

LAKE SAMIA

Strange times with not so strange takes



Internet photo

By CALLUM HEYNS

In 2016, Netflix released the first season of a horror show set in the '80s called "Stranger Things." As the show went on, the fanbase of this hit show became enormous, leaving fans excited for the season finale which was released on Dec. 31, 2025. However, the finale left some fans with a bitter taste and left others wanting and hoping for more.

During Thanksgiving of last year, Netflix released Volume 1 of the final season. The feedback on these episodes were mainly positive with good reviews and no pushback on the writing or the plot. As Christ-

mas day rolled around, Volume 2 was eventually dropped, leaving fans bewildered and confused. The main two episodes with the most negative feedback were the seventh and eighth ones, the seventh being the runt of the series. Junior Porter Bates described Episode Seven as "boring, slow, and outstretched." Porter is not the only one who shares this opinion, as many fans were left disappointed after watching this, after having to wait four years for this new season. While Episode Seven was not received well by fans, Episode Eight left more holes in the plot than swiss cheese. As the finale released

on Dec.31, fans were left greatly disappointed and felt underwhelmed. While some liked the sentimental part of the ending, others were left wondering about some characters left behind or completely forgotten about.

This need for a better ending was demanded by so many fans that a theory had begun and spread like wildfire called "The Conformity Gate." The main point behind this theory was that Episode Eight was not the true ending and that a secret Episode Nine would be released on Jan. 7 of this year. Sadly, this prophecy did not come to pass and is leaving fans wanting more.

I have to agree with the majority of the fans as this was a lackluster final season. I was also left with lots of questions about characters and various plots that were left unexplored. While this final season disappointed me, there is still light at the end of the tunnel as they are releasing an animated TV show, describing the events that occurred between Season Two and Three.

While it is hard to direct and produce a show, previous seasons have had less of a budget and less time, but were executed perfectly. I feel disappointed, as this final season had the time and the money, but the execution was subpar.

Finals tips, and how to prepare for them

By TAYLOR SHELDON

Finals are just around the corner, which means it's time to start polishing up on everything you've learned thus far and make sure you're on the right track to get the best grade you can. The new year should be a fresh start where the worries of the past can be left behind, but for LOHS students, it begins a stressful month with the chaos of wrapping up all the units and classes with the semester's end. It's common for students to get overwhelmed and not know where to begin with preparing, especially for freshmen who have never experienced finals. To make the process a little easier, I have some tips that I've seen be helpful in my own experience with finals.

The main thing to focus on is time management. There have been countless times where students have left all their studying for the night before, thinking that they had enough time to study, but the reality is, this is the absolute worst thing you could do because you'll be forced to rush or pull an all-nighter. This is not ideal, as a huge component to succeeding on test day is getting proper sleep and feeling energized. Setting goals for yourself and designating specific times to study a few weeks out before the test allows for less anxiety because you'll have a lot more time to prepare and not need to cram any studying. You'll be able to take more breaks throughout studying sessions, have an appropriate amount of sleep and retain more of the information so you're confident on test day. Also, prioritizing classes in which you have a low

or border grade, or have content and material that you don't understand as much in comparison to other classes is crucial. This way, you're able to set aside more time for those classes and gain the necessary knowledge while not wasting time studying for classes that you don't particularly need to, or at least as much.

Some other key methods of studying include going over notes, rewriting them and engaging in review activities so you're able to get the most out of review days. It's known that writing information down by hand helps you to better memorize and retain knowledge than doing it digitally. Also, since some teachers allow note sheets on tests, it only better prepares you with also being able to use those notes on the test; it's like a free cheat sheet, except it's fully permitted. The simple yet commonly unappreciated review tactic of participating in lectures and activities designed for finals studying is beneficial. Most students just overlook the importance behind those review days and don't fully pay attention, but in doing so, they don't realize that the teachers have specifically planned activities that go over topics that are covered on the test. When students choose to do their own thing and not follow along with the activities, they are left feeling confused and aren't as productive or efficient, as they don't know what to specifically study since they didn't focus on the teacher's insight. These are just a few tips, and there is no one right way to study; specific tactics work better for some people than they do for others because it depends on the person and how they best prepare. Following these tips won't guarantee that you'll feel more relaxed because

finals are always going to be stressful, but the extent to which can be significantly reduced if you take appropriate steps ahead of time. Finals can be as easy as you make them for yourself as long as you make sure you feel confident and energized on test day by preparing properly in advance.



Internet Photo

Photo of a report card showing A+ in multiple subjects

Growing Green Team flourishes at LOHS

By ALYSSA MANNINEN

Starting this year, the LOHS Green Team is expanding beyond high school. LO middle school is launching its own Green Team, giving younger students the opportunity to get a kickstart on environmental activism.

Green Team has long been a popular and growing club at LOHS, where students are able to work on projects that promote sustainability and environmental awareness while gaining volunteer hours and building a community. This year, the club is extending its impact on LO by partnering with the LO middle school to offer environmental activism at an earlier age.

Green Team club leader Millie Wollmuth shared that this new collaboration has been really successful, with freshman Emily Korkola leading the education committee. Wollmuth shared, "We've been collaborating with some teachers over there, and it's really exciting to see." The middle school and high school Green Teams plan to work together through regular visits. Wollmuth explained that members will begin visiting middle schoolers once a week, with a focus on encouragement and engagement with students. "We're going to start trying to make it just fun at first for the students and then encourage participation in speaking and learning about sustainability issues."

The goal of the middle school Green Team is not only to teach students about sustainability but also to spark interest in environmental issues early, as well as grow the environmental club as a whole. Wollmuth shared, "I think it's going to be beneficial a lot because I just know that when I was in middle school, I wanted to start an environmental club there...So I think it's going to be good for them just to get kick-started on environmental education." This early exposure is expected to increase long-term involvement, which will also grow the LOHS Green Team. "Also, they're more likely to want to join a high school green team when they eventually come up to the high school, which will get us more members who are more comfortable getting right to the projects they want to do," added Wollmuth.

The first LO Middle School Green Team meeting took place on January 9, 2025, and the meetings are planned to continue every Friday. Middle school students interested in environmental activism are encouraged to attend, and high school students are welcome to help volunteer and support the growing club. The Green Team and LOHS look forward to seeing more students involved in creating a more sustainable community and can't wait to see the impact that this new addition to the team will have.



Internet Photo

A photo that demonstrates recycling and how to do it

Proposed bill calls to ban dual citizenship

BY: CORDELIA MEGOWAN

Ohio Senator Bernie Moreno introduced a bill on December 1st, 2025, titled the Exclusive Citizenship Act of 2025, which would ban Americans from holding two citizenships. According to Moreno, this act was introduced to ensure that citizens were pledging their full allegiance to the United States. Under this new proposal, people holding two citizenships would have one year to give up either their foreign citizenship or their U.S. citizenship. Set to take place 180 days after being enacted, this bill would affect anyone who has dual citizenship, including birthright and naturalized citizens. Dual citizenship was first fully established in the 1967 case *Afroyim v Rusk*. In this case a naturalized Polish man voted in the Israeli legislative election and because of this the State Department refused to renew his passport. The case was taken to the Supreme Court where they ruled that *Afroyim* was allowed to keep his U.S. citizenship under the Citizenship Clause of the 14th amendment. Today, a little over half of the world's



Internet photo

Senator Bernie Moreno introduces a controversial new bill denying U.S. citizens of having dual citizenship

countries allow dual citizenship; however, every country differs in policy on what dual citizenship entails. In the United States, millions of people already hold dual citizenship, and millions more are eligible, as many countries allow the grandchildren of citizens to gain citizenship.

While the bill gives a grace period of one-year for dual citizens to decide, it also raises a

constitutional issue. The Fourteenth Amendment states that the United States may not take away anyone's citizenship unless they willingly give it up; however, Moreno proposed that if one fails to relinquish their citizenship in the year they have, their American citizenship would automatically be lost. The bill would call for a complete collection of every American who holds

two citizenships, which would be a difficult task by itself and likely require self-reporting, further complicating the task. Additionally, passing the bill would also invoke issues with the countries people have dual citizenship in - if their citizenship was revoked by the United States government, it would likely not be recognized, a policy that the US has followed in the past.

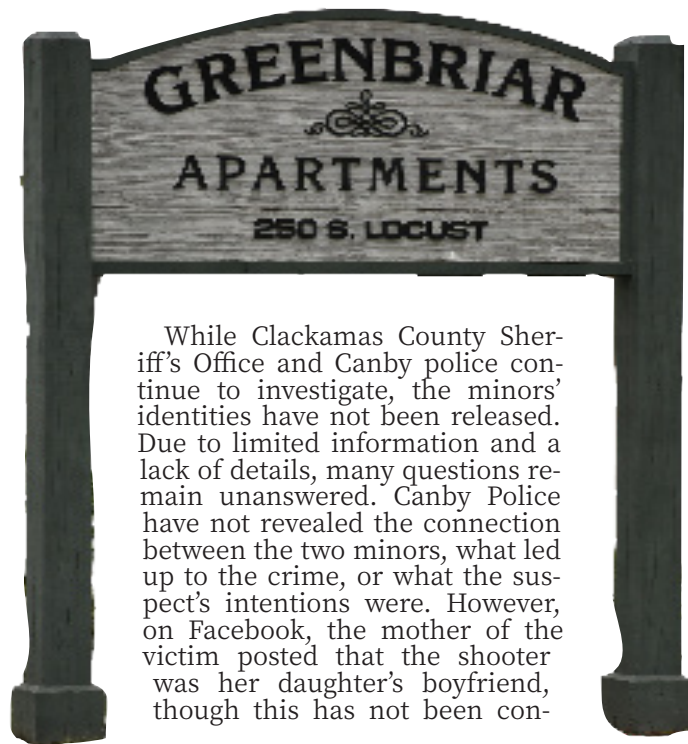
Shooting in Canby leads to casualty

BY: LILLY KAISI

On Sunday night, Dec. 7, shortly after 11 p.m., a shooting was reported to the Canby Police Department that resulted in the death of a 15-year-old girl.

When the police rushed to the scene at an apartment complex, they found flowers outside the door. After entering the apartment, officers located the young girl with a serious gunshot wound. The location of the gunshot has not been released. She was found alive, and the medics attempted to provide immediate care; however, moments later, the victim was declared dead.

As this continues to be an active investigation, most of the information has not been disclosed. The Canby police discovered that before their arrival, another minor had fled the scene. The police tracked the juvenile down for around 2 hours and finally took a 17 year-old-boy into custody around 1 a.m.



While Clackamas County Sheriff's Office and Canby police continue to investigate, the minors' identities have not been released. Due to limited information and a lack of details, many questions remain unanswered. Canby Police have not revealed the connection between the two minors, what led up to the crime, or what the suspect's intentions were. However, on Facebook, the mother of the victim posted that the shooter was her daughter's boyfriend, though this has not been con-

firmed by the police.

This incident was so out of the ordinary that, reacting to the shooting, a woman said, "[E]specially here in Canby, you just don't hear of it, ever." Many residents in Canby have expressed worry after this shooting. According to the residents, violent crime in the area is considered uncommon. As the news spread quickly, parents and students expressed concern and were hoping for clarity to understand what is going on.

While there are limited details, police have confirmed that there are no other suspects and the community remains safe. There has been no confirmation on how the gun was obtained or whether it was somehow legally owned. Canby police are urging anyone with information regarding the shooting to come forward in order to discover what truly happened.

Despite this rare occurrence in Canby, the community has begun their healing process as they await for further answers.

