

FALL, 2023

VOLUME 7  
ISSUE 1

# THE TROJAN VOICE

MCDOWELL HIGH SCHOOL'S  
STUDENT MAGAZINE

## RENOVATIONS

MIHS GETS UPGRADES AFTER SUMMER  
REMODELING AND UPGRADES

STORY BY TEACHER





INSIDE

03

*Letter From the Editor*

Sarah Giknis

05

*Cinemark's Classic Trend*

Izzie Nicewonger

06

*School Tips and Tricks*

Harleigh Iarussi

08

*Renovations*

Kacie Magee

10

*McDowell Football:  
Year In Review*

Eric McMahan

11

*New McDowell Staff*

Mckenzie Pauli

14

*You Gatto Be Kidding Me*

Emmaleigh Dorau

16

*A Haze of  
Pumpkin Spice Craze*

Emmaleigh Dorau



# Letter from the Editor

We're back! The Trojan Voice Magazine is back in full swing and we are so excited to announce the arrival of the Fall issue! In this issue, we cover topics that are relevant to the introduction of the 2023-2024 school year and into the season of fall.

Layout Managing Editor, Kacie Magee, covers the renovations that have been done across McDowell Intermediate over the summer months. There was still dust left in areas across the school as some renovations continued into first quarter. There is a new lunch line flow, and if you couldn't find a teacher in their normal room, the renovations might have been why.

The cafeteria setup isn't the only thing that's new, however! McDowell welcomes 11 new teachers across both buildings. In this issue, we talked to the new faculty additions and got to learn more about their roles in the school and what they will teach.

As the leaves turn and begin to fall, it's time to look at cooler weather activities like evenings at the movies. Izzie Nicewonger looks at the return of some of the most popular movie classics to the theaters.

We are looking for new faces in the McDowell Media club as well! If you have any interest in joining the print team to help with future issues of The Trojan Voice, come to room 2-009 in the basement of MIHS for club meetings on Mondays from 2:45-4:00pm or contact Mrs. Weiss at [weiss@mtsd.org](mailto:weiss@mtsd.org).

*Sarah Diknis*

EDITOR IN CHIEF



# THE TROJAN VOICE

MCDOWELL HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

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**Want to write stories and  
create your own videos?  
Join McDowell Media Club!**

**When:** Mondays (Print/Photo) &  
Wednesdays (Video)  
2:45 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Where:** MIHS basement, room 2-009

**What:** Create *The Voice* & videos

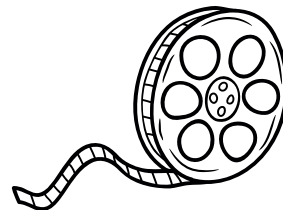
**Why:** To be creative

**How:** Writing, editing, and filming



# CINEMARK'S CLASSIC TREND

By Izzie Nicewonger



In the wise words of Hermione Granger, “It’s leviOsa! Not leviOSAW!” Many fans yearn to see the Harry Potter films in theaters either for the first time or as a rewatch. But since the last showing in 2011 of Deathly Hallows Part II, fans were left to only dream of seeing Harry fly around the Quidditch field on the big screen....until this past September.

Recently Cinemark has brought back “fan favorites” to theaters for limited showings. Titles in the “Comeback Classics” category included *Coraline*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part I and II*, *Disney’s Coco*, and many others. Though the films are viewable for a limited time, the list of returning films grows by the week. But the question remains - why are these movies coming back to theaters?

## Why are these Films Returning?

Film is a huge part of our culture. It is a form of entertainment, art and how many artists and viewers express themselves. A study done by Statistica shows that more than 13,066 films have been released since 2000, and more and more programs are being developed to provide feedback on newer movies. However, contrary to many groundbreaking films that have been released since 2000, critics have been saying that films have been going downhill over the years, causing a decrease in people going to the movie theater. This decrease could be a major part of why these films are coming back into theaters. By bringing back old films, the cinemas appeal to all age groups and profit at the same time. The return of classics can even help promote new films and bring a larger audience to the theaters.

## What Films Are Returning?

Cinemark has an amazing lineup of “Comeback Classics” that will be returning to the big screen, and it keeps growing! There are movies for every mood from horror to classics, bringing something back for everyone, and tickets are affordable starting at \$5 for an adult and \$3 for a child. For movie times and dates go to [www.cinemark.com](http://www.cinemark.com).

