help document the scale and nature of the crimes committed during this period. It will bring us closer to more accurate numbers of victims, which are now estimated from 40,000 to as many as 100,000. This evidence is essential for addressing the scientific issues being debated in Polish-Ukrainian relations. Since 2017, Ukraine has been objecting to the way the events are described and commemorated. Poland officially recognizes the massacre as genocide, while Ukraine has historically disputed this characterization, viewing it as a conflict for which Ukraine is merely complicit. The different interpretations of history pose a serious challenge, polarizing society and complicating relations between Poland and Ukraine. In the context of international relations, the topic of exhumation takes on special importance, as it can contribute to building bridges between nations, instead of digging in with one's beliefs. Even if the investigation of these events will lead to social tensions and exacerbate existing conflicts over national memory, historical evidence must be obtained to ensure that the way things were are settled once and for all. Resolving the Volyn issue and finding answers backed by science can paradoxically ensure reconciliation instead of further division. Together, we can preserve the memory of the victims, thus recognizing their suffering and contributing to the reconciliation process.

HEALING WOUNDS

The personal tragedies of the victims and their families are also an important aspect of the case. Efforts, in the case of consent for exhumations, are also aimed at ensuring dignified burials. The exhumation process is crucial to ensuring that the victims are given proper burials, resolving the long-standing issue of their remains being left in unmarked graves.

For years "Families of Volyn victims have been calling for exhumations and burials." They are waiting for a dignified burial and a proper farewell to their ancestors. The crimes are also recalled by survivors themselves, such as Mrs. Maria Berny, who says "We were not afraid of death then. We were afraid of the murder; the way we would die." To the people who were so brutally murdered, condemned to long hours of torture, we should provide a dignified burial that will not only bring solace to their loved ones, but also return and preserve the memory of how easy it is to stop seeing the human in the human. How easily we divide people into worthy and unworthy, better and worse, those who deserve a grave and those whose bodies are thrown into the ditch.

HONORING THE PAST, ENSURING PEACE

To prevent a murder of this size, we need remembrance. About the victims and their unimaginable suffering. Unfortunately, the survivors who carry this dark part of history with them are dwindling year by year. To preserve and honor the testimony of them and the thousands of victims, we need to know the truth and spread the memory.



THE PARADOX OF CHOICE

Julia Jasińska

Do you ever find yourself stuck, unable to make a decision when sitting in a restaurant and the menu you're holding has just too many options to choose from? Or when you have to buy bread in a bakery but variations of what seems to be just flour and water are actually endless? Well, this phenomenon is called the choice paradox.

In the modern world where more and more options are available to us every day, instead of feeling liberated, we tend to feel paralyzed. This concept was introduced by a psychologist called Barry Swartz in his book 'The Paradox of Choice.' He argued that when we are faced with a decision that includes choosing only one out of many options, we are put in a state of overwhelm that will cause us to postpone making the actual decision. This is because making decisions requires a lot of cognitive effort and when we are faced with many opportunities, we feel the pressure to take the best one. In turn, however, we are less satisfied as we might be left with a feeling of regret about not taking the 'better option.' So, in a nutshell, Swartz argued that having more choices creates unrealistic expectations that increase our dissatisfaction. To prove this concept in real life,



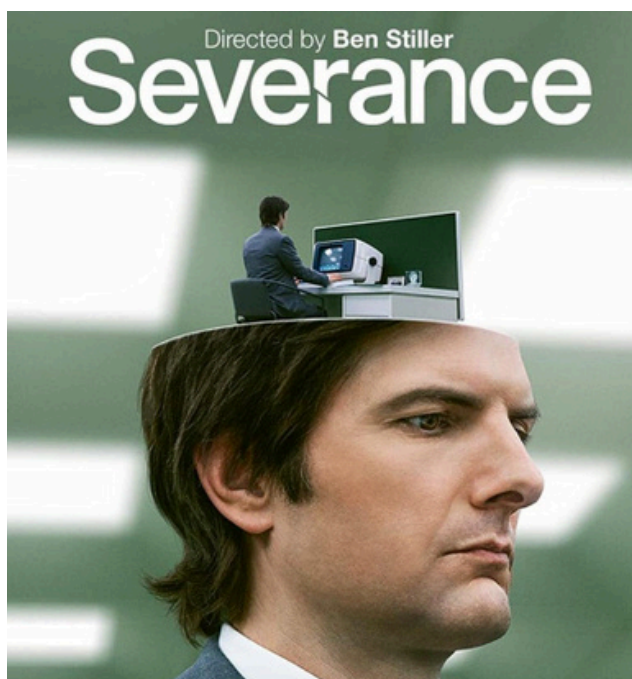
a case study was conducted by two psychologists: Lyengar and Lepper in 2000. They presented customers with an array of shops, some of which had 24 different samples of jams and others which only had 6 samples. It turned out that in the shops where there were 6 samples, customers were 10 times more likely to make a purchase compared to the shops with 24 samples. This case study shows that while more options may attract more attention, it is the simpler choices that make us feel satisfied and more willing to make decisions and act.

