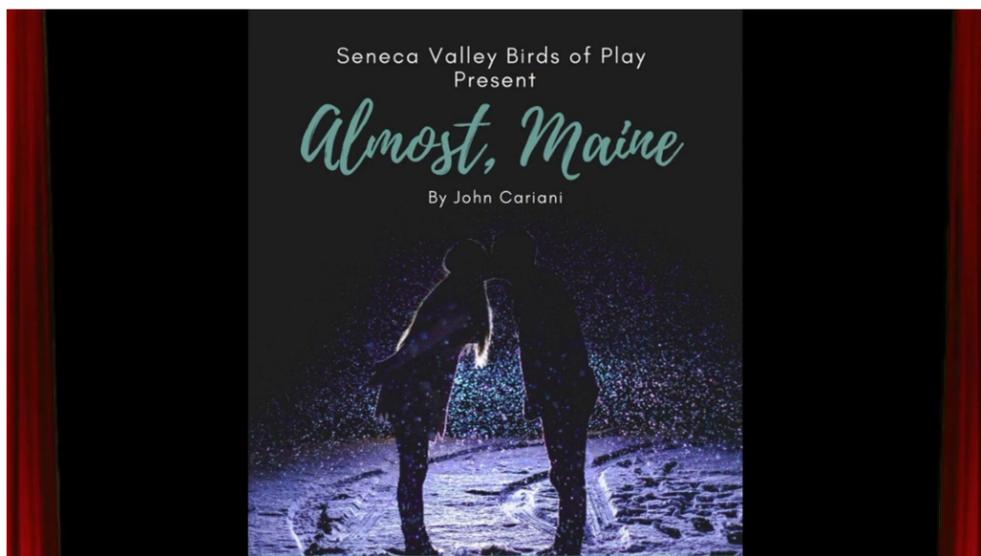


THE TALON

SENECA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL GERMANTOWN, MD

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The Show Must Go On

By: Parissa Ghahreman

Bright lights, colorful costumes and meticulously designed sets: it's Seneca Valley's show week, and students are itching to perform. Except, there are no mic checks. Or proper staging. But, there are web cameras and the comfort of performing that all-important scene as many times as needed in the comfort of your own home. For the Seneca Valley Birds of Play, the living room has become their stage due to the pandemic. With that being established, how does a whole theater department operate virtually? During an interview with the stage manager for the tech crew, Kira Shimokaji, I was able to gain an understanding of the process of what organizing the winter play *Almost, Maine* entails. Kira is a senior at SVHS and has been in the tech crew for all four years of her high school career.

How does theater operate through virtual learning?

As far as learning things like blocking and lines, we've been using Zoom. The actors are put into breakout rooms according to scenes and the director goes in to chat with them scene by scene. Line work has been pretty easy, while learning blocking has been a little more difficult since we have to make sure it looks like the actors are looking at one another through Zoom. The technical aspects of theater, like stage design and prop making have definitely been interesting to figure out. Mostly I've just been giving my techies very detailed instructions and trusted their creativity to do the rest. I've seen some great handmade props as a result!

What are the struggles of virtual theater? What's different from the traditional process?

I think the biggest struggle of virtual theater is the fact that it's hard to create a palatable atmosphere between actors, the director, and the technicians. There's this feeling that's missing because we aren't actually, physically, together. Some other troubles include blocking, as previously mentioned, and Internet issues.

Any comments you'd like to make?

Being the stage manager has definitely been challenging this year, but I think it's been worth it. I've sent some juicy emails, and I'm a sucker for a good email. COVID-19 or not, I am incredibly fortunate to work with this program and the stupendous Joanna Chilcoat Fellows.

The piece is described by Cottage Theater to be "a play about love and longing, friendship and isolation, melancholy and hope. The setting is a cold, clear, moonless night in the middle of winter in the mythical town of Almost, Maine. As the northern lights hover in the star-filled sky above, Almost's residents find themselves falling in and out of love in unexpected and often hilarious ways. The nine short, and sometimes quirky, vignettes all have a fable-like quality and the sweet simplicity of stories being told around a New England campfire". Tickets were available on svhsbop.com and were "pay what you can," with a recommended amount of \$5 per person. Funds went toward the theater program. Streaming was available from February 5-14. A streaming party was held on opening night, February 5th, at 7 PM.

All in all, the arts department at SVHS is still kicking through trial and error, DIYs, and enthusiasm.

