

# LAKE VIEWS

THE AWARD WINNING STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LAKE OSWEGO HIGH SCHOOL

## Court ruling declares Oswego Lake to be public



Internet photo

Drone picture of Oswego Lake, a man-made body of water in the affluent suburb of Lake Oswego, recently made public by a court ruling

By ALYSSA MANNINEN

Oswego Lake, known for its beauty and popularity for boating, fishing, and swimming, is now officially open to the public. The City of Lake Oswego was ordered by Judge Kathie Steele of Clackamas County Circuit Court on Wednesday, Nov. 13 to take down all the lake's "No Access" signs and to revoke the ordinance that forbids the general public entrance to the lake. Judge Steele granted public access to the lake through Millennium Plaza Park. Although the ruling declares the lake to be publicly accessible, the decision is still being reviewed by the city council, and it is unclear if the city will appeal this court ruling.

The case dates back to 2012 when Mark Kramer and Todd Prager filed a lawsuit against the city to challenge its public access restrictions. Mark Kramer, a kayaker from Portland, and Todd Prager, a swimmer from the East Coast, were shocked when they found that the lake was inaccessible to them because Kramer lived outside the city and Prager was a resident of Lake Oswego but was only able to access certain areas of the lake. For years, Oswego Lake has been

essentially privatized and restricted to the members of the Lake Oswego Corporation: a private, not-for-profit association that manages the lake and surrounding properties. Many of the organization's members own upscale houses with private docks that line the lake's edges.

The central issue of the case was whether the city's restriction infringed Oregon law which typically permits public access to navigable water. Although the lake is technically accessible by boat, its shoreline was swiftly seized by private property owners, preventing public access to the lake. In a statement, Prager commented, "I want to take the opportunity to correct what has been wrong for so many years," arguing that the city's exclusive control of the lake was unfair and illegal under state law.

The City of Lake Oswego had previously defended the restriction, citing concerns about safety and prevention of invasive species from entering the lake. They asserted that the restriction was a matter of safety and liability since the lakeside parks were not designed for public use. In this reasoning, Judge Steele concluded that there was justifiable reasoning for restricting access

via Sundeleaf Plaza and Headlee Walkway, but no justification was found for limiting access through Millennium Plaza Park. In an interview with KGW8, Prager said "She [Judge Steele] did acknowledge that the city might need a little bit of time to improve the access, that essentially there's an injunction to provide public access." Moreover, the city contended that Oswego Lake was never public to begin with. Board President for Lake Oswego Corporation, Justin Harnish, spoke up on the topic, expressing that the organization opposes the modification of long-standing laws that have been in place for decades.

While the court's decision marks a victory for public access advocates, the issue is far from unsettled. It remains to be seen whether lakeside homeowners and local governments will react to the implementation. Certain residents voiced concerns regarding water safety and quality due to its public access, as the maintenance of the lake is funded solely by them without contribution from the public. However, Judge Steele proposed the idea of reasonable restrictions like permits, fees, and requirements. "Managing the risks is reasonable in Oswego Lake. Banning the public outright is unreasonable."

## Forecasts predict snow

By ANYA PHILLIPS

The colder conditions and heavier snowfall of this year's La Niña weather pattern have allowed for Oregon ski resorts to open early. On Nov. 15, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort opened for a preview weekend—the resort's earliest opening in 15 years. Meadows typically aims to begin operations around Thanksgiving weekend, but often doesn't open until December due to thin snowpack and icy patches. However, this year skiers were greeted with a bluebird day and 49 inches of snow for a great start to the season.

According to the resort's website, resort president Greck Pack said everyone is excited to be opening early. "It's such an incredible position to be in to be able to open ahead of schedule, and we're excited to kick off what's sure to be another amazing season of skiing and riding," he said.

Other resorts such as Timberline and Mt. Bachelor have also begun their operations early. After receiving over 40 inches of snowfall by mid-November, Bachelor kicked off its season with a pre-opening for season-pass holders from Nov. 15-17, marking its earliest opening since 1998. Timberline began early operations the weekend after Halloween, opening one lift with limited hours, making it their earliest opening since 1972. The resort launched daily operations on

Nov. 9, with more lifts soon opening.

The early snowfall comes with an extra layer of gratitude for mountain-goers and resorts after the uncooperative weather of last year and the subsequent shortened season. The Northwest was hit with a strong El Niño in Dec. 2023, creating a drier, warmer winter with less precipitation in the form of snow. La Niña has historically brought great ski seasons to Oregon, with the 2022 La Niña winter seeing 531 inches of snowfall at Meadows—over 100 more than average. This year, the season is anticipated to be another good one for NW resorts.

"I want to thank our teams for making this happen," said Bachelor president John Merriman to Powder Magazine. "It was a big push and I'm so proud of everyone—we are ready to make this the best season yet."

## LO police increases presence around city



By DYLAN THOMAS

The Lake Oswego Police Department (LOPD) has a reputation for straightforward efficiency which allows the town to be safe. However, there has been a recent increase in the amounts of traffic violations and tickets, and it has spiked the attention of many LO residents.

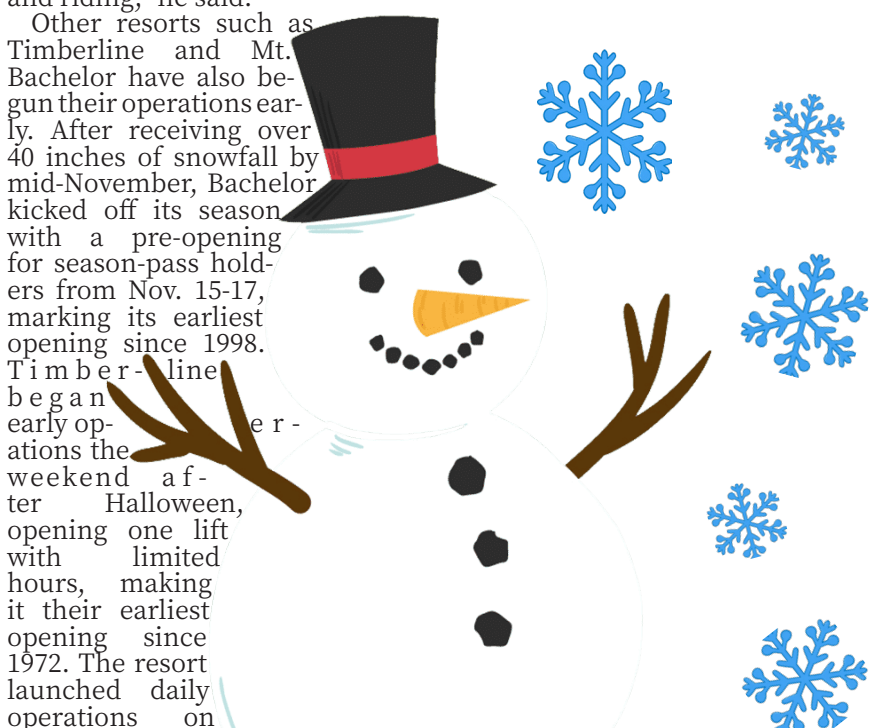
On Nov. 20, 2024, the City of Lake Oswego's Instagram account made a post picturing an officer standing alone without a vehicle on the sidewalk, using a speed radar on oncoming cars. The caption stated that in the month of November, the police department would be increasing patrols in an attempt to control the number of traffic violations as well as increase the prevention of accidents.

There are five categories of fatal crashes that were listed as targets for improvement: speeding, occupant safety, lane safety, impaired driving and distracted driving. The post also advised that citizens should expect to see an increased law enforcement

presence in Lake Oswego, not limited to police from the LOPD, but also including officers from surrounding areas.

Two days before this post was made, another post was released advertising job opportunities in the LOPD, possibly connected to the increase in patrols. Even earlier, there had been a noticeable increase in police patrol cars, undercover police cars, police bikes and K9 patrol cars. The increased surveillance seems like it will be focused on busier roads, such as Boones Ferry and Country Club, but there will also be an increase on neighborhood roads and less busy areas that are often not a priority of the LOPD.

The reactions to this announcement were mixed, containing both positive and negative responses. Some claim that there is already enough law enforcement in town, and that this increase is drastic and unnecessary, while others state that the change is much needed. Results should be seen soon during this holiday season.



# New cabinet appointed by Trump



Internet Photo

President-elect Donald Trump points toward the audience at his election night event

By JAKE BRENDEN

With Trump returning to the Oval Office he brings a slew of political appointees. The most notable ones are Pete Hegeseth for the Secretary of Defense, Pam Bondi as the Attorney General, Marco Rubio as the Secretary of State and Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) as the Health Secretary.

Pete Hegeseth is a veteran of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also served at the military prison Guantanamo Bay. He is currently a Fox News host of "Fox and Friends." He has advocated for an end of diversity equity and improvement within the military. He has also been accused of sexual assault by a staffer at the California Federation of Republican Women.

Pam Bondi is slated to be the Attorney General of the United States. Her job is to head up the De-

partment of Justice. She is a long-time Trump supporter from Florida. She falsely claimed in the 2020 election that there was widespread fraud.

Marco Rubio has been nominated for Secretary of State, which heads the US Department of State and manages foreign affairs and diplomacy. He has been a US senator from Florida since 2011. He has strong ties to his Cuban heritage. His endorsement of Trump was key during his first term. He is one of the few senior cabinet members with past political experience in the Senate.

RFK was nominated for the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Hailing from a democratic dynasty, his nomination comes after years of change and moving more rightward with his beliefs. RFK's main points are to focus more on exercise, healthy

eating, the Polio vaccine and vaccines overall. He has also expressed skepticism on vaccines and modern medicine. He has had no higher education regarding public health and has spread conspiracy theories regarding the safety and efficacy of vaccines.

Another notable nominee that went nowhere was Matt Gaetz who was supposed to be the Attorney General. He later had his name drawn after his long line of sexual assault allegations and charges came to light. He has also had a DUI on his record. His name was withdrawn as the Attorney General after immense backlash.

Finally, many of these picks and his other picks for the executive branch are much more anti-establishment than his last terms, this is also matched by his rhetoric which might indicate a theme for his upcoming term.



Internet Photo

# La Nina has kicked El Nino to the curb

By ANSLEY KANG

This winter marks the switch from El Niño to La Niña, two weather events that are often extremes of normal conditions. El Niño is characterized by dry and slightly warmer winters in the northern half of the United States, while La Niña is characterized by wetter, slightly cooler winters.

Environmental Science teacher Mr. Goodrich explained more specifically that La Niña is "a tropical ocean condition where the trade winds are blowing really strong in the tropical Pacific, and there are changes that move the jet stream around and displace where storms go in the United States. Generally, during La Niña, the southern tier states are going to be really dry ... the northern tier states tend to be wetter and sometimes a little cooler than the average year."

States such as California and Arizona have experienced a high number of intense fires, while Portland and Seattle have experienced lower temperatures and a large amount of rain which can be attributed to the La Niña event that Goodrich described.

Last winter, Lake Oswego experienced an El Niño, with weather patterns slightly drier and cooler, leading to less snow overall. This year, meteorologists are predicting a La Niña event in Portland, which may entail more snow and colder temperatures.

"Usually [La Niña] translates into wetter areas in terms of rain, but also a pretty good snowpack. So usually La Niñas are better years

for skiing," said Goodrich.

While it is unclear whether or not this year will bring more rain or snow, Goodrich shared that "one meteorologist had a lecture a few weeks ago, and he predicted we'd have four snow events in Portland this winter, two of which would cause disturbances, which I kind of interpret as 'get out of school' events... he was saying that January is not when it is going to happen, but more so in February."

