



A jump on the future



Photos courtesy Fort Zumwalt School District

Students from Fort Zumwalt School District get to work on a project in one of the many Career Technical Education (CTE) Apprenticeship Courses offered.

Fort Zumwalt School District's unique Apprenticeship Program was recognized as a Program of Distinction by the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation of America

By Brett Auten

Students from the Fort Zumwalt School District are getting a leg up on tomorrow today.

The district's unique Apprenticeship Program was recognized as a Program of Distinction by the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation of America.

The award, given to Dr. Patrick Brown and Andy McHaffie, recognizes the program for, "fidelity to the modern registered apprenticeship model and excelling in high-quality, industry-relevant instruction, on-the-job training, apprentice mentoring and employer partnership."

It was awarded at an event presenting the United States Department of Labor Certified Youth program to more than 50 business rep-

resentatives, as well as elected officials, state and local Chamber of Commerce leaders and representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

McHaffie is a teacher at Zumwalt East High and curriculum coordinator for Industrial Technology and Engineering. Brown is the Zumwalt School District's Executive Director of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) and Career Technical Education (CTE). The pair launched the program in 2019 with partner Merric Millwork and Seating. It has grown steadily over the past four years, despite early hurdles created by the pandemic.

The program started with four apprentices, in 2022, the number grew to 20.

"We have always tried to find a way to bridge the gap from education to going into

the labor force," McHaffie said. "The benefit of the program is amazing. It's an experience you cannot get at school. Real world experience."

The program isn't just come one, come all.

Students that are interested in applying for the apprenticeship program need to enroll and complete one of the many CTE Apprenticeship Courses offered, which include industrial tech, business, family and consumer science, and many others. Once they have completed the course, they can fill out the application including two instructor recommendations. Applicants will then be asked to interview at a manufacturing partner for the apprenticeship position they have selected.

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade-point

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St. Louis Alumnae Chapter's Founders Day celebration reminds members to stay focused, fearless and faithful



Submitted photo

The St. Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. packed the ballroom of the St. Charles Convention Center Feb. 11, and celebrated under the theme, "Our Mirror of Time... What an Impact We've Made."

Founders Day season is always exciting for Black Greek organizations. This year's commemoration by the St.

Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (SLA) gave space for its more than 500 members to

gather and reflect on its extraordinary 110-year history of sisterhood, scholarship, service and social action. The sorority packed the ballroom of the St. Charles Convention Center Feb. 11, and celebrated under the theme, "Our Mirror of

Time... What an Impact We've Made."

The 2023 Founders Day chair DeJeanette Williams and co-chair Erica D. West planned and executed the event. The program opened with remarks from Delta Chapters across the metropolitan St. Louis area, as well as Dr. Joi L. Moore, DST, Inc. National Secretary, Dr. Felicia C. Echols, Central Regional Director, and Dr. Bernadette White, SLA President.


During the program, members commemorated the occasion by paying tribute to the organization's 22 founders.

"One of the most inspiring aspects of our Founders Day Program was a tribute to women whose shoulders we stand," said White. "The tribute consisted of a simulated graduation ceremony of that special

day on Jan. 13, 1913, at Howard University, the place in history which marked the creation of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Shortly after that, the daring members of the newly formed sorority would participate in the Women's Suffrage March in Washington, D.C., its first act of social justice – a time in our history we will never forget."

The chapter's very own choir, Voices of Fortitude, set the tone before the keynote address. Rosie Allen-Herring, Eastern Regional Director of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and President/CEO of the United Way of the National Capital Area was the keynote speaker. She took the audience on a ride of reflection, emphasizing all the things that have come the sorority's way for the past 110 years and how it has overcome. She started her remarks by telling the audience, full of charismatic and courageous Central Region members, that they all inspired her.

"This is an opportunity for me to come outside what's familiar and understand what it means to be a Delta," said Allen-Herring. "Be worthy of what's expected of us as Deltas. If our 22 founders had the courage in an environment that didn't have the luxuries we have today, you don't have the right to be tired or not to show up and do the work. Everybody can do something. Deltas wrote the book on activism, so we need to show up when it's time and be unapologetic about it. "Don't give up as we move forward with fortitude. How do we save the world?" Allen-Herring asked. "One community and one chapter at a time."



