

The Stuttgart Insider

The Stuttgart Insider Presents: The Vow

By Emily W

A lot has changed with The Vow since they performed at the Soccer Rocker and their lunchtime concert last year; down a lead singer but continuing to work hard, I spoke with the group about not only their history and inspirations, but what they see coming next.

The band is currently composed of three seniors: Charles B, Ava G, and Gwen D. Charles' girlfriend, Ariel K, was the band's lead singer before graduating at the end of last year. Lydia P used to play keyboard for the group.

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All images courtesy of Mirabelle K



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Around November last school year, Coach Rat, whose band Mayer was headlining the Soccer Rucker, said that anyone who formed a band might be able to play at the concert, which supports both the girls and boys soccer teams. Charles and Gwen, who had played together before, decided to go for it.

They approached Ava, who, though initially unsure, agreed. Charles also asked Ariel, having heard her sing in the Acapella Club. Lydia would only play the Soccer Rucker, but Charles, Gwen, Ava and Ariel would go on to make up the core of the band. Rehearsing for the Soccer Rucker was difficult, but they were eventually able to perform the following setlist, all covers:

Scott Pilgrim by PLUMTREE

Me and My Husband by Mitski

Carnival by Bikini Kill

Creep by Radiohead

Later additions to their set would include "My Iron Lung," by Radiohead, and Cafuné's "Least Coast." But picking music for the group to play has never been easy, with every member having different tastes and musical inspirations. While Ava brings her jazz background, and is very focused on the technical aspects of playing, Gwen and Charles say that Radiohead is

the primary influence on the band's overall sound. Gwen and Charles also individually credit Nirvana and The Strokes, respectively.

Since Ariel's departure, it has been admittedly difficult to fill her shoes themselves or find a

perhaps something he played while improvising, or starts with guitar chords and then writes lyrics. He draws from strong emotions like love, sadness and heartbreak, whether or not he ends up showing anyone else the lyrics.



From left to right: Gwen D, Ava G, and Charles B.

new person who can. The setback has made it difficult for the group to set up any gigs this year. So, the band has pivoted. Their goal for the end of the year is to have written an entire album of original songs, with less emphasis on the covers that got them started.

Their approach to how they write those songs has evolved with every other aspect of the band. Gwen and Charles started out by improvising together, but they've become more methodical. Nowadays, Charles would say that he either writes lyrics first and finds a melody within them,

For her own lyrics, Gwen finds that being an American in Germany is one of the things that inspires her music the most. The freedom of being able to go out on her own on the train, experiencing a different culture, is something she feels that you can't replicate back in the U.S.

But what Gwen and Charles both have in common is that when listening to songs, they usually hear the music before the lyrics. Perhaps that's why, to Charles, the music is both poetry and its own instrument.

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Ava does not write songs herself, but does write her own bass parts and contributes ideas, such as for backing vocal parts.

The band is a democracy, but only kind of; with the change in members, and thus the group dynamic, everything is subject to change, even their name. What is likely to stay the same for The Vow, as they redefine themselves and what being in the band even means, is that they have a musical partnership that they plan to continue even after graduation.

Images courtesy of Mirabelle K. A special thank you to Mira and all of the members of The Vow for their help with this article.



Images courtesy of Dr Sims and Emily W.

SHS Students Attend 17th Annual PRAMUN Conference

By Arianna A

This past January, Stuttgart's Model UN students traveled to Prague for another year of negotiation and debate over the world's issues. They returned from an overall triumphant conference with other schools around the world with many resolutions passed at the General Assembly.

The Prague Model United conference, or PRAMUN, saw the attendance of more schools and students than ever during their 17th conference. From schools across Europe, Africa, and North America, including the hosting school, Gymnázium Jana Nerudy, over 500 delegates participated in discussion, drafting, and passing of resolutions on

various topics. Stuttgart's delegates represented Algeria and China this year, focusing their efforts on topics ranging from ending statelessness in the Humanitarian committee to mitigating food waste in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) committee. By the end of the General Assembly on the 25th, it became clear the conference had been a great success.

Traveling delegates didn't spend all their time in discussion with their committees, however. Students were able to tour the beautiful city of Prague, exploring the historical district, including many cathedrals and palaces along the way.