While weather patterns are often unpredictable, many meteorologists and climate experts can agree that climate change is a leading cause of more extreme weather events and the switch between La Niña and El Niño. Oftentimes there will be a period of "normal conditions" followed by the occasional switch between the two. But "most people who study La Niña and El Niño would say that we have less average conditions and we have more extreme conditions... and most climate modeling shows that we're getting more extreme in all sorts of different ways," said Goodrich.

While the snow this year will be a treat for many students looking forward to getting out of school, ultimately these extremes are happening because of the significant change in our climate, whether it be the warming of our planet or other factors that go into climate change.

Goodrich noted that "In other parts of the country, more extreme events could translate into more intense hurricanes, or storms that we don't necessarily want to be more intense."

# LO lights up



Internet Photo

The Christmas tree alight in Millennium Plaza after annual ceremonial lighting

By LILLIAN MCILRAITH

While holidays bring a variety of unique traditions to communities all around the world, Lake Oswego has its very own: the annual Lake Oswego Holiday Tree Lighting, a large event with carolers from both Lakeridge and Lake Oswego high schools, fire trucks from the fire department, visits from Santa, speakers from the community, a reindeer petting zoo, snacks and the lighting of the Holiday Tree.

Hundreds of Lake Oswego citizens bundle up, bringing their holiday spirit to this annual event. Zia Murphy, a current senior at Lake Oswego High School said, "My mom brought a giant blanket and shared it with everyone around her." Her good friends, Shea Bamford and Sadie Hovey, enjoyed churros and took pictures by the tree. "The community gets to come together, eat food, sing songs, and enjoy the Christmas spirit," Hovey said.

The LOHS Windjammers gathered together at the Millen-

nium Plaza and sang carols such as "Deck the Halls," "We wish you a Merry Christmas," and "This Christmas." Admiring this celebration, Bamford recalled she "had a good time performing and everyone was just there to have fun." In a similar spirit, Luke Lidington's favorite song to sing was "Deck the Halls" because they sing it in a 7/8 time signature. Lakeridge's choir sang alongside the Windjammers. "It's a wonderful event because it brings both sides of the lake together to create beautiful music and celebrate," Bamford said.

This Christmas marks the 60th year of the tree lighting in downtown Lake Oswego. The beloved tradition started in 1944 and has grown in tradition and festivities over the years. One of the oldest trees in Lake Oswego is the tree in Safeway's parking lot, which is lit up at the lighting, as well as the tree in Millennium Plaza. It is a time for people of all ages to remember the joy of small-town holiday spirit as the City of Lake Oswego welcomes the winter.

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# Israel Prime Minister accused of war crimes

By JAKE BRENDEN

As the war continues to rage in Gaza, the International Criminal Court (ICC), the criminal court that prosecutes war criminals, such as those convicted for their crimes in Kosovo, has issued a warrant for war crimes and crimes against humanity for Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu. These crimes include withholding food and using starvation as a weapon of war, as well as not taking the proper steps to protect civilian life within the Gaza Strip. Another person who has had an issue with the ICC is Yoav Gallant, the former Minister of Defense for Israel, who has had a warrant issued for him for the same reasons as Netanyahu. These warrants are seen by supporters of the Palestinian cause as a major step forward in Israeli accountability and Palestinian statehood. Whereas those who

have been in the Israeli camp have called this a politically motivated decision, with President Biden calling the warrant "outrageous."

The warrant also draws lines between where Netanyahu can and cannot travel. All countries that are members of the ICC have to arrest people within their borders. Although many countries are signatories, the U.S. and Russia notably are not. Many other countries within the ICC, such as Hungary, have also said that they wouldn't arrest Netanyahu, while others, such as South Africa, firmly support it. If Netanyahu entered Hungary or any other signatory country they would have a treaty obligation to arrest Netanyahu, but if they do not it could bring into question the power and efficacy in the court. Another issue is that Israel's closest ally, the US, is not a member of the ICC, and the president has stated he wouldn't follow



Internet Photo

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel who's being accused of war crimes

# New LO recreational center set to open

By BREX PINE

As part of the 2019 bond Lake Oswego's new Recreation & Aquatics Center (LORAC) is set to open February 2025. The new community center will be located on Stafford Road and features a modern design. In late 2020, the city hired Scott Edwards Architecture LLP to create preliminary designs for LORAC which were then revised in 2021 for the facility to be larger. The revision was based on a public survey the city took, with over 300 responses. The community decisively voted for a larger facility than originally planned. LORAC's aquatics portion will feature both a 12 lane competitive pool as well as a 4,500 square foot recreational pool. Additionally, LORAC will include cardio and weight lifting equipment and a large gym.

The city had released various concept renderings, including a large plaza in the middle, parking space out front, and a modern



Internet photo

One possible design for the new Lake Oswego recreational facility

front entry. In late 2023, the city first broke ground on the site, today the framing of the building is complete, the front desk area is being finished and electricity is being installed, setting up for the 2025 opening. The construction

costs alone for the Center is over \$36 million, showing the scale of the project.

Membership to LORAC can be bought if you are a Lake Oswego Resident or a LOSD student. Prices vary by membership type. Includ-

ed in membership will be access to the gym, workout rooms, pools, and different types of classes. Pre-sale memberships, which give you access to LORAC's grand opening, are currently available and will be until the center opens. Another service the center plans to offer is event meeting spaces, which they will release more information about in the fall.

A goal of the Center was the use of sustainable building and operating methods. The design incorporates several sustainable features, such as a concrete design that reduces CO2 emissions, and use of LED lighting. They will provide EV car chargers to encourage use of electric cars. Finally, when choosing finishing and furniture selections were made with a preference for recycled content, local materials, and long lasting reliable pieces. LORAC aims to be a center for the community while focusing on Lake Oswego's commitment to accessibility and sustainability.

# Taylor Swift's "The Eras Tour" ends after two years

By CASSIA LITTLEFIELD

Taylor Swift's "The Eras Tour" officially came to a close on Dec. 8, 2024. Spanning over 149 shows, five continents, ten albums and two years, "The Eras Tour" certainly made its mark on the world.

The tour opened on March 17, 2024, with a duration of over three hours. Many of Swift's fans had wondered how she would do her first tour following the pandemic since she had released three albums that she had yet to tour for. Her solution was "The Eras Tour," a show that encompassed her entire career rather than just focusing on her latest album.

Each album, or "era," had its own stage set and costume for the show. From the colorful "Lover" house to the mossy "Folklore" cabin, to the various visuals and props used for the other eras, Swift created a magical and immersive experience for the audience.

Although, Swift was not the only one who contributed to the immersive environment. Many attendees came decked out in costumes, sparkly makeup, friendship bracelets and references to albums or songs. Toward the end of the tour, people made a game out of guessing which costumes Swift would wear each night. The tour became bigger than itself, with people watching

each show from live streams and even sitting outside of the stadiums to hear the concert.

Overall, the friendship bracelet phenomenon was the aspect that seemed to stand out the most during the two years that Swift toured. In her song, "You're on Your Own, Kid," she has a line that says, "so make the friendship bracelets, take the moment and taste it." The line inspired fans to make thousands of beaded bracelets that had Swift-related references on them. At any "The Eras Tour" con-

cert, fans could be seen with countless bracelets up their arms, trading them with other fans and celebrities at the show.

Friendship bracelets quickly became the symbol of the "The Eras Tour": a place of community, connection, childlike wonder and joy.

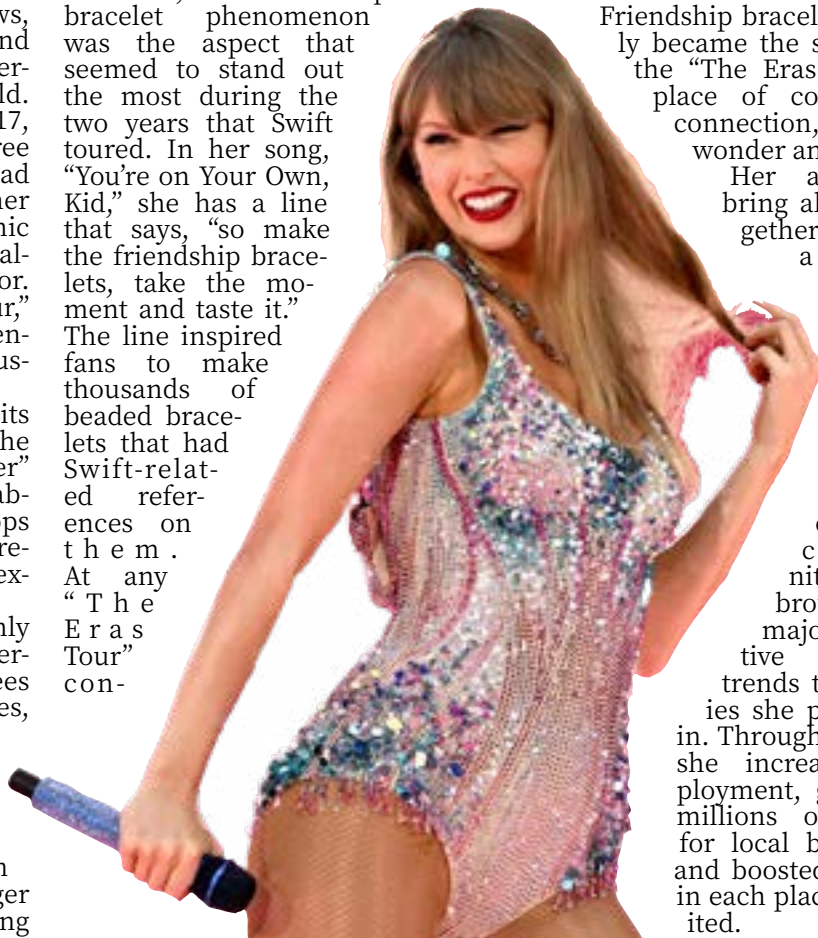
Her ability to bring all fans together in such a simple way was not the tour's only feat.

Along with her impact on the community, Swift brought in major positive economic trends to the cities she performed in. Through her tour, she increased employment, generated millions of dollars for local businesses and boosted revenue in each place she visited.

Besides the positive influence Swift has had on the fans and cities she went to, the tour also greatly benefited her career. Over the course of "The Eras Tour," Swift released two re-recorded albums, one new album, an extended version of her album "Midnights," a movie, four music videos and racked up four Grammy nominations.

It was also a significant tour in regard to celebrity guests. Some of the artists she performed with included Sabrina Carpenter, Ed Sheeran, Hayley Williams, Gracie Abrams and Ice Spice. The celebrities weren't just on stage; almost every night, a celebrity attendee could be spotted in the VIP tent. One of the most notable guests was NFL player Travis Kelce, who attended her show in Kansas City and is now her boyfriend. "The Eras Tour" made connections amongst her fans, but it also made important connections for Swift herself.

All in all, "The Eras Tour" redefined the concert experience and what the limits of a live show are. Many other artists have already started to follow in Swift's footsteps, endeavoring in their own tours that encompass their entire career. Many are curious as to what Swift is going to do next, for "The Eras Tour" was so monumental that it seems difficult to top.



# Daniel Way reopens after extensive stabilization project

By CLARE CHRISTENSEN

Daniel Way reopened last month following the completion of the Daniel Way Creek Stabilization project that left the road closed for over three months. The stabilization project was proposed in early 2022 due to erosion on the roadside from Three Sisters Creek adjacent to the road.

To begin the project, in March 2024, 60 trees were removed from the roadside of Daniel Way between the road and the Yakima parking lot adjacent to it. Of the 60 trees removed, eight of them were dead, and nine were invasive to the area, and the rest were in poor health. Now that the project is finished, 150 trees and 1000 shrubs will be planted next spring.