Donald J. Trump wins the new FIFA Peace Prize award

BY: JAKE BRENDEN

Donald Trump recently received the FIFA Peace Prize on Dec. 5 at the Kennedy Center. FIFA, the world's governing body of soccer and an organization that has typically remained politically neutral, announced it would begin issuing an annual prize to an individual who has taken "exceptional and extraordinary actions for peace and by doing so has united the world." President Donald Trump was the first recipient of the newly established award. The president of FIFA, Gianni Infantino, remained tight-lipped regarding the winner of the award until the ceremony; however, it was no surprise to the public when Trump received it because Infantino was a loud and vocal supporter of Trump receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

According to FIFA, Trump was selected because he helped end wars and save lives. The reasoning for the award has been contested on many occasions, and doubt has been raised as to the impartiality of the group or person who picked Trump to be the recipient of the award. FIFA has historically been an apolitical organization, and concerns over an overtly political award being attached to them may bring unfortunate consequences and troubles for the world's leading soccer federation.

Infantino has been a long term Trump supporter and has been spotted with him at many peace summits and has been a long time supporter. Trump and Infantino have worked closely in preparation for the FIFA World Cup that will be in the US, Canada and Mexico. Infantino has had a controversial past, with him being accused of being too political with FIFA. He has repeatedly made political statements out of the ordinary for a FIFA president.



Tension mounts between Netflix and Paramount

BY: ALEX BAUTISA

Companies in the entertainment industry are engaged in a high-stakes competition to acquire Warner Bros., the media conglomerate that owns Warner Bros. studios and the streaming service HBO Max. In early December 2025, Netflix entered into an agreement with Warner Bros. to acquire the company's studio and streaming assets in a deal valued at approximately \$82.7 billion. The agreement includes the Warner Bros. film and television studios, the HBO and HBO Max brands, and the associated content libraries, while the company's linear cable networks would be spun off into a separate entity called Discovery Global.

Within days of Netflix's announcement, Paramount Skydance launched a competing hostile takeover bid for Warner Bros. Paramount's offer was structured as an approximately \$108.4 billion all-cash proposal, valuing Warner Bros. at a higher enterprise value and including the company's cable networks as part of the acquisition. Paramount has urged shareholders to consider its bid as an alternative to Netflix's agreement, arguing that its proposal provides greater value

on a per-share basis and could close sooner.

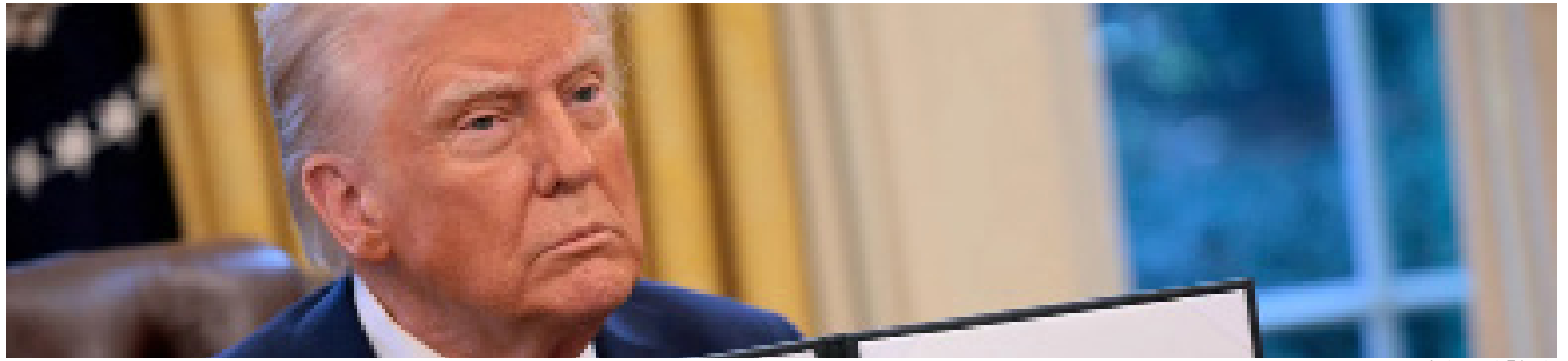
Warner Bros.' board of directors acknowledged receipt of Paramount's bid and stated it would review the offer in accordance with its fiduciary duties and advise shareholders on its recommendation. Shareholders have been given a deadline to consider Paramount's unsolicited tender offer, though that period may be extended.

The competing proposals now face a regulatory review process that could take several months. Federal antitrust authorities are expected to scrutinize any acquisition under U.S. law, with some experts suggesting regulators could block a merger if it is found to harm competition in the media and entertainment markets. A class-action lawsuit has already been filed in federal court seeking to challenge Netflix's proposed acquisition on competition grounds.

As the bidding war continues, stock prices for Netflix and Paramount have responded to investor expectations about the outcome, and Warner Bros. Discovery's future ownership remains uncertain. Decisions by shareholders and regulatory agencies will ultimately determine which offer, if any, moves forward.



Trump's executive order on DEI



Internet Photo

By TARA PIDAPARTHI

January, 2025. The marking of when our current president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, signed a huge executive order with his intent to take away all of the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs across all of the US federal agencies. Many supporters of this have argued that it was just a simple restoration of American merit-based opportunity, while other critics have begun to express their unease with these new programs, saying that it is working to erase many of the safeguards that America has attempted to sculpt for marginalized communities and is undermining years of progress made towards America's inclusion acts. The mantle of this shift was Executive Order 14151, called "Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing." The directive required all US federal agencies to terminate DEI-related activities, including positions, training programs and equity action plans. A related order, "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity," dismantled Biden's 2021 DEI directives. Trump framed DEI initiatives as illegal and immoral forms of discrimination, arguing that they

undermined merit-based systems. The framing of this marked a direct ideological clash with Biden's Executive Order 13985, which had grown DEI across federal agencies and encouraged departments to identify barriers to equity in all their operations. There have been immediate impacts. Federal departments were told to remove all DEI offices and take away references to DEI from any pre-existing official materials or documents. Through the educational viewpoint, states such as Arizona have started to remake their curriculum, and teacher training has been instructed to comply with this, risking the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in funding. Hundreds of corporations, which have been very wary of political pressure and legal risk, have started to roll back on these DEI commitments, with reports indicating that dozens of firms made changes following Trump's inauguration. Local governments also responded, with cities like Hendersonville disbanding DEI committees and replacing them with rebranded advisory groups.

These orders have sparked a fiery debate throughout the United States. Supporters argue that DEI programs impose a lot more conformity, wasting taxpayer money, and discriminate against non-mi-

nority groups. For them, the executive orders represent not merely a policy change but a symbolic rejection of the efforts to acknowledge these systemic inequalities. Legal experts, on the other hand, warn of aggressive enforcement, noting that recipients of federal funding may face criminal liability if they continue to maintain DEI programs deemed unlawful. This has created a powerful chill down America's neck, with institutions preemptively abandoning initiatives to avoid scrutiny.

Trump's DEI orders represent more than administrative changes; they signal a political realignment. By framing DEI as discriminatory, the administration has recast equity efforts as threats to American meritocracy. This reframing places pressure on institutions to leave their diversity initiatives behind, even those that are voluntary or privately funded.

The broader consequences extend further than policy. In schools, teachers and administrators are beginning to face issues on how to approach such challenging topics of race, gender, and identity without violating federal directives. In workplaces, employees who benefited from mentorship or affinity programs

fear losing support networks. Within our day to day life, communities that relied on DEI committees to elevate marginalized voices now face a massive uncertainty on how to maintain just basic representation. The orders have intensified political polarization, with states continuing to resist compliance, setting the stage for legal altercations that could begin to reach the Supreme Court.

The dismantling of DEI programs under Trump may seem like a positive step in the progress towards America's future, but others might see it as a fatality in U.S. governance. Whether viewed as restoring fairness or erasing progress, these executive orders have begun to reshape the landscape of education, employment and civic life, whether we approve of it or not. The dismantling of these programs will now have to depend on how institutions, courts, communities, and companies will end up complying. For now, the debate over DEI has moved from boardrooms and classrooms to the center of our nation's politics, painting bright patriotic colors under the enduring struggle over what equality and opportunity just has for the future of what we once called the US of Action, America.

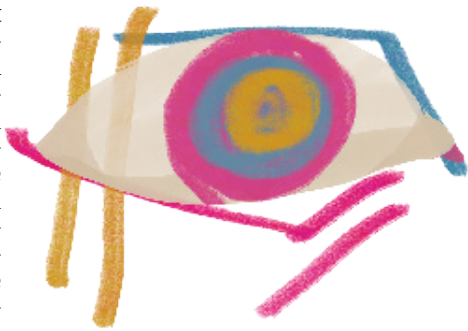
Human nature and evolution

By CORDELIA MEGOWAN

Fertility rates are decreasing while autoimmune disorders are increasing, largely due to the added mental and physical stressors humans face today. These disturbances include manmade light and noise, as well as exposure to pesticides, herbicides and microplastics. Each of these stressors are what many would consider relatively recent when looking at Earth's timeline. Due to the recency of these nuisances, humans have not had time to adapt, which has resulted in negative outcomes of modern developments. The fast pace at which the world has evolved since the Industrial Revolution is one that humans have not biologically evolved to keep up with. This quick change leads to what anthropologists call "evolutionary mismatch." Evolutionary Mismatch is the theory that describes what happens when a trait that was once beneficial to ancestral species becomes detrimental due to the new conditions the species is a part of. This phenomenon is most easily identifiable in animals like birds, bats and marine organisms. However, unknown to many, it is also common in humans. A simple example of evolutionary mismatch in humans is the concept of the "sweet tooth." Originally adapted to help humans find foods that would keep them sustained for longer periods of time, this trait now fuels unhealthy eat-

ing habits that lead to obesity and diabetes. This occurs because humans have been unable to adapt to the new sugars, salts, and fats that are used in foods today.

Furthermore, humanity took thousands of years to evolve biological pathways that activate when we are in danger. For the majority of human history, these pathways were triggered by predators, a stressor that was temporary. However, in our current day and age, these biological pathways are constantly going off due to the never ending amount of pressures from our evolving world. This is what many anthropologists believe to be the key reason for increasing stress, especially among those who live in cities and urban areas.



Japan earthquake shocks

By SARA FIRMIN

On Monday, December 8, 2025, the coast of Japan was struck by a massive earthquake, leaving at least 51 people injured and causing damage throughout the region. At 11:15 p.m., the magnitude 7.5 earthquake hit 44 miles off the northeast coast of Japan, triggering an aftershock warning as well as a tsunami warning for the region.

According to CNN, the tsunami waves seen in Japan were not as high as initially feared. "A 2.3-foot tsunami was observed at Kuji port in Iwate, while a 1.3-foot tsunami was recorded in Aomori and Hokkaido," which helped relieve the people living in the area. The tsunami warning was lifted on Tuesday, December 9.

Although the earthquake did not cause widespread devastation, many people were injured by falling ob-

jects. Most homes were not heavily damaged, though some will need to be fixed from the quake. At a news conference early Tuesday morning, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara reported power outages in Aomori and Iwate, as well as the suspension on high speed train service between Fukushima and Aomori.

Multiple emergency help groups have been sent out to help families that experienced damage from the earthquake, as well as make sure no one is trapped by falling debris. Prime minister Sanae Takaichi stated, "We are putting people's lives first and doing everything we can." While no deaths have been reported due to the earthquake, many were left injured. Despite the damage Japan has suffered from this earthquake, their government emphasized prioritizing the safety of its citizens following this disaster.