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The final day of the trip before Stuttgart's departure, students got to see the Lennon Wall and the famed Charles Bridge, both truly one-of-a-kind experiences.

The 2025 Model UN trip to Prague was made possible by Mr. Hickey, who was in charge of

planning and coordinating events. Dr. Sims and Ms. Jeanne Alicea also chaperoned for the trip, helping to make it an enjoyable and educational experience for all of the students.



Image courtesy of Emily W.

Jazz Fest 2025 is a Roaring Success

By Anna K

This week, 14 Stuttgart High Schools students participated in Jazz Fest, a five day long workshop where students go to play jazz and improve their musical skills. To be part of this amazing event, you have to audition, which includes playing a scale, two short pieces, and an optional improvisation. Jazz Fest takes place in a youth hostel in Germany.

There are two jazz bands students are placed in: the Big

Band and the Jazz Academy. The Big Band is the main band, and Jazz Academy is for students who are less familiar with, but excited to learn about, this style of music. This year, the Big Band played 12 songs and Jazz Academy is playing five.

During this year, there were many firsts that happened. Non-traditional Jazz instruments were able to join the band, and some did. Two violinists, from Ramstein and Vilseck, and another from Stuttgart made the cut. Since the show choir was not

available this year, two vocalists also accompanied the Big Band for five songs.

All students who are able to play an instrument should take advantage of this wonderful opportunity and apply for next year's workshop. If you are interested, please contact the music teacher, Mr. Held. Audition music will likely be released in early November 2025. Senior Lydia P has gone to Jazz fest twice playing the piano, and she says, "It's super fun, but remember to not do your audition at the last minute. Jazz Fest is so worth it!"

Debate Team Wins Rounds 3 and 4 in German League

By Tadek N

Last Friday the Stuttgart High School Debate team participated in and won at a two-debate meet at Gymnasium Plochingen. Having spent the weeks beforehand preparing for this meet, delving deep into the prompt provided, they came prepared with speeches and

heads filled with valuable research. After losing the first two debates of the season, the team was anxious over the potential outcome of this meet.

The first round was impromptu, a style of debate where debaters are given the topic only an hour before the debate. Debators are given no outside

resources, and must come up with arguments themselves. The debaters had an intense hour of preparation before they jumped into their first match against Josef-Schwarz-Schule Heilbronn and emerged victorious with a unanimous

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decision from the judges. Coming off the high of their win, the Stuttgart team dived headfirst into their prepared debate against Friedrich-Abel Gymnasium, with a strong opening speech to kick off the debate. The following round developed into a close match, but ultimately ended in Stuttgart's triumph.

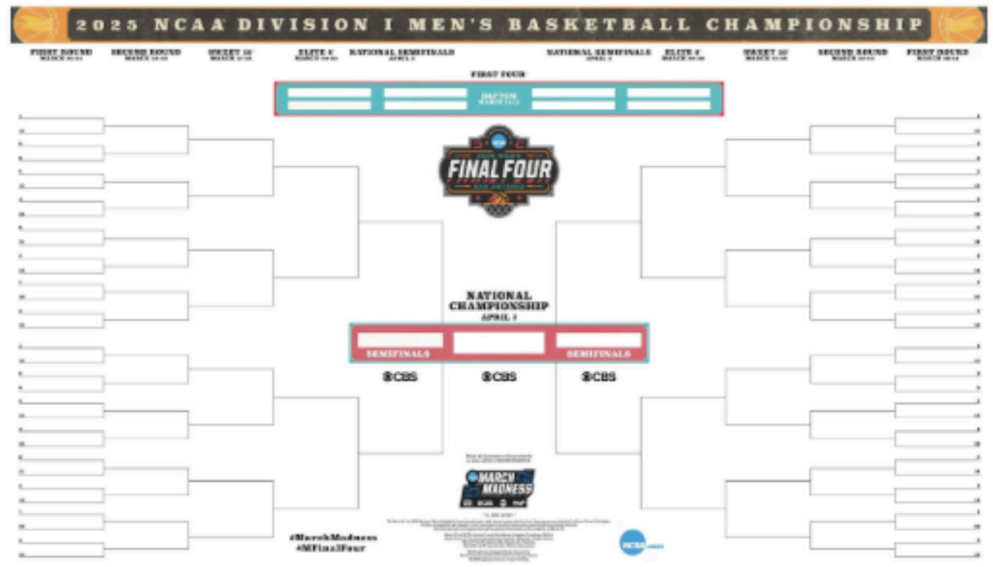
With two wins under their belt and only one month till the debating weekend in Würzburg, the Stuttgart Debate team is preparing non-stop in hopes to make it to the finals.