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Pictured (from left) are Dave Sweda, Seyer Industries; Dan Claypool, CEO Merric; Dan Fitter, CEO Quest; Rob Unnerstall, National Cart; Jeanna Caldwell, U.S. Department of Labor; Jennifer Waters, FZSD Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Patrick Brown, FZSD Executive Director of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math and Career Technical Education; Andy McHaffie, FZ Curriculum Coordinator of Industrial Technology and Engineering; Cynthia Walker, ISI and Perry Gorrell, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

'FUTURE' from cover

average (on a 4.0 scale) in the CTE Apprenticeship Course-work and complete at least 180 classroom hours of work-based learning which is aligned with the CTE Apprenticeship Curriculum. They must also maintain at least a 90% attendance record overall for grades 9-12 and maintain at least a 95% on-time record (four tardies or less per semester).

"We don't want to send someone and they leave a bad taste in their mouth," McHaffie said. "We also incorporate some of the soft skills. The students have to dress and present themselves for the interview portion, for example."

Current partners include Merric Millwork and Seating, Quest Specialty Products, National Cart Co., Patterson Mold and Tool, Fixture Concepts, Seyer Industries and Avmat.

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ers with highly skilled workers whose school attendance is a proven track record of commitment to the workplace. It provides students with paid, on-the-job training, the chance to earn high school credit while learning and earning on the job, 45 hours of college credit toward a Skilled Trades A.A.S., through St. Charles Community

College and a nationally recognized USDOL certificate.

Looking into the future, McHaffie could see the program expanding.

"I think we could be at 80 students someday, easily," he said. "Also, I would love to expand into IT (information technology) and health-care."



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St. Charles County Election Authority to offer 'no excuse' voting at satellite location

Beginning with the April 4 General Municipal Election, the St. Charles County Election Authority will offer all St. Charles County voters the opportunity to vote early without an excuse at a satellite location specifically for this purpose.

With the change in Missouri law that went into effect Aug. 28, 2022, voters now can absentee vote in person without giving a reason.

The satellite voting site will be at Element Church, 100 Mall Parkway, Suite 500 in Wentzville, site of the former Belz Mall between I-70 and I-64. It will be open weekdays 9 a.m.-3 p.m., through March 31.

"The satellite voting site will accommodate the significant increase of voters choosing to vote during a two-week period prior to election day," says Director of Elections Kurt Bahr. "Voters must

have a valid photo ID to receive a ballot just as they do on election day."

No excuse absentee voting will also be available weekdays 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., March 21-March 31; 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., April 1; and 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday, April 3 at the St. Charles County Election Authority, 397 Turner Boulevard in St. Peters. April 3 is the last day for no excuse absentee voting for the April 4 election. Curbside voting for voters with mobility issues is available at the Election Authority office during absentee voting times. Curbside voting will not be available at the satellite voting site at Element Church.

For questions, please contact the Election Authority office at election@sccmo.org or 636-949-7550.

MoDOT closes westbound Route 94 exit ramp

Drivers using westbound Route 94 to access eastbound Route 364 in St. Charles County have been detoured starting March 13. The ramp is scheduled to be closed until mid-summer.

Crews closed the westbound Route 94 ramp as part of the conversion of the Muegge Road bridge into a Diverging Diamond Interchange over Route 94/364.

Drivers will be detoured by continuing on westbound Route 94/364 and exiting at Heritage Crossing/North St. Peters Parkway, then turning around eastbound on South St. Peters Parkway to continue to eastbound Route 364.

This ramp closure is part of the Route 94/364/Muegge Road improvements. For more on the interchange improvements, visit the project website: <https://www.modot.org/interchangeimprovements>.

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Make the most of snacking for healthy kids

Kids, no matter their age, love snacks, and often come home from school hungry and looking for something to eat. However, it can be a struggle to find snacks that kids enjoy and parents approve.

The snack experts at Kemp's along with registered dietitian and nutrition expert Frances Largeman-Roth know the importance of finding fun and tasty ways to give hungry, growing kids the nutrient-rich foods they need. These tips can help you make the most of snack time (or any time) to keep kids healthy.