WWIII, Kobe's Death, Coronavirus? Here's what happened in 2020

By: Karla Sanchez

Folks, a new decade has come! Remember how we were all dedicated to accomplish whatever goals we had for 2020? Unfortunately, things came crashing down. Definite *not* what we expected...

Just on the third day of 2020, a US Airstrike killed Iran's top general. According to the New York Times, "#WWIII" was trending on Twitter, due to fear that Iran would attack the US. In March, out of nowhere, a virus came out, the "Coronavirus" or COVID-19, causing schools to close on March 13th and finish the school year virtually. Everyone was quarantined for the summer, and we (Montgomery County Public Schools) have started this 2020-2021 school year virtually as well. Taking a few steps back in April and May, there were reports of Asian Giant Hornets (also known as Murder Hornets) found in Washington State according to BBC. That was wild.

Now, this was truly a devastating year for many families worldwide. We've lost precious people in our lives, who were too young to go. From 2020 to now, over 1.9 million people have passed away due to the coronavirus according to Worldometer. On January 26th, Kobe Bryant (41) & his daughter Gianna Bryant (13) died in a helicopter crash in Calabasas, California. According to autopsies in an article of ESPN, Bryant and the rest of the people (7) on board died immediately in the crash due to sustaining "fatal injuries." Another Legend that passed away in 2020 is Diego Maradona, at age 60. According to The Guardian, he died from a heart attack at his home in capital Bueno Aires, Argentina. This really hurt the Argentina fans (including myself), and his family. May all that passed rest in peace.

This year was terrible, sure, but in the music industry- artists have helped us get through the year. BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan, "Bulletproof Boy Scouts" in English) came out with a single every month of the year, and even released a new album in November, *BE*. The album was dedicated to everyone in the world, and ARMY (name of fan base) who have been struggling this year due to the pandemic. In Japan, there's a new theme park, the "Super Nintendo World" at Universal Studios. According to Orlando Informer, it's supposed to open sometime in 2024. It was originally set for 2023, but it got pushed back due to COVID-19.

I decided to question some people about 2020, here's what they said:

Karla: Is there an event that has affected you in a positive way this year?

Melina Rivera, student at SV: An event that has affect[ed] me in a positive way.. I think definitely the opportunities to do live paintings for paint institute.. The themes/paintings became personal and meaningful for others and I And it was really a huge step for me and my art so it was emotional.

Anonymous (fake name - Beau): Something that has affected me in a real positive way is getting my own apartment again for my children. It has really given me and my children a lot of privacy and closeness in our mother and son relationships. Along with keeping my business up and going. I did real well this year doing nails from home.

Karla: Will you miss 2020? Why?

Melina Rivera, student at SV: I will not miss this year (laughs) it honestly was a huge downfall for me mentally and emotionally. And I have lost quite a few things this year so ye[ah].

Beau: I think I will miss 2020 because I feel like the entire year I felt real grateful about everything happening around me. Good or bad. I always, always remained grateful.

Karla: What do you hope 2021 turns out to be?

Melina Rivera, student at SV: What I do hope for 2021 is that I am able to do more, getting myself back up and especially preparing for the future. Overall being a lot more productive and healed. [My] new year's resolution is to officially get my commissions going and sell my art.

Beau: I hope 2021 is full of new things. New vibes and positive relationships with others. I hope for more closeness with my family... And maybe a bigger apartment. God willing.

Karla: What's your new year's resolution?

Melina Rivera, student at SV: [My] new year's resolution is to officially get my commissions going and sell my art.

Beau: A New Year's resolution (laughs), I think it'd probably be the usual, lose some weight.

In conclusion, those are not all events that have occurred this 2020, but surely are major ones. The major tragedies with COVID-19, Murder Hornets, deaths. Though in order to not make it so bad, we did have BTS help and good news about the new theme park in Japan. I personally think this year was bad, but I've been able to do more during quarantine and find my real passion. Let's hope for the best in 2021 and hope we accomplish our goals.

Domestic Violence: Know the signs and get help

By: Katherine Mendoza

“According to the Partnership Against Domestic Violence, every 9 seconds, another woman in the U.S. is beaten.” According to [domesticshelters.org](https://www.domesticshelters.org).

Domestic violence is viewed differently through different people's eyes. Some people view it as normal or even expected in a relationship; causing people to not realize that what is happening to them is domestic violence. While others try their best to never be in that type of relationship. “Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person for example behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone,” as defined by [wadvocates.org](https://www.wadvocates.org).