### November Classics

Scarface - Nov. 12

Saving Private Ryan - Nov. 19

Elf - Nov. 24

### December Classics

Monty Python and The Holy Grail - Dec. 6

Love Actually - Dec. 8

It’s a Wonderful Life - Dec. 17

# SCHOOL TIPS AND TRICKS

Harleigh Larussi

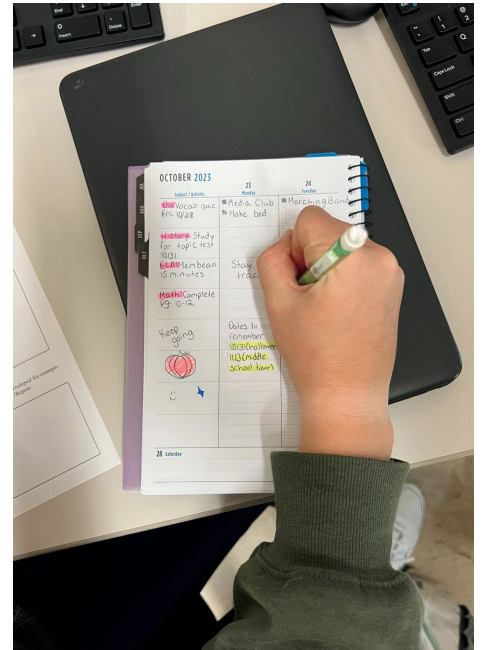
Now that we've started a new quarter, you may need to get back into the swing of things again and make a new routine. Although this can be tricky, especially if you're a freshman. Fortunately, there are plenty of tips and tricks to help you survive and succeed both this year and the rest of your high school careers at McDowell.

1

In high school, while many students know that their grades are important, a lot of students tend to brush off freshman and sophomore year grades because they believe "junior or senior year is what matters." All four years do go into your final GPA, so if you don't give your best in all four years of high school, your GPA could be majorly affected.

2

Being prepared and organized. One thing that will make your life a little easier and will help you be prepared. It's good to have any and all supplies you may need. Make sure to come to class prepared with things like pencils, your charged chromebook, any worksheets you may need and anything else you would use in a classroom setting. Try your best to make sure all your things are organized, for example, try and have some type of folder or binder for your classes and don't just throw things in your locker. This is one tip that will definitely help your high school career flow a little smoother.



Wesley Amicangelo/The Trojan Voice

3

While this next tip is given out so often to high school students and often seems obvious, it's perhaps one of the most important things you need to know. Have fun. While you do need to try your best and work hard in high school, that doesn't mean that you shouldn't be having fun. You're a teenager and still young, you are supposed to be having as much fun as possible. So, even though you should be putting forth lots of effort in high school, it's good to set time for yourself and hang out with friends, even if it's just attending school events or sharing a laugh. It'll boost your happiness and get you in a good mood throughout the school year.

4

Building a schedule and routine will help assure things go smoothly. Build yourself a nightly routine that will help you feel better in the morning and try to build a morning routine to help you in school, for example, get dressed first thing in the morning, then eat breakfast. It may be good to have certain routine things after school to help you relax after school that day. Finally, try to get a good sleep schedule. Most teenagers find it hard to do this, but if you try to go to bed earlier each night and try to sleep for at least eight hours, it will definitely pay off.

5

Respect everyone. This is said a lot, but it's very important. Not only is showing respect to everyone from your peers to your teachers common courtesy but it will help assure that you get treated with respect as well and in the future it may benefit you. This being said, if you don't like someone, it's still good to learn to respect them. Respect teachers time by emailing issues or questions. Respect classmates by remaining silent in class and being easy to work with.

Hopefully if you follow some of these tips and tricks it will help your high school experience be both more enjoyable and more successful. Whether it happens day-by-day or even in a year, you'll start to realize how fun high school is. Oh, and one more final tip, be YOU. Make it a great school year!