While construction on the road began in June, the road became closed to all vehicles on July 15 and was set to reopen in late September. However, due to delays in the project, Daniel Way remained closed until late October. While the road was closed, construction crews worked to restabilize the creek by grading the surrounding channel and replacing stormwater outfall pipes and catch basins.

As of Dec. 10 2024 all major work on the road has been completed and the road has been reopened. Through traffic is now permitted between Carmen Drive and Kruse Way, and the remaining trees are set to be planted in the spring of 2025. Three Sisters Creek is now stable and no longer eroding the earth beneath the roadway.

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## Corn on the Cobb



## Setting better goals

By MADISON COBB

As New Year approaches, people all around the world will start to set goals to complete in the upcoming year. The definition of a goal is an ambition to reach a desired result. Common goals in the world are topics such as working out more, making more money and improving happiness. Those examples are mostly focused on self-improvement, a common theme to goals. But, I believe goals can consist of things that don't always have to better oneself. I'm not saying that goals need to be self-deprecating, but I believe that people around the world need to update their New Year's resolutions to be not as general. For instance, goals that are more simply and less broad. But the point is I want to see interesting goals that tell me more about who a person is.

In retrospect, I believe sometimes setting goals that are really far fetched, like improving your happiness, is just a waste of time. Because I know for myself I will say things like "oh I'm gonna go to the gym all the time and eat less sugar at the beginning of the year." I say this knowing damn well after one week into January that mindset will be gone. Changing routine and habits in your life isn't easy, especially when those habits aren't necessarily hurting you. This example again reinforces how some goals can be unrealistic.

I think that by changing the scope of a goal to be more reasonable, it will actually make a difference in one's life. For example, if I wanted to eat less sugar, instead of leaving it broad like that I would change the goal to eliminate soda out of my diet.

Another theme of goals that needs changing is all the self improvement. Goals in my mind could be anything. One of my goals from elementary school was being able to do a front walkover. This is not really self improvement I would say since it's just a random skill. Same goes with learning how to cook or bake a certain recipe.

Goals about learning skills or random talents can speak volumes about someone's values and opinions. An example of this is if someone who is terrible at dancing might have a goal of learning a short routine. This shows how they want to have a diverse set of goals, not afraid of something even if it's not perfect the first time, and is simply an interesting fact about a person. I think having more of these random goals is a great way to get to know someone on a deeper level. I'm not quite sure what other goal examples besides random skills and self improvement could be but I think it would be really inspiring to see a diverse cluster of people that all had different goals. Goals shape what you believe in and what's important to you so I encourage people to not pick the same goal as the friend next to you. Branch out and think deeply about what you value in life.

I believe that having goals in general, no matter what type of goals you have, is a great human quality. Goals show how someone thinks about the future and is constantly trying to evolve. People who refuse to stay stuck in their ways are very mature and responsible. I know I am a really big procrastinator. I will wait till the last minute to complete anything. The pressure helps me work for some reason. But even so, it's always been a goal of mine to get ahead on things. Getting ahead would help me sleep earlier, in turn benefiting me for the future. But if I somehow fought this habit and began getting work done earlier, I would show major determination which is a great quality. This means that goals are a great way to show hard working attributes, another great human quality. Overall goals make one a better human being. But don't forget how completing a goal is also very satisfying no matter how tough it was. Anyways, good luck with your goals this year, Lakers.

## Performing arts glows this winter

By ANNEMARIE VLAIC

On Dec. 11 and 12, LO's Choir, Band and Orchestra played together at their second annual Winter Glow concert. The concert's lineup consisted of a variety of Christmas songs sung and performed by students who are part of our musical fine arts program. It also provided the opportunity for the community to bond in a special way this holiday season.

The songs performed were "Rudolph," "White Christmas," "A Very Laufey Christmas," "Joy to the World," "Alexandra," "All I Want

for Christmas is You," "Cantaloupe Island," "Bugler's Holiday" and "Winter Wonderland." Sophomore Jack Weber explained that Winter Glow is a concert where "all the performing arts in the school come together to put on a big show." Weber added that it took about two months to learn the songs, rehearse and prepare for the show.

Senior Zia Murphy believes that Winter Glow was more than just a concert. "I think Winter Glow is not just introducing others to new parts of the art department that they might not be exposed to often, but

I think it's a symbol of collaboration and connection. I also think it is a good representation of the arts department and what we can offer... at the end of the day, if you come to Winter Glow, you can't really deny that we're really damn good," elaborated Murphy.

Murphy's favorite piece to perform was a piece called "Stars" performed during intermission where they "got to sing with wine glasses full of water, tuned to the key [they] were singing in," a magical experience for both the performers and the audience. She further explained that the piece's lyrics brought

her "to tears" while "thinking about being in a vulnerable state describing the stars above as 'the dome of heaven.'"

Senior Maria Calabria, a member of choir and band, explained that her favorite piece was "Christmas Eve Sarajevo" by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Calabria thought that it was "really powerful to perform with the full band and orchestra and a very high-energy piece." She continued, "I loved watching all of the performances, but the ones that stood out were Jazz Band's set and the Winter Wonderland Vocal Quartet."



Submitted Photo

Lake Oswego Band, Choir and Orchestra come together to create music for their Winter Glow concert

## Nara Smith takes over "DIY"

By TIFFANY HSU

Everyone knows that TikTok is a platform where many couples share their lives and relationships, however, a certain modeling pair has been catching the eye of many. Nara Smith, a South African-born German fashion model, young mom of three, home chef and social media influencer, and her husband, 26-year-old Lucky Blue Smith, an American fashion model, have been going viral on the app. Together, they share their heartwarming chemistry and traditional lifestyle.

Nara Smith's page is filled with videos of her cooking for Lucky Blue Smith and their children. She has made everything from bubblegum to her own sunscreen and hair oil. However, despite their success in life and in their careers, people always have something negative to say. Like any other social media influencer, Nara Smith gets her fair share of hate comments. The most common critique revolves around the label of her being a

"trad wife"—short for "traditional wife." Many assume that she only stays at home, cooks for her family and cleans the house based on her content. The term "trad wife" is thrown around quite easily, but I think she fits the title of a passionate creator better.

What inspired Nara Smith to get into cooking in the first place? In her TikTok video posted on March 4, 2024, she explained, "I've always loved cooking, but I just recently, in the past year, have gotten really passionate about it. It all started when I was dealing with really severe eczema. I had to make sure that what I put in my body would be good for my body and that's kinda how I got into nutrition and food and cooking." So, she wasn't always the chef who made everything from scratch but fell in love with cooking after dealing with her skin condition, and the fans loved it.

Recently, partners and even friends have been making parodies of the two internet sensations. In these humorous and dramatic representations of the

couple, pairs reenact Nara Smith and Lucky Blue Smith's takeout videos, often including sudden and awkward acts of romance which the couple has become well known for. At the same time, there are also parodies of Nara Smith's cooking videos, which have encouraged people to try and cook up new things, even if it was for a joke.

Right now, Nara Smith is a model for IMG Models while taking care of her three children: Rumble Honey, Slim Easy, and Whimsy Lou, who was born earlier this year. She also frequently takes care of Gravity Blue, her stepdaughter, who is the biological child of Lucky Blue Smith and his previous girlfriend, Stormi Henley. In spite of all the criticism she gets, Nara Smith inspires many, especially those dealing with eczema themselves. She has also influenced modernist women to think differently about the life of a "traditional wife." For the many years to come, fans will continue to watch her videos about making all sorts of things from scratch.

## Kendrick Lamar drops new album

By SOPHIA SAYER

The music industry has not been able to keep up with Kendrick Lamar's unsurpassed wins this year, especially since he dropped an unexpected new album, GNX, on Nov. 22, 2024. Lamar hasn't released any new music since his hit single "Not Like Us" was released in May 2024, a diss track to his main musical opponent Drake. This song was recognized as the final blow, confirming Kendrick as the winner of one of the biggest rap disputes in years. He followed this victory, whilst staying on the top of the pop charts for months, by releasing GNX. This is his drop sur-

prised many as there was next to no inclination that he would be doing so, only giving us a teaser video mere minutes before the album went out. The significance of GNX is that it is Kendrick's only full-length studio album since 2022's "Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers." GNX is a 12-track album featuring multiple artists like SZA and Dody 6, along with one music video titled "Squabble Up."

The tracks on this album are considered

"good" by long-time fans and new listeners. Despite this, the overwhelming agreement between fans at LOHS is that GNX is, as sophomore Owen Beaudmont put it, "definitely not his best album." Their reasoning for this was that the tracks are radio-hits with a more individualized feel for the songs, unlike Lamar's typical style being a consistent storyline throughout the album. People that were interviewed who had listened to the entire album

all had a different favorite track, but "Dodger Blue," "Hey Now" and "Peekaboo" were the most popular choices by far.

GNX currently has over 363 millions streams on Spotify since its opening week, making it No.1 on the Billboard Hot 100 according to the official Billboard website, and the album continues to rack up over 22 million streams every day. As we move into the new year, we'll be looking to see if Kendrick can keep this winning streak alive!



# The Holiday Bazaar comes to LOHS in full spirit

By CLARE CHRISTENSEN

The annual LOHS Holiday Bazaar was back and better than ever on Saturday, Nov. 30, and artists from all around the community took the opportunity to display and sell their art. The first Holiday Bazaar was hosted by LOHS in 2017, and since then the event has continued to grow and be successful. The convention is a way for local artists to showcase their work as well as raise money for the LOHS arts department.

Artists from all different mediums participated in the event. "They are all local artsy vendors," said senior Sam Leverich. "Some sell clothes, there was one booth selling 3D printed toys, a booth selling wigs and so many selling jewelry." Leverich has been involved in the bazaar since its inception, volunteering to sell snacks at the event back in 2020.

The money raised at the bazaar goes to the LOHS visual arts department. "Each

year the Holiday Bazaar brings in a substantial amount of money for the arts department which helps supply the teachers with the materials they need to teach their classes," said Leverich. "It is also a great volunteer opportunity for a lot of students."

Many members of the National Arts Honor Society (NAHS) were involved in the setup and execution of the bazaar this year. NAHS senior member Olivia Jordan said, "I think more students should be involved because it is a community event and it is fun to see all sorts of different people there."

The Holiday Bazaar is a fantastic way for students of LOHS to learn more about the artists in the Lake Oswego community and to help raise money for the arts department at LOHS. This long-standing tradition has a bright future and will continue to be a source of income for the arts department in the coming years. "I believe it is truly a LOHS tradition worth continuing, and I believe anyone can help it continue on," said Leverich.



Submitted Photo

Handmade goods like crochet plushies were sold

# Holiday traditions are in full swing for students this winter

By LILLIAN MCILRAITH

As the holiday season arrives, many students have diverse traditions to signal the winter months! These traditions are special because they mark the winter season, get people in the holiday spirit, and are a way to reconnect with loved ones.

A number of traditions revolve around food, such as Yaroslave Grandson, who has traditional Russian soup every winter, or Connor Ramsey, who eats homemade Chicken Cacciatore, an Italian dish his mom makes during the cold months. Similarly, Audrey Hauck and Zia Murphey shared that they love to eat warm foods during winter to feel cozy, as comforting food reminds them of their families.

Other students, such as senior Charlie Crandall, watch movies to get into the holiday spirit. "Every Christmas I watch all the Harry Potter movies to feel festive," said Crandall. Hauck watches "Prep and Landing" over winter break, sharing that "It started off as something my dad forced us to watch, and it has now become a sweet family tradition".

For Ramsey and Nate Niccum, their traditions involve their entire families. Niccum's whole family

places gifts in each other's stockings over the course of December, so that even his parents are surprised by what they find in their stockings. Additionally, they have an annual snow ball fight as a family, which is a fun memory for Niccum who said, "We always team up on my dad, which leaves him covered in snow."