Domestic violence or in other words aggressive behavior within the home, typically involves violent abuse of a spouse or partner. A lot of cases of domestic violence normally happen in the home behind closed doors and due to this there are no witnesses to report it and in many cases the victims themselves will not report their abusers. “One in four women in the U.S. will experience domestic violence in their lifetime, most frequently by someone they know. Female victims most commonly first experience domestic violence between the ages of 18-24 (38.6%), followed by age 11-17 (22.4%), age 35-44 (6.8%) and age 45+ (2.5%). Almost one out of five or 16.3% of murder victims in the U.S. were killed by an intimate partner; women account for two out of three murder victims killed by an intimate partner.” As stated by [domesticshelters.org](https://www.domesticshelters.org). Anyone can be affected by domestic violence. Gender, age, race, religion, education, immigration status, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status does not matter. The status of the relationship doesn't matter either, domestic violence can affect couples that are married, living together, or who are just dating. Statistically women are more likely to be abused by a partner or ex-partner. “Women are 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend,” as stated by [futureswithoutviolence.org](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org). Women no matter their age are at risk for domestic violence, and women between the age twenty to twentyfour are at a greater risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence. “Teen victims of physical dating violence are more likely than their non-abused peers to smoke, use drugs, engage in unhealthy diet behaviors (taking diet pills or laxatives and vomiting to lose weight), engage in risky sexual behaviors, and attempt or consider suicide.” As claimed by [futureswithoutviolence.org](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org). In the United States one in three adolescent/teen girls are victims of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a partner.

What about domestic violence? The risk of becoming an abuser as an adult is two times greater for those who were abused or witnessed their mother being abused during their childhood. Along with the risk of becoming a victim of domestic violence as a teen or adult is increased when young people are raised in homes where abuse is present. According to [futureswithoutviolence.org](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org), “Women who have experienced domestic violence are 80 percent more likely to have a stroke, 70 percent more likely to have heart disease, 60 percent more likely to have asthma and 70 percent more likely to drink heavily than women who have not experienced intimate partner violence. In the United States in 1995, the cost of intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking totaled \$5.8 billion each year for direct medical and mental health care services and lost productivity from paid work and household chores. When updated to 2003 dollars, the cost is more than \$8.3 billion. Sexual and domestic violence are linked to a wide range of reproductive health issues including sexually transmitted disease and HIV transmission, miscarriages, risky sexual health behaviour and more.”

What should be done if you know someone or you yourself are a victim of domestic violence. Go to this website to receive help in getting out of a bad situation <https://www.thehotline.org/>. Also for other domestic violence helplines and shelters go to <https://www.womenslaw.org/find-help/advocates-and-shelters>.

Also if you are a man in an abusive behavior here is another website you should visit <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/help-for-men-who-are-being-abused.htm>. Some signs that you are in a bad relationship are that they threaten to hurt you or other people you care about, hit, kick, punch, push, choke or use physical force against you, criticize or blame you for everything that goes wrong, humiliate you in front of other people, control your access to money, control the decision-making in your relationship, control your time and actions, put you down, call you names, make you feel like you're crazy, destroy your property or abuse your pets, threaten to hurt you or commit suicide if you leave, force or coerce you to have sex when you don't want to.

Some things you may need to know if you are trying to escape according to <https://www.helpguide.org/>, “Know your abuser's red flags. Stay alert for signs and clues that your abuser is getting upset and may explode in anger or violence. Come up with several believable reasons you can use to leave the house (both during the day and at night) if you sense trouble brewing. Identify safe areas of the house. Know where to go if your abuser attacks or an argument starts. Avoid small, enclosed spaces without exits (such as closets or bathrooms) or rooms with weapons (such as the kitchen). If possible, head for a room with a phone and an outside door or window. Come up with a code word. Establish a word, phrase, or signal you can use to let your children, friends, neighbors, or co-workers know that you're in danger and they should call the police. Make an escape plan Be ready to leave at a moment's notice. Keep the car fueled up and facing the driveway exit, with the driver's door unlocked. Hide a spare car key where you can get to it quickly. Have emergency cash, clothing, and important phone numbers and documents stashed in a safe place (at a friend's house, for example). Practice escaping quickly and safely. Rehearse your escape plan so you know exactly what to do if under attack from your abuser.