# DRESS CODE SURVEY

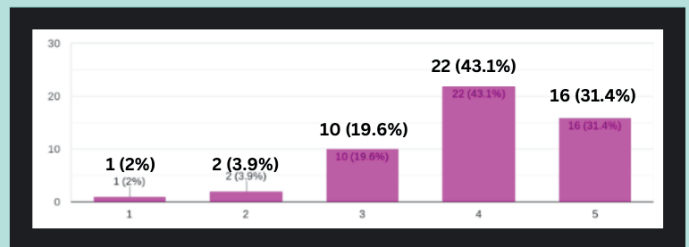


**29.4 %**  
of girls in grades 6th-12th have reported that they have been dresscoded.

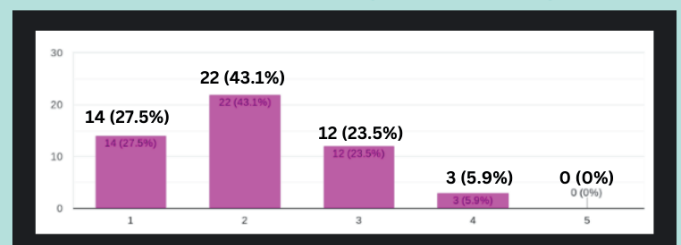


**7.84 %**  
of boys in grades 6th-12th have reported that they have been dresscoded.

## HOW FAIR IS THE DRESS CODE FOR MALE STUDENTS? ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5 (1 BEING LEAST FAIR)



## HOW FAIR IS THE DRESS CODE FOR FEMALE STUDENTS? ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5 (1 BEING LEAST FAIR)



\*\*Survey out of 51 students

# SUMMER UPDATES CONTINUE INTO FALL

by Kacie Magee

McDowell Intermediate High School underwent many renovations and changes over summer break. Students may notice big changes to the cafeteria as well as the upstairs 2-200 section, but the biggest changes are ones they can't see.

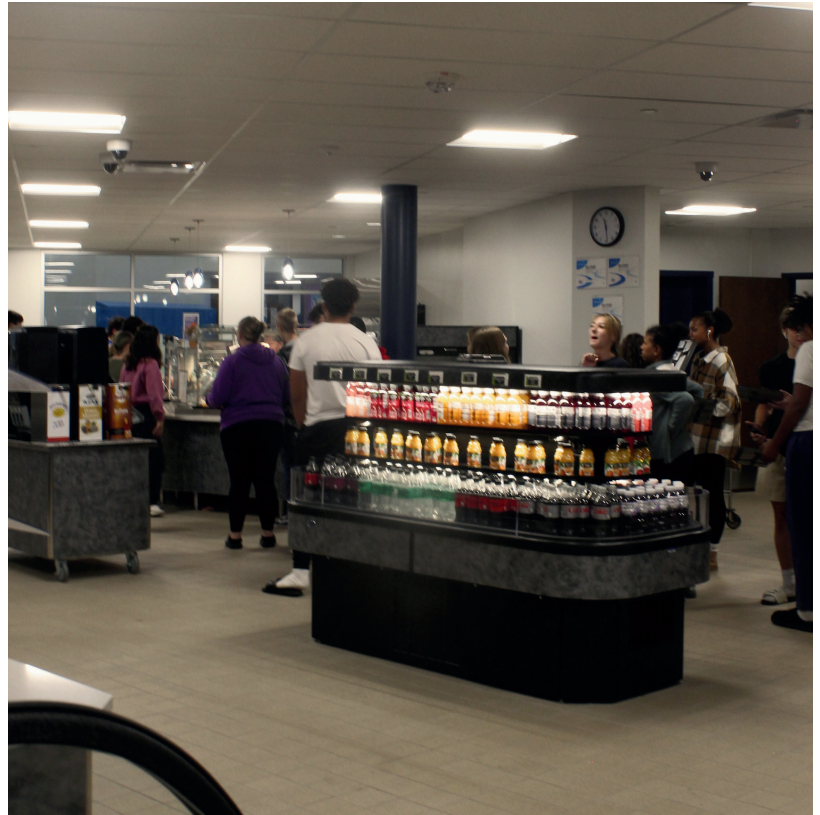
MIHS principal Scott Quivey says, "We are updating our HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, electrical and networking in the renovated areas."

Renovations like these require contractors to work inside of the building's ceilings, which therefore required new drop ceilings to be installed in the classrooms affected; over the last two summers, these renovations have been done in phases. Some happened over the summer, but the 2-200 section of MIHS was blocked off throughout the first quarter.

"We had some teachers/classrooms that have been temporarily displaced as the work is completed. These staff members will be back in their original classrooms once the work is done," Quivey says.

The final phase of the project will take place during the summer of 2024 and will carry into the first quarter of the 2024-2025 school year. Those renovations will result in the creation of brand new family and consumer science classrooms and kitchens at MIHS.

"All family and consumer science teachers are moving to MIHS and all technology education teachers are going to McDowell's Senior High for the 2024-2025 school year," Quivey says.