Murphy looks forward to the family sing-along at her aunt's house. Murphy said, "It's a whole event and everyone brings food and gets together." Every Hanukkah, Hauck's family plays dreidel, a traditional Jewish spinning top game. Hauck shared that on Hanukkah her family waits all day for the sun to go down, at which time they open gifts by candlelight since the candles represent illumination in the darkness.

As students slug along through school in the dark winter months, many joyous moments of holiday traditions are sprinkled between the mundane moments. There is a wide range of holiday traditions among students, and every tradition is centered around culture and family. These traditions remind students of the joys of wintertime and the holidays. As Audrey Hauck says, "Traditions give meaning to the season."



Internet Photo

The Dreidel is a game often played during the Hanukkah seasons



Internet Photo

"Cacciatore" in Chicken Cacciatore is Italian for a person who hunts

# Administration keeps tight watch on ChatGPT usage

By ANSLEY KANG

Over the past few years, ChatGPT usage has skyrocketed in schools, causing administration and teachers to keep a watch on students who are using the AI chatbot. Here at Lake Oswego High School, teachers along with vice principal Aaron Hollingshead have been in charge of monitoring student ChatGPT usage on school-issued devices.

"The primary tool we use is GoGuardian. Teachers on GoGuardian are able to see what screens students are on. From an administrative point of view, we are able to see search queries including websites that students might use," said Hollingshead.

Hollingshead noted that, "Anything a student searches on a school-issued Chromebook I can see. On a personal computer, we cannot access search history." Because GoGuardian monitoring does not exist on personal computers, a student who uses ChatGPT on their personal computer cannot be monitored by teachers or administrators.



English classes are often at risk for plagiarism via ChatGPT. With its instant results and long responses, ChatGPT has become a website that some students may have used to plagiarize English assignments. Ninth-grade English teacher Ellen King stated that "ChatGPT and other AI, because they're drawing from language on the internet, lean

heavily on what sounds good ... It's usually very polished and uses academic words, but when you read for something deeper, it's often not there." Although it depends on the teacher and policy, Hollingshead said that students will have "a rewrite by hand, as well as a discussion with parents about AI usage" as a consequence.

With there being thousands of AI websites on the internet, it is hard to tell whether or not a student will use AI with dishonest intentions, but Hollingshead said to make sure that "AI is always being used in the right way." The English department will continue to implement their department wide zero-AI policy.

# Holiday recipe for hot chocolate cookies this season

Recipe for Hot Chocolate Cookies:

- Ingredients-
- 12 Tablespoons (170 g) unsalted butter softened
  - 1 ½ cups (300 g) granulated sugar
  - ½ cup (100 g) light brown sugar firmly packed
  - 4 large eggs room temperature preferred
  - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
  - 2 ½ cups (313 g) all-purpose flour
  - 1 cup (100 g) natural cocoa powder
  - 1 Tablespoon baking powder
  - ¾ teaspoon salt
  - ½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar for rolling
  - 18 marshmallows cut in half
- For the chocolate topping-
- 1 cup (170 g) milk chocolate chips
  - ¼ cup (60 ml) heavy cream

- Instructions-
1. In a large mixing bowl, use an electric mixer to beat butter and sugars until light and fluffy.
  2. Add eggs and vanilla extract and beat until completely combined.
  3. In a separate medium-sized mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt.
  4. Gradually add dry ingredients to wet, stirring until completely combined.
  5. Cover bowl with plastic

6. After the dough has chilled, preheat oven to 350F (175C) and line several baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.
7. Scoop dough into 1 ½ Tablespoon-sized balls and roll into a smooth ball with the palms of your hands, then roll through granulated sugar until completely coated. Transfer to a baking sheet, spacing cookies at least 2" apart and bake in center rack of 350F (175C) oven for 10-12 minutes. Meanwhile, ensure your marshmallows are prepared (cut in half).
8. Immediately after removing cookies from the oven, carefully press half a marshmallow directly

9. into the center of the cookie (sticky side down). Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for several minutes before carefully transferring to a cooling rack to cool completely before topping with chocolate.
10. For chocolate topping- 1. Combine chocolate and heavy cream in a small microwave-safe bowl. Heat in the microwave for 25 seconds, stir well, and heat again for 25 seconds longer, if needed. Whisk well until mixture is completely smooth. Let cool slightly at room temperature.
11. 1 cup (170 g) milk chocolate chips, ¼ cup (60 ml) heavy cream.
12. 9. Drizzle chocolate topping over the tops of the cookies. Allow ganache to set before serving.

# LAKERS

# WRAPPED

## POP ALBUMS OF 2024: RANKED

1



**Short n' Sweet:** Personally, Short n' Sweet by Sabrina Carpenter was my favorite album released this year. While this album is in fact short, I think it's packed with great songs both lyrically and melodically. There is not a single skip on this album for me. With popular songs like "Please, Please, Please" and "Espresso," I think Carpenter had everyone obsessed with her this summer. As a long-time fan of her, it's been incredible to see her growth as an artist and her rise in popularity. She has really settled into her aesthetic and sound as an artist, making "Short n' Sweet" a really cohesive and catchy album. I would not be surprised if "Sharpest Tool" is my most played song this year.

2



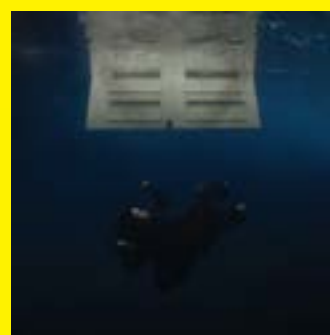
**The Secret of Us Deluxe:** This is likely an unpopular opinion, but I think Gracie Abrams had one of the best albums this year with the release of "The Secret of Us." Almost every song on the album is a hit for me, with only one or two skips. Not only do I love her voice, but I think she is very talented lyrically. The album has the perfect combination of fun songs, such as "Risk" and "That's so True," as well as her more emotional songs, such as "I Love You, I'm Sorry" and "Us ft. Taylor Swift." A personal favorite from this album is "Free Now," a song that has an amazing bridge. "The Secret of Us" is definitely a departure from the sound of her last few albums, but I think it's her best release yet.

3



**The Tortured Poets Department:** Taylor Swift is always going to be high on the ranking for me. "The Tortured Poets Department" has so many good songs on it, and I think it does a good job at showcasing her lyrical talent. While I feel that her singles lacked on this album in comparison to her previous ones, the more underrated songs on the album are what carried for me. Songs featured on "The Anthology," the second portion of the album, were some of my favorites. "Peter," "I Hate it Here" and "Chloe or Sam or Sophia or Marcus" are all songs on "The Anthology" that have become some of my favorite Swift songs of all time. Upon first listen, I definitely wasn't super impressed, but it's absolutely grown on me over time. There are no skips on "The Tortured Poets Department."

4



**Hit me Hard and Soft:** Billie Eilish's "Hit me Hard and Soft" is one of her best albums yet, putting it at fourth on my list. The song "Birds of a Feather" is probably one of my favorite songs released all year. Her voice is obviously amazing, and I love how detailed the production is. This album is also pretty short, but it's packed with great songs. The only reason that it's so low on the list is because some of the songs are not my vibe. I love the song "L'amour de ma Vie," but it bothers me how it randomly switches styles halfway through the song. Although, I appreciate how creative her music videos for the album have been. All in all, "Hit me Hard and Soft" is a great album.

5



**Eternal Sunshine:** Ariana Grande is more recently known for her role as Galinda in the new "Wicked" movie adaptation, but some people forget she released her own album this year. "Eternal Sunshine" was an album that, for me, was partially great and partially not so great. I've played songs like "we can't be friends," "the boy is mine" and "eternal sunshine" probably over 50 times this year, while I haven't touched some of the other songs on the album since I first listened. I'm a big fan of Grande's voice and her style, and I've been a fan of a lot of her earlier work, too. I think it's hard to top iconic albums such as "Thank U, Next" and "Sweetener," but "Eternal Sunshine" still had some great songs.

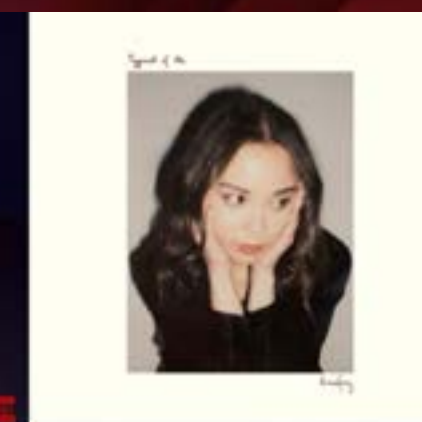
6

brat

**Brat:** If you haven't heard of Charli XCX's latest album, "Brat," then you must be living under a rock. Her hyperpop album recently took over social media and resulted in what came to be known as "Brat Summer." I thought this album was super catchy with lots of great hits. The iconic features she had, such as Billie Eilish and Lorde, also really won me over. This album is perfect for when you need to get the energy up, but other than that, I didn't really listen to the album much. There's definitely a time and place to listen to this album, but it's hard to deny how iconic it has become. I was not a fan of Charli XCX before, but I definitely am now.

## WHAT WERE LAKERS LISTENING TO IN 2024?

Open Spotify and scan the code below to access a playlist full of songs that your fellow Lakers listened to on repeat this year!



## 2024: A YEAR IN MUSIC



MARCH 29  
BEYONCÉ RELEASES HER FIRST COUNTRY ALBUM: "COWBOY CARTER"



AUGUST 19  
BRUNO MARS AND LADY GAGA RELEASE "DIE WITH A SMILE"



DECEMBER 8  
THE ERAS TOUR COMES TO AN END IN CANADA

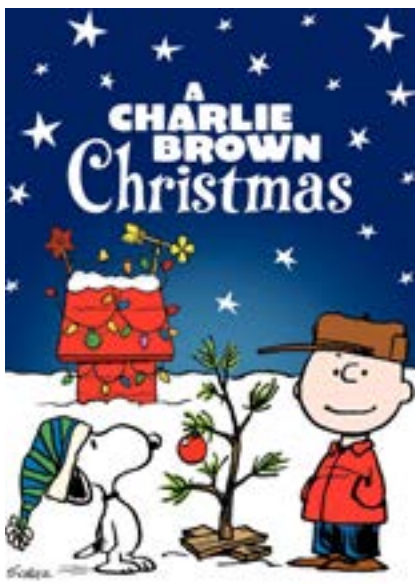
APRIL 29  
LANA DEL REY PERFORMS AT COACHELLA



NOVEMBER 2  
CHAPPELL ROAN MAKES HER SNL DEBUT



# Christmas movies to watch this holiday season



A Charlie Brown Christmas  
(1965)

An unforgettable classic. “A Charlie Brown Christmas” is an animated TV special about a young boy named Charlie Brown who is depressed by the commercialization of Christmas. It is also the first animated movie based on the comic strip “Peanuts” created by Charles M. Schulz. Lucy suggests that he apply to be the director of the school’s Christmas Pageant, which he accepts, but then struggles with his friends’ preference of dancing over acting. My favorite part is when he gets mocked for choosing a puny but unique Christmas tree as the centerpiece. Overall, he goes on a journey to discover the true meaning of Christmas with Linus’s help. This nostalgic cartoon is rated G, and if you have (surprisingly) not watched this, it’s the perfect family movie for Christmas.