Look for real fruit ingredients

While quick and easy, many packaged snacks use sugar instead of real fruit. Make sure to read labels carefully to understand what is in kids' snacks. Look for real fruit, not just fruit juice, and key vitamins and nutrients like calcium while skipping out on artificial flavors, preservatives, colors and high-fructose corn syrup.

Start the day off right

It's not always easy to squeeze a nutritious breakfast into busy mornings, but it's an important way to start each day. Multiple studies show kids who eat a nutritious breakfast perform better academically and focus better throughout the day. Plus, starting the day off right helps kick unhealthy cravings while keeping kids full and energized.

Pack in the protein

To make sure your kids are staying full between meals and getting the nutrients they need, stock up on snacks

that are high in protein. According to Largeman-Roth, dairy is a great way to accomplish this while also giving kids a tasty snack.

Model healthy habits

Kids learn by example in countless ways, and the way you take care of your own health and well-being is no exception. When kids see grownups they admire making smart choices about nutrition, they're more likely to adopt those behaviors themselves. Join in the fun at snack time and create meaningful family moments by preparing or enjoying a nutritious snack together.

Make snack time fun

There's few things kids love more than fun flavors or seeing characters they cherish on their favorite foods. To make snack time extra exciting, get snacks featuring characters they love or with favorite flavors, like strawberry or mixed berry, which are popular among kids.

To learn more and find fun recipes, visit kemps.com.

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Take Notice . . .

The events listed in this section are the latest updates as of press time, please check with individual sites for the most up to date cancellations and re-schedule info.

Featured Events . . .

April 22 and 23: Choral Art Singers celebrating 50th Anniversary!

Choral Arts Singers announce our spring concert, "Let Heaven and Nature Spring" featuring folk song Bright Morning Stars, jazzy Blue Skies, and uplifting Song of Creation. Our group is celebrating over 50 years as a choir with performances Saturday April 22, 7pm, at Wentzville United Methodist Church, 725 Wall St, Wentzville, MO and Sunday April 23, 3pm, at Assumption Parish Chapel, 403 N Main St, O'Fallon, MO. Concerts are free, donations are appreciated. Visit our website, www.concertarts.org, and Facebook (Choral Arts Singers) for more concert details and to learn more about our choir. We look forward to singing for you again this spring. Peace and blessings! Choral Arts Singers

EVENTS

March 25: Shred event

Shred Day at Sunrise Church takes place at 7116 Twin Chimneys Blvd. in O'Fallon from 9 a.m. to noon. The event supports Food For Hope and more. Bring documents to shred and non-perishable items for the food pantry. For a suggested list of food donations, please visit sunrisefamily.org/foodforhope.

March 25: Trivia night

Hop on over to the Pezold Banquet Center at 5701 Highway N in Cottleville to support United Services for Children at their annual trivia night. Teams of eight are \$200 per table. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the action starts at 7 p.m. This is a 21 and older event. Register at www.usfctrivia.org.

March 25: Rummage sale

Grace United Church of Christ at 8326 Mexico Road in O'Fallon is hosting a rummage sale in Grace's lower level from 8 a.m. to noon. Shop the "treasures" for a freewill offering.

March 25: Writers' meeting

Saturday Writers March Meeting takes place from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Spencer Road Library, Room 240. Writers encouraging writers. Special guest speaker Melissa Ridley Elmes will present "First Lines: Opening Your Poems with Intent." For more information, visit www.saturdaywriters.org. \$5 for visitors, free to members.

March 31: Fundraiser gala

Resonating Hope's Starry Night Spring Gala is at 7 p.m. at Water's Edge Banquet Center at 200 Salt Lick Road - St. Peters Golf Course. Enjoy a date night or evening with your friends with a formal three course catered dinner, dessert, dancing with live music by The Magnifikats, silent auction and raffles. Proceeds go to support arts and education for St. Louis' inner-city kids. Tickets are \$45/person or \$425 for a table of 10. Tickets online at ResonatingHope.org or Eventbrite.com.

March 31: Fish fries

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Fish Fry takes place at 2 Seton Court in St. Charles from 4-7 p.m. every Friday in Lent, except Good Friday. Dine-in or carry-out orders only. Order online at MKT.com/seasfishfry. Adult plates are \$13. Child plates are \$6.