Jaiden Hamilton/The Trojan Voice

Students navigate the new cafeteria lines at MIHS that offer more grab-n-go options and self-serve areas to help move lines along quickly.



Jaiden Hamilton/The Trojan Voice

Ceilings in the basement of the MIHS are still missing, but will be replaced with new tiles and lights during the summer of 2024 to match the rest of the school's new ceilings and lights.



MIHS was built in the 1970s so renovations to these systems are to be expected.

“These changes are necessary because we have an older building that was not functioning as efficiently as we would have liked,” Quivey says. These renovations are meant for students and staff to feel more comfortable in the building. Heat and air conditioning sometimes fluctuates, as well as, allowing for better use of technology throughout the building.

While it has taken some time and there may have been some frustrations adjusting to these changes. Quivey says, “Our school community has been very flexible in adapting to the renovation process.”

Current sophomore Nora Vitron says, “I think it’s easier to navigate the lunchroom with these changes. The walkways aren’t as crowded since the lunch lines are contained in the walls.

I think the overall flow of the lunch room is organized much better now.”

Lisa Czejdo, one of the teachers who was relocated due to renovations says, “at first I was very nervous about where I would be placed but Mr. Quivey was very helpful and did a great job at making sure every teacher had their own space to teach and grow.” Students can expect more changes next summer at the senior high school. The auditorium is currently being used as a store room, but will be transformed into classrooms.

There will also changes to the library, and others to ease accessibility throughout the school. AC units are to be fixed only in the basement of the senior high by next summer. The entire school’s AC system is expected to be done by 2027 at the latest. The senior high building will continue to be renovated over the next four years.



Jaiden Hamilton/*The Trojan Voice*

The 2-200 section of MIHS was blocked off so that renovations in a number of classrooms could continue during first quarter, leaving multiple teachers displaced. Teachers were able to return to their rooms before quarter two began.

# McDowell Football Season In Review

Photos by Eric McMahon

The McDowell football team plays State College Area High School for the PIAA 6A Subregional playoff title on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at Gus Anderson Field. Fans are encouraged to wear white.



The McDowell Football Team raises their helmets in tradition at the end of the National Anthem.



The Trojans line up for a play against the Ramblers.



Senior drum major Gianna Ladeluca conducts and Emmaleigh Dorau plays bass guitar at a 2023 marching band production, "Reinvention."



The McDowell Varsity Cheerleaders perform for the mob.



Dominic Berarducci scores a touchdown against North Allegheny.



The McDowell Mob celebrates after the McDowell Trojans score a touchdown against Cathedral Prep.

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# New McDowell Staff

BY MCKENZIE PAULI

As the school year is in full swing, we want to acknowledge the new faculty faces at McDowell. This year we have 11 new teachers across departments and in both buildings. This year McDowell Senior High has four teachers who are new to the district.

**Mr. Schlosser** is one of the new social studies teachers. He is located in room 120. Before he came to MHS he was a former middle school and elementary school teacher for one year. One fun fact about him is that he is a big Boston sports team fan. In his free time he enjoys traveling, designing, hiking and playing pickleball. He is super excited to be a part of the Trojan Family this year.



**Ms. Samol** is one of our new English teachers up at the Senior High. She is new to McDowell but she previously was an eighth grade teacher at J.S. Wilson. She is located in room 218. A fun fact about her is that she actually attended McDowell during her high school career. In her free time she enjoys running, cooking and baking. She is very excited to be a part of our Trojan Family.

**Mrs. Boesch** is the new guidance counselor filling in for Mrs. Ryes since she retired. She is located in the guidance office. Her previous teaching experiences include, first, second and fourth grade. She was also a counselor for grades K-8. A fun fact about her is that she has been a swim coach for 14 years. In her free time she enjoys swimming, going to the beach and spending time with her family. She can't wait to start her new chapter here at McDowell.

**Mr. Calabrese** is the assistant principal for the senior high building. He is in the main office. His teaching experiences include seven years of high business, computer and technology. He also had five and half years as an assistant principal and half of a year as a principal for an elementary school. A fun fact about him is that he once rode a helicopter with the famous LeBron James back in 2006. In his free time he enjoys playing baseball and basketball with his kids and also spending time with his family.



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# New Intermediate Staff

BY MCKENZIE PAULI



**Mr. Costello** is one of four new learning support teachers. He teaches Social Studies in room 6-201. This school year is his first time teaching. He is also a McDowell Basketball coach. During his free time he enjoys playing golf.

