



THE MAMMOTH TRIBUNE

"MADE BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS"



VOLUME 8 ISSUE 6

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THE TRIBUNE STAFF



Back Row: Kaylei Davis, Melody Cortez, Zeydi Ponce, Alejandro Pena, Gabriela Ordaz, Maddox McAVaney, Lily Hawkinson, Lucas Land, Jayla Moss, Kolton Klug, Vivianne Ugarte, Gabriela Sagastume, Lovina Seelhofer
Front Row: Adriana Ordaz, Yarezi Gutierrez, Kaisara Arambula, McKayla Binette

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Hello Mammoths,

Welcome to our spring issue of *The Mammoth Tribune*. As another season changes, the clocks spring forward as we grow closer and closer towards the end of the school year, which is bittersweet. On the one hand, seniors will soon be saying goodbye, everyone else will part for summer, and we only have two issues left of *The Mammoth Tribune*. Still, we have lots of fun memories to look forward to such as graduation, prom, and awards night. In this issue we have a wide selection of memories and articles for you to peruse. From driving rats, to kind messages from your peers, to a Morp recap, and even current events like the bird flu, all of these carefully bloomed with you all in mind, so we hope you enjoy them. Happy Spring!

- Jayla Moss, Design Layout Editor

"Made By Students For Students."



AROUND

After the chaos of the Pep Rally, our campus was full of fun spirit days for us to enjoy. On Feb. 28, we had our “Valentines Day Rewind” where students were encouraged to wear red and pink.

The Madame Mammoth nominations were held on March 3, and the nominees were **Makayla Castaneda (2028)**, **Jayda Bass (2027)**, **Persia Batiste (2026)**, and **Vivianna Ugarte (2025)**. Throughout the month of March, similarly to the gentlemen's contest, these four will compete against each other to see who is the most lady-like, and will be crowned at the end of the month.

To kick off March as Kindness Month, the “Aloha to Kindness” spirit day on Thursday, March 6 invited students to dress in Hawaiian shirts, floral prints, or vacation attire. That Thursday also featured the “Kindness Banner” lunch activity, where students wrote sweet messages to their friends, which were displayed on the poster wall for the rest of Kindness Month.



CAMPUS

By Lily Hawkinson



Pep Rally Recap

By Lovina Seelhofer

As you all know, every year we have a pep rally where each class competes to show the most school spirit in the Battle of the Classes. This year we built up excitement for Pep Rally with a spirit week, lunch activities, and pop up games during passing periods.

Pep rally spirit week kicked off with a “Glow in the Dark Monday,” where students wore their brightest neon colors. On Tuesday every class dressed to represent different life stages for “Generation Day”—freshman as babies, sophomores as teenagers, juniors as middle-aged adults, seniors as senior citizens (who would have thought?). Next up we had “Twin with a Teddy Day” on Wednesday. Students brought to school one of their stuffed animals and dressed up as that stuffed animal as well. Thursday featured a “Chick Flicks vs Action” theme. Students dressed up in either pink or camo.

For our pop up games we had several exciting challenges. On Monday, before third period, one student from each grade was given a roll of crepe paper in their class color. The object of the game was to be the fastest class to finish unwrapping the crepe paper completely. Tuesday before fourth period, students gathered at the dig site area for a ping pong ball challenge. Using cups covering their hands, contestants had to transfer the ping pong balls from a bucket into three class-colored cups.



The next pop up game on Wednesday involved knocking over 10 stacked class-colored cups using ping pong balls. Then on Thursday, students had to balance a balloon in the air while stacking their 10 cups in a pyramid formation. If their balloon touched the ground, students had to start over.

Finally, Friday was Pep Rally Day so each class dressed in their class color—freshmen in yellow, sophomores in red, juniors in orange, and seniors in purple. Every class brought their energy and enthusiasm, and many teachers were very impressed with all the class dances this year. Clearly one class's dance stood out from all the rest, and that was the sophomores. The sophomores performed an especially impressive dance, but they were just short of taking first place in the Battle of the Classes. The seniors took that overall top spot with their school spirit, consistency and participation in the Pep Rally dance.



MORP Pajama Jam

By Zeydi Ponce

This year's Western Center Academy Morp, held in the piazza, was a highly anticipated event that brought the whole school together for a night of fun and excitement. Students eagerly changed their school attire for cozy and colorful pajamas, creating a relaxed, yet energetic vibe to the dance. The dance floor was filled with students jumping and singing along to upbeat jams, playing games, and enjoying snacks and drinks with friends. The Morposal competition was done differently this year with real-time voting for students who attended. Ultimately, **Allison Wieding (2027)** and **Diego Gomez (2026)** emerged as the winners, earning cheers and congratulations from the crowd. Morp has become a beloved tradition at WCA, providing unforgettable experiences and lasting memories for all who attend.





Club Spotlight: Mathletes

By **Melody Cortez**

For years, WCA Middle School has had a Mathletes team, but until last year, the high school did not. Since then, Mathletes has grown into a thriving high school club, competing successfully for two years and celebrating Pi Day with enthusiasm.

The club started with two freshmen, who believed that mathletes should have a place in the WCA High School. Now-sophomores **Julia Abdelmlak (2027)** and **Ereny Shehata (2027)** serve as the club presidents. Julia explains that “what started as an idea has become a real club, a real community, and a real opportunity for students to challenge themselves, work together, and be part of something bigger. I want others to know that you don’t have to wait for opportunities—you can create them. If something you love doesn’t exist at your school, be the person who makes it happen.” She adds that you don’t need to have everything figured out, “you just need passion, determination, and the courage to start.”

Pi Day, a day that celebrates the mathematical constant π , holds significant importance for mathletes. It takes place on March 14 (3.14), and is a day for fun, math, Albert Einstein, and of course, pi. This year’s activities include a water balloon toss, 3.14-legged races, and pie decorating. Mathletes Club members dedicate nearly the entire school year preparing for Pi day, striving to make it a memorable and successful day.



Mathletes also compete in math competitions, including their recent participation in Westmont College’s Mathematics Field Day. This was a very exciting experience that required students to cooperate and support each other. Mathletes participated in one-hour tests, which had five complex problems, and buzzer rounds, requiring speed and precision to test different mathematical topics. They have already begun to prepare for their next competition on March 20, which will be held online.

Aside from these events, mathletes plan a few others throughout the year, including Teacher Appreciation Day, where students decorate teachers’ classrooms with post-it notes highlighting things they enjoy. This is an important day for club members as it gives them a chance to thank their teachers for everything they do. Ereny recalls starting the tradition in 8th grade, when they decorated **Mrs. Torrico’s** window with post-its in the shape of the lorax. “It was a fun and creative way to celebrate Mrs. Torrico’s birthday.” It has since become an annual event. Mathletes work incredibly hard each year to ensure that each Pi Day is better than the last, and they have been successful in that goal. Through various competitions, celebrations, and traditions, they strive to create high school experiences that will last a lifetime.

WCA Mathletes Members

Patrick Adams (2028)	Israel Melena (2028)
Alina Ahumada (2028)	Angelina Mikhail (2027)
Jayda Bass (2027)	Sienna Montoya (2027)
Melody Cortez (2027)	Elias Rivera (2026)
Kira Denicker (2027)	David Sagastume (2027)
Calob Dinsmore (2027)	Dominiko Serrano (2027)
Anum Firoz (2027)	Alexander Strecker (2027)
Yaretzi Gutierrez (2027)	Ethan Tsai (2028)
Thomas Harr (2027)	John Valenzuela (2027)
Peyton Her (2027)	Melanie Wainaina (2027)
Taylor Her (2027)	Khloe Watkins (2027)
Xavier Hernandez Flores (2027)	
Malia Lopez (2026)	



Love or Money?