The Princess Switch  
(2018)

One of my all-time favorites, “The Princess Switch,” is an American Christmas romantic comedy film that stars Vanessa Hudgens, who plays two characters in the movie. The warm, happy, unexpected ending is why I love it most. On the week before Christmas, a small Chicago baker gets the chance to compete in a baking competition all the way in Belgravia. While going to the bathroom, she bumps into the duchess (who no one has seen before) and—plot twist—she looks exactly like her. The two take the chance to switch lives for a day because the duchess has never lived a “normal” life. I, personally, loved this movie, but reviews on Rotten Tomato say otherwise. However, if you liked the first movie, I would not recommend watching the second or third.



Home Alone  
(1990)

When people think of their favorite holiday movie, “Home Alone” is likely in the top three. Probably one of the most iconic Christmas movies ever made, it is filled with hilarious quotes, slapstick and action, and it remains a holiday tradition to watch it every year. The story follows Kevin McCallister, an eight-year-old boy who gets accidentally left behind in Chicago when his family travels to Paris for Christmas. Initially thrilled to have the house alone, he soon realizes that it’s not as fun as it sounds. Two burglars: Harry and Marv were trying to break into the house, and he uses a series of creative booby traps to defend his house. Through this, he learns the value and importance of family, which I thought was so touching. 34 years later, Home Alone still remains a holiday tradition for audiences of all ages.



The Grinch  
(2018)

Although released more recently, it is considered a classic. Dr. Seuss’ character, the Grinch, first debuted in 1957 when the book “How the Grinch Stole Christmas!” was released. Dr. Seuss books have been around for almost 90 years, and even if you haven’t read them, you’ve definitely heard of the story “Green Eggs and Ham”. Adapted from the book, Dr. Seuss’ “The Grinch” is a comedic animation about a grumpy, green and furry humanoid who attempts to “steal Christmas” from a town called Whoville, but his heart gets changed by a young girl’s kindness. I especially love the relationship between him and his pet dog Max. Together, they live in isolation on Mt. Crumpit. If you want a humorous movie that you can enjoy with your family, then Dr. Seuss’ “The Grinch” may be the perfect fit for you.

## Santa Claus: a symbol of generosity or a marketing strategy?

By SOPHIA LU

Saint Nicholas was once the patron saint of children, toymakers and unmarried people, among others. However, depictions of him varied, including some that represented him as an evil elf or others that portrayed him as a tall, haggard man. Now, Santa Claus is synonymous with jolliness, laughter, a full white beard and, of course, cookies. He has come a long way from the days when he was simply “Old Saint Nick,” and there is one company that single-handedly remade him: Coca-Cola.

Coca-Cola started putting advertisements of Santa in magazines in the 1920s, and they eventually began devoting significant effort to creating campaigns, commissioning illustrator Haddon Sundblom to paint an official Santa. They showed Santa completing all his regular duties, such as toy delivery and cookie eating, in addition to drinking Coca-Cola from families’ refrigerators. Sundblom’s paintings of Santa have been shown in various museums, including the Louvre. Thus, it is evident in each identical smiling Santa that Coca-Cola succeeded in its mis-

sion to reinvent Santa Claus.

Although Santa portrays a jolly front, his associations with advertisements and marketing encourage a culture of consumerism. Beyond Coca-Cola, other companies similarly embrace Santa’s image and use it to promote shopping during the holiday season. In 1963, Santa boasted that the first Polaroid color camera was perfect for anyone with a pocket. In addition to taking pictures, Santa also used typewriters and other technology. In 2011, Apple featured Santa in ads talking to Siri and using it to help him with his 3.7 billion remaining gift-distribution appointments. Instead of a symbol centered on family, giving and holiday joy, Santa has become a caricature of his original purpose: he now stands as the epitome of corporate manipulation.

For many people, Santa is an irreplaceable aspect of their childhood, associated with presents, hot chocolate and warm emotions. By capitalizing on these feelings and featuring Santa in holiday advertisements, companies draw customers in, prompting them to purchase a never-ending stream of souvenirs from their childhood. As the

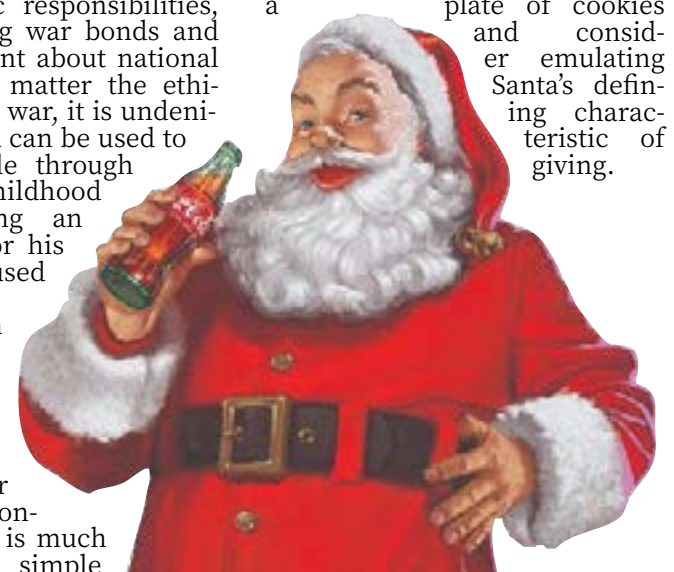
years go by and more children experience Santa’s gifts, receiving material items becomes an even more integral part of the holidays. Nevertheless, Santa’s character is rooted in the desire of companies to make money.

Still, the power of Santa has also been used to unite people and accomplish other goals beyond sales. In both World War I and World War II, Santa became a patriot. He fought with the troops and encouraged people to maintain civic responsibilities, such as buying war bonds and remaining silent about national strategies. No matter the ethicality of either war, it is undeniable that Santa can be used to connect people through a common childhood link, providing an opportunity for his persona to be used for good.

Although companies like Coca-Cola have used and continue to use Santa to promote their products to consumers, Santa is much more than a simple

marketing strategy. He acts as the common denominator between millions of people, offering a unique chance for people to come together. Thus, it is important for everyone to remember the true spirit of Santa Claus: giving. Even if Santa can be criticized for many things, it is undeniable that he has a giving personality, providing children with gifts and hope. Therefore, this holiday season, if nothing else, give Santa a chance, set out a

plate of cookies and consider emulating Santa’s defining characteristic of giving.



## The best gifts to add to your wishlist this year



**1. Headphones:** Regardless of brand, everyone wants a pair of over-the-ear headphones (bonus points for noise canceling) that they can use to listen to their favorite music while they study, work out or just exist. Some popular choices are the Apple Airpod Max’s and the Bose noise cancelling headphones.

**2. Concert tickets:** If you truly have everything you could dream of, why not ask for an experience this holiday season, Lakers? Tangible items can be hit or miss but an experience (like a concert) will provide lifelong memories. So look up the tour dates of your favorite artists and make sure to add their concert tickets to your wishlist.



**3. Birkenstocks:** You would look so good in a pair of Boston clogs! No seriously, somehow everyone does. The clogs never fail, and they’re super comfy too. They are a fun way to spice up an outfit while still staying neutral and comfortable. A popular choice is the corduroy textured clogs. How stylish!

**4. Legos:** We all love Legos; we just don’t think to add them to our holiday wishlists. Completing a Lego set is the perfect way to spend your time, and it will feel even better knowing that someone you love bought it for you. Make sure to check out Amazon for some options and add them to your wishlist. Another great option would be to ask for Legos Flowers.



**4. Perfume/Cologne:** Everyone wants to smell good. That is a fact. So why not ask for a scent that will get you compliments 24/7? Someone who has a yummy signature scent is automatically ten times better to be around, so ask for perfume or cologne this year. Two top choices are the Jean Paul Gaultier Elixir cologne and the Replica perfume in the scent ‘By the Fireplace’. Another fantastic option would be to ask for a scent sample set so you can test a variety of high-end scents for yourself at a lower price.

# Kaiya's Papayas



## Hobbies make me happy

By KAIYA CARNEGIE

It is winter, and we are officially in the midst of the weeks before break, which are crammed with tests, and will soon be approaching the weeks after break, which are spent stressing about finals. I am racked with stress and piles upon piles of work and often find myself going to my bedroom immediately after school to lay down and doom scroll on TikTok. After a long and strenuous day, I thought it was the perfect release to recharge myself to begin on homework. I noticed that my eyesight was getting worse. I wouldn't start my homework until the late hours of the night, and I felt lazy, almost as if I was paralyzed in front of my screen. The longer the break I took on my phone, the harder I would work later, right? News flash! That was actually just called procrastination, and I was spending hours on my phone contemplating starting my work with my face glued to my screen.

As the temperature outside changes with the different seasons, my mood changes along with it, and I feel slower and lazier with the cold weather. However, one day after school, rather than immediately going on my phone, I listened to music and decided to start a puzzle. I spent hours working on this puzzle; I didn't have to use my brain one bit, my eyes didn't hurt and I wasn't as tired. The puzzle wasn't as addicting as scrolling on my phone for hours at a time, so I naturally got bored of it, and that made it easier for me to start my work. I don't know what urged me to start the puzzle because I am not usually a fan, but it reminded me of all the joy my hobbies bring. Having a hobby is important for all sorts of people for all sorts of reasons. Now, after school instead of scrolling on my phone for hours on end, I work on one of my many hobbies: crocheting, doing my nails, art, drawing, sewing, softball, cutting my hair, making jewelry, journaling, film photography and piercing my ears.

I've had these hobbies for a while, but I thought I could only work on them during the weekend because I had to focus on school work during the week. I soon realized that was not the case. I strongly recommend taking up a hobby because the benefits are amazing. Having a hobby is proven to improve mental health and, in my opinion, is one of the best ways to relieve stress. Don't get me wrong, I still love going on my phone and scrolling from time to time, but when I put the device down, I feel like I have more hours in a day and am also less tired, less stressed and more social. Having a hobby can create personal connections. At first I thought this was ridiculous, but I have since realized that I have started so many conversations over hobbies like crocheting, and even strengthened existing friendships.

Finding the perfect hobby is hard, but don't be afraid to experiment. For outdoorsy people, there is hiking, running or rock stacking, and for people who would rather be cozy, there is baking, reading and movie watching. Hobbies don't have to perfectly align with a person's lifestyle or aspirations; it can simply be anything that sparks passion or relieves stress. So I suggest taking up a new hobby and finding out the benefits!

# Ozempic creates a space for unrealistic standards

By CASSIA LITTLEFIELD

If you've been on social media lately, you've probably heard the term "Ozempic Face" floating around in conversations about various celebrities. Ozempic is a recently introduced medication that is used to treat obesity and Type 2 diabetes. The drug works by mimicking hormones that signal to the brain that the body is full, while also slowing down the digestive process. It's supposed to be used to treat serious health issues, but many people have discovered its additional benefit: rapid weight loss.

The drug is intended to help people, but like a lot of medical treatments, it comes with a hefty price. The price is accessible for the wealthy elite, yet it is often unattainable for the people who actually need it. With the rapid weight loss, it can result in a gaunt, saggy face, also known as "Ozempic Face." This side effect has been used as evidence to accuse celebrities of being on Ozempic.

While some celebrities, such as Oprah Winfrey, Kelly Clarkson and Amy Schumer have admitted to taking the drug, others have vehemently denied it. There's no way to prove that celebrities are or aren't taking it, but it doesn't matter. What matters is that the drug has created a dangerous trend of unattainable beauty standards and a rising obsession with being skinny.

Celebrities that were already thin, like Kylie Jenner and Ariana Grande, have recently lost a noticeable amount of weight. This ultra-skinny movement is perpetuating the idea that you need to be a certain size

to be considered beautiful. Even celebrities who once advocated for plus-size representation, like Lizzo and Rebel Wilson, have since lost a ton of weight, abandoning their body-positive narrative.