Russia-Ukraine war

By KARINA SWARTZ

Recent updates in the Russia-Ukraine war show a continued mix of fighting and diplomatic efforts, as the conflict remains unresolved. More than three years after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, both countries remain engaged in active military operations while also facing pressure from the international community to explore a possible path towards peace.

In recent months, there have been renewed discussions about potential peace plans and negotiations. Ukraine has continued to promote proposals that emphasize the restoration of its territorial integrity, the withdrawal of Russian forces, and long-term security guarantees. Russia, on the other hand, has expressed interest in talks under conditions that Ukraine and many Western nations consider unacceptable, including demands related to territory. While no formal peace agreement has been reached, these discussions suggest that diplomatic communication, though limited, has not completely stopped.

Fighting on the ground has intensified. Russia has recently carried out its largest attacks in months, using a combination of missiles, drones, and air strikes targeting transportation networks and military-related sites. Ukraine's air defense systems intercepted many of the incoming weapons, but damage was still reported in several regions. Ukrainian officials have described these strikes as attempts to weaken civilian morale and disrupt daily life.

tary Ukraine has continued to

respond with defensive operations and limited counterattacks, while also requesting additional military and financial support from allies. Western countries, including the United States and members of the European Union, have continued to provide aid while also encouraging diplomatic solutions. Sanctions against Russia remain in place, adding economic pressure alongside the ongoing military conflict.

The humanitarian situation remains a major concern. Civilians continue to be affected by displacement, infrastructure damage, and power outages, especially during periods of heavy fighting. International organizations have called for increased humanitarian access and stronger protections for civilians.

U.S. President Donald Trump has also taken actions related to the conflict. Since returning to the office, Trump has criticized previous U.S. involvement in the war, mainly toward the amount of U.S. financial and military aid towards Ukraine and has pushed for a shift toward negotiations rather than continued military aid. His administration has emphasized pressuring both Russia and Ukraine to consider negotiation for a peace deal.

Overall, recent developments in the Russia-Ukraine war highlight the ongoing tension between military escalations and diplomatic efforts. While peace talks and proposals continue to be discussed, large-scale attacks and active combat show that the conflict is far from over. The situation remains unstable, with future outcomes depending on the battlefield developments and political negotiations.



Internet Photo

The impact of Ukraine war on the Middle East

Transforming St. Vincent Medical



Internet Photo

Students with a happy patient celebrating after decorating the room

By MIKAYLA RIGGS

Junior Room Crew is a club here at LOHS with the mission of bringing joy to hospitalized children by decorating patients' rooms. The club represents a section of the organization Once Upon a Room, a non-profit based in Los Angeles, California, with the goal of brightening the lives of hospitalized children who are battling life threatening illnesses or acute trauma. The organization serves 40 hospitals across 15 states. The LOHS Junior Room Crew decorates rooms for children at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center in Portland. Junior Room Crew provides the opportunity for high school students across the country to volunteer and be a part of Once Upon a Room. Members get the opportunity to fundraise, put on various events and lift the spirits of the patients whose rooms they decorate. Junior Daphne Heath is a member of the Junior Room Crew here at LOHS and has been participating in Once Upon a Room for many

years. Her favorite thing about being a member of Junior Room Crew is "being able to transform someone's room and being able to see their reaction when they first walk in." Heath said, "It's so amazing being able to help people have their own personal touches in their rooms." Members of Junior Room Crew get the opportunity to experience many meaningful moments with the patients they get to decorate for. Heath shared her favorite memory from a recent hospital trip: "We got to decorate a boy named Dylan's room in October and got to see him come in and take it all in for the first time. He went straight to the toys and showed us his costume, and it's such a special feeling being able to feel like you have a connection with these people."

If you're looking to join a club, love helping people and are looking to make a meaningful difference in peoples' lives, consider joining Junior Room Crew to help spread joy to children at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center.

A Fresh Look Into the Medial Field

By SALLY HSIA

When most students consider pursuing a career in the medical field, it can be easy to get caught up in the challenges of lengthy schooling, intense studying and pressure. Though these are all considerable aspects of a health-care career path, a club at LOHS is highlighting something equally important: compassion.

The Hearts and Helpers Club, co-founded by sophomores Sahashra Vuyyuru and Leila Longeteig, is a new club at LOHS introducing Lakers to a look inside the medical field. Members can contribute to their communities by creating hygiene and craft kits for patients, brightening their days not only with fun trinkets like pop-its and bracelet-making activities but also by providing essential supplies. Hearts and Helpers encourages those outside the community, as well as supporting those within. Once a month, seminars are held featuring an invited medical pro-

fessional who provides insight to those interested in their career. By helping out within the club, members are finding hands-on experience that lets them better understand the responsibilities and challenges of the field.

Vuyyuru, who cofounded the club this year, has experience volunteering in hospitals and wanted to bring that experience to her peers. She expressed, "I can tell how it impacts people, and that influenced me to want to teach high school kids what's available for them if they want to go into the medical field." Through service and interaction with medical professionals, she hopes that the club can inspire others to explore their passions and futures, just like she has.

We can all get absorbed in getting the best grades or internships to improve our odds of success, but Hearts and Helpers reminds us that helping others in our community can be the most rewarding part of trying to make an impact.



Internet Photo

Three students gaining hands-on experience in a similar program

Odd Christmas Traditions still Celebrated



Internet Photo

Photo depicting the "Caga Tió", a unique Catalan Christmas Celebrated in Spain where logs are dressed in festive clothing and given faces

By CHARLOTTE WOOLDRIDGE

Around the world, Christmas traditions come in many different levels of unusual. While American celebrations typically include trees, stockings and hot chocolate by the fire, other countries add their own unique twists to the holiday. Five countries in particular have Christmas traditions that make their winters special.

In Iceland, the most famous holiday figure isn't Santa. It is the Yule Cat. According to old folklore, the Yule Cat roams the countryside during the holiday,

searching for kids who are not wearing the clothes they received for Christmas. The Yule Cat is a reminder for kids to appreciate their gifts and stay on their best behavior.

Meanwhile, in Venezuela, people of the town of Carracas have an all-night roller skating celebration on Christmas Eve, ending with a final early morning Mass on Christmas Day. Streets close the night before, so everyone can celebrate and skate safely to church. For many families, the holiday isn't complete without an early-morning skate through the streets. If you enjoy a spooky

holiday, Austria may be the place for you. In Austria, the Krampus, a horned, anti-Santa creature, is said to haunt and scare naughty kids. Each year on Dec. 5, towns across Austria host Krampus parades where costume performers rattle chains, stomp through the streets, chase people and put on a show.

The Czech Republic brings romance into the holiday season with a Christmas Eve ritual where unmarried women toss a shoe over their shoulder toward a door. If the toe points toward the exit, it means that she will be married in the coming year. If the heel lands

toward the door, it means she will stay single for a while longer. Friends and family often gather around to watch, turning it into a light-hearted and fun moment that is not taken very seriously.

Although these traditions vary wildly, they share something deeper. Each one brings people together, preserves old stories and adds magic to the winter season. Whether you're running from Krampus, skating to church or tossing a shoe over your shoulder for luck, these traditions show that Christmas can look completely different around the world.

Why the Cinnamon Bear Breakfast Cruise is the best holiday activity

By CHARLOTTE WOOLDRIDGE

During the holiday season, families find importance in spending time and celebrating with their loved ones. Adults take their children to retirement homes or shopping centers to hear the prolonged harmony of local Christmas carols, while the little ones tug on their parent's arms trying desperately to escape the seemingly endless experience. When looking for a holiday activity for every audience, the Cinnamon Bear Breakfast Cruise is simply the best. Dating back to the 1940's, the Cinnamon Bear has become an iconic figure of Portland. For decades, children would tune into the KGW radio station every day at 3:45p.m. to listen to the adventurous stories

of Cinnamon Bear and his colorful friends. Parents now have the opportunity to share these nostalgic stories with their children through the Cinnamon Bear Breakfast Cruise. At the beginning of this cruise, families can enjoy a variety of food from the all-you-can-eat hot breakfast buffet. With eggs, bacon, fruit, pastries and more, this breakfast includes plentiful kid-friendly options so everyone can satisfy their needs. As for drinks, all cruise attendees have access to hot cocoa, orange juice, coffee, and hot tea to start off their morning just right. Reserved seating for every guest ensures that families can settle in smoothly. At this cruise, restless toddlers needing to walk around or kids heading off for a quick bathroom break won't result in the devastating loss of seats that took

a painful 20 minutes to obtain. After enjoying a nice breakfast, kids can gather round to listen to the stories of Cinnamon Bear and his crew. Not only do they get to hear these stories, children get to see them come alive as characters, such as Crazy Quilt Dragon, reveal themselves to the audience. As kids erupt with excitement for their turn to meet these characters one-on-one, parents finally get the perfect opportunity for a photo op to send to eager grandparents.

As exhilaration is rising, a magician swoops in to take these kids' jubilation to an all-time high. With mind-blowing tricks and opportunities for kid volunteers, the magic segment of this cruise is my personal favorite as someone who attended this cruise throughout many of my childhood years.

As the 2-hour mark approaches, this cruise begins its descent before kids become tired or restless so that everyone can leave this experience on a positive note. Additional photos with Cinnamon Bear, supporting characters, and the magician can be taken at this point. These individuals are so friendly and always willing to give autographs to anyone who may want them. Parents can take another trip down memory lane to Maybelland Gift Shop where they'll find all sorts of trinkets, toys, and apparel to keep the stories of Cinnamon Bear alive. With satiating breakfast, captivating stories, and generational sentimentality, the Cinnamon Bear Breakfast Cruise is the best holiday activity for every audience.

Running through new resolutions

RYAN KOPER

“New year, new me” is a very popular saying. It might be a saying you are familiar with, or it might not be. The saying is usually used around December, in regards to the new year about to take place: it’s all about changing your life for the better in the new year. This time of year, people make New Year’s resolutions, promises that they are going to change themselves for the better in the coming year. It’s a great tradition that celebrates making decisions/additions to your life that will improve you as a person. It is a time for appreciating what you have done this year, accepting some things to work on, think-

ing of ways to change them and deciding to actually make those changes.

Many people focus on different things. For example, some people’s goal is to lose weight or go to the gym more, some want to make more friends and be more outward and some don’t want to make changes at all.

LOHS sophomore Saxon Kitchen said, “I want to get better grades,” which is a very popular goal that most students are aiming for in the upcoming year.

Another student, sophomore Ryan Jumnongnart, said

that he wants to “work out more and get [my] driver’s license,” which is another great goal and a very popular decision as well.

A third student, junior Owen Beaumont, had the same New Year’s resolution as Ryan, saying that he wanted “to work out more and gain weight.”

Finally, junior Kieran Lusser said a goal that is not very often said, “I want to get a loving girlfriend.”

All of those are good options, and if you didn’t already have a New Year’s resolution. I hope you found a good resolution to make or at least got a good idea for one.

Renee Rapp tours Australia

By MOLLY DORNBLAZER

Renee Rapp, born on January 10, 2000, in Huntersville, North Carolina, gained popularity when she debuted as Regina George in the Broadway musical “Mean Girls” in 2019. After starring as Leighton in “The Sex Lives of College Girls” and reprising her role as Regina George in the 2024 “Mean Girls” adaptation film, Rapp’s acting career has undergone considerable growth.

Apart from her career as an actress, Rapp is a rising music artist as well. In 2022, she launched an extended play called “Everything to Everyone” including hits such as “The Kitchen.” Following this, she dropped her debut album titled “Snow Angel” in 2023, featuring top songs like “Pret-

ty Girls” and “Talk Too Much.”