March 31: Fish fries

St. Patrick Church Knights of Columbus will hold fish fries every Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. through March 31 at 405 S. Church St. in Wentzville. Beer and wine available for purchase. Dine in or carry out. For more details, call Greg Lippert at 314-440-5510.

April 1 Quilt social

A quilt social takes place at St. Joseph Parish, Cottleville in the school cafeteria at 1355 Motherhead Rd. Doors open at 10 a.m., bingo starts at noon. There will be lunch, beverages, crafts and baby quilts for sale.

April 1: Trivia night

Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County is hosting its 10th Annual Trivia Night at 6 p.m., at the Larry Elms Training Center, 755 Parr Road in Wentzville. Tickets are \$25 per person, or \$200 for a table of eight players. Free bottled water, soda and beer will be available while supplies last. Attendees may bring food and beverages, but glass bottles are prohibited at the venue. Tables, tickets and sponsorships may be purchased at hfhtrivia.org.

April 2: Easter egg hunt

The sixth Annual Easter Egg Hunt is back at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish at 403 North Main Street in O'Fallon. After Palm Sunday Services, bring your child, ages 12 and under, to the soccer field to help the Easter Bunny find hidden eggs. Sponsored by the Assumption Men's Group, these age-appropriate hunts are free and begin 30 minutes after each Sunday Mass. There will be donuts available at

the 8 a.m. hunt, and grilled hot dogs, soda and water offered after the 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. egg hunts. Donations are welcome and all proceeds collected support and fund this popular parish event. For

more information about the Assumption Easter Egg Hunt or Assumption Church, contact the Parish Office at 636-240-3721 or visit assumptionbvm.org.

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Recipe: Fuel for the future with good nutrition

TURKEY SWEET POTATO SKILLET

INGREDIENTS:

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| 2 tablespoons butter | 1 yellow bell pepper, diced |
| 1 tablespoon garlic, minced | 3 small or 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced small (about 3 1/2 cups) |
| 1 pound ground turkey | 3/4 cup chicken broth |
| 1.5 tablespoons ground cumin | 1/2 cup mozzarella, shredded |
| 2 teaspoons chili powder | 1/2 cup cheddar, shredded |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped |
| 1/4 teaspoon pepper | |
| 1 cup onion, diced | |



DIRECTIONS:

In a large skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Then add the ground turkey. Cook turkey until browned.

Add cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper. Stir

well to incorporate.

Add onion and bell pepper, and cook for 3-4 minutes.

Add diced sweet potatoes and broth. Stir and cover with a lid for approximately 6-8

minutes until the sweet potatoes soften.

Remove lid and add additional salt and pepper if desired. Top with shredded cheese. Remove skillet from heat and garnish with fresh cilantro before serving.

For more information on dairy's benefits, visit www.stldairyCouncil.org

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Robert Blake and the curse of 'The Little Rascals'



Movie:

By Steve Bryan



Born and raised in South St. Louis, Steve Bryan is now based in Anaheim, California, and has been allowed access to movie and television sets to see actors and directors at work. Though his writing has taken him far from St. Louis, Steve is, at heart, still the same wide-eyed kid who spent countless hours watching classic movies at neighborhood theaters.

In the 1970's, local television stations broadcast reruns of "The Little Rascals," a popular series of short films originally shown in movie theaters. Also known as the "Our Gang" comedies, the main characters were children who often got into trouble or unusual circumstances.

Young performers such as George "Spanky" McFarland, Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer and Darla Hood were big draws until they became too old for the series and "aged out." To fill the void, Michael James Vijencio "Mickey" Gubitosi and other fresh faces were hired to continue the series until it ended in 1944.

Gubitosi, better known as Robert Blake, passed away on March 9. Unlike many of his colleagues, he transitioned to adult movie roles and later played an undercover detective in "Baretta." He also played Father Noah on the NBC series "Hell Town." On April 18, 2002, Blake was arrested and charged with the murder of Bonny Lee Bakley, a woman with whom he had a relationship. Blake was later found liable for her wrongful death and ordered to pay \$30 million to Bakley's children, but that amount was reportedly lowered. In later



"Our Gang" photo courtesy MGM

years, he had his own "YouTube" channel and was selling memorabilia online.