Body-positivity and self-confidence is already a huge issue in our society, and it's even more prevalent in young people's lives. According to The Recovery Village, approximately 95% of eating disorder victims are between the ages of 12 and 25. With the massive influence that celebrities have on society, it's important to think more responsibly about the beauty standards that they perpetuate. It's unfair for young girls to believe that celebrities are naturally super skinny, and that they don't have enhancing surgeries or have access to weight loss drugs like Ozempic.

Now, it's also important to address why celebrities feel the need to lose weight. It's undoubtedly stressful to be in the public eye, and there's obviously pressure to look a certain way or to fit Hollywood's standards. It's understandable that with the amount of money celebrities have, they'd want to buy a drug that would "enhance" their body or their looks. Even so, celebrities should be more conscious about the impact these choices have on society.

Celebrities have power, and they have the ability to use that to make a difference. If they stopped using Ozempic unnecessarily or forcing themselves into impossible beauty standards, then maybe society would stop expecting perfection too. It's a change we all have to contribute to in order to stop shaming people for the way their bodies look



Internet Photo

Kelly Clarkson admits to Ozempic

and to stop expecting people to fit into one mold.

Fatphobia is dangerous. There has been an increase in eating disorders over the past few years, along with a rise in body-shaming that is reminiscent of the early 2000s, when a size four was considered fat. Everyone's body is going to look different; that's something most of us have all come to understand. So, why do we keep feeding into the narrative that celebrities and common people alike have to be skinny to be beautiful?

# Luigi Mangione sparks uproar



Internet Photo

Luigi Mangione being taken into court, shouting and yelling

By ANYA PHILLIPS

The social media commentary on the suspected killer of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson has grown exponentially over the past few weeks. Trending hashtags such as "Free Luigi" and "Deny, Defy, Depose" have become commonplace across media apps like TikTok. The GoFundMe for the suspect's legal bills has reached over \$110,000, many commending him as a savior of the working class. However, this swell of public veneration should not be entirely surprising with the state of the U.S healthcare system, as well as the historical repetition of alleged anarchists becoming the "hero" of the common people.

Early in the morning on Dec. 4, 2024, 26-year-old Luigi Mangione allegedly shot and killed Thompson in Manhattan. He was arrested a few days later at a McDonald's in Pennsylvania with a gun, bullets and fake IDs in his possession. Also found was a handwritten letter in which he expressed strong hatred for corporate America and the healthcare industry. Because of this, investigators believe his motive involved vengeance towards these health insurance companies. Additionally, the words "deny," "defend" and "depose," were written on the shell cases at the murder site, referencing the tactics used by healthcare agencies to deny claims by patients.

This act of vigilante defiance against the flawed healthcare system quickly caught the eyes of many who began feeling sympathy for the suspected murderer. His violent actions seemed to represent the bottled frustration felt by the millions of Americans experiencing difficulties with the failing U.S healthcare sys-

tem. According to the Commonwealth Fund, the United States has one of the highest rates of preventable deaths among developed nations, with over a quarter of Americans lacking adequate coverage with their insurance and over 18% having experienced a denied claim just this year. Following Mangione's arrest, thousands online shared personal stories of their own skyrocketing medical debt and denied insurance claims.

The bonding of Americans over their anger towards the capitalizing system of healthcare and lack of proper government intervention is reaching a climax, with Mangione being the chosen leader of the people's demands. Historically, violence has never dissuaded a frustrated public from supporting a representative of foundational change in society, so why would it now? Many argue the morality of the situation stands in a grey area, especially when it comes to idolization or near obsession, which is important to acknowledge. The murder of a father and husband should never be a celebrated occurrence on its own. However, the catalytic effects of the incident on the long-suppressed rage of disappointed Americans is something to be noted.

According to ABC News, while he was taken into court, Mangione turned to the reporters crowded on the street and shouted that his arrest was "an insult to the intelligence of the American people and their lived experience." His direct recognition of the grievances of Americans continues to provoke excitement in more of those who, if not sympathetic, can relate to the core of his attack: restless discontent towards the disproportionate power of healthcare companies.

# Consumerism consumes lives

By ELLIE NGUYEN

As the holidays approach, we are enthralled by a variety of goods. Whether it be buying peppermint-themed drinks and desserts or meaningful gifts for our families and friends, these actions are accompanied by an excessive amount of spending. Though unintentional, many can become consumed by the idea of purchasing during this time of year, such as Black Friday, occurring the day right after Thanksgiving. Americans nationwide shop all day, the night before seeming insignificant in comparison to thrilling low prices and deals. Such behavior can lead to forgetting the true meaning of the holidays: creating cherished memories with loved ones.

The rate of consumption during the holiday season is horrifically unsustainable. The average American consumer intends to spend over \$1000 on gifts, with this amount increasing each year. In 2022, Americans spent \$929.5 billion on purchases related to the holidays. Furthermore, every holiday season almost six billion pounds of newly purchased items end up in the landfill. Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, waste generation increases by 25%, leading to an additional one million tons per week.

These statistics, though grand, cannot entirely be blamed on the consumer. Companies partake in calculated marketing, often exploiting the vulnerability of customers to maximize profit. The line between desire and necessity becomes unclear, allowing Americans to be easily manipulated by such tactics. Materialism has become more common, and our culture is more focused on withholding physical desires. Taking advantage of this, holidays such as Christmas have become exponentially commercialized, with mass-produced candy canes and cheap plastic Santa figurines being a common sight.

When materialistic aspects take over, the true nature of the holiday months can be deprived completely. Becoming so occupied by items that need to be purchased, it is easy to neglect embracing what we already have. The holidays can still be enjoyed while bearing mindfulness and simplicity. The result of this can foster a culture where pleasure and limited environmental and financial impact can coexist. Being conscious of such things can lead to a healthier lifestyle that can stretch far beyond the holiday season, allowing us to connect, rather than consume.



Internet Photo

Black Friday shoppers fighting over sales



## Dietz's Debrief



### Ducks fly high: a historic season, but a tough path

By JACOB DIETZ

The Oregon Ducks have officially done it. On Saturday, Dec 7, the Ducks clinched the BIG-10 championship in a high-scoring game against number three ranked Penn State. The game started off fast with the Ducks taking a commanding lead, but the Nittany Lions, behind talented quarterback Drew Allar, quickly climbed their way back into the game. It was back and forth all game with each team scoring at a high level offensively, but the game was eventually sealed in the fourth quarter when Oregon cornerback Nikko Reed made an amazing interception.

As a die-hard Ducks fan, it was great getting to see my team win the BIG-10 championship and cap off an undefeated regular season in their first year in the conference. Many analysts said that the PAC-12 (Oregon's former conference) was uncompetitive and that they would struggle in the BIG-10 this year, but the Ducks completely exceeded expectations. Not only did they claim the number one seed in the college football playoffs, they are the only undefeated team in the country this year. That is highly impressive considering the difficulty of their schedule and the rocky start they had against Idaho at the start of the season, only winning 24-14.

Along with the conference championships that took place over the weekend of Dec 7, the College Football Playoff Committee, who decides which teams make the playoffs every year, was busy at work. Different than ever before, this year, instead of only four teams in the playoffs, there is a 12 team bracket. Although I am a fan of letting more teams into the playoffs, the format baffles me. The top four seeds are the respective winners of their conferences, so this year's top teams are Oregon at number one (BIG-10 Champion), Georgia at number two (Southeastern Conference Champion), Boise State at number three (Mountain West Champion), and Arizona State at number four (BIG-12 Champion). These teams all earned a first round bye, and play the winners of the first round games.

While I am glad Oregon is number one, they have the hardest path to the championship in the eyes of many. Although teams like Ohio State, Texas and Penn State didn't win or didn't make their conference championship game, they are still considered some of the best teams. This is unfortunate for the Oregon Ducks because they have to play the winner of the eight versus nine seed game which could be either Ohio State or Tennessee. The Ducks have beaten the Buckeyes once earlier in the season, but it was their toughest test and having to face them again, so early in the second round, will be a difficult task.

If Oregon makes it past that game, they will most likely end up playing the Texas Longhorns who made the 4 team playoffs last year and have been a force to be reckoned with. On top of that difficult semi-final game, the Ducks could either meet the Penn State Nittany Lions who they narrowly beat in the BIG-10 championship or red hot Georgia who has won two national championships under head coach Kirby Smart in the National Championship. The point is, the road to the championship is most difficult for the Ducks, and that doesn't make sense for a team who has rightfully earned an easier path to the finals.

Despite the fact I am frustrated with Oregon's seeding, I am a fan of how this playoff format is giving teams that would have no shot of making the previous four team playoffs a chance to win. Examples of teams that fit this category this year are Boise State, Arizona State and Southern Methodist University (SMU). The Boise State Broncos are a fan favorite led by Heisman candidate running back Ashton Jeanty. Jeanty has broken numerous records this year and is the favorite to win the trophy. The Arizona State Sun Devils are led by another star running back in Cam Skattebo who is also on the Heisman watchlist and head coach Kenny Dillingham who was Oregon's Mustangs coordinator last year. The SMU Mustangs got the last spot in the playoffs after a hard fought loss in the Atlantic Coast Conference championship to Clemson, and they will look to make a run. As a whole, this bracket format allows for success of smaller teams, but punishes the top teams like the Oregon Ducks. Nevertheless, it should be an exciting postseason.

## LO boys basketball dribbles into a promising new season

By ANNEMARIE VLAIC

Kicking off winter sports, LO Boys Basketball has begun their season with a dunk, hoping for a successful season this year. The team has currently had games against Liberty, Jesuit, and Nelson, starting off a strong season.

With new head coach Tully Wagner, LO Boy's basketball is making some changes from previous seasons in order to capitalize on the talent they currently have this year. Coach Wagner's main goals for the team this season are to "build and maintain a positive team culture, have consistent improvement over the course of the season, [and] represent our community with effort, passion, and integrity." Furthermore, he plans to emphasize "Playing up-tempo with effort and competitiveness, positive communication" and "practic[ing] the way we intend to play." New to the school, Wagner has already built a "hard-working and positive" environment with players who "enjoy playing with each other and want to build success."



Internet Photo

Senior Sev Dreke aims for the hoop

With this fresh start, players are stressing the importance of team chemistry and a new "put together" environment, according to senior Sev Dreke. "I feel like the atmosphere between the players on the team right now is pretty positive; everyone's getting along pretty well," explains Dreke, who believes

this will allow the team to "hold each other accountable without being overly negative and allow us to be more of a team than last year." Senior Liam Davis added on, explaining, "Coming off of a year like last year that didn't have very much success, I think it's important to put a winning culture back into the program through winning games... being committed to our teammates and coaches is a big theme for us this year as we try to build off of last year." Junior Liam Rigney agrees, explaining that "this year's group is a lot tighter than last year, so just kinda playing for each other is the biggest thing — having each other's back." According to Rigney, in practice and games, the team's main goals are to focus on "defense, communication, and playing for each other," as well as "creat[ing] a more competitive environment, work[ing] hard in practice, and always try[ing] to win, because that will translate in-game." Senior Carter Dietz also adds that the team will be working hard on "trying to change the culture of the program." Good luck this season, go lakers!

## Portland welcomes WNBA team in 2026



Internet Photo

By TAYLOR SHELDON

On Sept. 18, 2024, it was announced that Portland is welcoming their very own WNBA team in 2026, becoming the 15th member of the league. This is due to the WNBA's expansion project of three new franchises, which include a team in Toronto and the Golden State Valkyries. This expansion is a result of the growing popularity of the league, and will allow for more opportunities for WNBA athletes to thrive. It also provides fans with more teams to cheer for and more accessible games to watch in person. Portland hasn't seen a WNBA team since the Portland Fire in 2002, which had to fold after only three short seasons in the league due to chairman Paul Allen's financial problems at

the time with both the Fire and underachieving Trail Blazers. Allen didn't want to face any more financial losses on top of what he was already experiencing, and this ultimately led to the Fire having to cease operations and sell their franchise back to the NBA counterparts, despite having the potential to eventually grow into a successful and dominant team.