In our quest to include guest writers in The Mammoth Tribune, we posed the question, "Would you rather find true love today, or win the lottery next year?" The staff enjoyed reading all of the responses, but the following answers were our favorites.

Love

Joseph Hartel (2027)

If love is perfectly true, then it will not fail. Money fades, wealth is unpredictable, but love is something that lasts for a lifetime and beyond. I am the one who benefits by winning the lottery. In a relationship in which true love exists, that love goes both ways. True love benefits both people involved. Winning the lottery requires nothing of me; true love requires everything of me. It sounds really backwards, but true love is more of a blessing because I am required to contribute something of myself - often everything. Eternal value is of more worth than momentary worth. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. People are eternal, and so is love.

Malia Lopez (2026)

What is the point of having all the money in the world if at the end of the day you feel alone and empty? I believe our soul purpose on earth is to love and it's a large factor of our nature as humans, never have I ever heard a complaint from someone who is in true love complaining that they are being loved too much. On the other hand I have heard complaints about how money turns people on you and you never know if someone truly cares or loves you because you have money. Wouldn't you rather have someone pick you and you have no doubt in your mind that they are hopelessly in love with you and care about you, and will never do anything to hurt you. Verses staying up at night wondering if they actually like you, or if they're only with you for the money? Staying up restlessly, wondering if they like you as much as you like them. It's like a saying, "if they loved you, you would know".

"And if you wonder if they love you they don't, because if someone truly loves you. You would NEVER have to wonder" But that is just my opinion and preference.

Lottery

Samira Seelhofer (2025)

I am NOT ready for true love. I might be ready in a year or ten for love, but I am ALWAYS ready for that dough.

Amanda Pelazini (2028)

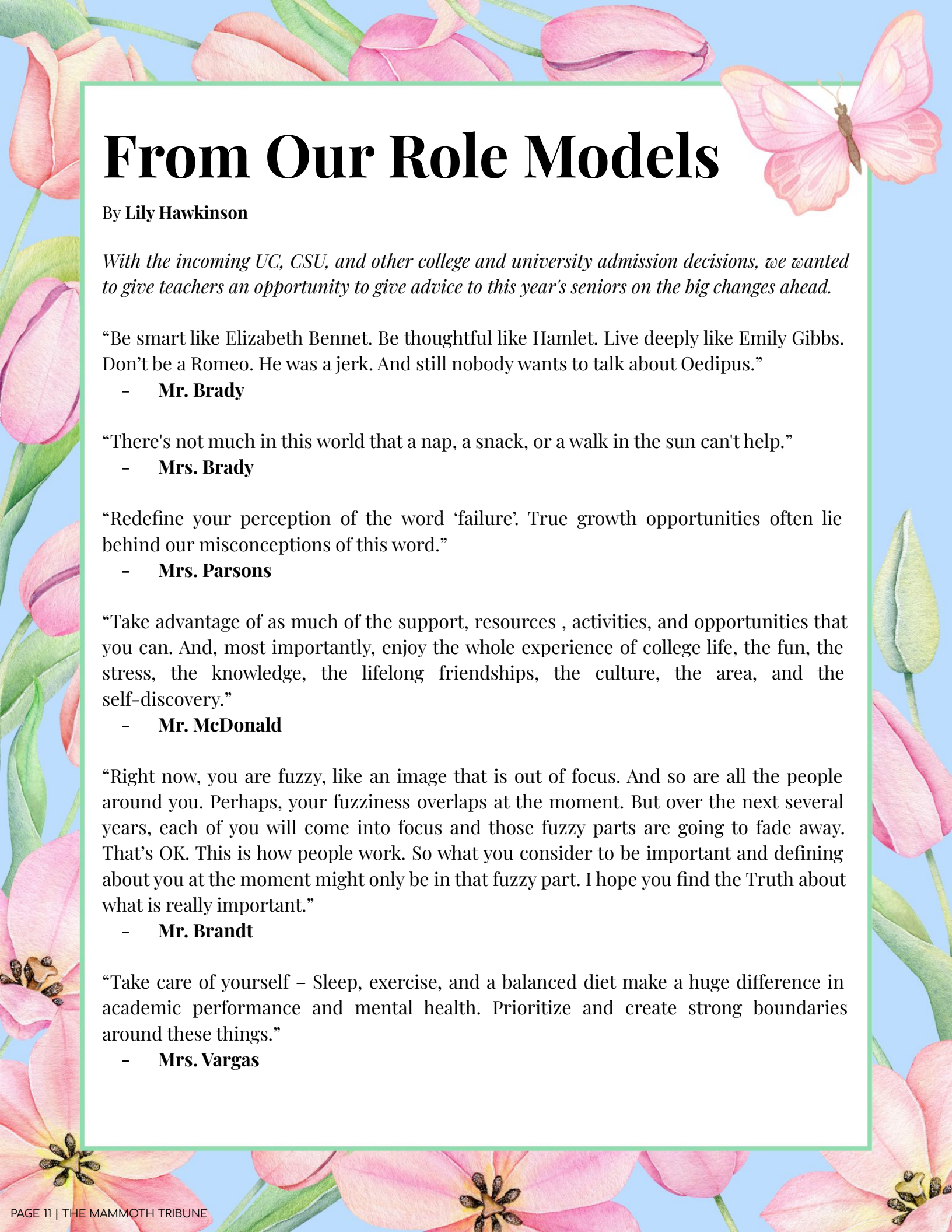
I would rather win the lottery next year because I'm still in 9th grade and I would rather wait to find love when I'm older and more mature. Also because I want to focus on school. Next year I will be able to drive so it's a perfect time to win the lottery. My brother is graduating so if I get the money next year I wouldn't need to share and pay back my debts to him.

Carlos Leon (2027)

People say that life is like a lottery, days could be good, or things could go bad. Winning the lottery of life may just mean you get something simple, but it could also mean that it's the best thing you could ever want, that's why it's a lottery. And if you get to win the lottery of lottery, then you will have the best life that you would never have even dared to dream. Also if it's just money, \$1000 dollars is nice.

Kiley Devore (2028)

I don't need any man in my life right now. I just need money. Having money I can do many things, I can go places and buy what I want mostly. I will be able to have a savings account and be able to have fun. I'm not interested in finding love any time soon. I can find that later when I want to. With money now I could get a car and not have to worry about asking my parents for money.

The page is decorated with pink tulips and a pink butterfly. The tulips are in various stages of bloom, with some showing green leaves and stems. The butterfly is in the top right corner, with its wings spread, showing a mix of pink and orange colors. The background is a light blue sky.

From Our Role Models

By Lily Hawkinson

With the incoming UC, CSU, and other college and university admission decisions, we wanted to give teachers an opportunity to give advice to this year's seniors on the big changes ahead.

“Be smart like Elizabeth Bennet. Be thoughtful like Hamlet. Live deeply like Emily Gibbs. Don't be a Romeo. He was a jerk. And still nobody wants to talk about Oedipus.”

- **Mr. Brady**

“There's not much in this world that a nap, a snack, or a walk in the sun can't help.”

- **Mrs. Brady**

“Redefine your perception of the word ‘failure’. True growth opportunities often lie behind our misconceptions of this word.”

- **Mrs. Parsons**

“Take advantage of as much of the support, resources , activities, and opportunities that you can. And, most importantly, enjoy the whole experience of college life, the fun, the stress, the knowledge, the lifelong friendships, the culture, the area, and the self-discovery.”