Was there a curse on "The Little Rascals?" Robert Blake's later years were certainly filled with controversy, but other members died tragically. After Carl Switzer "aged out" of child roles, he had trouble getting adult parts in films. He did appear in small roles in "State of the Union," "My Favorite Blond" as well as "The Gas House Kids" series that included "Our Gang" alum Tommy "Butch" Bond. In "It's a Wonderful Life," Switzer had a wonderful cameo playing a prank on George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart). In 1959, he died after being shot over a small debt and passed away at age 31.

Reportedly, Carl Switzer was replaced by William Robert Laughlin. Where Alfalfa was known for his "crooning," Laughlin could make his voice sound like a frog and was nicknamed "Froggy." He appeared in the final "Our Gang" comedies and had the lead role in "Dancing Romeo." In that short, Froggy fell in love with a girl who only had eyes for a handsome dancer. William Laughlin sadly passed away at the age of 16 on Aug. 31, 1948. Laughlin was using his motor scooter to deliver newspapers when he was hit by

a truck.

Former child star William "Billie" Thomas, Jr. reentered popular culture when "Saturday Night Live" star Eddie Murphy appeared in character as Buckwheat, one of the most beloved members of the "Our Gang" comedies. Thomas made his debut as Buckwheat in 1935, but he played the role as female. Thomas' character later became male as the series continued. As an adult, Thomas had a great career as a film lab technician with the Technicolor corporation and also learned film editing and cutting. He had a heart attack on Oct. 10, 1980, and passed away at age 49.



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MOORE ON LIFE: The year of the cat

By Cindy Moore

It was International Women's Day this month. I informed my cats of the event. They were of course thrilled to know that their owner had a day specified to honor someone they esteemed and revered so deeply.

It started out this way on that day:

"Hey kitties, it's my special day reserved just to honor yours truly. How should you celebrate me?"

Right away they conspired to do good deeds. The fat one spoke up first:

"I insist you take a long leisurely catnap, but first how about brushing out this fur coat of mine? It has a few snags and snarls and if you don't get them under control, I'll be forced to lick them out myself and we all know how that ends. Last time, I experienced a dreadful hacking fit at 2 a.m. and deposited a giant furball at the foot of your bed. You then stepped in it and repeated some shocking words that curled the whiskers on my sensitive brow."

I remembered staying awake for the rest of that night. I dutifully grabbed a brush and meticulously worked over his pelt after first retrieving a plate of his favorite snacks which he demanded.

Afterwards, I cornered the skinny cat and reminded her that it was my special day and a chance to pamper me instead of her.

"Sure thing," she meowed. "But first be a good pet person and wrestle up a few flies to put in the window-sill. You know how much I love those little flying peanuts and it gives you such joy to see me swat and eat



those nasty menaces."

For the next hour I ran around the house with an empty pickle jar trying to snag a fly to please the little fur ball. After stumbling over the couch and banging my shin on the coffee table, I captured one of the disease-covered insects and presented

it to her highness. She promptly turned up her nose and waved me off informing me that the fly-catching mood had passed.

Irately, I informed them both that the day had gone by without any attention to me.

The fat one responded, "You've had an entire day off from indulging us, so get up all the earlier tomorrow morning because I declare it the start of, Celebrate Your Cat Year!"

Cindy Moore is the mother of three superlative kids, servant of two self-indulgent felines and wife to one nifty husband. Her fictitious occupation? Archeological Humorist: someone who unearths absurdity and hilarity in strange and unusual places including public restrooms, the lint filter, and church meetings. Most recently, she excavated a find in her neighbor's bird feeder.



The opinions expressed in this column are Cindy Moore's alone and do not reflect the opinion of the owners or staff of Community News.

LIFESTYLE: Tips for selecting the perfect home

For those beginning the process of home buying, there are many factors to consider. Keep these ideas in mind as you conduct your search – whether it's online or at a series of open houses.

Consider future needs

Because life is always evolving, it's important to move into a home that has enough space for your family's anticipated changes. While features and space are always prime considerations, don't forget to, look into the area schools, day care options, parks and other kid-friendly amenities if you plan to grow your family in your next home.