Our life is made up of decisions that we make every day and there is no escaping this reality. To maintain good mental well-being, it is important to take the options that are good enough rather than focusing on making the best decision. Only wanting what's best can create a lot of unnecessary pressure and regret. So, the lesson is: don't let your inner perfectionism tear you apart as the decisions that you have made allowed you to be in the place you are today. Don't be afraid of life; make decisions, take risks, and see where life takes you.

UN-LOCKEING SEVERANCE

Natasza Grzyl

With the continuing release of the second season of ‘Severance’ on Apple TV, I decided to go back and explore more deeply some of the ethical questions posed by this show, especially whether a “severed” consciousness of an “innie” is enough to be considered a *person*.



‘Severance’ is an American science fiction psychological thriller which follows Mark Scout, played by Adam Scott. He leads a team of office workers under the “severance” program, where they have all had their memories surgically divided between their work and personal lives. As a result, the employees who have been “severed” do not remember anything about their home life while at work or anything about what they do at work when they clock out. This essentially creates

two separate people: the “innies” and the “outies.” The fact that neither the “innie” nor the “outie” know what their job actually is only adds to the atmosphere of obscurity; the “outie” is not told anything about their work while the “innie” sorts through massive files of numbers only knowing that their work is apparently “mysterious and important.” Although slowly solving this puzzle is a central premise of the show, another is exploring the degree to which the “innies” have an *identity*, especially in comparison to their “outies.”

Inquiries about personhood—what makes you *you*, and not somebody else—were very prominent during John Locke’s times. John Locke was a 17th-century English philosopher and physician who is widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers, and whose works are the cornerstone of modern philosophical empiricism and political liberalism. For many 17th-century thinkers for whom Christianity was an essential part of society, it was a given that after our physical lives we would go on to live some form of afterlife. However, the question about who exactly would live this life still stood.

Locke provided two main principles for determining the identity or unity of things in his ‘Essay Concerning Human Understanding’ (1690). Firstly, he believed that at any given time, one thing can exist at one place only:

“It being impossible for two things of the same kind to be or exist in the same instant, in the very same place; or one and the same thing in different places. That, therefore, that had one beginning, is the same things; and that which had a different beginning in time and place from that, is not the same, but diverse.”

Secondly, and more importantly for this inquiry into *identity*, Locke claimed that the constituents that a thing is made of and is differentiated from other things is crucial for determining the identity of things. What this means is that, for instance, non-living creatures are a “cohesion of particles any how united” and that is what their identity consists of. For living creatures however, the particles cannot be united in just any way, but rather, must be united in a way that nourishes and sustains that creature through existence. Therefore, Locke said that their identity lies in:

“The participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized body.”

As living beings, humans are part of this as well.

Locke does not stop there as, for him, there also exists a difference between human identity, as a living being, and *personal* identity.

Despite the frequent interchange of the terms, Locke posits that *man* is composed of two components: the body, which is composed of physical matter, and the soul, which is composed of non-physical matter. Alternatively, a *person*, in addition to being composed of physical and non-physical matter, also possesses consciousness. Locke defines consciousness as something which unites the body and soul while giving perception to the being. In other words, a person is a rational being capable of thought and reflection, able to perceive itself as the same entity across various times and locations, thanks to its consciousness. For Locke, personal identity rests in a person’s consciousness and the awareness of previous states of consciousness, known as memory. He concludes that having no consciousness reaching into the past, even if there was a continuation of the same soul, is evidence that the soul is not where personal identity resides.