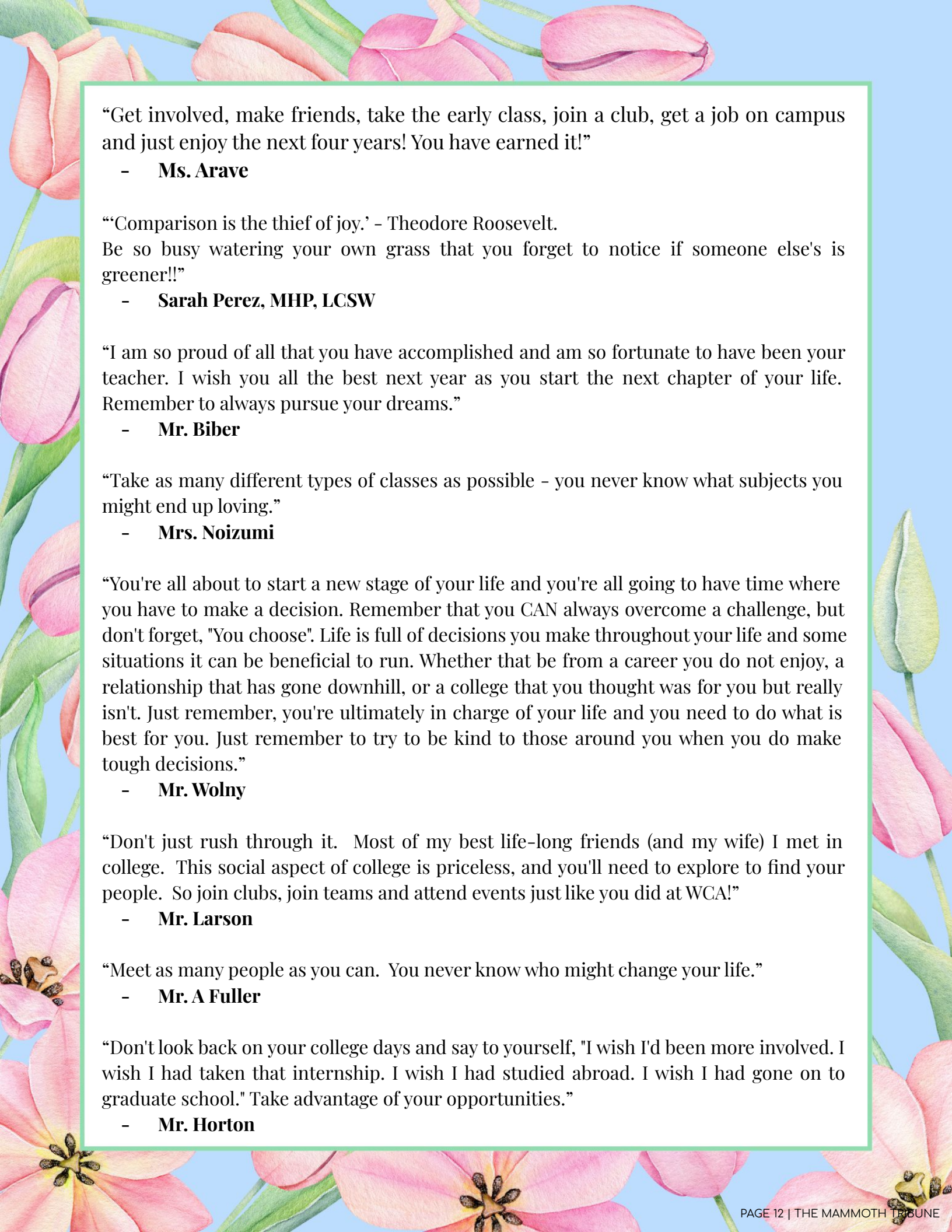
- **Mr. McDonald**

“Right now, you are fuzzy, like an image that is out of focus. And so are all the people around you. Perhaps, your fuzziness overlaps at the moment. But over the next several years, each of you will come into focus and those fuzzy parts are going to fade away. That's OK. This is how people work. So what you consider to be important and defining about you at the moment might only be in that fuzzy part. I hope you find the Truth about what is really important.”

- **Mr. Brandt**

“Take care of yourself – Sleep, exercise, and a balanced diet make a huge difference in academic performance and mental health. Prioritize and create strong boundaries around these things.”

- **Mrs. Vargas**

A decorative border of pink tulips and other flowers surrounds the central text area.

“Get involved, make friends, take the early class, join a club, get a job on campus and just enjoy the next four years! You have earned it!”

- **Ms. Arave**

“‘Comparison is the thief of joy.’ - Theodore Roosevelt.

Be so busy watering your own grass that you forget to notice if someone else's is greener!!”

- **Sarah Perez, MHP, LCSW**

“I am so proud of all that you have accomplished and am so fortunate to have been your teacher. I wish you all the best next year as you start the next chapter of your life. Remember to always pursue your dreams.”

- **Mr. Biber**

“Take as many different types of classes as possible - you never know what subjects you might end up loving.”

- **Mrs. Noizumi**

“You're all about to start a new stage of your life and you're all going to have time where you have to make a decision. Remember that you CAN always overcome a challenge, but don't forget, "You choose". Life is full of decisions you make throughout your life and some situations it can be beneficial to run. Whether that be from a career you do not enjoy, a relationship that has gone downhill, or a college that you thought was for you but really isn't. Just remember, you're ultimately in charge of your life and you need to do what is best for you. Just remember to try to be kind to those around you when you do make tough decisions.”

- **Mr. Wolny**

“Don't just rush through it. Most of my best life-long friends (and my wife) I met in college. This social aspect of college is priceless, and you'll need to explore to find your people. So join clubs, join teams and attend events just like you did at WCA!”

- **Mr. Larson**

“Meet as many people as you can. You never know who might change your life.”

- **Mr. A Fuller**

“Don't look back on your college days and say to yourself, "I wish I'd been more involved. I wish I had taken that internship. I wish I had studied abroad. I wish I had gone on to graduate school." Take advantage of your opportunities.”

- **Mr. Horton**

Student Spotlight: Surf City Sisters

– A Handmade Jewelry Business

By Kaisara Arambula

Kendra Johansen (2025) a talented student who has transformed her passion and creativity into a thriving business as the founder of *Surf City Sisters*, a handmade jewelry business specializing in ocean-inspired resin pendant necklaces.

The idea for Surf City Sisters started during a family reunion at the beach, where Kendra and her sister **Carly**, a WCA middle school student, were making resin jewelry. A relative suggested turning their hobby into a business, and that inspiration led to the launch of Surf City Sisters. When it came to naming the business, they struggled at first, but her mom suggested Surf City Sisters, and it stuck! As for the logo, they simply created something that felt right.

Each necklace features a handmade resin pendant decorated with natural ocean elements like seashells, sea stars, algae, sand, and gravel. Customers can choose a necklace cord color from black, ivory, green, grey, or brown. The best part? Every necklace is priced at just \$6, making it an affordable way to carry a piece of the ocean with you.



Starting Surf City Sisters wasn't without its difficulties. Learning to use online selling platforms like Etsy and figuring out how to reach the right audience, such as divers and beach lovers, proved to be challenging. However, through persistence, they have made great progress. One of the biggest lessons Kendra and Carly have learned is that success takes time—patience is key!

Academics always come first for Kendra and Carly. Whenever school work becomes overwhelming, they put the business on hold to focus on their studies. Despite not having a mentor, they have learned a lot by networking with other entrepreneurs and continuously improving their business strategies.

