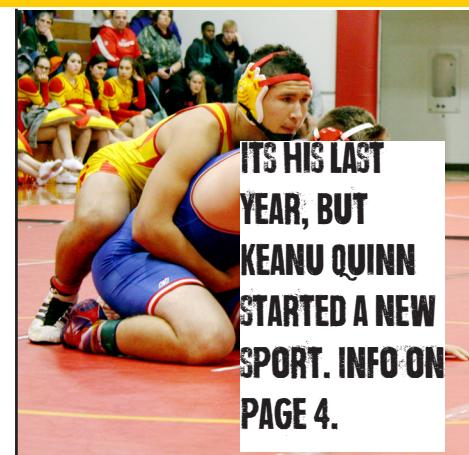




AFTER RETIREMENT, COACH MESSERLI STILL VOLUNTEERS. STORY ON PAGE 14.



ITS HIS LAST YEAR, BUT KEANU QUINN STARTED A NEW SPORT. INFO ON PAGE 4.

The Indian mascot is a topic that is heavily discussed. Read more about it on page 2.

Christmas songs can be cheery, but some are just ho-ho-horrible. Find out which on page 7.



Baylor Fish, '17, dribbles the ball while trying to expertly escape from three Spartans during the game in Marion's Red Gym on December 1st.

Doggin' with Dexter

-Commentary-

It seems like everyone desperately awaits the winter break every year. However, many people still complain about how bored they are. Holidays are about being grateful, and nobody acknowledges the blessing that is winter break.



By: Lexi Morgan @Lexi_Morgan17

Of course, there are times when one just can't help being bored. But despite this inevitable feeling, there are many ways to solve this, especially when it's Christmas! The best way I cure my boredom over the break is with Dexter, my beloved beagle.

Whenever my friends and family aren't available, my dog is the perfect companion. And he can do everything a human can, technically.

My favorite thing to do with Dexter is binge watch Christmas movies. I can never get tired of the cheesiness about them and how warm and happy they make me feel. I imagine Dexter feels the same way because who doesn't? I curl up by the fire, sip on hot cocoa, pop up some corn. Of course, Dexter can't have any popcorn or hot cocoa because he is fat and chocolate is deadly. But basically we watch as many movies as we can cram into a day.

The next best thing when I am bored is to bundle up in some warm clothes and force my dog outside with me to participate in a snowball fight. It's not really the same because he can't throw back, but he enjoys himself. We run around the yard and I throw snowballs at him. And he has a huge grin on his face and he runs and runs until he is just too tired. Which isn't all that long because he's fat. We also built a snowman together once. But we're not doing that again. I ended up doing almost all the work.

Another fabulous way to spend time with my dog over the holiday break is building a nice gingerbread house. This activity is actually quite challenging, and I don't know if I would recommend this. Basically, I end up doing all the work because Dexter is obsessed with anything even remotely edible, and he will eat it before we can even start. So, I just build it and then we take pictures with it, then I eat it, and he begs for just a little crumb and I say no because he is so fat.

The moral of the story is, winter break isn't meant to be spent complaining and whining about boredom. Make the most of the excitement around the holidays. There are plenty of things to do, especially if one is blessed with a dog.

Translating transgender

Aiden Zimmermann gives insight into the life of a trans student.

By: Solomon Groothuis @walnutsareasin

Hiding was a lifestyle. It was all he knew. Aiden Zimmermann was born Hannah, but after a certain point, Zimmermann confessed to identifying more as a man. Still in recluse, he only came out to a few friends. Eventually, the secret leaked out to his father, who was very supportive. But Zimmermann had yet to come out to his Mom. While on a trip, Zimmermann texted his mom, revealing his gender identity. "I also said we could talk when we got back. I was worried how she would take it," he said. "She kept affirming that she loved me 'despite' my gender identity."

There are many struggles for Zimmermann on his journey through manhood. He pointed out that when others think of trans people, they assume they are perfect, radiant creatures. "They talk about trans and they're actually talking about Caitlyn Jenner or Laverne Cox. Not every trans person is a woman, and they're not all perfect. Nobody can always look so flawless."

He also corrected the myth that not all trans people are stereotypically uber-masculine or uber-feminine. Zimmermann said his body made him feel insecure, especially at the pool or when trying to find clothes. Overall, being transgender has been almost overwhelming for Zimmermann.

"There are times when I wanted to give up being



Aiden Zimmermann, freshman, is thankful for his transitioning experience and all he has learned.

trans and just fake being normal," said Zimmermann. "Depression is almost always a part of being trans. I have thought about suicide, but not seriously."

Aiden also revealed that this drew major concerns from his parents. "Depression and suicide are a big part of my life. I'm often anxious about what might happen. It's also hard to feel masculine. I look in the mirror and it's not who I see in my head. It can be very depressing."

"With high school I wasn't sure if I wanted to tell my teachers because I might not be accepted. I emailed my teachers and I started to get replies," Zimmermann said. The Marion faculty was very supportive of him with Mr. Semler reaching out to Zimmermann and his father to make sure he would be comfortable and safe.

Zimmermann also talked about experiencing many great joys from being trans. "It's amazing having friends who accept you, and it's also great not having people label you or put you down. At school, most of the time, I feel accepted as a man," he said.

Unfortunately, not everyone is as open-minded as Aiden's friends. "Some people call me Hannah and it's frustrating. They know who I am, but they still say it. Every time someone calls me Hannah it's like I'm a ticking time bomb. It makes me want to explode."

Along with people disregarding his name, Aiden feels hurt when people refer to him as a girl or use the incorrect pronouns. Aiden's a trans man and should be referred to as "him," "his," and "he." But many people don't care.

"A lot of people say my name or get my gender wrong. They're like, 'You've always been Hannah,' but if you really cared about me you'd have the decency to get my name and pronouns right," said Zimmermann.

In short, Aiden feels mistreated when others lack respect.

Although there is so much adversity and hardship that comes with being transgender, Zimmermann is proud to have this part of his identity, saying, "I obviously sometimes wish I was born as a man because I wouldn't have had all these problems. But on the other hand, I wouldn't be the person I am today if I wasn't trans."

Zimmermann even said he's thankful for the hardships. "When you go through more, it shapes you and makes you wiser."

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