And here is Mark, drinking while mindlessly watching TV at home but being enthusiastic and diligent at work. Despite Mark Scout being



technically one person, there exist major differences between the behavior of his “innie” and that of his “outie,” as the viewers see as the first season progresses, due to the differences in their conscious experience. Therefore, it can be said that, at least from the standpoint of ‘Severance,’ Locke’s theories seem to apply quite well.

While there exist objections to Locke’s account of personal identity, it is a good way to begin thinking about why we consider the “innies” in ‘Severance’ people, despite their severe lack of experiences and knowledge about the outside world. Even the characters themselves wonder about this, as Helly R exemplifies within the very first few minutes of the show: “Am I livestock? Like, did you grow me as food and that is why I have no memories?” The fact that Helly is asking these sorts of questions moments after having woken up on a conference table with no memories and no one around is just one reason I encourage you to watch the show. If that is not enough to convince you, consider how this question about personal identity may apply to your own school/home identity. Would you regard your school-self and home-self as a unified identity, or, despite not being “severed,” would you see them as separate? If so, you may have more in common with Mark S and Helly R than you think!

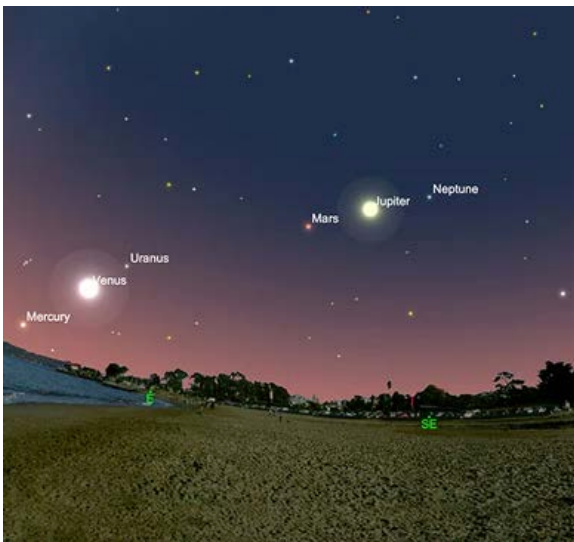
SPACE BY THE MONTH

Anastazja Rybakiewicz

It's March, but I still cannot believe it's 2025! Have you kept up your New Year's resolutions, or as I like to call them, New Year's possibilities? If learning about astronomy was on your list, this article is for you. Here, I gathered the most fascinating astronomical events happening each month until the end of 2025. Make sure to write down the dates in your calendars so you won't miss them!

1) Quadrantid Meteor Shower Peak (January 2-3):

It was one of the most prolific, with up to 120 meteors per hour at its peak, best viewed in the Northern Hemisphere under ideal conditions due to minimal moonlight interference. The event is associated with an asteroid named 2003 EH1, which is believed to be the source of the meteoroids creating the shower. When trying to see it, if you faced north, that is where the radiant point of the shower was located – right next to the constellation Boötes. Moreover, the Quadrantids are notable for their sharp peak – 6 hours, which means the best viewing opportunities were extremely limited compared to other meteor showers, so I hope you didn't miss this opportunity!



2) Alignment of Seven Planets (February 28):

A spectacular event where seven planets aligned as they move through the ecliptic, forming a “planet parade”. You did not need any additional equipment, because the phenomenon was visible with the naked eye, except for Neptune and Uranus, which required a telescope for a better view. They'll never form a straight line; however, this was still a rare event, considering the last time a full planetary alignment occurred was in April [2022](#). This is because each planet exhibits slight deviations in their location relative to the ecliptic, with their orbits tilted varying degrees from the plane. This is why achieving a perfectly straight line of all planets is virtually impossible and this is as close as we will get to one.

3) Blood Moon Total Lunar Eclipse (March 14):

A total lunar eclipse where the Moon takes on a reddish hue, providing a dramatic celestial display visible from many locations. It was the first total lunar eclipse since 2022, where the Earth blocks sunlight from directly reaching the Moon. Instead, light refracts through Earth's atmosphere, casting a reddish hue on the Moon's surface. As much as the official name sounds quite scary, the event is widely known by the name Worm Moon, which comes from the earthworms that appear as the ground thaws in spring.