Looking ahead, Kendra and Carly hope to expand Surf City Sisters by introducing new products like handmade earrings. They offer local pickup and nationwide shipping, but for now, you can explore their work and stay updated by following them on Instagram and see what's next for Surf City Sisters! [@surfcitysistersshop](https://www.instagram.com/surfcitysistersshop).


Surf City Sisters
resin jewelry



Seasonal Depression

By Vivianne Ugarte

Many adults around the world report experiencing seasonal depression due to various circumstantial changes throughout the year. According to UTHealth, four-in-ten American adults experience seasonal depression, often attributing their mood shifts to the lack of sunlight during the winter solstice. The issue has become so prevalent that the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has officially recognized it as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which can have lasting effects. Many individuals suffer from SAD for four to five months each year.

This issue is beginning to negatively affect individuals causing many to experience feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, irritability, decreased energy. The NIH notes that about 38% of Americans report a decline in mood during the winter, and one-in-five individuals report losing interest in activities they once enjoyed, struggling to find motivation.

It is important for those who are experiencing SAD not to dismiss their feelings but instead seek support. Johns Hopkins Medicine highlights the importance of getting help, setting realistic goals, surrounding yourself with supportive people, confiding in trusted individuals, maintaining regular exercise to boost endorphin levels, and understanding that improvement takes time. In order to improve moods, it is important to stick to a positive schedule that helps to get you out of bed, be active, and look forward to future goals to help ease the effects of SAD.

However, if symptoms persist even as winter fades and efforts to improve mood prove ineffective, it may be time to seek out professional help. Reaching out to a trusted adult, peer, or mental health professional can provide the support needed to work toward recovery. Prioritizing mental health is essential—listening to your mind and body rather than suppressing emotions can make a significant difference in overcoming SAD.

SEASONAL DEPRESSION

What you need to know about depression

21 MILLION
American adults suffer from depressive illness during any one year period.

WOMEN
experience depression **2x** as often as men.

Without treatment, depression can last weeks, months or years.

Symptoms of depression

- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Feelings of inappropriate guilt
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"

Major depression is classified as a type of affective disorder or mood disorder that goes beyond the day's ordinary ups and downs, becoming a serious medical condition and important health concern in this country.

How can you beat holiday depression?

- Exercise**
A daily 30-minute walk may help prevent depression—so take a brisk stroll down a snowy path!
- Enjoy the Sunlight**
As little as 15 to 30 minutes of sunlight, best in the early morning, will go a long way to alleviating the winter blues.
- Get enough Sleep**
A lack of sleep can take a toll on your mood—so aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Moderate Alcohol Consumption**
Two glasses of wine are plenty for the holiday party—one if you've already had the eggnog.
- Adjust Expectations**
Don't let visions of perfection spoil everything. Learn that most things can be good enough—gifts, food, company, etc.

Concerned about depression?
If the depressed mood is serious, leading to isolation, crying spells, not sleeping or eating, hopelessness and thoughts of death or suicide, get help immediately.

SOURCES
Johns Hopkins Medicine Health Library; Andrew Angelino, MD, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE
www.hopkinsmedicine.org



Image Credit: Healthy Children

Image Credit: Johns Hopkins Medical



Keeping Up With the Herd: **Byron Gonzalez**

By Lily Hawkinson

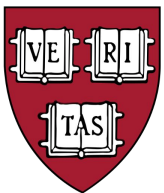
Byron Gonzalez, a graduate of WCA's Class of 2021, was an active member of the Associated Student Body, National Honor Society, and Academic Decathlon. Through these experiences, he honed his leadership and teamwork skills, setting a strong foundation for his academic journey. A recipient of The Gates Scholarship, Byron is currently pursuing a degree in Psychology at Harvard University and is set to graduate on May 29th, 2025. *The Mammoth Tribune* caught up with him to see what he's been up to since his time at WCA and what lies ahead in his journey.

What are some activities you are engaged in outside of the classroom at Harvard?

At Harvard, I've been heavily involved in service work, particularly through the Phillips Brooks House Association and the South Boston After-School programs. These experiences have been transformative, as they've allowed me to work on projects that promote a sense of belonging and community among students and local residents. I've been passionate about creating spaces where people can connect beyond academic pressures and engage with others from diverse backgrounds and identities.

Through my involvement with community outreach programs, I've learned the importance of collaboration and community engagement. Whether working with Harvard students or Boston residents, I've gained valuable insights into the power of stepping outside the "Harvard bubble" to understand different perspectives. I am eager to continue applying these lessons to future projects, focusing on fostering inclusive spaces for everyone.

Additionally, I work as a research assistant at the Biopsychosocial Effects of Stigma (BEST) Lab, where I'm exploring emotional regulation in the context of identity-based stigma. This research is shaping my thesis, which builds on the themes I've explored in the lab, and contributes to a broader understanding of the psychological effects of stigma.



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY



What have you enjoyed most about college life?

The freedom, the people, the classes, and the sheer amount of opportunities I have access to have been the most fulfilling aspects of college life. Coming from a more structured high school experience, it's been liberating to explore subjects and activities that interest me without the rigid confines of a set curriculum. Harvard's environment has allowed me to shape my own academic and extracurricular journey. Beyond academics, the friendships I've made here are invaluable, and I'm excited to see how these relationships continue to grow. While it took time to feel fully comfortable, I've found a true sense of belonging, which has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my college experience.



What are some of your plans for the future?

In the next two years, I'm planning to take a gap period to explore various career opportunities and gain hands-on experience. I'm particularly interested in teaching, health policy research, or working with nonprofits. While I don't have a set plan yet, I want to gain experience working with underrepresented communities and have patient interactions. My long-term goal is to develop cultural competence and expand my worldview by traveling and working with diverse populations, which I believe is critical for my future as a doctor. I want to ensure that my future practice reflects my values of cultural sensitivity and a deep understanding of the people I serve.

What are some of your favorite memories of your time at WCA?

Some of my fondest memories at WCA are centered around community events, like Pie Day, which I was really passionate about as a science nerd. It was one of the last events I participated in before the pandemic, and I remember the excitement and energy. Another favorite memory is preparing for dances and events. While I was shy at first, I gradually pushed myself to step out of my comfort zone and embrace new experiences, and those moments helped me grow a lot.



How did WCA prepare you for college and the real world?

WCA instilled a strong sense of discipline and time management in me. The academic rigor of the curriculum prepared me for the challenges I faced in college, especially in terms of workload and balancing multiple responsibilities. The supportive environment at WCA also taught me the importance of seeking help when needed, and I've carried that lesson into my college experience. The lessons I learned at WCA have been essential in navigating the complexities of college life, where I'm balancing academics, extracurriculars, and personal growth.



What advice can you give to WCA students preparing for college?

One piece of advice I would offer is to advocate for yourself—know your worth and your abilities. Embrace what makes you unique and share it with the world. College can be overwhelming, and it's easy to feel lost in a sea of new experiences, but trust yourself and your journey. Also, take care of your mental health. College is a time of immense change, and it's important to learn how to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotions. I wish I had taken time to understand my own emotional needs earlier on, and I encourage students to prioritize self-care, whether it's seeking support, practicing mindfulness, or setting boundaries. Finally, don't hesitate to seize opportunities, even if you feel like you're not fully prepared. The most growth happens when we step outside of our comfort zones.