**Ms. Hornaman** is a new math teacher at MIHS. She mainly teaches Algebra and Geometry and is located in 4-115. Her previous teaching experience was in Ohio at Saint John School for the past four years. There she taught Geometry, Algebra 2, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus and AP Calculus. One fun fact about her is that she enjoys traveling. Some of her favorite places she's traveled to are Costa Rica, Cancun and New England. In her free time she likes to hang out with her friends and family and read. She's very excited to start her new chapter of her teaching career at McDowell and become a true Trojan!



**Mr. Carnes** is a new music teacher and the new marching band director. He is located in room 6-106. He previously taught chorus at Westlake Middle School and MIHS. A fun fact about him is that he is active in a local music community. In his free time he enjoys cooking.

**Miss Grubbs** is a new math teacher located in room 4-108. She previously taught second grade at the Erie Rise Leadership Academy. A fun fact about her is she has a nephew who turned two in October. She also needed seven stitches in her right hand from playing softball as a kid. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family and friends and also going shopping.





**Mrs. Schillinger** is a special education math teacher. She is in room 2-112. She was a teacher at Robert Benjamin Wiley for nine years teaching seventh and eighth grade math. A fun fact about her is she traveled to Iceland for eight days. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her husband and kids, camping, traveling, going to concerts and doing yoga. She is very happy to be a part of the Trojan family.

**Mrs. Swantek** is a new special education science teacher in room 6-201. She previously taught for five years in second grade and middle school. A fun fact about her is she has two daughters, one named Natiale who is a nurse in Pittsburgh, and another one named Kelsey who is an engineer in Chicago. Both her husband and daughter Kelsey graduated from McDowell. In her free time, she enjoys sewing, knitting, painting and reading.



**Ms. Hayes** is a multilanguage learner teacher. Her room number is 4-102. She previously taught both English and Family and Consumer Science at McDowell, but prior to working here she worked in the City of Erie School District. A fun fact about her is she is a volunteer firefighter and EMT. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her son, being outside, swimming and rappelling.

**Mrs. Bihler** is a new environmental science teacher in room 4-201. She has been teaching for 20 years. She spent several years teaching Early Childhood Education as well as middle school science, biology electives and high school chemistry in North Carolina. She recently taught sixth-grade science in Louisiana. A fun fact about her is her favorite sport is soccer and she played goalie in college. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family.



**Miss Brown** is a new Family and Consumer Science teacher. She previously taught fifth grade at Belle Valley Elementary for two years and she also taught Kindergarten at Asbury Elementary for one year. A fun fact about her is she has an English bulldog named Elvis. In her free time she enjoys baking, reading and traveling.

# You Gatto Be Kidding Me!

Joe Gatto brings his Night of Comedy tour to the Warner Theatre

by Emmaleigh Dorau

Smaller cities like Erie aren't typically a popular stop on tour lists, but this year, Joe Gatto, a world-famous comedian from the TV show, *Impractical Jokers*, brought his Night of Comedy tour to the Warner Theatre on Oct. 29.

Joe Gatto is most famous for his participation in the hit truTV comedy show, *Impractical Jokers*, a hidden camera show featuring four life-long best friends who challenge each other to do various tasks, in exchange for a thumbs-up or win. If someone refuses to do a task, they receive a thumbs-down or a loss which accumulates throughout the episode. Whichever joker gets the most thumbs-down losses in the episode, receives a punishment that they cannot escape.

Gatto left the show in the beginning of season nine due to family issues, and he took more time to focus on himself and his family outside of the show. Soon after Gatto left *Impractical Jokers*, he began touring North America bringing laughs and smiles to people nationwide, even offering meet and greets.

Besides touring, Gatto has also focused more of his time on Gatto's Pups and Friends, a dog adoption service that helps dogs find healthy, happy homes. The comedian also joined a podcast titled "Two Cool Moms" that he co-hosts with Steve Byrne.

His Erie Night of Comedy Show began at 7 p.m., with one of the two opening comedians, Mark Jigarjian, who has been featured on Joe's podcast "Two Cool Moms." He was followed by Steve Byrne, a comedian who appeared on *Impractical Jokers* season 9 and 10, and Gatto's co-host of "Two Cool Moms." Mark and Steve were perfect opening acts for Joe as they kept the whole crowd laughing for an hour.



Emmaleigh Dorau/The Trojan Voice

Comedian Joe Gatto entertains fans in Erie at the Warner Theatre on Nov. 29.