4) Conjunction of Venus and Jupiter (April 30):

Venus and Jupiter may appear to merge into a single bright point of light due to their proximity, as they will appear to be less than the width of the Moon apart in the sky. Make sure to look for a bright spot after finishing school – the event is estimated for around 5:22 p.m.

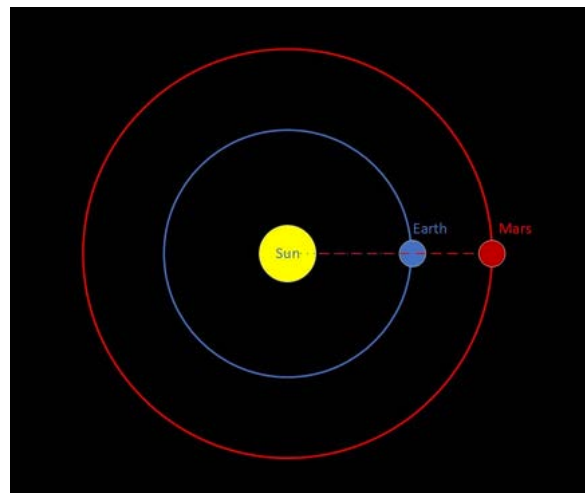
5) Super Flower Moon (May 15): This full moon is classified as a Supermoon (within approximately 90% of its closest distance to Earth during its orbit), meaning it will appear larger and brighter than it typically does. The name originates from various cultural traditions that recognize this full moon as a time when flowers bloom abundantly in spring.



7) Mars at Opposition (July 27): Mars will be at its closest approach to us, appearing particularly bright and large in the night sky, because Earth will be passing directly between Mars and the Sun. The event occurs approximately every two years, due to the differing orbital speeds of each planet.



6) Strawberry Full Moon (June 14): This full moon is traditionally associated with strawberry harvesting and will be particularly bright during this time. It is part of a series of full moons throughout the year, each with unique names that relate to seasonal changes. In 2025, there will also be other notable full moons such as the Buck Moon and the Sturgeon Moon.



8) Perseid Meteor Shower Peak (August 12-13):

One of the most popular meteor showers, it can produce up to 100 meteors per hour under optimal conditions. The Perseids are caused by the Earth passing through the debris left behind by Comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle, coming from the constellation Perseus, hence their name.



10) Mercury at greatest elongation east (October 29):

Ideal for evening viewing, as Mercury is positioned about 18 degrees away from the Sun in the sky. This distance minimizes the Sun's glare, making it easier to spot Mercury shortly after sunset when it appears in the western sky.



12) Total solar eclipse (December 4):

We will be finishing the year with a totality, where the Moon will completely cover the Sun, revealing the solar corona— beautiful white plasma surrounding the Sun. This phenomenon occurs when the Moon is directly between the Earth and the Sun. In Poland, the total solar eclipse will be easily visible during school hours from around 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. To safely view the eclipse, it is essential to use proper solar viewing glasses (which you can try to convince our physics teachers to bring us) to protect our eyes from harmful solar radiation during the partial phases.



9) Lunar Occultation of Venus (September 19):

The Moon will pass in front of Venus, temporarily obscuring it from our view. It may be challenging to observe it with the naked eye due to daylight, so make sure to bring binoculars or a telescope to enhance visibility.



11) Supermoon (November 5):

Appearing larger and brighter than usual, the Beaver Moon is named for the time of year when beavers are preparing for winter. During this time, the Moon can appear up to 30% brighter and about 16% larger than an average full moon. And although it happens every year, it is a sign saying Winter is coming...



UNSUNG HEROES — OF FOOTBALL —

Konrad Wierzbicki

Team: *‘a group of players forming one side in a competitive sport or game’*

The key word of this definition is a group. No team is created with a single player. However, some of them stand out, and some of them work in the shadow of others. And when the latter leave, teams struggle to continue to prosper, and most importantly to win.

Throughout the history of football there have been multiple examples of such players across many generations, but there is one predominantly unnoticed position: central midfielders, the connectors, and conductors of the pitch. One of the best examples is the German national Toni Kroos.

Toni Kroos had played for Real Madrid [RMA] since 2014. During 11 seasons RMA won: 5 Champions League titles, 5 Club World Cups, 4 Spanish Championships, 4 UEFA Super Cups, 4 Spanish Supercups, and 1 Copa del Rey.