Stuttgart Insider to Host March Madness Bracket Challenge

By Gabby F

The Stuttgart Insider will be holding a bracket challenge for March Madness. The rules are simple: brackets will be available in Coach Garrett's room starting on March 10th and must be returned to his room no later than the morning of March 18th. Once selections are made on the 16th, the official picks will be available to view on the Stuttgart Insider website to help participants fill out their brackets. Brackets will be scored, with the highest scoring winning the challenge. Following the tournament's end on April 7th, that winner will be announced and prizes will be distributed. Any student may submit a bracket at no cost, but only one submission can be made per person. Any submissions after the morning of March 18th will not be accepted. Prizes are yet to be announced, so keep an eye out on our website and Instagram (@_stuttgart.insider_). For any questions email Emily W at ewhe2449@student.dodea.edu or DM us on Instagram.

Since 1939, The NCAA Division 1



Information and bracket courtesy of the NCAA.

men's basketball tournament has been one of the most viewed and anticipated sports events; it is known as March Madness. Sixty-eight teams from different colleges around the country battle in a single-elimination tournament with seven rounds for the national championship. Following the regular season, if a team wins their conference tournament, they will receive a bid to the NCAA tournament, known as automatic qualifiers. Then, the selection committee on Selection Sunday will decide

which thirty-seven teams that weren't automatic qualifiers will receive an invitation to the tournament based on statistics and rankings. The selection committee then ranks all teams based on their regular season and conference tournament performances.

The tournament begins with the First Four, four games played before the official first round. The four lowest-seeded teams (teams that received an

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invitation but didn't win their conference) and the four lowest-seeded automatic qualifiers (teams that won their conferences but are considered the weakest) play and determine which of the last four teams will qualify to play in the first round. The full schedule for the tournament, courtesy of the official NCAA website, is published here.

Selection Sunday: Sunday, March 16

First Four: March 18-19

First round: March 20-21

Second round: March 22-23

Sweet 16: March 27-28

Elite Eight: March 29-30

Final Four: April 5 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas

NCAA championship game: April 7 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas

An Overview of the DC Plane Collision

By Cheyenne T

Sixty-seven people have died after a passenger plane hit a helicopter mid-air before 9 P.M. on the evening of January 29. The American Airlines plane, a Bombardier CRJ700, travelling from Wichita Kansas to Washington DC's Reagan National Airport collided with a US Army Sikorsky H-60 Black Hawk that took off from Fort Belvoir. The Black Hawk had belonged to B Company, 12 Aviation Battalion.

Top figure skaters from the United States and Russia were among those who were on board, including young figure skaters who were on their way back from a developmental camp in Wichita along with their parents and coaches. The Skating Club of Boston later named six victims.

This midair collision is the deadliest in nearly 24 years. Most recently before this, on November 12, 2001, an American

Airlines flight slammed into a residential area of Belle Harbor, NY just after takeoff from Kennedy Airport, killing all 260 people aboard and five people on the ground.

Within hours of the January 29th crash, the fire chief in the nation's capital said that "We are now at the point where we are switching from a rescue operation to a recovery operation." Twenty-seven bodies from the passenger jet and one from the military helicopter have been recovered as of writing.

Both of these flights were on standard flight patterns. The Black Hawk was on a training flight with experienced crew doing an annual required night evaluation, and the airline pilots were experienced in complex commercial flight operations. Just one day before the collision, another flight to Reagan National was forced to go around due to helicopter traffic. Both the jet and helicopter landed safely.