Look for flexible spaces

Seek homes that offer rooms with multiple func-



Photo courtesy of Unsplash

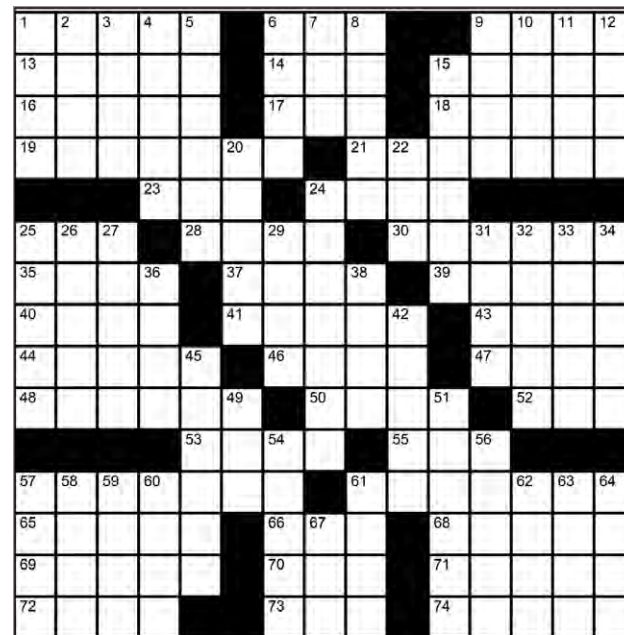
tions. For example, an office area may be suitable for a small child's room, or a sunroom may be converted to a laundry area down the road. Unfinished basements are also blank canvases that can be customized to meet your family's wants and needs.

Get to know the area

The purchase of a home goes well beyond the property line. Be sure to examine the neighborhood in which the house is situated. From the condition of the neighbors' houses to highway access and the proximity of necessities like grocery stores and gas stations, be sure to take every factor into account to help ensure you're selecting the right location.

Find more tips to aid you in your home search at eLivingtoday.com.

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ACROSS

1. Necktie alternative
6. Finish line
9. Show of appreciation
13. Biotic community
14. Hula dancer's necklace
15. House duty
16. Sofia Costanza Brigida Villani Scicolone's stage last name
17. International distress signal
18. Hogwarts professor, part werewolf
19. *"Avengers: _____," second-highest grossing movie of all time
21. *Annexed Black Sea peninsula
23. Santa _____, Orange County
24. Multicolored horse
25. *Rand Paul's title, abbr.
28. Youngster
30. *Type of spinner popular in the late 2010s
35. Between duet and quartet
37. Newspaper piece
39. Pope's court
40. Bohemian
41. *Tonya and Harley Quinn to Margot Robbie, e.g.
43. *Like Millie Bobby Brown and friends in "Stranger Things"
44. Prows
46. Vaulting prop
47. Fencer's blade
48. *Animated story of Elsa and Anna
50. Greek salad ingredient
52. Make #26 Down
53. Look through a book
55. Good times
57. *Global surveillance whistle-blower
61. *Swedish audio streamer
65. BBQ spot
66. Words at the altar (2 words)
68. Beneficiary
69. Anti-seniors sentiment
70. Ides mo.
71. Bone hollow
72. Prepare potatoes
73. Tide's backward flow
74. City in France

DOWN

1. Having the means
2. Land of Israel
3. * _____-cutting, broadcast TV phenomenon
4. Opposite of alpha
5. Not owner
6. Something _____
7. Opposite of paleo
8. "Saturday Night Fever" music
9. Pal
10. Between trot and gallop
11. Operatic solo
12. Actor Sean
15. Healthcare facility
20. *Bill de Blasio, e.g.
22. England's airforce
24. Recite rapidly (2 words)
25. Walking stick
26. Fielding mistake
27. Part of TNT
29. *BTS' genre
31. *Home to Blue Devils, 2015 NCAA winners
32. Complain
33. Downy duck
34. Policeman's shocker
36. Court of law opener
38. Mark for omission
42. Frame job
45. Not often
49. *Amal Clooney _____ Alamuddin
51. Naturally footless
54. Japanese cartoon art
56. Expressionless
57. Junk e-mail
58. Hindu serpent deity
59. Singer-songwriter Redding
60. Item on Santa's list
61. Acidic kind of apple
62. A fan of
63. *Plant in Zach Galifianakis' 2019 movie
64. Those not opposed
67. *Popular meme move