Kroos’s contribution amounted to 28 goals scored and 99 assisted. To add to his trophy cabinet, he also became victorious in the 2014 World Cup with Germany. All the accomplishments sound impressive, don’t they? Nevertheless, he has always stayed in the shadow of Cristiano Ronaldo, and later, Karim Benzema. Following his retirement, Real Madrid entered a season of underperforming, and that was when people realised how important he was. Kroos was an absolutely irreplaceable maestro who dictated the tempo of the game. Moreover, he maintained consistency and was able to connect players as a whole.

In the 23-24 season Real Madrid won nearly everything there was to win, with the biggest achievement being the UCL followed by a 97-point La Liga year. That year Madrid also won all El Clasicos with the most notable being a 4-1 win in the Supercopa final. The season was one of the most successful in the club's history.

The EUROS came and Kroos retired, with no replacements in the midfield, and everyone focused on Kylian Mbappe, renowned as the best striker in the world. Then the first games came, and it was as if a different team had stepped out onto the pitch. Another testament to this was a 4-0 loss to Barcelona and a defeat with Lille and AC Milan in the Champions League, teams that last season Madrid would have easily defeated. The thing Real struggled with was not the front three, but the midfield and defence, and the general connection between all players that were kept together by Kroos for the past decade.

This is a prime example of how often the most important players are completely overshadowed by their colleagues in a world where goals and statistics are the measure of a player, not the difference they make. Kroos is not the only example. There were other unsung heroes of football such as Makelele, Xabi Alonso, Steven Gerrard, Busquets, among others. These stories remind us how football is never a one player game, but always a team game, where everyone is equally important, and no team can function without all players.



HISTORY OF EL CLASICO

Jan Janczar

One thing all football fans can agree on is that Barcelona and Real Madrid are two of the most famous clubs in football history. Matchups between these two are known as El Clasico, and each time, around 650 million people worldwide tune in to watch. Regardless of the final score, this fixture always proves to be entertaining with both teams playing incredibly passionately. Despite the massive popularity of this rivalry, few people know its full history.

El Clasico started all the way back in 1902 during the Copa del Rey final. Even then Barcelona and Real Madrid were considered the best football clubs in Spain. Since the Spanish league was not founded yet, the only match between the 2 clubs would have been in the Copa del Rey. This historical game sparked a massive rivalry, with this incarnation of the famous match going Real Madrid's way, ending in a 3-1 win in their favour. The Spanish league was founded in 1927, with the first match in this new competition ending in a 2-1 victory for Real Madrid. Another notable match between these 2 teams includes the highest scoring one ever, being an 11-1 victory for Madrid in 1943. The standout season for El Clasico is undoubtedly 2010/2011, with there being a total of five matches that year; including 2 La Liga matches, 2 games in the UEFA Champions League and the Copa Del Rey final. In addition to there being a substantial number of matches that year, they proved to be incredibly entertaining with the main attraction being Barcelona's 5-0 win at home in La Liga.



Since both teams usually have star studded lineups, heated rivalries are bound to begin. The most famed and obvious one is Lionel Messi (Barcelona) and Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid). Both players are considered some of the best football players ever and even though they are personally on good terms, their fanbases tend to create rivalries. This is partially why each El Clasico - from 2009 up until 2018 - which is when the 2 players played in La Liga together, was met with particular excitement. The 2 attackers competed over the course of their entire careers, with both scoring many goals and eventually becoming their clubs' top scorers. They also consistently fought for the Ballon D'or and the title of top scorer every season.

Another lesser-known rivalry is that of László Kubala (Barcelona) and Alfredo Di Stéfano (Real Madrid). These 2 players played in LaLiga in the 1950s and early 1960s. At the time, despite being known on a national level, Barcelona and Real Madrid were not particularly proficient on the European level. However, this all changed when Alfredo Di Stéfano arrived in Real Madrid. Together with Ferenc Puskás and Paco Gento they formed what is now referred to as the Galacticos at Real Madrid. Barcelona's response to them was László Kubala, who's rivalry with Di Stéfano can be compared to that of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo - both players revolutionized football in Spain.

Despite the growing popularity of football, the history of El Clasico is a relatively unknown one, however fascinating. From the historical matches such as Real Madrid's 11-1 win in 1943 to exciting rivalries such as Lionel Messi vs Cristiano Ronaldo, each El Clasico is sure to be fascinating, emotional and a part of football heritage.