The collision happened in tightly controlled airspace. A few minutes before the crash, air traffic controllers asked the helicopter if it had the arriving plane in sight. A crewmember said that the aircraft was in sight and requested "visual separation" – allowing it to fly closer than usual. Controllers approved the request.

Seconds later, the two aircraft collided. At the time of the crash, approximately 19 aircraft were diverted to Dulles International Airport.

President Donald Trump said that he was "fully briefed" on the collision. He added that he was "monitoring the situation and will provide more details as they arise." His statement also read, "May God Bless their souls. Thank you for the incredible work being done by our first responders." Vice President JD Vance also addressed the collision on Wednesday night, calling to the nation to unite in prayer, asking people to "hope for the best."



Opinion: Is the Academy Finally Giving Animation the Recognition it Deserves this Year?

By Sophia B

Though first delayed by the Southern California wildfires, the Oscar Award nominations have now been announced, with a few pleasant surprises from the list of the possible winners in the Best Animated Feature category.

The Oscars have a record of disrespecting animation and a bias toward Disney. This is because out of the electors in the Animation/Short Film category, some are ironically not well versed in the medium of animation, and they will reportedly vote for whatever film their kids or younger relatives are watching, regardless of the film's quality. It is most likely those kids will be watching a Disney (or Pixar) film. Some allege there may also be some corruption behind the scenes, but I don't think that the rich men of Hollywood would care about animation, and would rather disregard the entire medium as "just for kids." While more adult-oriented and mature films have been nominated quite a few times before, none of those kinds of features that ever seem to win. Now, enough about the past. Let's dive into the pool of nominees.

Against all odds, and my personal prediction, Flow has ended up being nominated for

not only Best Animated Feature but for Best International Feature as well. Flow has already won the Golden Globes' own best animated picture award, which is absolutely astonishing for an indie film that falls away from the mainstream trends as a dialogue-less adventure film. However, my bet is on The Wild Robot to win its category, with it also snagging some other nominations for Visual Effects and Original Score, it is now one of the highest nominated animated movies ever at the Oscars.

Another thing that left me surprised was that Moana 2 wasn't on the shortlist at all. With several years behind us of mediocre Disney films being nominated and winning, is it true that the Academy is finally giving truly industry-standard animated films the spotlight? Maybe this is the first step. I'm not sure if there was a change of leadership or nominators, but it might be that those same people who opened their minds up and saw what the medium has to offer. Inside Out 2 deserved its nomination, even though people were skeptical of the quality of a sequel of a 2010s Pixar film. It seems that the Pixar studio has more independent creatives than Disney, and are able to make good movies even within the corporate sequel quotas they seem to have been

inexplicably handed. We should be excited for what Pixar has in store after they were robbed of theatrical releases during the Pandemic, and made a box office comeback with Elemental. Some are concerned about Pixar's next film, Elio, with major worries that it would be uninteresting and clichè. But it is best to hold out hope, especially for an original screenplay in a sea of remakes, reboots, and sequels.

The last two films nominated are coincidentally both stop-motion productions from Commonwealth countries. One of them, Wallace and Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl, was a smash hit in Aardman Animation's home of the UK. Wallace and Gromit are beloved characters, and this is their first feature film in 20 years. The other is Memoir of a Snail, a lesser known picture from Australia. Only making a little over a million at the worldwide box office, this heartfelt tragicomedy has won critical acclaim. Stop-motion animation is a tedious process, and the film took the creators eight years to make; it is quite amazing to see all that hard work pay off.