The owners of the new Portland team are siblings Lisa Bhathal Merage and Alex Bhathal, who also own the Portland Thorns, a professional women's soccer team. They paid the WNBA \$125 million in 2024 to own the franchise after having discussions about the matter in late 2023, during which plans fell apart with the previous potential owner, Kirk Brown. The Bhathals pursued this opportunity as they are

passionate about women's sports, specifically in the Portland area, and because of the success involved in the market with their ownership of the Thorns. Lisa will serve as the controlling owner and WNBA Governor, and Alex will serve as the Alternate Governor.

The new Portland team will share the Moda Center Arena with the Portland Trail Blazers. The Bhathals are devoted to building a new, state-of-the-art practice facility to ensure equal opportunities and also attract top talent in the WNBA to the Portland community. The future of women's sports is looking very bright. With growing popularity and heightened excitement, 2026 will bring in a large number of fans to what will hopefully be a new hot spot and staple attraction in Portland.

## LOHS girls bowling team is ready to strike

By LILY OLSON

Our LOHS Girls Bowling team just started up their 2024-2025 season, and they are ready to strike. The team is preparing for their first bowling event which will be held in Gresham at Mt. Hood Lanes on Jan. 26. Leading up to this competition, they have been working hard, practicing from 4:00 to 5:15 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday. Over the past few years, there have been many big wins for our Girls Bowling team. Senior Kate Kochavatr, who has been on

well at districts." According to Kochavatr, at least one group from the team has made it to state in the past few years. Last year, two teams placed in districts and qualified to bowl at state, and one of the two teams placed seventh.

Another senior Laker bowler, Amy Archiga, is very confident that the team will make it to state this year. "Everyone is supportive and uplift- ing to one another, and the energy is up. We have some very good bowlers this year," she said. Archiga also mentioned her excitement and eagerness to defeat Oregon City this year at districts.

More than anything, the Girls Bowling team is known for their fun spirits and attitudes which is seen and expressed through how these teammates talk about the team. Many of the girls on the team joined for the experience and friendships and not necessarily for the competitive aspect. Most that have joined have never competitively played and are there to learn something new and build close connections with other girls through a non-selective sport. Hoping for a season full of turkeys and wins for our Laker bowlers!



the Girls Bowling team

# Lakers participate in multiple varsity sports



By LAILA BRISTOL

LOHS is undoubtedly home to some incredible athletes. We have football stars, track sensations, soccer prospects and more. However, what we seem to forget about is our population of students who shine in more than just one sport. LOHS hosts some awe inspiring athletes who compete for our school at the varsity level in multiple sports. These athletes have earned numerous varsity letters in all of the sports that they participate in, and some have collegiate aspirations in at least one of them.

Not only is LOHS senior Parker Lemm a star on the soccer field, she is also committed to play Division 1 lacrosse at the University of Colorado Boulder in college and is a star midfielder on the LO team during the spring. "I've been playing soccer since I was probably like five and lacrosse since third grade," explained Lemm. Though Lemm doesn't play club soccer anymore, she continued to play center back for LO through her senior season, earning herself an honorable mention in the Three Rivers League and scoring a few goals along the way. "Recruiting was really hard because you just have to go to camps. A lot of the time it was just me and tons of

other girls, and we were all trying to prove ourselves," stated Lemm. She explained that despite her plethora of trophies and medals, her biggest accomplishment in lacrosse was her bravery and determination throughout her journey to being recruited by Boulder.

Tripton Ciupryk is a junior at LOHS who participates in three varsity sports. He starts his school year playing football, and in the winter he participates in wrestling, followed by lacrosse at the very end of the school year. "I'd say I spend most of my time wrestling. It needs a lot more attention just because of the sheer amount of activities we do like tournaments and practices," Ciupryk stated. He also noted that although he spends a lot of time wrestling, he enjoys lacrosse most of all. Ciupryk is a goalie for the LO boys lacrosse team during the spring, and as a freshman, he not only made varsity but also earned a Three Rivers League second team award. Ciupryk revealed that he hopes to play lacrosse in college and intends to earn a scholarship with his athletic abilities. Be sure to keep an eye out for Ciupryk on the field this spring or on the mat this winter, as he represents Lake Oswego at the highest level.

Hudson Kurland is a junior at

LOHS as well as a member of the varsity basketball and football teams. "My dad played for coach Corey back in the day, and so I've always grown up loving football. My brother and I both play," explained Kurland. He described the legacy his family has in football and added that he also has a love for basketball, where he plays small forward, although he hasn't been playing for quite as long. Kurland revealed that his biggest athletic accomplishment was helping the LO football team get to the state championship this year, and that he hopes to play football in college. Keep an eye out for Kurland on the basketball court this winter and get hyped to watch him take on the field as QB1 next fall.

Sophomore Karina Swartz plays on LO's varsity softball team and miraculously made it on the varsity soccer team as a freshman. Swartz has been playing each sport for around ten years, but she spends most of her time playing soccer. "I like it better," Swartz stated. Swartz's career as a double sport athlete is far from over, as she has aspirations to be a double sport athlete through college as well. Swartz explained that her largest accomplishments in terms of soccer are "winning dif-

ficult tournaments and making it to regionals last year." She also noted that she was proud to have earned third place in state with her club softball team throughout her career. Another member of the varsity softball team is sophomore Avery Cavagnaro, a catcher and shortstop. Cavagnaro is also on the varsity basketball team where she plays center. "I enjoy softball the most because my club and highschool teams are like my second family," stated Cavagnaro before detailing that it is nearly impossible for her to have a bad time when she is surrounded by her favorite people. Cavagnaro explained that as a child, she participated in many sports, but softball and basketball were the two that stuck with her. "I remember when I was in fourth or fifth grade, I came to watch the varsity girls basketball games and I always wanted to be a part of the team," revealed Cavagnaro. She also explained that she looked up to her older sister when it came to softball and always hoped to follow in her footsteps. Cavagnaro additionally has a deep desire to continue playing softball in college and has already begun her recruiting process. Make sure you show up to the softball field on game days this spring to watch Avery dominate!

## Approaching NFL playoffs spark anticipation

By JACOB DIETZ

The NFL season this year has been nothing short of entertaining, and it is now winding down to a close. While for over half of the league their seasons will be over, the top 14 teams will get a chance to compete in the playoffs.

On the AFC side, The Kansas City Chiefs 11-1 record, and the Buffalo Bills 10-2 record have already secured their spot in the playoffs in an automatic bid by winning their division. The Pittsburgh Steelers, led by experienced head coach Mike Tomlin, have not had a losing season under his 18 years in charge of the organization, and he has his Steelers going into the playoffs. Although Pittsburgh has not clinched their division yet, they should easily do that in the coming weeks. Veteran quarterback Russell Wilson has provided a spark for the Steelers offense, and their defense, led by TJ Watt, is one of the best in the league. The Houston Texans are looking to make the playoffs for the second year in a row, and with star wide receiver Nico Collins back and healthy they will have a good chance to go far. All four of those teams will look to make deep runs in the playoffs. The Los Angeles Chargers,

Baltimore Ravens, Denver Broncos and Indianapolis Colts are all also in contention to fill the last three spots on the AFC side. The Chargers have had an extremely successful season. With the addition of new head coach Jim Harbaugh and rookie receiver Ladd McCowney the Chargers have a solid team, and with Justin Herbert in command of the offense, they will look to go far. The Baltimore Ravens always have a solid team with two time MVP Lamar Jackson as their leader, and the Denver Broncos have shocked everybody with their success. They have rookie Bo Nix at quarterback and a very strong defense, which has made them a tough team to beat this year. In Indianapolis, the Colts are also still holding on hope for the playoffs, but they are going to need a lot to go their way if they want to make the postseason.

On the NFC side, the Detroit Lions boast an impressive 11-1 record but still haven't clinched their playoff spot as their division rivals the Minnesota Vikings (10-2) and the Green Bay Packers (9-3) are both close behind them. The Philadelphia Eagles, led by newly acquired MVP candidate running back Saquan Barkley and quarterback Jalen Hurts, are first in their division with a (10-2

record). The Seattle Seahawks are currently first in their division with a 7-5 record, but that could quickly change as the Cardinals, Rams, and 49ers are not far behind. Similarly in the NFC South, the Atlanta Falcons currently lead the standings with a 6-6 record, led by second-year running back Bijan Robinson and a talented defense. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are also 6-6, but the Bucs are still getting back to full strength with star wide receiver Mike Evans returning from injury. If the Buccaneers make the playoffs they could do some damage. The last team in contention is the Washington Commanders with a 8-5 record. The Commanders shocked everyone and started their season off red hot with a 7-2 record, but since then, they are 1-3 in their last four games. They are currently slotted as the last team in, but the Commanders have to keep winning to keep their chances alive.

The playoffs look like they will be very exciting this year as there will be lots of high-level games. The favorites to make the Superbowl coming out of the AFC are the Chiefs or the Bills and out of the NFC, the Eagles, the Lions, and the Packers are all favorites. It should be another great Super Bowl matchup come February.

## The LOHS wrestling team is ready to pin down their competition

By CLARE CHRISTENSEN

The boys wrestling team is ready for another exciting season. After a triumphant end to last season with current senior Luciano Lopez winning first in state and the rest of the team performing exceptionally well, the boys are looking forward to another round of success.

Lopez said that his goal for the team this year is "winning nationals and winning state." Although these aspirations appear ambitious, the boys have a solid plan in place to achieve their goals. "We're gonna go out there everyday with as much energy as last year and work really hard," Lopez stated.

"I think this season, even though we don't have the seniors from last year, we have a really good foundation because we have a bigger group," said junior Ahmed Toney. Still, the wrestling team is always looking for more players, with one of their goals for the upcoming

years being to grow in numbers.

The team is well on their way to achieving this goal because of all the new members this year. The team has seen a massive shift since last season. "We have a lot of new kids on the team this year which is really good to see," said Toney. "I'm excited to see a lot of them progress and get better."

Improvement won't happen for the team without a lot of hard work, though. According to Toney, nearly half of the team last year quit early in the season because the practices were so physically draining. However, it's likely the team won't suffer the same fate this year because, as Lopez says, "we're all really close this year." The team being so close is integral to their success as it makes them more motivated to win.

It's safe to say that the LOHS wrestling team can expect another great season this year.

## Cheering for cheer team



Ansley Kang/Lake Views

Junior cheerleader Sadie Bame cheers at a rainy game

By ANSLEY KANG

During the fall season, the Laker Cheer team had always been present to give our school spirit, whether it be through football games, pep rallies or hyping up the crowd during assemblies. The team spent long practice hours before and after school in order to prepare for Friday nights and other school events. With the fall season officially coming to an end, the cheerleaders are starting a new part of the year which takes a step back from the sidelines and into competition mode.

This past season for sideline cheer was extended, as the Laker Football team made it all the way to finals, which meant that Laker cheer was able to cheer at every single season game for football. "Making it to finals was exciting, and having a pretty dry season in general was my favorite part. We didn't have as much rain as my freshman and sophomore year," said Liu.

"Our first competition was in October, but cheer competition season starts late January. I'm pretty

excited for it," said junior cheer member Jasmine Liu. This is Liu's third year on the team, and she does base and back. "Basing is when you are supporting the flyer who is at the top in stunting ... backing is also supporting the flyer but you're also eyes for the base because you can overlook everything."