After its release, Rapp shared with fans that she was facing a lot of burnout. With a tumultuous breakup and intense public pressure to explain her situation to the media, Rapp began a journey of self-acceptance. She stated numerous times that she wasn’t in a good place in her last relationship which led to making some choices she now regrets. Initially hesitant to admit to her faults, Rapp said “I was like ‘Oh my god, what if it isn’t received in the right way? I don’t know if I want to put that much of my personal life out there.’” Ultimately, Rapp decided the vulnerability and authenticity of her words was what made her voice special. Instead of hiding from her mistakes she decided to take

them on and self-reflect through a new album titled “Bite Me.”

On August 1, 2025, Rapp released her new album, gaining more traction than ever before. Many people hated her songs, saying she was a toxic person that fans shouldn’t be idolizing. However, others saw her work as refreshingly imperfect. Raleigh Sherman, junior at Sunset High School said, “We all have moments in our lives we wish we could go back and change. Shaming someone for admitting to that and openly trying to change isn’t necessary.”

On October 13, 2025, Rapp visited the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon to perform songs from the “Bite Me” album as part of her “Show Hard Feelings” tour. She plans to continue her tour worldwide with her next concert scheduled for January 27, in Brisbane City, Australia.



Internet photo

Renee Rapp sitting on stage at one of her many large Australian concerts during her Australia tour.

Midwest Emo escape the midwest

By CORDELIA MEOGWAN & ELLIE NGUYEN

Tired of hearing the same songs over and over again? Been wanting to get into new music? The genre of Midwest Emo is complex and deep, often resonating with high schoolers due to the raw and honest lyrics. But what even does “Midwest Emo” mean? Well, despite being in the name, originating in the Midwest is not a requirement to be a part of this genre. Like all music, it does not matter where one comes from, but what they can create.

These various backgrounds add to the reality that these bands depict in their music, creating a personal connection with each of their listeners. Three of the most prominent Midwest Emo bands are American Football, Modern Baseball, and Mom Jeans. A lot of songs by these artists have recently been trending on social media, such as “Scott Pilgrim vs. My GPA” by Mom

Jeans, and “Never Meant” by American Football- their whiny vocals and impressive guitar make the tunes even more memorable. Many are familiar with the lyrics “So leave my sweater on the porch/I’ll leave your bag under the stairs,” the chorus of “Scott Pilgrim vs. My GPA.” The sound often accompanies sports edits, existential revelations, and even Family Guy segments, allowing the tune to accumulate close to 83k uses on TikTok. Senior Justin Conolly talks about how Midwest Emo is very particular and that you “really need to think” about what songs could be included in this category of music. “Don’t expect to like it at first. It’s an acquired taste,” he reflected. Many would agree that it takes a few tries to understand the mumbled lyrics and the differences between

the two electric guitars, one focusing on the droning tonic sound and the other on the melodic counterpoint. Be that as it may, taking the time to get to know the music creates a bond between band and listener that many other genres cannot recreate. Connolly continues to talk about his favorite bands from the genre: “I particularly like Sunny Day Real Estate and Title Fight. So if you feel the need to expand your musical horizons and you were ashamed of your Spotify Wrapped again this year, try out Midwest Emo. Maybe you’ll find a part of yourself you’ve never understood before. Maybe it’ll lead you to a artist or genre you like even more! So next time you go to click your liked songs, maybe try putting on some Mom Jeans instead.



Internet image

Assorted album covers that have taken the Midwest Emo scene by storm spreading far and wide.

Ellie’s Epiphanies



Similarity over shared purpose

By ELLIE NGUYEN

Like any typical incoming freshman, I entered high school with a trifecta of seemingly accomplishable goals in mind. There were the usual, such as finding a solid lunch table, attending every home football game, and maintaining a high GPA— but more importantly, I hoped to make a difference in the world, even if small and insignificant.

One such opportunity arose early in the first semester: Sustainability, a critical-thinking course that emphasized the problem-solving of current environmental issues. At first, I felt out of place— one of only two underclassmen in the room, surrounded by individuals familiar with current news and politics. Educated and passionate, they often discussed topics foreign to my younger self. During class, they talked about new policies, innovative technology, and incidents from decades ago— I felt as though I was bearing witness to a strange world, one I was unfamiliar with.

A couple of weeks into the course, we were met with an assignment, the directions simple: create a project that would bring awareness to an issue our planet faces today. In my group were a handful of upperclassmen I had never talked to before. However, I soon realized I had more in common with these older students: we all wanted to make a change. An introverted junior with a pixie cut, a former football player cut from the varsity roster— figures once deemed strange and distant became my closest acquaintances.

After intense collaboration with the administration, we proposed an original idea for the school community: Sustainability Week. The event would consist of multiple segments, each discussing a critical issue impacting the future of the planet. I was to individually lead a paper-making class on Wednesday, following only a tutorial I had discovered the night prior. Composting lessons were to be taught in the cafeteria, a thrift market to be opened after school. The last day would consist of a field trip to the Oregon State Legislature to advocate for resourceful practices. To our surprise, the project that had once been a distant figment in our minds transformed into a campus-wide collective, bearing participation from students and faculty alike.

Though it was only a week long, Sustainability Week taught me a plethora of lessons, reshaping my understanding of what it truly means to make a difference. I learned that efforts do not need to be large or grand in scale to matter, but simply the product of small fragments over time. Working with my classmates to bring attention to a crucial matter was a memorable experience— what was once an idea, then a tentative proposal, became a yearly school tradition. I realized that systems only change through working together, and only then can thoughts be converted into action.

More importantly, I learned the importance of uniting over a common cause. Individuals with whom I thought I had nothing in common turned out to be very similar to me. Our different backgrounds allowed our small group to have a variety of perspectives and ideas, allowing the event to come into fruition. Working with these people taught me that collaboration is about shared purpose, rather than similarity.

Lakers Got Talent

LOHS student musicians strike a chord Laker students showcase artistic abilities



Jaden Yazhari playing the violin.



Skye Neal playing the piano.



Patrick Wear playing the guitar.



Ella Chang's beautiful and handmade pottery.

Ella Chang

Inspired by pottery videos on social media and encouraged by her mom, senior Ella Chang has been making pottery for nearly three years. She spends Saturdays at a local studio, sometimes planning pieces ahead of time and other times letting creativity take the reins to guide her on the wheel. After two years of practice, Chang began selling her work, and she learned that farmers' markets offer more freedom and profit than online platforms like Etsy. Chang shared some advice: "The hardest part of creating art is being ok with failures. With the pottery process, things go wrong all the time. Whether it's a crack in the bottom of a bowl, or a glaze not being the finish I wanted, I've learned that sometimes, it's out of my control." Although she's decided that pottery won't be a part of her future career, it remains a creative outlet and even had influence on her college decisions: she considered whether they offered access to their pottery studios and how much they invested into their art programs.

By SOPHIA LU

Sophomore Jaden Yazhari entered the music world at the young age of three when he began taking violin lessons. Currently, he is involved in two orchestras: in school, he is in LOHS's Symphony Orchestra, and outside of school, he plays as a member of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony.

However, Yazhari does not limit himself to orchestras or musical opportunities locally — he also participates in nationwide groups. This past summer, he attended the Sphinx Performance Academy, a two-week strings camp at Juilliard.

Across these experiences, Yazhari said, "My favorite music memory was playing in a string quintet last year for the state's solo and ensemble competition. Chamber music is my favorite kind of music, so I had lots of fun rehearsing with my friends and competing."

For the future, Yazhari plans to continue practicing and performing. Notably, one of his goals is to "keep attending music camps over the summer to meet more musicians who are equally as interested in their instrument as I am."

Similarly, junior Skye Neal also began with music from a young age, starting piano lessons at three and writing down her compositions at seven. Neal is dedicated to not only piano, violin and LOHS's A Cappella choir but also composing. She was also selected for a camp at Juilliard, attending the 2024 Juilliard Summer Composition Intensive. In particular, she elaborated, "I stayed in the Juilliard dorms in New York City with 30 other young composers from around the world, and we got the chance to attend masterclasses and workshops from faculty members and highly acclaimed composers."

Neal has won numerous awards for her compositions, such as the 2025 Na-

tional Young Composer's Challenge. Her winning piece will be performed by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra this spring. Some of her compositions also hit closer to home: for example, she is currently working on a 12-part suite about Portland's bridges. Through her piece, she works to capture each bridge's structure, history, setting and associated memories. Concurrently, she is also working on a piece about the dangers of light pollution.

Long-term, Neal wants to "major in music and hopefully find a way to pursue it as a career!"

Nowadays, sophomore Patrick Wear plays three instruments — guitar, drums, and bass — and sings vocals, but it wasn't always that way. Although Wear began taking guitar lessons at age seven, he wasn't immediately drawn to the instrument. He later decided to return to the guitar a couple of years later. Soon after, he began playing the bass as his main instrument until seventh grade, when he formed his first band. Although this band was not entirely successful, he gained experience practicing his music skills on guitar and vocals.

Currently, however, Wear explained, "I have been working on my debut solo record 'Ash' with the help of my friend River McLean." He is also debuting a record with his band "Petrichor," but he continued, "Ash is a project that I am very passionate about and that means a lot to me. I am a person who occasionally struggles with depression and I seek music to help with that. The album carries that sound."

Wear takes inspiration from the indie-folk genre and is influenced by popular artists such as Mac DeMarco, The Beatles and Arctic Monkeys, learning their techniques to shape his music.

Beyond his albums, Wear further expands his musical abilities by studying music theory and practicing his various instruments. He will be releasing a single "Win/Win" on February 10 on Youtube, Apple Music and Bandcamp.

Luca Sporon-Fiedler

Luca Sporon-Fiedler, a senior, began taking art more seriously during the pandemic, starting with using markers and colored pencils to draw their favorite characters before experimenting with different mediums and ideas. Fiedler shared, "Over time, as my passion for art grew, so did my ambitions." The hardest part of creating art for them is the very common struggle of "art block" where ideas and creativity aren't coming as smoothly as they usually do. However, this has been a huge part of the learning process for Fiedler. Through AP Art, they are able to freely decide what to draw or paint; when they like their project, they are more devoted to it, creating a better masterpiece overall. Art will likely stay a personal hobby for Fiedler, but no matter where they go in life, it will always be an important part of it.



Luca Sporon-Fiedler's impressive drawing.



Katelyn Chun's whimsical mural in LOHS hallway.

Katelyn Chun

Senior Katelyn Chun has been making art for as long as she can remember. From sketching to painting to sculpting, she's done it all! When Chun is creating art, she does a brain dump about the piece and takes inspiration from specific subjects she's interested in or random ideas that pop in her head along the way. Chun mentioned, "I like to make an inspiration board on Pinterest to gather reference images, inspirations based off of my brain-dumped ideas or even more ideas of new techniques I could try." In her creations, she always finds a way to incorporate her Korean culture. This way, her pieces carry a sense of home. Regarding the future, she wishes to keep art a part of her life for as long as possible. Other than a hobby, Chun sets her heart on transitioning her passion for art into a possible career of UI design.

Lakers shine at Winter Glow performance



By LILLY KAIS

On Thursday, Dec. 11 and Friday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m., Lake Oswego High School was transformed into a winter wonderland, beautifully decorated for the annual Winter Glow concert that features performances from choir, orchestra, band and theater. Walking into the auditorium, a green and red backdrop was displayed, with projected snowflakes on the wall, handmade snowflakes hanging from the ceiling and mini Christmas trees. To enhance the experience, the instruments were decorated with bows and little Santa hats. As Harmony Yount said, it was "a shared experience" filled with joy, mixing familiar songs and holiday traditions.