Mammoths Spreading Kindness

To Morgan Munnell (2025) -You are always so nice to talk to and so kind :) I'm gonna miss you next year! **From Ashlynn Bunnell (2026)**

To WCA students - you look goood **From Luis Quiroz Montano (2025)**

To Jayla Moss (2025) - Hi Jayla I love you very much and I enjoy being your friend. I hope we stay friends even after you graduate <3 **From Danielle Okpala (2027)**

To Jayda Bass (2027) - You're kinda like my inspiration you know? You're pretty cool Jayda!!! (btw I didn't say that) **From Xavier Hernandez (2027)**

To Setareh Sophia Hunter (2028) - Hi Setareh you are soo sigma!!! I love your curly hair and your bracelets are soo cute. I'm so grateful that you are my friend and you always help me study for tests. **Christina Ann Shearer (2028)**

To Sadie Lopez Cital (2028) - Sadie, you are such a sweet, smart, caring person and im so lucky to be friends with you! Thank you for always being there for me- you're the best! <3 **Setareh Hunter (2028)**

To Melody Cortez (2027) - god bless you my psychology taking queen ~(>▽<☆)/ **Alyssa Arechiga (2027)**

To WCA students- You brighten peoples day :3 **Marques Gehres (2027)**

To James Woods (2026) - We Saiyans Have No Limits **Asher Rice (2026)**

To WCA students- "Let all that you do be done in love"- 1 Corinthians 16:14 **Liliandra Sing (2026)**

To Emma Wright (2026) - I'm so grateful to have gotten closer with such an amazing person this year! You are truly such a kind person and you are always willing to help anybody where you can. Your kindness truly means so much to me, thank you so much dawg! **Hailey Wolbeck (2025)**

To Sadee Packham (2025) -Sadee!!!! You are so awesome and I really look up to you! You are such a kind and inspiring person, and there are so many amazing things about you! I love spending time with you, and you're just such a great person :) **Riley George (2026)**

To Logan Joshua Smith (2027)- Thank you for being able to handle chaos friend **Peyton Thaiying Her (2027)**

To Levi Valle (2027) -You are a great friend and a duo in anything we do. I appreciate you and good luck in football Levi. **Taylor Her (2027)**

To Jamie Young (2025)- Hi my little Jamie C: I'm really glad we've become friends and super close to each other in a short amount of time. You are always so sweet and kind! <3 **Katelyn Ochoa (2025)**

To Kendra Johansen (2025)-Haiya Kendraaaaa! I love having you as a friend and we were truly robbed of our time tgt :(llysm and I hope your College years are beautiful! I'll miss you! **Persia Batiste (2026)**

To all amazing WCA teachers- Thank you so much for all of your support. You teachers are truly unique, kind, and appreciated. Your lessons and time are all uniquely impactful on the lives of many children who will one day grow to improve the world. So, to all of you amazing teachers of WCA, I will say "Thank you" for dedicating your lives to teaching students and filling us with remarkable knowledge **Jazmyn A. Jimenez (2027)**



Superheroes Are So Back

By McKayla (Sarinya) Binette

DC and Marvel, the two biggest producers of action movies and comics arguably in the world, have been going head to head to be top dog in superhero media for decades. Both studios have had a long run in the movie industry with hard hitters such as *Black Panther* and *The Dark Knight*, but in recent years both studios have faced less than savory reviews from both audiences and critics saying that Marvel has lost their touch after *Endgame* and DC has, well, been lost since the beginning.

However, these sentiments might change in the upcoming months. The two studios have announced two major projects that are sure to revamp each of their respective eras and phases: *Superman* and *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*. Kevin Feige, president of Marvel Studios, and James Gunn, co-CEO of DC Studios, are aiming to be at the top of their game this summer with their all new takes on the legacy characters of Superman and the Fantastic Four.

The DC Universe has long been a whirlwind of recasts and retcons, most notably for Superman and Batman. Christopher Reeve's portrayal of Superman in 1978 launched DC's presence in major motion pictures, proving to audiences that superhero movies could be dramatized. Reeve reprised his role as the Man of Steel for three more sequels in the Superman series before the franchise ended in 1987.



After the end of this movie run, DC made a string of Batman movies with various actors as the caped crusader, Michael Keaton and Val Kilmer most notably before Christian Bale starred in the critically acclaimed Dark Knight Trilogy. Eventually, Ben Affleck took over the role and director Zach Snyder started what would be called the DC Extended Universe (DCEU), which would contain the new Superman, played by Henry Cavil and Affleck continuing his portrayal of Batman. *Man of Steel* was Cavil's first Superman movie, and he continued to appear in subsequent DCEU movies such as *Justice League* and the superhero versus superhero movie, *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* in 2016. The "true beginning to the DCU" will be spearheaded by this year's *Superman*, starring David Coronswet as the Kryptonian.

Meanwhile, Marvel also had a pivotal year in 2016 releasing the third installment of the Captain America franchise: *Captain America: Civil War*—a superhero versus superhero movie extremely reminiscent of the DC "version" that premiered less than three months before *Civil War*. This sparked many viewers to think that one studio copied the other, but it is hard to tell since Hollywood productions are years and years in the making.





Civil War marked the beginning of Phase Three for the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the final stretch of the Infinity Saga, culminating in the record-breaking *Avengers: Endgame* in 2019. That same year, Disney was able to officially acquire 21st Century Fox, which would allow Marvel to use Fox-licensed characters like the X-Men, Kang the Conqueror, and the Fantastic Four. With this new ownership, Marvel was able to expand their wheelhouse and venture into more multidimensional plotlines, thus beginning the MCU's Phase Four and newly titled Multiverse Saga. However, Phase Four was where many think Marvel's quality of production started to decline.



Films like *Thor: Love and Thunder* and *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantamania* have been some of the worst performing Phase Four and Five movies thus far, and the underperformance of *Captain America: Brave New World*, suggests that Marvel is losing their touch. Despite this, Feige and the studio are expecting a comeback with *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*.

After two different reboots in 2005 and 2015 and the new Fox acquisition, Feige has decided to bring the Fantastic Four home to Marvel this upcoming July. The 2005 film and its sequel received less than 40% on Rotten Tomatoes, and was expected to have a third installment; however, production fell through.



Fox decided to reboot the characters in 2015 and was met with another box office flop. Feige has said that he is "very excited for the future of the Fantastic Four" and is looking forward to implementing Marvel's first family into the upcoming Marvel films.

Gunn, who worked on previous Marvel titles such as the *Guardians of the Galaxy* series, is in deep post-production for *Superman* with a July 11 release date according to Variety. *Fantastic Four* is also in post-production with an expected release date exactly two weeks after *Superman* on July 25. Both movies have high expectations set for them as they are about to start a new era for their studios, and after years of low performing films, *Superman* and *Fantastic Four: First Steps* are sure to reignite audiences' love for superheroes.



NEW JEANS NEW NAME

By Kaylei Davis

NJZ, originally known as New Jeans, is a five-member K-pop girl group that was under the label ADOR, which is one of the many labels owned by the company HYBE. The girls debuted in 2022 and have grown in popularity ever since with their “fresh” concept as described by fans. The music even reached those who don’t listen to K-pop with their song “Super Shy,” which went viral in late 2023. However, things started going downhill for the group in April 2024 when HYBE launched an investigation of ADOR and its then-CEO and group manager, Min Hee-Jin.

Following an inspection, ADOR issued a statement in response to another girl group under its parent company, HYBE, which debuted with a concept similar to New Jeans. Many had accused the new group of copying New Jeans' style. The statement was officially translated by the trusted K-pop news outlet Soompi. In it, ADOR claimed that “New Jeans’ cultural achievements are being most severely infringed upon by HYBE.” The label also criticized HYBE, accusing them of being “blinded by short-term profits” and of “mass-producing unoriginality by copying successful cultural content without hesitation.”