ART'S WEEK

A celebration of creativity and community

Our annual Art Week happened during the second week of March.

On Monday, the Art and Design Exhibition showcased work from GCSE and A-Level students, including paintings, sculptures, and digital designs. It was good to see the fruits of their hard work (usually hidden in room 21). On Thursday, the Art Fair featured student-made crafts, prints, and artworks. Ms Strzelczak was even drawing portraits - it felt like we were on a Parisian street. In the evening, the school musical premiered. Friday included a mix of musical and poetry performances, ending with the final show of the musical, which was spectacular and so fun! Remember, don't feed the plants!

What a vibrant time in our community.



Later

By Susan Dutkiewicz

Not now, later

I'll call you back, later

I'll talk to you, later

I'll love you, later.

Not now,

Now, I'm busy

School, work

Working at school

Learning to work

Well

It takes time to work

It takes time to be

Busy

All, the time

Not now, I'm busy

I'll see it, later

I'll think, later

I'll live, later.

Later, I'll be busy

Busy, dying

Too Busy to live

I'll do it later.



AP JAMZ

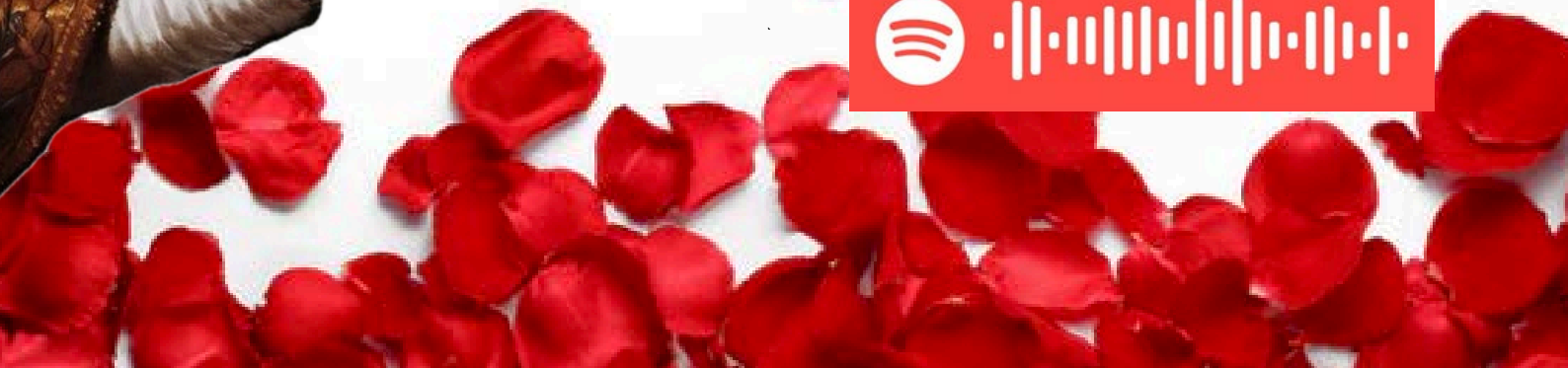


Julek Franco Janecki

“It’s Friday, I’m in Love!” That may be the defining quote from one of The Cure’s greatest hits of the same name. This love-filled holiday happened to fall on a Friday this year and it couldn’t have been more perfect. March has four Fridays when you can sing this chorus, despite Valentine’s being long gone. Whether you have a special someone (or someones) or not, I think this celebration is a stellar opportunity to express gratitude for all the love in your life; friends, family, pets, and the list goes on. Maybe you have not found romantic love but I’m sure: “If you look for it, I’ve got a sneaky feeling you’ll find that love actually is all around” (Love Actually, 2003)



1. Friday I’m In Love by The Cure
2. Linger by The Cranberries
3. Put Your Head on My Shoulder by Paul Anka
4. Love in the Time of Socialism by Yellow House
5. Love My Way by The Psychedelic Furs
6. Silver Springs – 2004 Remaster by Fleetwood Mac
7. Kiss Me by Sixpence None The Richer
8. LOVE. FEAT. ZACARI by Kendrick Lamar and Zacari
9. Ribs by Lorde





AKADEMEIA
HIGH SCHOOL