In the case of short films, I am not aware enough to make

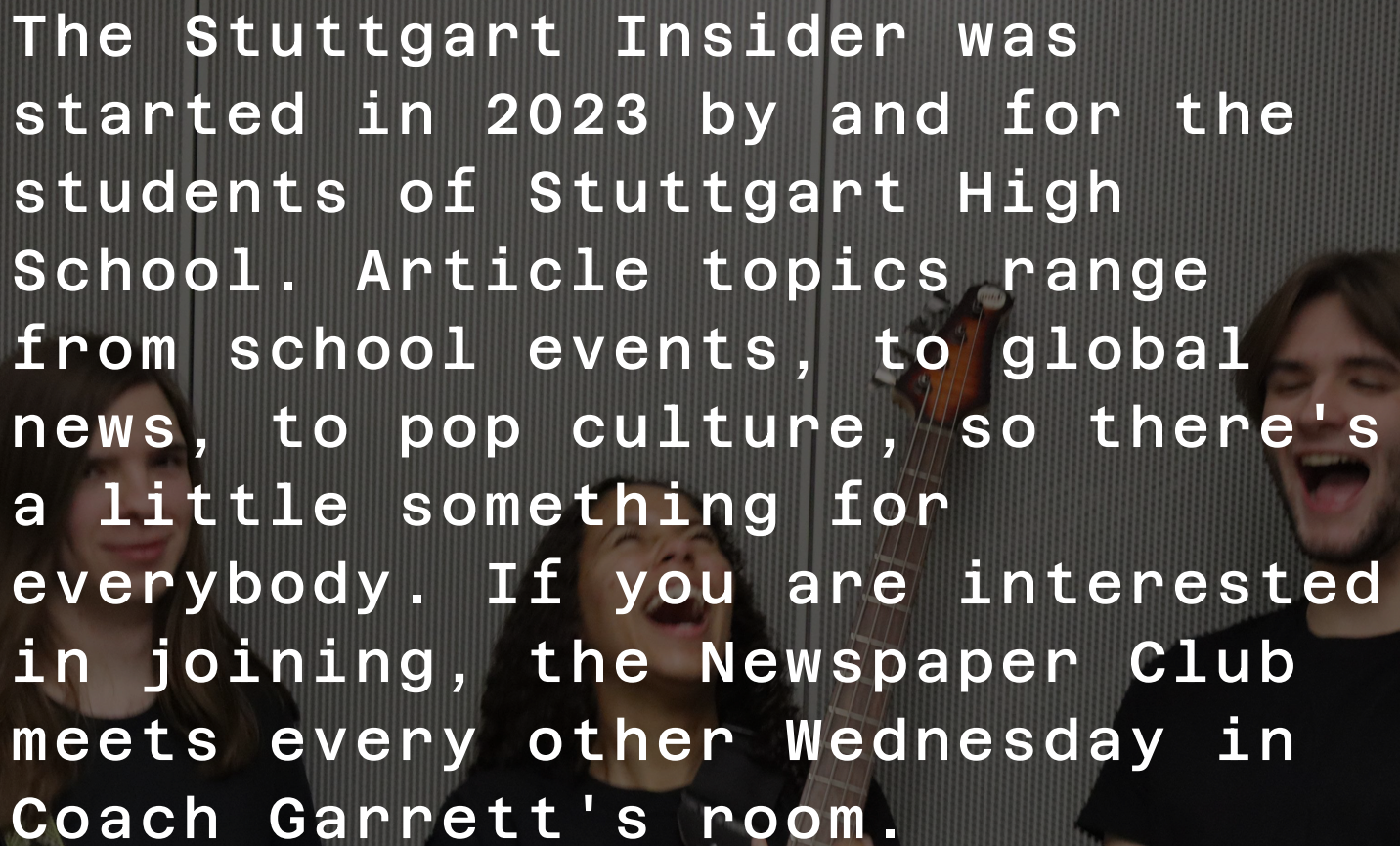
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comments on them, or say how this affects the rest of the seemingly changing scope of the Academy. But with shorts either having a small budget and less corporate oversight, or just being independently made, animated shorts generally have a more artistic and conceptual approach to production than something that is feature length; I'm sure they deserve their nomination. (And the only big name I saw in the nominees was Toei Animation)

In conclusion: is this really a turning point for original stories and indie animation? There hasn't been a nominee list quite like this in a while, or this many nominations for animated movies outside of

the animation category. Is the Academy finally not going to disregard animation anymore? Is this a one-time-miracle? This does feel like a step in the right direction for the Oscars, and the best thing to do is to hold out hope for the years to come.



The Stuttgart Insider was started in 2023 by and for the students of Stuttgart High School. Article topics range from school events, to global news, to pop culture, so there's a little something for everybody. If you are interested in joining, the Newspaper Club meets every other Wednesday in Coach Garrett's room.

Reach out to us on Instagram @stuttgart.insider_