This statement marked the beginning of a series of public declarations during the ongoing feud between HYBE and ADOR. Even the parents of New Jeans members expressed concerns over the alleged mistreatment of their children, including reports of them not returning home until after 2 a.m. and living in unclean dorms. Amidst the chaos of statements and mutual accusations, a member of New Jeans wrote a letter to Min, addressing her as “mother and warrior.” This sentiment was echoed when the group took to YouTube on a new account to share their side of the situation after Min was replaced. During the live broadcast, they issued an ultimatum to HYBE: reinstate Min to her position or they would leave by a set date. While HYBE partially met their demand by offering Min a board position, it was not the outcome they had hoped for. In November, New Jeans officially parted ways with the company. One issue, however, remained unresolved—the validity of their contracts. New Jeans left on their own terms, citing the company’s failure to protect them; it was not a mutual decision.

Image Credit: IMDB



Image Credit: Pinterest



Image Credit: BBC



Despite being contractually in limbo, the group reassured fans that their departure didn't mean the end of New Jeans. They remained together, continuing to engage with fans via social media under a new name, NJZ. On Feb. 7, 2025, they officially announced their rebranding and upcoming performance at a convention in Hong Kong.

In response, ADOR released a statement expressing disappointment over what they called a “unilateral decision” before any legal ruling on their contracts. Fans are divided—some worry about the legal ramifications of NJZ's departure and name change, while others admire the members for taking control of their careers.



Image Credit: Reddit



Image Credit: Reddit



Image Credit: Pinterest



Image Credit: Times Square



Dog Man the Supa Cop

By Alejandro (AJ) Pena

Ever since *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie* was released in theaters back in 2017, fans of the movie and the books were hopeful that a sequel would follow to continue the story of the Waistband Warrior. It's been around eight years now since the movie came out, and though there are still no signs of a second epic Captain Underpants movie, we have the next best thing: *Dog Man*.

Similar to Captain Underpants, the Dog Man books were written and illustrated by Dav Pilkey, who has been writing kids comics ever since childhood. Within the Captain Underpants lore, however, the Dog Man comics were actually written by the main characters George and Harold. The Dog Man books differ from Captain Underpants' more nonsensical and immature humor to instead focus on more of the silly "superhero" aspects of stories, which is a likely reason that it was chosen to be adapted to film this time around.

The Dog Man movie follows a similar approach to the Captain Underpants movie, picking and choosing certain plots from the books and meshing them together into a movie adaptation. From what I could see, this film adapts the plots of around three of the books into one cohesive film. Though this mixing of different stories does make the first half of the movie feel a little fast paced, by the end it pulls itself together a bit more and feels more cinematic.

Besides the pacing, the movie does a fantastic job of portraying the characters. Many fans of the books say that Pete Davidson's voice is perfect for Petey the Cat, saying it perfectly matches how they imagined the character. The film also has certain references to the books which couldn't fully make it in, such as Flippy the Fish's origin and Philly the Cheesesteak. Overall it truly does mimic the child-like feel that's shown throughout Pilkey's original comics.

While *Dog Man* is a movie meant for kids, there are a lot of deeper messages throughout as well as some humor that's probably appreciated more by older audiences. It's a really sweet movie to watch with family, and it's packed with plenty of laughs. Once again, this adaptation does justice to Dav Pilkey's creative mind, and hopefully it will get enough eyes on it to warrant a Dog Man sequel or even another Captain Underpants movie.



Image Credit: IMDb



Anime Review: *Bocchi the Rock!*

By Lucas Land

Bocchi the Rock! is one of my favorite anime series, and with a second season just recently announced, I thought it would be fitting to review it for this issue. *Bocchi the Rock!* started off as a four panel manga series that debuted in 2017, and was adapted into an anime in 2022 by CloverWorks, the studio behind *Fairy Tail*, *Rascal Does Not Dream of Bunny Girl Senpai*, and *Spy x Family*.

Bocchi the Rock is centered around Hitori Gotou, also known later on as Bocchi, and her lifelong dream to be in a rock band. Standing in the way of her lifelong dream is her extreme social anxiety and awkwardness, to the point where just speaking a few words can be a struggle sometimes. One day though, she is encountered by her classmate Nijika, inviting her to play second guitarist for the day. This encounter leads to Hitori, joining the band and slowly stepping out of her comfort zone while making new friends.

I thoroughly enjoyed watching *Bocchi the Rock*, and I can't wait for the next season. I'm always a fan of comedic slice-of-life anime, and Bocchi scratched that itch. First off, I loved seeing the creative freedom the animation team took with the show, notably being the "Game of Life" and "Blender" segments. Seeing these random segments always managed to get at least a chuckle out of me, and always made me wonder just what type of shenanigans the team could come up with next. I also loved the characters and their interactions, with my favorite moments being Ryo eating weeds, or Bocchi randomly defying the laws of physics.

Overall, I really enjoyed watching *Bocchi the Rock*, and I definitely recommend it to anyone considering it. With the second season just around the corner, now is the best time to watch.



Image Credit: Reddit



Image Credit: Youtube

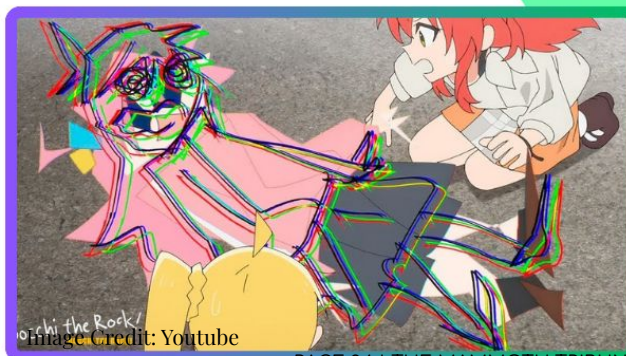


Image Credit: Youtube

How to Be a Human Being: *Disco Elysium*

By Gabriela Ordaz

When you wake up, your head is swimming and everything hurts. The room you're in looks like a hurricane has passed its way through, clothes are strewn around, wind trickles into the room from the shattered window, and a cassette that looks like someone tore all the tape out from lying on a heap in the corner. You stumble your way to the bathroom tripping over the caved-in door laying on the ground. You look in the mirror and realize... the face looking back at you is unfamiliar. You don't remember your name.

Developed by ZA/UM, with a team led by Robert Kurvit, *Disco Elysium* is a groundbreaking role-playing game (RPG) that was originally released in October of 2019 with a "final cut" version released in 2021, featuring voice-acting in the entire game and new content for players. The game was nominated for four awards—Best Narrative, Best Independent Game, Best Role-Playing Game, and Fresh Indie Game—in the 2019 Game Awards and won all four.

Set in the town of Revachol, *Disco Elysium's* oil-painted art style is captivating and emblematic of the game as a whole. The art is, at times, hauntingly abstract, yet it still melds perfectly with the game's atmosphere, story, and gameplay. The characters in the game feel like real people going about their day, and you can't help but get attached to the character you play, who's name remains a mystery in the early parts of the game, and Kim Kitsuragi, a man who is by your side the entire game as your detective partner. The "final cut" version of the game brings even more life to every single character, minor or not. Being able to go up to practically any non-playable character (NPC) and hear them speak to you in unique voices is a treat to see among an RPG game and a testament to the time, effort, and care Kurvit and his team put into creating it.

This game is one of the best games I've ever played. There's a reason *Disco Elysium* is seen as a staple within the RPG genre, and that reason becomes very clear within the first initial minutes into the game. To put it in vague terms (to avoid spoilers), the narrative is a moving story about what makes someone a human being and how people persevere through tough times. I would recommend everyone play this game at least once in their life.