Returning songs from last year's programs that were crowd favorites, such as "Sleigh Ride" and "Believe," definitely excited the audience. Another addition to the holiday experience was the Windjammers performing around the audience, holding candles, returning from last year with Callie Schmitke playing the tambourine. Not only did they continue traditions from last year's performance, but they also incorporated a variety of activities that the crowd hadn't seen before.

While past concerts have included little skits

after performances, this year humor was emphasized. The skits were interactive, engaging and of course included holiday humor. There was a fun little performance with students dressed as Whos from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," followed by the Grinch and his dog Max, surprising everyone. They all walked down the aisles and handed out candy canes to the crowd.

This concert involved a variety of ensembles and different styles of music. It had orchestra and wind ensembles, with jazz, A Capella and even more. There was such a variety throughout the night where the music would flip from being calm to upbeat, keeping everyone engaged. Multiple quintets, quartets and trios were performing, whether this was the clarinet ensemble, flutes or jazz band. The jazz band even performed a song without the conductor, with Dan Zelyanovskyy on guitar and Jack Weber and Julian Powell on piano.

As the concert continued, it was clear that there were many vocalists showcasing their amazing talent. There was a vocal trio singing "Silver Bells" and "White Christmas," which was put together without instructions from a teacher. Another song performed was "A Very Laufey Christmas," which was arranged by Eden Choi and had solos from both her and Maya Ye. An-

other awesome performance was a vocal quartet by Callie Schmitke, Sadie Hovey, Jack Weber and Adam Koh. There were absolutely beautiful harmonies, and let's not forget a returning favorite from last year, "Christmas Eve/Sarajevo," with swaying, hand gestures and once again solos from Kalea Chow and Sadie Hovey. Ending the song, Henry Robinson popped up wearing a Santa hat and imitating Santa Claus.

However, let's not ignore the additions outside the auditorium. Of course, there were concessions, but people were also handing out little goodie bags and cocoa grams. There was a fun activity where people could anonymously write down a strange hobby, an activity or a skill that a lot of people may not know how to do. There was also a poster board outside where the Thespian Club partnered up with Schnitzer Cares to raise money to donate to their choice of a non-profit organization.

Finally, Winter Glow concluded with a full performance of Sleigh Ride, incorporating the entire choir, orchestra and band. It was such an exciting and upbeat song to end the night. Highlighting tradition, students and the community, everyone had a great night and will be back next year! Amazing job to the choir, band, orchestra and Thespian Club.

LOHS male choir group continues to impress



By TARA PIDIPARTHI

At Lake Oswego High School, choir isn't just another class kids walk to — it's a community. Within the school's celebrated A Capella program, the Windjammers are a select group of singers known for their dedication and precision regarding music. From this ensemble, a smaller subgroup called the Decks, originally known as the Poopdecks, has painted its own presence within the LOHS choral program, blending the tradition and history of Lake Oswego with its own spin of musical creativity.

Renowned choral director at LOHS, Tara Bamford, has witnessed just how much the group has shifted over time. "I think the groups have really changed over the years," she said. "The Decks are a tenor-bass quartet, and sometimes they'll do things like barbershop music. For all members of Windjammers, after the school year starts, I'll hold auditions and give them a piece to prepare. Returning members get to stay in the group as long as they have upheld their commitments from the previous year."

The commitment that the Decks showcase highlights just what makes them so unique. Members don't just rehearse during their class hours; they dedicate time outside of the choir room's confines to learning and practicing music together. Junior Adam Koh reflected, "Something I really like about Decks is the time we spend outside of school learning and practicing music. It gives us an opportunity to get to know each other a bit better and bond as well."

For many, the joy is spurred by not simply the music itself but also the companionship it builds along the way. "You get to create really cool music together," junior Tiger Hadley shared, "and being able to enjoy the music you produce with the individuals around you is just such a memorable experience."

For others within the group, the responsibility and creative freedom that comes with being able to produce music on their own is appealing. Senior Aspen Gross added, "Being part of Decks is cool because we get a lot more independence with what we sing and do to practice. We're responsible for a lot more, but it's super fun to work on our pieces together and come up with our interpretation of things. It's like being in our little band."

The Decks may be a small ensemble, but they have proved to be incredibly mighty. From being members of the highest and most advanced choir A Capella, being placed in the Windjammers and further being chosen as the representative tenor-bass quartet, they shape the spirit of collaboration, tradition and joy that is harnessed by Lake Oswego High School's music program. They are proof that harmony is as much about people as it is about sound.



LOHS Decks take the stage together.

Seasonal depression affects many students worldwide

By SOPHIA LU

Recently, I have been hearing a lot of my peers discuss their exhaustion with school and life, declaring they are “burned out” or “in a slump.” While academic and athletic pressure can certainly pile up as we near the middle of the school year, the truth is that Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) can also play a significant role in one’s mood.

SAD is a type of depression caused by changes in weather, specifically reduced sunlight. The sun triggers the production of serotonin, a “happiness chemical” and increases Vitamin D. Living in Oregon, it is rare to see a sunny day during the late fall and winter months. With less serotonin produced, people are prone to irritability and lack of motivation, leading students to have this feeling of burnout and exhaustion.

Research from the Sleep Foundation indicates that even small changes in daylight can affect one’s circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm is the body’s system that regulates melatonin and cortisol, the sleep and alertness hormones. With daylight hours

shrinking, one may experience a feeling of fatigue earlier in the day since the sun sets around 4 p.m. Combined with daylight savings, the body’s internal and external clock are even less aligned. This can lead to inconsistent sleep, extended morning grogginess and overall fatigue. All of these symptoms seem to compare consistently to the problems my friends and other peers have been reporting, leading me to believe SAD is more widespread than publicly acknowledged.

Physical activity also helps reg-

ulate mood, ensuring stress levels stay grounded and mental health remains positive. With dropping temperatures and rainy weather, student athletes are less likely to practice on outdoor fields and tracks. Limited physical activity can worsen stress induced by schoolwork or poor sleep, leading to overall mental unease.

By realizing their sleep schedule may be at fault, or recent physical inactivity has caused fatigue and stress, hopefully students can work to fix their mental health and defeat this winter slump!



Internet Image

Angel trees spreads holiday cheer to all and more!

By AUDREY KANE

The holiday season is all about giving back to the community, so what better way to do it than Angel Tree? Some of you might be wondering what Angel Tree is. It’s run by the Salvation Army, and it’s a way to support families who struggle to get Christmas gifts for their families.

Especially with the high prices of the holiday season, many people are having to stretch their budgets so they can give their kids and themselves the Christmas they deserve. So, if you are able to, it would mean a lot for the struggling kids and parents to wake up on Christmas morning with the gifts they asked Santa for. These Angel Tree lists are quite accessible, as you can find many of them in your local Walmart. All you do is pick off a list or multiple from the tree, buy those items and drop them back off to the Salvation Army. Not only is it easy to complete, but many of the kids

are asking for the basic essentials such as clothes, toothpaste and other hygiene necessities that are more of a need rather than a want.

Not only are you helping the kids but you are also helping their guardians, so they don’t feel ashamed or guilty for not being able to supply the gifts on their kids lists. And if you yourself have kids, it’s good to do Angel Trees as a yearly tradition because it teaches selflessness and empathy for others. It also teaches younger kids that Christmas is not just about receiving gifts but also giving them. By doing Angel Tree, it’s not just giving to give, it’s a true cause that could really make someone’s year; that is what Christmas is all about. So, even though this Christmas season may be over, it doesn’t mean that the kindness has to end. Keep donating to programs you believe in, and keep angel trees in mind for next season so you can make sure you end the year being nice rather than naughty.



Quality of lyrics in music declines

By AHMED AL-AWADHI

In older music, the lyrics are meaningful and tell a story. Now lyrics are just obnoxious and singers try to hide their poor writing behind murmuring and loud instruments. Reading modern songs from artists like Sabrina Carpenter and Kendrick Lamar showcase how stupid lyrics have become. An example of this is from Kendrick Lamar’s song Sing About Me, I’m Dying of Thirst. He opens with his usual plate of noneness “see, my hormones just run away and if I can get ‘em back To where they used to be then I’ll probably be in the denim Of

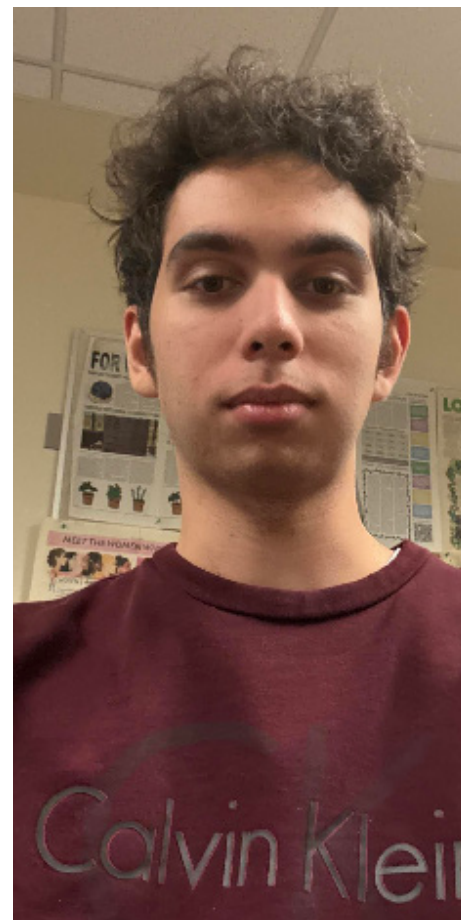
a family gene” (Musixmatch 61). These lyrics become worse when you compare them to poets like Justin Bieber. His song “Baby” transcends modern music’s repetitive tropes. Bieber packs his song with meaning and his rhetoric easily gets his point across. They can be analyzed or just enjoyed; the song does not try to be smart but somehow comes off as intellectual. It is a casual song— but also a serious one. In the middle of the song Bieber says “I’ll buy you anything, I’ll buy you any ring” (Azlyrics 27). This line is catchy but also has a hidden meaning that showcases people’s dependence on material wealth in order to have mean-

ingful relationships. He makes a rhetorical choice to buy her a ring, which typically symbolizes marriage. “And I’m in pieces, baby, fix me” (28). This line highlights society’s view that if one is not materially full something must be wrong with them. “And just shake me ‘til you wake me from this bad dream” (29) Kendrick Lamar wishes he could imitate such rhetoric. Bieber’s lines build upon each other into a story that is full of morals and ambiguous meanings. Modern music has forgotten its base— perhaps storytelling and meaning hold more value than an obnoxious mumbling.



Internet Image

Jakes Take



Venezuela liberated

By JAKE BRENDEN

When America took the president of Venezuela on the 3rd, the world added another chapter in a long-storied history of America intervening in South America. Post WW2 and especially after Cuba became a communist regime, a main focus of the CIA was Latin and South America. America has launched 10 coups, or invasions of countries in just that bit of the world, since the end of WW2. In the 2000s, especially post 9/11 and the subsequent Global War on Terror, a lot more attention was placed on the Middle East and the conflicts in that area. Overall, for the past 20-odd years, it has seen a lot more stability and less American interventionism.

That’s not to say there haven’t been issues, it’s still a developing part of the world, and America has continually operated in Haiti and maintain economic sanctions on many countries in the area, such as Cuba. However, lately, direct ground operations to topple the Maduro government show an increased interest in the area, with overtones about American involvement, such as with oil companies such as Exxon Mobil and Shell. This type of interventionism harks back to so-called “Banana Republics.” Where companies ran countries in the early 1900s. This is because the companies would bribe officials and this led to terrible conditions for workers and a huge wealth inequality, the US helped support these regimes and the result of this was many populist uprisings against them.