Joe Gatto came on to a screaming audience. He started his segment out with the famous bit, "scoopski potatoes." Hearing scoopski potatoes live was amazing, especially since it always gets stuck in my head every time I watch the episode. Joe proceeded to make the crowd scream and laugh as the jokes kept getting funnier, and more questionable, especially with his "shower thoughts that make you really think." Joe asked people if they had ever seen a baby pigeon, and asked if Cinderella's stuff turned back at midnight, then why were the slippers still glass?

Throughout Joe's segment, he kept mentioning various times with his fellow Jokers, leading us to believe that either Murr, Sal or Q would make a surprise appearance, but sadly, no one did. Joe didn't leave the stage until around 9, going over his time limit by half an hour, he said he didn't care though because he was having so much fun with the crowd.

At the end of the show, my aunt and I raced to the merchandise table at the front of the Warner to buy a "meet and greet" ticket, as she knows how much I love Joe.

We had to wait in line to meet Joe for half an hour, and just sitting there knowing I was about to meet one of my idols was terrifying. That half an hour wait flew by and before I knew it, I was face to face with the guy I laugh at on TV, Joe Gatto. The first thing I did was hug him.

Joe was the nicest human being I've ever met. He was so caring about all his fans, though he didn't know them personally. One-on-one, he still made you laugh. I got a few pictures with Joe and then I asked him to sign my jacket and draw on it.

The ticket was \$100, but it was worth it, the best \$100 I've ever spent.

## Three Questions With Joe

**Q: What was your favorite punishment?**

**A:** My favorite punishment I ever did was breaking the tables as "the manager" in Season 9!

**Q: Why do you continue touring?**

**A:** To make people laugh, of course, it's the best feeling to me when other people are happy.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you would like to share?**

**A:** Continue being kind, sweetheart, and always make other people laugh.

Emmaleigh Dorau/The Trojan Voice



Emmaleigh Dorau and her aunt attended the meet-and-great session with comedian Joe Gatto on Oct. 29 at the Warner Theatre. There she asked him some questions and got his autograph.

# A Haze of Pumpkin Spice Craze

by Emmaleigh Dorau

As seasons start to turn a new leaf, so do grocery stores. Autumn begins in the United States on Sept. 22, but if you walk into a grocery store in the middle of August, whether it's coffee, Oreos, cereal or surprisingly, SPAM, the first item usually on display is pumpkin flavored. Many people around the world stand by the idea that "it is never too early for pumpkin spice," but this year, it should've waited until the end of September.

August and September are still summer months and usually are the hottest months of the season compared to June or July. The average August temperature in Erie this year was 80 degrees with a low of 72 a high humidity and very little rain. The beginning of September reached the same temperatures as August, with highs in the 80s, if not higher, and high humidity. Pumpkin-flavored items usually taste best towards the end of September when the weather has cooled down to 40 or 50 degrees and autumn has officially begun.

Another reason pumpkin-flavored items came out too early this year is pumpkin harvesting. Most pumpkins in the United States are not ready to harvest until early- to mid-September. Looking at traditional pumpkin recipes using real pumpkins, most of them aren't possible to make until mid-September. If you buy pumpkin bread off of a shelf at a grocery store in August, it has an artificial pumpkin taste, which is more pungent than sweet. If the pumpkin craze waited until the end of September to take place, the taste of pumpkin would be more genuine and authentic.

Just like people get tired of ice cream during the summer because they have had too much of it, the same thing applies to pumpkins. By the time autumn

hits, pumpkin items have been out for over a month and a half. Having the same thing over and over again starts to have an effect on people's taste buds and mentality, causing people to be tired of pumpkin by early- or mid-September, not even making it until October. If pumpkin items waited until the end of September to release, the pumpkin craze would last until Halloween instead of dying off before the leaves do.

Finally, grocery stores release pumpkin-flavored items earlier in the year as a way to capture people's attention to make money. If they waited until the middle or even the end of September to release these items, they would make more money because of the limited release or time frame.

Starbucks released its fall menu on August 24, leading to record-breaking weekly sales after the 20th-anniversary launch of their spiced menu this year, according to an article from the Associated Press. And it will stick around until even after the holiday drink menu tempts customers with gingerbread and peppermint.



The pumpkin spice flavor craze enters stores earlier every year and appears in foods you might expect like hot chocolate, but others you might not, like Goldfish crackers.