The student section on Friday nights is mainly familiar with the team's sideline cheers, but Liu detailed that "sideline cheer is usually shorter and more repetitive, while comp cheer requires you to move around more."

Senior cheerleader Zoe Lok agreed and said that "A lot of people typically only see the sideline cheer aspect of cheer, which is a lot of crowd leading and hyping, and less of the high-level stunts and more."

As the team gears up for the competition season, Liu said that in any winning routine, "good teamwork and energy" is needed to succeed. Lok noted that "I'm really excited because I think our team this year has good team work, and we work well in unison."

## Live, Laugh, Laila



### Reading between the lines

By LAILA BRISTOL

Reading has always been something that I love, and I truly believe that the stories I have consumed throughout my life have helped to shape who I am. My room is cluttered with books; I have hardcovers and paperbacks spilling from shelves and stacks upon stacks of novels strewn across my floor. I have journals dedicated to handwritten book reviews dating all the way back to middle school. For as long as I can remember, I have been labeled a ‘bookworm’ or a ‘reader,’ and frankly, I don’t mind. With every new story I consumed, I fell in love with the words, the characters and the plot. Reading was a way for me to escape anything that may have been preoccupying my thoughts at the time and relax. Whether I had five minutes of free time or three hours, I would have a book at the ready, trying to soak up as much as I could in the time I had allotted.

In fifth grade, I read the “Red Queen” series by Victoria Aveyard. The books were thick and somewhat hefty to lug around, but nevertheless, everywhere I went, I brought one with me. My mom brought me to brunch with one of her work friends one Saturday morning, and before sitting down, I dropped my novel onto the table. At the time, I was reading “War Storm,” the fourth book in the series. The jacket of the book was a silvery blue color that gleamed in the sun, and the cover art featured a textured crown right in the center of the page. The book was almost 700 pages long and made a subtle thud as it hit the table. I can recall the shocked look on my mom’s friend’s face as she praised me for being such a “studious girl” and began to pepper me with questions about other books I had read. At the young age of 11, this praise felt monumental. I knew that this was how I wanted people to see me throughout my life. I liked feeling like I was doing something incredible by simply partaking in my favorite hobby. Since that moment, I adopted reading into my personality. In any ice breaker, my fun fact was always that “I read 51 books in 2020.” As strange as it sounds, regardless of what happened in my life, I always felt somewhat accomplished as long as I had a book to read.

Throughout middle school, I was consistently reading 40 plus books per year, but as soon as freshman year began, that number dropped to 33. Then to 26 sophomore year. Now, I am in the thick of my junior year, and with 2024 coming to a close, I have only read a measly nine books. My Goodreads likes to tell me that I am “19 books behind schedule” each time I open the app, diminishing any feelings of success I previously possessed. It was not until a few days ago that I realized that with the amount of work I have been exerting into my studies in high school, I have unknowingly sacrificed something that I love so dearly.

Without one of the things that I was known for by friends and family, I have begun to feel a bit lost as to what identifies me now. I wonder if I can ever claim to enjoy literature if I don’t excel like I used to. I struggle with the idea that something which defined me for so long is now something that I am grasping at blindly. This realization has prompted me to wonder: does reading fewer books make me any less of a reader? Does the quantity of novels I consume truly represent the quality of my enjoyment? Does spending less time doing something you love diminish its value in your life or in the eyes of others?

Unfortunately, I do not have solid answers to these questions—if I did, I would be writing self-help books, not a column in Lake Views—but I do have some insight to share. My example of reading was a generalization of many things one could slowly lose connection with in their lifetime. This could apply to old friendships, relationships, grades or even other hobbies or interests that have simply faded with time. While it might be difficult to conceptualize this, the rate at which you enjoy something does not detract from the amount of joy that it brings you. Reading less does not make me a fraud the same way that listening to music that you don’t know all of the words to doesn’t make you a fake fan. We all need to realize that life is complicated and busy and occasionally, we will lose touch with things that bring us joy. This does not mean that we cannot consider these things to be a defining factor in our lives. I think it is really important to understand that as we grow and mature, so do our interests. It is unfair to judge yourself, or others for that matter, based on the level of passions or talents they possess because people are constantly changing. It is up to us to choose what defines us as our lives go on, and to create our own identities and realize that change in this aspect is not a bad thing, but rather an opportunity to grow and learn more about yourself.

As I type this, I can see the slightly warped pages of my 10th book peeking out from my backpack from the corner of my eye. My to-do list is growing with each word I type and I fear that I will not have time to read before bed tonight. I know I am not going to reach my Goodreads goal of 25 books this year. And despite all of this, I am feeling okay. I love to read and I have decided that regardless of whether I read 10 or 100 books this year, I am still just as much of a bookworm as I was in 5th grade.



## Thumbs



By LAKE VIEWS EDITORS

1. Everyone should be grateful that “Wicked” came out in November. We all know that soundtrack would’ve otherwise been embarrassingly “popular” on our Spotify Wrapped.

2. Here’s an easy New Year’s resolution for LOHS parents to uphold: stop parking in other students’ parking spots at 8:21 in the morning to excuse your child’s 31st absence. Happy New Year!

3. Is that putrid smell circulating the school from the boys bathroom, a broken pipe or just the freshmen crowding the main hall...

4. To all the students with weak immune systems who missed last week due to the LOHS plague: we hope you have fun completing all your missing assignments and want you to know that we had a blast hanging out with only those of us fittest to survive.

5. Can someone tell me why my for you page has been ridden with Luigi Magione thirst trap edits for the last few weeks? What has the internet come to? And where can I find edits of John Wilkes Booth?

6. I can’t be the only one who spent my whole B6 class distracted by the impending doom of carollers coming down the hallway. Locks, lights, out of sight everyone, if you’re not careful you’ll end up getting snapped and sang at by a Windjammer.

## The nostalgia in a sugar cookie

By ANNEMARIE VLAIC

Growing up, the colorful designs of a tin sugar cookie box were always a staple of joy and happiness for me during Christmas. The second that Costco would come out with their annual selection of Christmas sugar cookie tins with cute pictures of snowy cabins, reindeer, or snowmen, I would know Christmas had truly begun. The array of sugar cookies was simple yet intricate, with their own distinguished design and flavor and the sweet smell of opening the festive tin for the first time.

However, now in high school, I’ve realized that Christmas tins and sugar cookies have somewhat lost their popularity. Christmas has become a time of stress: trying to figure out what gifts to buy others, the rush of trying to save money during the holiday season, the commotion of rearranging the living room to place the expensive Christmas tree, the insane drivers on the road. The list goes on. But sometimes, I just like to go back to a time when all I cared about was the welcoming sugar cookie tin designs, and relishing in the nostalgia it brings with it to this day.

The most popular sugar cookie tins of adolescence were usually the ones with snowy-themed images printed on them. Some tins displayed reindeer, while some had a single image displayed on all four sides if it was a rectangular tin, with different animals or characters. Some were circular and had snowmen and children throwing snowballs at one another. Others had beautiful cabins in a forested setting with snow drizzled all over the place and deer roaming around. However, some cookie tins were more simplistic, with outlines of reindeer, holly, or snowflakes. There was not a time growing up that I didn’t remember a family having sugar cookies in their home, and most cookies also had individual designs on them that would fit the theme of the tin which always made them much more delightful to eat.

Although it has been a while since I’ve bought a sugar cookie tin, and years since I’ve seen one in a friend’s home, the nostalgia has stuck with me. I often miss the warm taste of sugar cookies and the merry feeling of Christmas. It would cling to you every time you entered your house, returning to the winter wonderland that wrapped around the sugar cookie tin.

## Letter from Kristen Peri to editors

To the Editor:

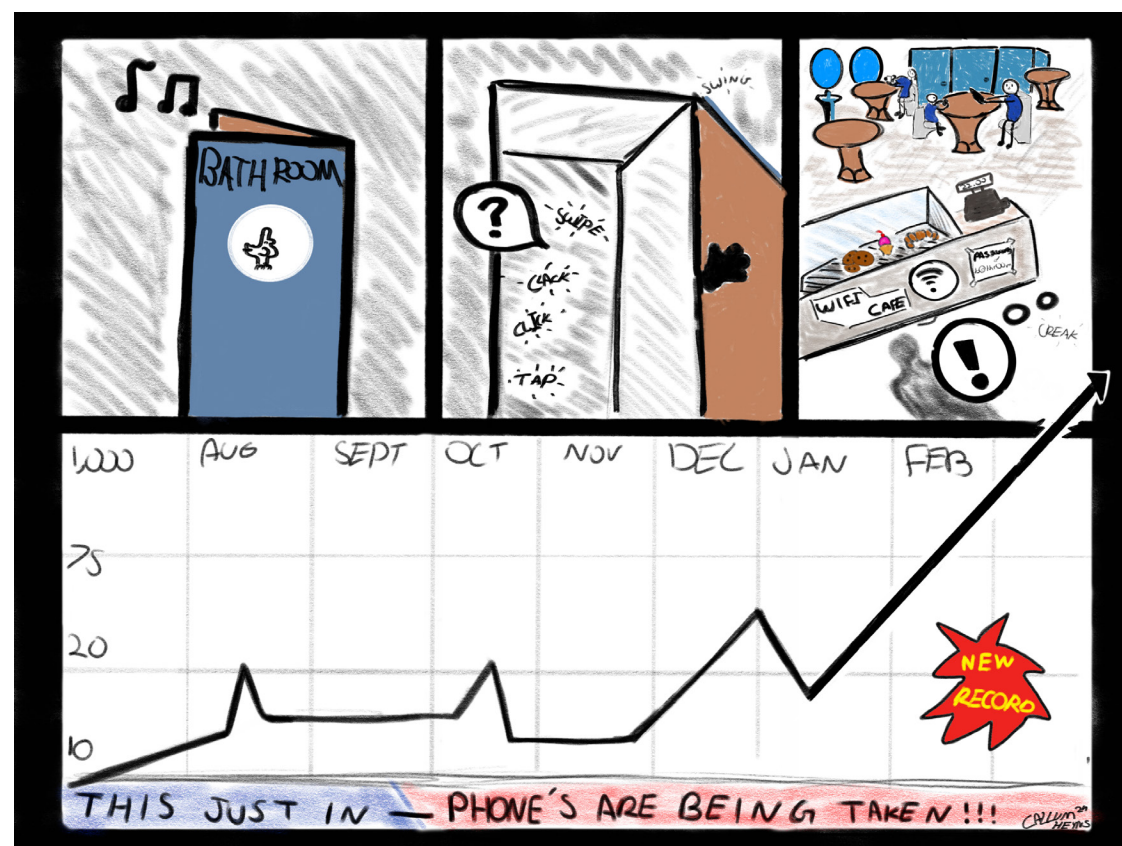
On behalf of myself, our daughter Rachel, and our extended family, I want to express our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude for the kindness, support and love that has been extended to us by the entire LOHS community—students, faculty and staff—both during Mario’s illness and after his passing. I wish I could thank each of you individually for your acts and gestures of kindness and good will; I fear I would unwittingly overlook something but please know we noted and appreciated everything during those terribly hard days. It was truly meaningful and humbling to feel the immense love from the community.

When Mario decided to change ca-

reers to become a Social Studies teacher everyone who knew him well said “of course that’s what he should do!” LOHS was his first and only teaching job and he always said he had found the perfect “fit” with the community to pursue what truly was his calling.

He so valued the connections he made with students and passionately wanted to help them succeed not just academically but in pursuing a meaningful life on their own terms. He formed close bonds with many of his colleagues and strived, year after year, to grow as a teacher and as a person.

Most of all, thank you for sharing so many stories and memories of him with us. We will treasure and celebrate them forever.



Callum Heyns