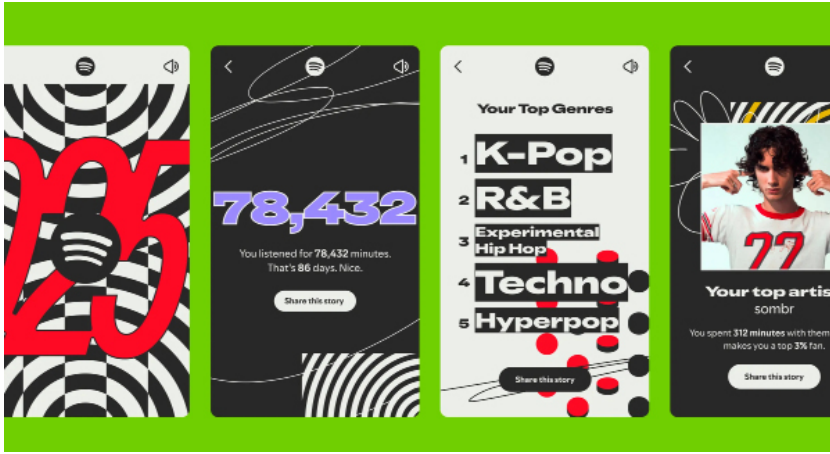
As much as Trump wants to call this an arrest or just a small thing, this will undoubtedly lead to regime change, or at the very least, destabilize this part of the world. And in all fairness, Maduro was not a great guy. He’s violated the civil rights of his people and run sham elections. His regime is the cause of countless people’s suffering in Venezuela, and many people who were for the decision to arrest him point to the fact the Venezuelans are celebrating his removal. Wasn’t it just 2 decades ago Afghans and Iraqis took to the streets and celebrated the removal of their respective dictators?

This comes to the crux of what I am writing about, the idea that it is America’s job to police the world and that the world is meant for the US to exploit. As much might be said about the actions, it is blatantly clear that it is a resource and control grab of the country with the single largest proven oil reserves. This is bad; this leads to death and suffering caused by America, which was seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. Wars that cost American lives and trillions of dollars.

Finally, on an international level, this action represents an era of interventionism and imperialism. It raises the question of America’s right to invade another country’s sovereignty to conduct a domestic arrest warrant, especially since long-standing legal precedent shows a country’s laws only extend to its border. Especially when there was no International Police (INTERPOL) warrant or red notice.

America has long held itself as the leader of the free world and a proponent of self-determination, this position as the leader of the free world is brought into question when the US unilaterally and without approval from the international community invades and arrests a foreign leader on domestic charges.

Calling a wrap on Wrapped!



Internet image

By TRUMAN SZEKELY-JOHNSON

In 2015, the music streaming service Spotify came up with the idea of making a recap of listeners' most listened songs, albums, artist and other statistics creating the first "Spotify Wrapped." But as of recent years, it seems that every company has made their own spinoff to the concept. Overall, the idea of a recap itself has been around in the media for a while such as Apple Music's rewind being created in 2019. Although this year, when apps that are irrelevant to music streaming like Dutch Bros (a popular coffee chain), Duolingo (a digital world language tutor) and Snapchat (a texting app) blatantly stole the same format as Spotify's recaps, they made its integrity less creative and more corporate focused to appeal to a wider audience.

The main reason for this recent call for yearly recaps would most likely be the popularity of the Spotify Wrapped has amassed. The Wrapped in itself has been a very large talking point for not only students and teachers alike, but millions of people globally. With that much popularity and attention on the subject, it does make sense for larger companies to hop on the band-wagon. However, a trend with large companies is that they try to appeal to

as many audiences as they can but end up making dry, uncreative and overall very underwhelming recaps for their company, especially with the new use of Artificial Intelligence.

What makes Spotify Wrapped different from others is its ever growing popularity and the connection it makes with its users. Every Wrapped, although inaccurate at times due to its A.I. collecting, is tailor-made for its listener's unique statistics. Each detail shown within the wrapped is often relevant and interesting to the user. While on the other hand, the new apps copying Spotify could be showing the user the least interesting information such as, "You have texted this person thirty times" or "Your most watched movie genre is comedy."

With the constant popularity of the Spotify Wrapped rising, other companies have taken part in adding an iteration for their own products. Although a smart business tactic, making marginal profits for themselves, a major problem in quality control has been made clear. With the unpolished use of A.I., million dollar companies are somewhat tarnishing the integrity of the recapped genre, creating carbon-copies of Spotify Wrapped that just aren't as appealing as the original in itself.

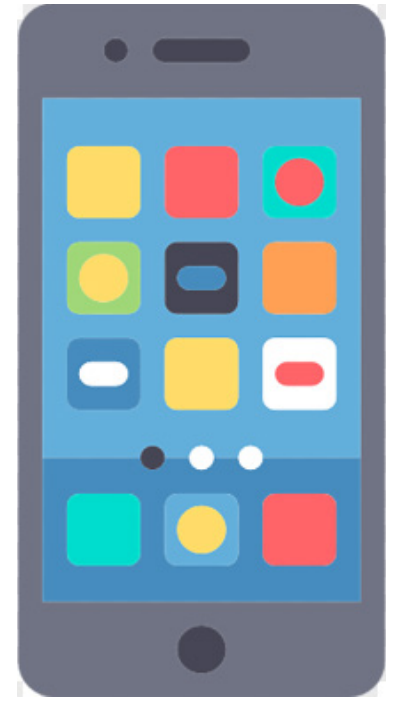
Internet drama goes way too far

By SALLY HSIA

As I'm sure many of my peers can agree, I'm addicted to my phone. Embarrassing as it is, I lie in bed on many nights scrolling through Instagram Reels and TikTok, and with each video, the little voice in my head goes, "Okay, just one more, then go to bed," and instead, I end up watching for another 30 minutes. Our phones, of course, provide never-ending entertainment, but the internet's vast reach also creates bonds and connections that would be otherwise impossible, and many, including myself, deeply value it.

Recently, though, I came across a mixed Asian-American woman on TikTok mentioning her annoyance with Caucasian people shopping at Asian grocery stores, saying that she "can't help but side-eye them" and giving subtle snark. The opinion wasn't outrageously unpopular, but in her attempt to convey a relatable sarcastic jab, she instead lit communities on fire. I didn't think much of it, but a few days later, I came across someone making a response video, criticizing her for making someone feel like an outsider. Then, a whole week later, I was surprised to scroll to another person with a similarly judgmental view on the same topic, but now, an Asian creator describing the initial woman as ridiculous to judge others, arguing that since she was mixed white and Asian, her Asian identity was invalid. Video after video sent roaring hostility, each leading to hateful and harmful comments, some even trying to dox the side-eyeing TikToker. While criticizing her for acting prejudicially, comment-writers and creators ended up doing the same thing, and all I could think was, "Was this really this big of a deal?"

This certainly is not uncommon; cancel culture and not-so-scandalous scandals have always been a part of the inter-



Internet image

net. Boycotting a creator or a brand can be valid, especially since preventing a harmful presence from spreading on the ever-expanding internet is unquestionably beneficial for communities. Social media users are extremely opinionated, and not all opinions are acceptable. However, when a mistake becomes a snowball made of more exaggeration than the original topic, it's hard to defend cancellation when it goes too far.

Controversy is entertainment, and as wholesome cute animal videos are, or how fun dance trends can be, people, me included, will always be captivated by drama. But when it's only making a ruckus just to make a ruckus, it takes away from the fun that the internet brings, and instead makes it tiring. The world is problematic enough, so why turn a creative outlet into more hate and debate? Perhaps this evening is the one to decide that it wasn't that big of a deal, and really put the phone down when the little voice says so.

Facial recognition becoming a concern

By SOFIA MOTIKA

In recent years, facial recognition has become one of the most widespread and powerful technological tools. For those with newer models of Apple iPhones, simply unlocking the phone requires facial recognition. Many individuals incorporate facial recognition into their daily lives in routine ways, such as by having Google or Apple Photos create albums of different people in their camera roll. However, personal use is not the focus of backlash against this developing surveillance tool. What people are worried about is how large corporations and law enforcement will collect and use the resources provided by facial recognition.

In Eugene and Springfield, Flock Safety cameras— which scan and track license plates— were banned after Eugene Police Department identified unspecified vulnerabilities and limitations regarding the AI powered technology. Retailers, such as Macy's, Amazon Go, Kroger, Target and Lowe's, are some of the large corporations that have experimented with facial recognition software. Rite Aid, for example, attempted to use facial recognition to identify potential shoplifters but was met with a ban from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) after it falsely accused women and

people of color. Since facial recognition software has historically been trained on white males, women and people of color are more likely to be misidentified. This vulnerability, coupled with the tendency for law enforcement to view black males as dangerous, could lead to even more false accusations for people of color. Facial recognition is also easily trained and adapted to inherit certain biases, so if law enforcement doesn't fairly regulate their technology, it could lead to increased racial profiling.

These misidentifications are common, as many cases have been reported, like that of Nijeer Parks. When law enforcement in Wodridge, Chicago, sent a low-pixelated driver's license photo into facial recognition software, the computer misidentified the suspect, leading to the arrest of Nijeer Parks, who had to spend ten days in jail. Facial recognition wasn't the only tool law enforcement could have used in that case. There was other evidence available at the shoplifting crime scene, such as fingerprint marks and DNA from a discarded water bottle, but authorities pushed away these leads and instead depended on a computer to uphold the law. This is dangerous, as reliance on machines could lead to unflinching systematic discrimination. Furthermore, if law enforcement has already

messed up with small crimes like shoplifting, imagine the consequences if the computer misidentified an individual in a large scale investigation.

If the identification is the problem, one might suggest that the computers need more training. For more training, the software will need more photos. Where organizations will obtain more photos is a point of contention. If grocery stores, Ring cameras (which directly partner with law enforcement through their Neighbor app) and other unavoidable businesses are using facial recognition technology, then there is virtually no effective way to mandate consent, and it would be a violation of privacy. It is tedious and unreliable to require each person to sign off on facial recognition consent when they just want to grab a few groceries. Currently, many law enforcement databases use mugshots or driver's licenses to identify suspects, but mugshots are taken before individuals are convicted of crimes, so they have not explicitly given consent for their photo to be used in these investigations.

In conclusion, the vulnerability for facial recognition software to misidentify suspects, especially people of color, and the privacy risks of training and using the software should be considered in the face of a technologically-evolving world.

Celebrities utilize their platforms to address issues

By ANDREA PIEDRAS

Have you ever been on your phone scrolling through Tik Tok and heard about the latest celebrity that is under fire for being silent and not using their platform? And ever wondered why this was blowing up? This is an issue that needs to be addressed more often.

Lately, due to many issues that are going on, many celebrities have decided to use their voice or their platform to speak up about these issues. During the Grammys last year, one example of this is when Lady Gaga, during her acceptance speech, spoke up on the importance of supporting trans kids and that kids deserve love. Or how, when Chappell Roan also spoke up during her acceptance speech on how the industry has failed artists. These are all issues that should be spoken about more, and because two of the biggest pop stars did,

it shed a new light on the issues and got media attention.