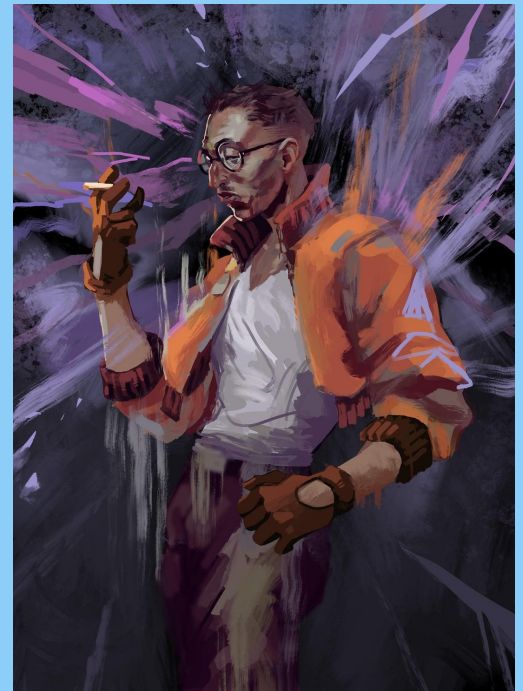


Image Credit: Aleksander Rostov



Deepseek vs ChatGPT

By **Kolton Klug**

Technological competition between groups and countries has existed for as long as humanity itself, whether to advance a nation, ensure survival, or gain a military advantage. These races have always been, and will always be, a fundamental part of human progress. Today, we see a new race beginning to form: the race for artificial intelligence (AI).

Should we care about what is going on with AI? The simple answer is undoubtedly yes. Like it or not, AI is rapidly expanding at an unprecedented pace, faster than anyone could have predicted. Soon AI will likely replace a great deal of jobs that require minimal human input such as cashiers, fast food workers, and even bus and taxi drivers. This acceleration is sped up by the competition between countries—primarily the U.S and China as they to outpace each other in AI advancements.

Image credit: Dirox



Image credit: Springboard



Let's look at a more lighthearted comparison of their two countries' AI, public chatbots. Chatbots are AI systems designed to generate text, images, audio, or video based on user prompts. In the U.S., the leading chatbot is GPT-4 from OpenAI, commonly known as ChatGPT. In China, a newer competitor, Deepseek, has emerged, designed to be more efficient, requiring fewer resources and less computing power. These two chatbots are similar in functionality: users ask a question or prompt, and AI generates a response.

The most notable difference lies in their censorship policies. Deepseek has a strict content censoring system, where questions and prompts relating to the Chinese government in any way will often have an automated default response of: "Sorry, I'm not sure how to approach this type of question yet." ChatGPT also has a fair amount of censorship, but it is more lenient. Generally, ChatGPT censorship tends to focus on topics like tragic events like 9/11 or discussions about certain political figures. In contrast, Deepseek censors anything related to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Taiwan, or even Winnie the Pooh because of its association with Xi Jinping.

Although Deepseek is not a major threat to U.S. interests, lawmakers in the United States have already taken steps to have it banned. A bill has already been introduced to ban Deepseek from any government devices in order to "protect national security."



I Wish I Could Eat Eggs...

By Yaretzi Gutierrez

Egg prices in grocery stores have risen significantly over the past year. This increase is largely due to the recent avian influenza outbreak, commonly known as bird flu, which has affected many chickens and other animals.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), bird flu has been around since 1878 when it was first described in northern Italy as “fowl plague,” a highly contagious disease with a high mortality rate. In 1955, the virus was labeled as a type A influenza virus, the most common type of flu strain responsible for common flu. The CDC also says that there are two types of bird flu: highly pathogenic or low pathogenic, though most cases are low pathogenic.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) says that the virus mainly spreads among aquatic birds such as ducks, geese, and storks, but it can also spread to domesticated poultry, including chickens, turkeys, backyard flocks, and even pet birds exposed to the outdoors. The AVMA reports that symptoms of bird flu include low energy, loss of appetite, purple discoloration, swelling, reduced egg production, misshapen eggs, nasal discharge, coughing and sneezing.



As the bird flu persists, there will continue to be a shortage of eggs in grocery stores and higher egg prices. The best we can do to keep the bird flu from spreading is to wash your hands, thoroughly cleaning eggs, and consuming pasteurized dairy products.

Humans usually become infected when they come into contact with an infected animal's body fluids, such as saliva, respiratory droplets, milk, and feces. It can also be transmitted from breathing in airborne particles. However, it's rare to see human-to-human transmission according to Cleveland Clinic. The CDC notes that while it is uncommon to see people infected with bird flu, symptoms can range from mild to severe.



The bird flu outbreak has caused egg prices to increase and has caused a significant shortage in egg production. When the bird flu is exposed to farms, farmers are forced to kill off most of their flock in order to stop the spread of disease. Approximately 158 million birds have been killed since the start of the outbreak according to The Associated Press. Additionally, it takes several months in order to properly dispose of the infected carcasses, sanitize facilities, and raise new birds until they're old enough to lay eggs. Consequently, egg prices as of March of this year have risen as high as \$8.15 per dozen, as per the American Farm Bureau Federation. Egg prices are expected to continue to increase another 20.3% over the next year, reaching an estimated \$9.67 per dozen as reported by University of Tennessee's poultry research center.



Rats on Wheels

By Gabriela Sagastume

Did you know rats love to drive? This fascinating discovery was made by Dr. Kelly Lambert, a professor at the University of Richmond along with her research team. According to the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Dr. Lambert specializes in behavioral science and wanted to observe the neurobiological effects in rats trained to drive. Their research is focused on experience-based neuroplasticity which looks at how our environment and interaction with the world can reshape and influence the brain.

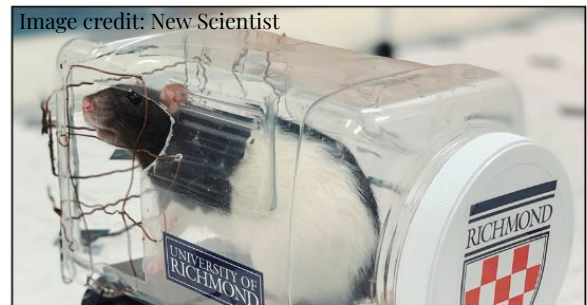
Their research study employs a non-pharmacological treatment with a cognitive-behavioral therapy approach, and according to Dr. Lambert, this therapeutic value offers insight on mental health, mental illness, and even rats. She argues in the University of Richmond Newsroom that rats serve as an excellent starting-point model for the study as their brains share the same areas and neurochemicals as ours. By examining their cognitive ability, emotional resilience, behavior, and brain function, we can gain a deeper understanding of the human brain and behavior.



Dr. Lambert collaborated with John McManus, a professor at Randolph Macon College, to use his expertise in robotics to develop a new car with new driving options for rats. The car has a lever for moving forward and a wheel to turn left and right. The rats were trained with an operant conditioning method, where they reinforce targeted behaviors through strategic incentives. When the rats first started learning how to drive, they were taught how to drive in the forward direction for the reward of their favorite treat, Froot Loops as reported in the University of Richmond Newsroom. Over time, they were taught how to turn right and left through the same method. Once the rats got the hang of driving, they were confronted with challenging obstacle courses.

Since 2019, this study has gained a great amount of attention and support from the public and organizations. The National Institution of Mental Health rewarded them with a grant to help the team find ways to be less susceptible in behaviors that are consistent in depression or anxiety disorders. Dr. Lambert and her team continue to discover new things to this day and are excited to make a change with their research.