If you have children, make sure they practice the escape plan also. Make and memorize a list of emergency contacts. Ask several trusted individuals if you can contact them if you need a ride, a place to stay, or help contacting the police. Memorize the numbers of your emergency contacts, local shelter, and domestic violence hotline Consider getting a restraining order or protective order against your abusive partner. However, do not feel falsely secure with a restraining order. Your stalker or abuser may ignore it and the police may do nothing to enforce it.” If you want more information you can visit any of the sites listed in this article.

I interviewed a friend of mine who was in an abusive relationship for almost two years and these are some of the things she went through with her abuser. **Warning - this testimony contains themes that may be upsetting to some readers.** “He would make me feel bad for wanting the bare minimum from him. Would start fights when I didn't answer the phone the first time he called even if I was with my family. Would call me every 15 to 20 minutes when he knew I was out and would force me to turn my camera to the people I was with each time to prove I wasn't cheating. Would make me feel like a bad person for saying he couldn't come see me at my home because I didn't have permission from my mother. Would make me feel bad when I found evidence of him talking to other females. He was an alcoholic and when I told him he had had enough while around my family he would grab me and pull me close only to whisper insults in my ear; then would cry and it would continue like that the rest of the night. Dragged me down the street and beat me. When I wanted to go somewhere and he didn't he would either lie and tell me he was working and actually go drink with his friends and skip work or yell at me until I left him alone. Would threaten to kill himself if I broke up with him and even threw himself in front of a moving car because I broke up with him. Said that I probably liked that I was molested because I was a big {deleted}. Would be mad if I showered and didn't tell him beforehand. Talked badly of my friends because they didn't like him or the way he treated me. Would constantly say I was cheating sometimes with random people and sometimes with people he knew and that I had never personally met. Would do something awful to me but get mad if I told anyone because I was making him look bad” These are some of the things that happened between her and her abuser and when I asked the question “Why did you wait so long to leave?”she said she didn't leave sooner because, “I loved him and didn't realize how awful he really was.”

Domestic violence is a big issue and is never okay. You should always set boundaries in a relationship and be very careful about the red flags in your partner along with always making sure you are being respected and treated correctly in a relationship. It is good to know the signs of a domestically violent relationship and the actions of abusers.



Binging During Quarantine: What are your classmates watching?

By: Mikaela Penaflor

Since quarantine started, many people had to stay home to stay safe from the virus. One of the top activities that most people did during quarantine was binge watch TV shows and movies. Many Seneca Valley students watched different types of genres from Action to Romance to Scifi. Hear from Seneca Valley High school students favorite TV shows and movies during their time in quarantine.

Maria Wraback (Junior) loved binge watching *West Wing* that is now on HBO max. A movie she loved during Quarantine was *Hamilton the Musical* that is now streaming on Disney +. Daniel Gower (Senior) watched all the Harry Potter and Star Wars movies during quarantine. Almost every Saturday night he would watch different types of genres with his family. Alongside his sister Lauren Gower (Senior), they both enjoyed the new Disney's Pixar Movie, *Soul* that came out during Christmas. Lauren also binged watched *Vampire Diaries* on Netflix. Christian Ramos (Senior) really liked the show *The Mandalorian* on Disney +. Elija Kinnol (Senior) watched a horror movie named *Hereditary* but in the end he didn't seem to enjoy it because he was scared but he liked the thrill it gave him. One of my favorites during quarantine was *Gossip Girl* and the Star Wars franchise. I am pretty sure I have watched Star Wars about 12 times during quarantine.

One of the top two shows that most people are watching is *Wanda Vision* on Disney + and *The Mandalorian*. *Wanda Vision* is one of the newest shows that just came out on Disney +. This new show is the start of Marvel's Phase Four series this year. The *Mandalorian* came out back in 2019 being one of the first live action Star Wars Television series. These two shows are some of the most popular tv shows on Disney + and they both came from very big franchises. I would definitely recommend *Wanda Vision* for those who love action, comedy and suspense. I would recommend *The Mandalorian* to those who love Star Wars movies but it will be a bit confusing to those who have never seen Star Wars before so beware! These two shows are family friendly and families seem to enjoy watching shows like this. I speak from experience since my family and I are big Disney fans. We love any new show and movie they come out with.

Overall, there are many other shows out there that are very interesting and nice to watch. During quarantine, I enjoy watching movies with my family because we love watching different types of genres. Before the pandemic, my family and I would go out to the movies every weekend to see the latest movies that just came out. Though this pandemic has taken away our fun, it is nice to look forward to the future and to be excited to go back and watch movies in theaters again.