More recently, the white house page has decided to brag about the fact that they are currently funding a mass deportation, as if it's something to brag about. With this, there have been many videos posted on multiple platforms by the White House, using famous celebrity songs, such as Oliva Rodrigo and Sabrina Carpenter. These videos were posted to glamorize the details that are being caused by ICE, which was not taken lightly; both singers commented on the posts to talk about how disgusting ICE's behavior has been. This post blew up so much that the White House deleted its own post. Which doesn't seem too big, but then you can see that there is shame behind the post and that being flamed by a celebrity would just make it even more shameful.

Another celebrity that I want

to speak about is Billie Eilish. She has never failed to ever stay quiet about all the issues happening globally. She has stood up for Gaza during the genocide, and has spoken out against ICE and the mass deportations. Not only these issues but global warming and publicly shaming all the billionaires who don't use their money for good. She not only speaks out with her words but also with her actions. In her speech during the Wall Street Journal Magazine Innovator Awards, it was announced that she will be donating all the funds she made from her HIT ME HARD AND SOFT tour to various charities, totaling up to 11.5 million dollars. This activity will make a difference globally. This is why it's so important for celebrities who have a huge audience and influence on their fan base to shed light on various issues, as it can one day be the reason something is solved.



Internet image

Lakers girls basketball team hosts and plays in annual Nike Interstate Shootout

BY TAYLOR SHELTON



The 2025 Nike Interstate Shootout (NIS) marked the 34th Annual basketball tournament hosted by LOHS on Dec. 20-22. What started as a four team tournament in 1991, conceived by the Laker Girls Head Coach at the time, Gary Lavender (1977-2004), has grown into a 28 team, four-bracket tournament. The mission behind the NIS is to promote regional girls basketball and attract the best competition by incorporating teams from across Oregon and Washington. This goal also brings attention to women's basketball and fosters a community that encourages female athletes. The tournament is able to run due to the generous local volunteers, consisting of the Laker Varsity and JV teams, their parents and other members of the community who all help manage admissions, concessions and game announcing. The event is sponsored by Nike, and also has local sponsors promoting their businesses and helping to fund the tournament in support.

The NIS is a staple for the Laker Girls Basketball program because it allows great opportunities for girls within the youth programs to watch the high school team battle against tough opponents and look forward to what they will get to experience when they are in high school. As the tournament is on the home court, the LOHS Girls Varsity Basketball team not only plays for themselves but for the collective community as a whole as they strive to represent themselves at the highest level.

This year, the Laker Girls competed in the Navy Division along with seven other teams. The other brackets are the White Division, Red Division and Silver Division, with the White and Red Divisions having eight teams and the Silver Division having four teams. The Lakers held their own among the competitive field and placed second in their bracket, falling just short in the Navy Division championship game

against Skyview (WA). They started the tournament out with a 43-23 win against Hood River. Then, they played Forest Grove in a nail-biter, narrowly winning 46-44 after going into overtime. In the championship game, Skyview opened a substantial lead, while the Lakers' shots struggled to fall, but during the second half the Lakers fought back and closed the gap. The White Division champion was Sherwood, the Red Division champion was Canby, and the Silver Division champion was Sandy.

Senior Addie Sale has been a part of the Varsity team and has participated in the tournament for all four years. She reflects that her sophomore year was her favorite memory from the NIS tournament when they won their bracket in a "nail-biting, physical game." Due to the pool play setup, the team didn't know who they would play immediately, making it difficult to prepare for the games. To best set themselves up for success, Sale stated, "We went in with the mindset that if we came out hard and played smart, we could figure out the other team's style of play and change our plays accordingly." Sale was most proud "of how our team reflected some of our values in the LO program with the youth teams present," as they were able to show what it looks like to play for LOHS Girls Basketball team and be role models for the younger players.



LOHS Laker dance team secures first

BY MIKAYLA RIGGS

The LOHS Laker Dance team regularly competes in competitions at the league, state, and national level in order to showcase their talent and get opportunities to learn from other choreographers and teams. On the weekend of December 6 and 7 of 2025, Laker Dance competed at the Rex Putnam Festival of Dance at Rex Putnam High School in Portland. There, the team placed first in the categories of hip hop and pom.

The competition featured dance teams from high schools scattered throughout the Portland Metro Area. Laker Dance got the opportunity to debut their new pom routine to the theme of Phantom of the Opera. Sophomore Elle McCan shared, "We competed against multiple other teams who had competed their

pom before so it felt really good to win." Since D-Squad regularly partakes in competitions, the team has established traditions in order to hype each other up and celebrate wins. Senior Clara Penoyer said, "When we are waiting for awards, we always sit in a circle and hold hands, and before we perform, we do a hype circle."

Penoyer later reflected on her time with the dance team, saying, "We're all family and there's such a special bond between all the girls. I've loved getting to dance with all these people and gain friendships with everyone."

A group of Laker Dancers also recently auditioned for the 2026 All-State Dance Team. Seniors Maddi Dale, Clara Penoyer, Georgia Truax, Gisele ElAzma and Carys Cassidy were selected to compete on the All-State team!



Wrestling takes down the season

BY CORDELIA MEGOWAN

LOHS wrestling is ready to put this season in a headlock. With a team of 36 athletes consisting of both boys (32) and girls (four), the Lakers have begun a new regime of training to ensure a successful and exciting season. Due to changes in coaching, the typical practice looks a little different than in past years but nonetheless proves to be effective and productive. Junior Charlie Hansen gives an outline of how a usual practice would go consisting of 10-20 minutes of warmup followed by 45 minutes of drills. The team would then practice "situational live" which is a portion of practice where the athletes go all out to simulate a real match. They finish with strength and conditioning. As for tournaments, there is a 32 man

bracket and as athletes win matches, they move up towards the state final. A typical match is on a mat, with a circle that acts as a boundary. To gain points, the athlete would either take their opponent down or escape an attempted take down. Wrestling is a dynamic sport that differs from many others. Freshman Natalie Anderson describes wrestling as a sport that combines every aspect of athletics. She mentions the emphasis of critical thinking, problem solving and physical strength that all play a part in having a successful outcome. All in all, the Lakers, including staff like Dr. Griffiths, predicts a successful year, and Senior Roham Shariati describes the team morale as high due to the dedicated line up which he believes will result in a "pretty good" season.

College football is underrated

BY KARINA SWARTZ

The college football postseason is one of the most exciting times of the year, bringing together dozens of bowl games and ending in the College Football Playoff (CFP). Bowl season allows teams from across the country to face opponents they rarely play, rewarding successful seasons and giving fans high-stakes matchups during the winter months. From historic bowls like the Rose Bowl and Sugar Bowl to newer matchups, these games remain as one of the most important traditions in college football.

At the center of the postseason is the CFP, which determines the national champion. Only a limited number of teams are selected, going from 4 teams to 12 teams last year. This decision makes every regular-season game crucial; one bad loss against a low-ranked team could kick a team out. The CFP committee evaluates teams based on wins, losses, strength of schedule, conference champions, and overall performance. While this system aims to select the "best" teams, it also has significant controversy. This year includes the addition of conference champions, who require 5. This year, they chose teams like Tulane and James Madison University (JMU) over powerhouses like Notre Dame. Some notable discussions from the playoffs this year include Notre Dame, Texas and BYU.

Every year, several teams believe they deserve a playoff spot but end up being left out. Smaller teams with an undefeated or only one-loss season get overlooked for larger and more dominant teams from more powerful conferences. This is just one example of how college football teams don't get to be rewarded for doing well in one season; they have to have years of greatness and upgrade to a better conference to be seen. Even teams from major conferences sometimes feel guilty for close losses and not playing in a conference game. This has led to some debates among fans, analysts, and coaches about fairness and consistency in the selection conference.

The controversy is intensified because being left out of the playoffs can drastically change a program's future. A playoff appearance brings national attention, increased recruiting, and financial benefits. Meanwhile, teams that narrowly miss out are often placed in bowl games that feel disappointing compared to competing for a national title, even if they are just as entertaining games.

Bowl games are a chance for players to compete on a national stage. For players, bowl games are a reward for a successful season and a chance to gain experience for younger athletes. For seniors, it's often the final game of their college career. The one downside is the risk of getting injured, especially if the players are declaring for the draft. Bowl

games also bring excitement to fans by creating unique matchups between teams from different conferences that don't play each other during the regular season. Even though some bowl games do not carry championship standards, they still matter for team pride and momentum going into the next season.



Internet Image

Texas A&M versus USC at Las Vegas Bowl

Basketball season begins

By LEENA BRISTOL

Lake Oswego High School Boys Varsity Basketball has recently started their season, and fans are excited to come out each week, watch the players compete and show their school spirit at each game. Players have been working hard in practice, improving their skills and learning how to work together as a team. Practices often focus on communication, along with conditioning and, most importantly, learning ways to best prepare for upcoming games. The coaches explain how they are proud of the effort and dedication the team has put in each day, whether it's at practice or in games. People think that their work will help the team succeed later in the season. So far this season, the team is 9-2, winning against Beaverton, Nelson, Summit, Sheldon, and many more. Many students came to cheer them on. The crowd's energy helped motivate the players and made games much more exciting. Their most recent win was against Forest Grove where the team showed hard work and teamwork. The players supported each other on and off the court throughout the game. Some players were interviewed about how they think the season is going so far. Sophomore varsity player Micheal Loye said his first varsity game was "really fun and I look forward to the rest of the season." Sophomore Dilara Mamakli said she is "really excited to watch the games and see how far the team goes this



Internet Photo

Boys Var basketball plays Beaverton HS

season." The team is hoping to keep winning and improve even more as the season continues. They are also hoping to make a strong playoff run. Fans are encouraged to keep attending games and show school spirit. Make sure to come and support our basketball team versus Sprague on January 16th at Sprague. Your support makes a big difference for the players.

McClaren Wins F1 Season

By KARINA SWARTZ

This 2025 Formula 1 season was a competitive one that featured races held all around the world and included 10 teams and 20 drivers. The championship followed the same general regulations as previous seasons, with teams focusing on improving the performance of their car throughout the season. The long calendar required drivers and teams to deal with heavy traveling this year compared to others.

At the end of the season, Lando Norris of McLaren won the 2025 World Drivers Championship with 423 points earning his first F1 title. Following him closely was Max Verstappen of Red Bull, who has won the past few years

quite an easy one this year for McLaren with Norris and Piastri being extremely dominant, earning them over 800 points.

Race outcomes this year were more heavily influenced by strategy. It's usually the driver, but weather played a big role this year. Strategies include things such as which tires to use, when to do a pit stop, weather conditions, and safety car periods. Some races were predictable, while others featured incidents that changed the races dramatically. Sprint races at certain events also contributed additional points and affected championship standings as seen between Norris and Verstappen as it was only a



and lost by two points. In third was Lando Norris' teammate, Oscar Piastri. Even though Norris did not win every race, he did a good job this season compared to other seasons, regularly finishing in the top drivers. It was not an easy win for Norris as he was constantly challenged by drivers like Verstappen, Mercedes teammates Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

The Constructor's Championship was won by McLaren, with Mercedes coming in second and Red Bull at third. It was

two point difference. Midfield teams including Alpine, Williams, Haas, and Red Bull Racing competed closely throughout the season as well. These teams this year focused on scoring small but important points, and improving their car development. Several younger drivers gained valuable experience and showed progress over the course of the season.

Overall, the 2025 F1 season was defined by consistent competition and steady performance. Norris' championship win highlighted the importance of reliability and long-term consistency across an entire season.

Waterpolo plays off-season

By PARKER SMITH

While fall sports wrap up, club water polo is just getting started, and the Laker boys water polo players have recently begun their off-season schedule after winning a state championship. Their club season gives them all the opportunity to keep up their skills and competitiveness, and many of them are taking advantage of this opportunity.

Sophomore Vedant Ramachrinan says club helps him keep his skills up and stay close with all his teammates. "During the fall season and after winning a

championship we still have to stay active if we want to do good again. It's all about consistency." He also added how he enjoys getting to hangout with the team more, and going on club trips to California is always really fun.

Freshman Laythe Townsend enjoys the change in pace from the regular season but appreciates that it still has that competitive feel. "It always feels like a bit of a break but still has some good competition. We get a good chance to hangout more and play in further away tournaments, that's always really fun because it's a chance to see a place I would've never

gone to otherwise." He also talked about how it's always fun to meet new people from the other teams and how it always makes the competitions a little more fun.

Junior Owen Beaumont has been playing for eight years and has enjoyed it all. He has won two out of three state championships he has been in! But it didn't just happen like magic; out of season he has been putting in the work during club season. He said "Water polo is such a fast paced, physically tough sport. With clubs, I get to play with people all over, not just my high school, but just like in high school we still get to practice and compete at high levels and travel for tournaments year round." He also talked about how without out of season practice he doesn't believe he or his team could have been as successful as they were.

Whether they're improving their shots or refining their plays, the LOHS water polo team is always staying active, and that's one of the ways they keep winning state championships. With their effort and passion, it's no secret why they keep winning.



Internet Photo

Boys Waterpolo poses after winning the State Tournament

Taylor's Timout



Lure of D1

By TAYLOR SHELDON

Time and time again, student-athletes looking to pursue their sport in college are blinded by the appeal of going D1, so much so that they don't even bother to look in the direction of any D2, D3 or NAIA schools, despite those schools being able to offer them more than D1 schools. I've fallen victim to having my eyes set and unwavering on the dream of going D1 to continue my academic and athletic career at the collegiate level. Although I've made this a reality, I realized throughout the whole recruiting process that there are so many other programs not at the D1 level that are just as, if not more, competitive as D1 schools and even provide more quality education, opportunities, and scholarship money.

Every situation is different and it all depends on what each person is trying to get out of college and what they prioritize more between their academics and athletics. For some reason, there has been this standard and pressure of D1 being this top tier level that the best of the best go to, and if you go to a lower division that you aren't good or competitive enough. It's estimated that a mere seven percent of high school athletes play collegiate sports, and that encompasses all levels. D1 is a lot more selective and less than two percent make it to this level, so athletes shouldn't feel like they aren't worthy if they don't go D1 because that's a dangerous road to go down. Athletes can end up comparing themselves to a harmful extent. They may become overwhelmed by the financial side of playing D1 as they are offered less scholarship opportunities than they would be at another level, and they end up needing to get a job to support themselves as a result. They also might get overworked and overloaded with the intensity of D1 training while trying to balance a new environment with school and not living at home.

Athletes should be proud to play at an level because they are already a part of a selective group by being able to pursue a collegiate career. It's common and a seemingly normalized question of people asking what division a school is that an athlete is committing to. This has only fueled the detrimental aspect of the pressure associated with D1 dominance. Athletes fear they may be judged and viewed as lesser than if they go to a lower division. This is very dangerous for athletes' mental health, as they lose confidence if they think they are perceived as not legit or elite due to immense external expectations. As a result of the increasing stress and toll of measuring up to others' standards, athletes tend to lose their love for their sport and end up not even playing in college at all.

As I've gone through my own recruitment process and experience, especially with all the changes to NCAA rules and the transfer portal, I've come to understand that it's increasingly more difficult to go D1 in this day and age, and for most schools the costs outweigh pros, the main pro being just to say, "I went D1." I was lucky enough to commit to play D1, but I realized that other levels have programs that are just as competitive while also having prestigious educational opportunities. Majority of D2, D3 and NAIA actually offer more money, just in different forms, such as academics, because schools at these levels like D3 can't grant athletic scholarships. Some people highly prioritize academics and staying within a financial range, thus lower divisions would be perfect as they offer both while still having competitive athletics.

Although most professionals come from D1 backgrounds, there is a lot of talent that consistently comes from other levels into careers beyond college. This goes to show that the level of colleges don't matter, it all just depends on what the person wants most out of a school and how athletic they truly are to continue on for a professional career, regardless of division.

Live, Laugh, Laila



Dimishing my own successs

BY LAILA BRISTOL

My whole life, I have been working towards one goal: getting into my dream college. If you know me at all, you surely know the extent to which I have aligned my self worth with my potential success or failure to be accepted into this school. I honestly let it consume me. Every meaningful thing that I did was weighed into my chances of being accepted. At a certain point, I didn't quite know who I would be if I didn't make it. What would I do with the merchandise I had bought in hopes of manifesting success, the vision boards I had curated, and the plans I had made? Would I still think the hours upon hours of studying were worth it? Would the attention to detail on every assignment still be beneficial?

These thoughts flew through my head at a rapid pace as I opened my letter. To my utter disbelief, I saw a screen full of confetti. I did it. Tears streamed down my cheeks as I realized that I had achieved the biggest goal I had ever set for myself. I felt so capable.

Of course, being the high-stress person that I am, the celebration was short-lived as my anxiety quickly found a new issue to latch onto. I realized that I no longer had something to work towards. My whole life, I had a driving persistence that kept me going even days after finding out about my news; that persistence was nowhere to be found.

Although I am a mere 18 years of age, what I once thought to be my life's purpose has now become entirely nebulous.

I realized that despite the hard work and study sessions, I had always been preparing myself for failure. I never truly believed in myself enough to fathom that I would succeed, even though I wanted to so badly. I never prepared myself to continue forward and excel after decisions came out because I was so sure that I would need to continue applying myself and find a new path.

I could only tell people that my acceptance must have been a mistake. I knew I didn't deserve to get in out of all the people that applied. I couldn't justify why I was one of the selected admitted students. Something went wrong. They didn't read my essays close enough.

It took me weeks to finally realize that I DO deserve it. I remembered how hard I worked for my success and decided to consider myself deserving and just like that, my perspective changed. Instead of feeling dread at the possibility of a mistake, I began to exude excitement at the thought of my future.

All this to say that I don't think this is just a "me thing." I think that oftentimes we inherently lessen the significance of our own successes by finding a minor "what if?" or problem to focus on. With a new year comes new goals, and one goal that I have for myself this year is to be more proud of my accomplishments, and I think you should try it with me.

Obviously, there's a healthy line between proud and boastful. I'm not saying you have to tell everyone about your accomplishments or loudly declare your pride in yourself. I just think it is important to allow yourself to feel truly happy after a success. Although it is difficult (trust me, I know), don't burden yourself with negatives or try to diminish your capability. Simply realize that whatever you've accomplished, you did it for a reason and you deserve it. Essentially, you are worthy. This year, let's not diminish that worth.



Toes

BY LAKE VIEWS STAFF



1. The fear of long words is called hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia
2. It is impossible to hum while holding your nose
3. Animals can be allergic to humans
4. Lemons float in water but limes sink
5. The specks on strawberries are small seeds called achenes.
6. Google images was created after Jennifer Lopez the green dress at the 2000 Grammy's

Walter becomes LOHS most popular celebrity of the year

BY SARA FIRMIN

Walking the halls of LOHS recently has been a 15-week-old golden retriever named Walter! Walter is the beloved puppy that our Athletic Director and Assistant Principal Chris Coleman takes to school with him every day. Since Coleman's wife works from home with his older lab, he has been bringing Walter to school to help socialize him and keep him company. Luckily for Walter, he gets lots of pets and tummy rubs from many different students in our school. You may see Walter during lunch, passing periods or while he's taking a nap in the office!

Having a young puppy at school has had a large impact on the students at LOHS. Seeing Walter has brightened students' days and put a smile on their faces. "I'll be hanging out in the hallway with him, and a student may be walking

down the hall by themselves, and all of a sudden they see Walter and get a big smile across their face," Coleman said. When a kid is having a bad day, or even a good day, it makes Coleman happy to see Walter raising students' moods.

You might be wondering, "How does Walter get walked, fed, and let outside while he is at school all day?" Luckily for Walter, he has several people at school willing to help take care of him. Coleman feeds Walter in the morning when he wakes up, then around 1 p.m. in the early afternoon and finally when he gets home from school. Walter gets walks from many people who offer to take him with them throughout the day, like DAs delivering passes and other office

staff. Coleman appreciates all of the people who help take care of Walter. "It is a village that keeps an eye out for him," he said.

If you're ever having a bad day, are stressed after a test or love spending time with dogs, keep an eye out for Walter during lunch and TSCT!



Study apps to ace your finals



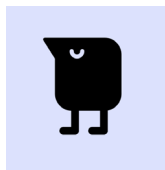
Focus Friend

I've been using Focus Friend for a while now, mostly when I'm studying or working on homework, and honestly, I wish I had started using it sooner. The whole concept of the app is that a little bean pet is born and it knits socks. When you set a focus timer, either as a stopwatch or a regular timer countdown, it begins knitting socks. The longer you work, the more socks it makes. With the socks, you are able to buy furniture to decorate your bean's room. Before starting an assignment, I set a focus session and put my phone down so I'm not tempted to check it. The fact that the focus friend only makes progress if I stay on task makes me more aware of how often I usually reach for my phone without thinking.



Study Bunny

I recently tried out the app Study Bunny, and ever since then, it has been one of my go-tos. The app centers around a bunny that studies alongside you, and when you start a focus timer, the bunny stays on task as long as you do. The longer you study, the more coins you earn, which you can use to buy clothes and accessories for your bunny. Before starting an assignment, I set a study session and put my phone away so I'm not tempted to scroll. Knowing that my bunny only succeeds if I stay focused helps me be more mindful of distractions and keeps me accountable.



Tweek

Tweek is a calendar app, which is a little bit different from Focus Friend and Study Bunny. I've been using it to organize my schoolwork, and it's made planning my week feel much more manageable. Tweek uses a simple weekly layout where you can list tasks for each day, which helps me clearly see what needs to get done without feeling overwhelmed. I like setting up my assignments at the beginning of the week so I can spread my workload out instead of cramming everything into one day. Having everything written down in one place keeps me more accountable and reduces stress when juggling homework, studying, and extracurriculars.

Does LO prefer skiing or snowboarding in the winter?

BY PARKER SMITH

Winter is rolling around and so are the sports. Whether you already got that new pair of skis or board, everyone seems to have a strong preference on which one they like. Skiing and snowboarding both have passionate people who do them, and many LOHS students spend their weekends on the snow; so here's their scoop on it.

Sophomore Ryan Jumng-nart has spent the past few years skiing with his family and friends, and he does not plan on changing his way on the mountain any time soon. He said, "Since I started going to Mt. Hood I have skied. It's always proven to be lots of fun

for me and my family. I tried snowboarding but skiing just felt more comfortable and natural." He also admits it still took him some time to get going but seemed like the better option compared to learning how to snowboard.

On the other side we have an avid snowboarder, sophomore Damon Morrow. He's been doing it for six years and believes it is far superior to skiing for many reasons. To him, nothing compares to the thrill of flying down the hill on a snowboard or peacefully cruising over some fresh powder. He says, "Snowboarding is just more fun and looks way cooler than skiing. I tried skiing for a season

when I was seven, and I instantly didn't like it. It felt clunky and weird, but as soon as I tried snowboarding it just felt better to me. Sure, it took some getting used to, but after getting the hang of it, you can progress so much faster in all areas from the park to freeride."

Those are some of the opinions about why each is better in their own ways, however, what about the schools favorite? Overall the poll shows skiing led the charge being favored by over 55% of students here at LOHS, but snowboarding still came in close.