When the group published the original driving rat manuscript in 2019, one of its primary focus was the effects of different environments on the rats' ability to drive. They made the lab a more enriching and engaging environment compared to most rat laboratory cages.



They have a greater space, more companions, can exercise, and have all kinds of stimuli. They found that this environment made the rats more motivated to drive. One day in 2020, Dr. Lambert noticed that the rats would jump up and down and run to the cage whenever she walked into the room. After that, her team shifted the focus from how chronic stress influences the brain to how positive events shape neural functions. Dr. Lambert stated in *The Times* that as with humans, rats training to gain competency in a challenging task can change the brain in interesting ways.



LETTING CHILDREN GAMBLE?

By Maddox McAvaney

Gambling has become a significant issue, yet many fail to recognize its impact—especially on children. Every day, young people are exposed to gambling mechanics in video games and apps, potentially fostering addictive behaviors. Video games like *Balatro* and *Counter Strike 2* expose children to high-stakes elements that normalize risky behavior, while fantasy sports apps encourage real-money betting, or trapping users in cycles of financial risk.

Balatro, a roguelike poker-based game nominated for the 2024 Game Awards, was initially rated 18+ before being lowered to PG-13. This change increases exposure to gambling mechanics for underage players.



Image Credit: Deviantart

While the game features no in-game purchases, which makes it free-to-play other than the original purchase, its core mechanics rely on risk and reward—fundamental principles of gambling. Some countries still maintain an 18+ rating, yet in the U.S., it remains accessible to those below the legal gambling age. Although *Balatro* can teach decision-making skills, it also carries the risk of addiction.

Balatro, is a game that had been nominated for the Game Awards in 2024, this game is a roguelike based off of poker, and luck plays a large role within the game. This game originally had an 18+ age rating, before it was dropped to PG-13. This comes with the consequence of exposing people under the age of 18 to gambling. Some countries still have *Balatro* rated at an 18+ age rating while, in the U.S., the age rating still stands below the legal gambling age. *Balatro* is marketed at \$12, but the game does not require actual money and features no in-game purchases, which makes it free-to-play besides the original purchase of the game. Although it can teach decision-making skills, it still requires risk and reward, which is the main principle of gambling and thus carries the risk of introducing addiction.



Image Credit: CBR

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MLB	SPREAD	MONEY	TOTAL
MIA Marlins C Poteet @ PIT Pirates M Keller	-1.5 +152	-102	O 8 -110
WAS Nationals M Scherzer @ PHI Phillies Z Wheeler	+1.5 -184	-116	U 8 -110

SGP 5:06PM MT More wagers >

MLB	SPREAD	MONEY	TOTAL
WAS Nationals M Scherzer @ PHI Phillies Z Wheeler	-1.5 -220	+108	O 7 +100
PHI Phillies Z Wheeler @ WAS Nationals M Scherzer	-1.5 +180	-126	U 7 -122

SGP 5:06PM MT More wagers >

Fantasy sports apps, such as *FanDuel*, or *DraftKings*, widely accessible on any device, revolve entirely around betting on the outcomes of sporting events. Users wager on everything from a player's performance in a game to the number of hits in a slap-fighting match. While these apps market themselves as skill-based evaluation tools, they rely heavily on chance and human error. With hundreds of thousands of dollars bet on any game or match, it's easy to fall into a cycle of compulsive gambling.

Recognizing the risks of these and other platforms is crucial. Whether games like *Balatro* serve as a learning tool or a gateway to addiction remains debatable, but the growing presence of gambling mechanics in entertainment calls for greater awareness and regulation—especially when young audiences are involved.

At Last—A Reprieve

By Adriana Ordaz

According to the BBC, on Oct. 7, 2023, approximately 1,200 people were killed in an attack on Israel that was carried out by Hamas. This triggered a prolonged 15-month Israeli military offensive in Gaza, leading to the deaths of over 47,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which is run by Hamas and considered a reliable source by the UN. After more than a year of failed negotiations, a ceasefire deal was announced on Jan. 15 of this year and set into motion just four days later.

The agreement consists of three stages, though only the first phase is fully detailed—stages two and three remain a “framework agreement,” according to American University. Currently, the first stage is set to last 42 days, or six weeks which is rapidly approaching. According to the *BBC*, in the current stage, Hamas will release 33 hostages with Israel releasing about 1,900 Palestinian prisoners. Israeli forces will leave populated areas, displaced Palestinians—particularly those from North Gaza—will be allowed to return home, aid trucks will finally be allowed in with a focus on North Gaza, and Israeli troops will remain in Gaza’s border areas.

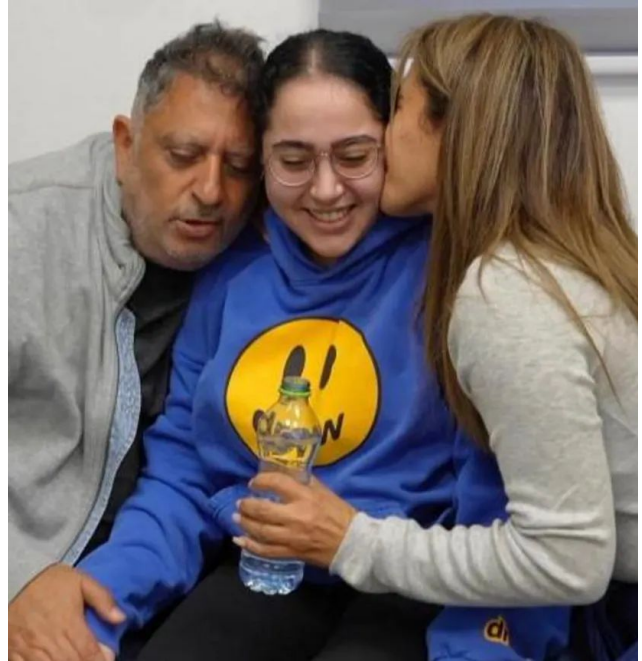


Image Credit: BBC News (Israeli soldier reuniting with family after being released)



Image Credit: Hasan N H Alzaanin (Aftermath of Israeli airstrike on Jabalia)



Image Credit: Crisis Group

As of Feb. 19, *France 24*, reports that 19 Israeli hostages have been released as well as more than 1,100 Palestinian prisoners freed from Israeli jails in a series of “Red Cross-mediated” exchanges. Though Palestinians have been allowed to go back to their homes, for many there is little to return to as “some 60% to 70% of buildings are estimated to have been damaged or destroyed,” says the *BBC*. It should be noted that this estimate is on the low end, with others, like American University, stating about 90% of the infrastructure was damaged or destroyed. Not only that, according to *Al Jazeera*, at least 19 Palestinians were killed after the ceasefire took place, including 18-year-old Hussam Abu Husul who was shot by an Israeli sniper while attempting to return home, as well as an air strike on Jabalia following the ceasefire agreement.

The ceasefire has been shaky and is always one misstep away from crumbling, barely holding together. There have been many challenges since the ceasefire initially began. One of these hurdles has been the case of Shiri Bibas and her family. The Bibas family—Shiri, her husband Yarden, and their two young children Ariel and Kfir—were among 251 people taken hostage during Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack. The family had become “national symbols of Israel’s hostages’ ordeal”, says *France 24*. Yarden was a part of a group that was released on an earlier hostage-prisoner swap, though Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir were not so fortunate. According to Hamas, Shiri and her boys were killed in an Israeli air strike early in the war, though that has yet to be proven and many, including members of the Bibas family, remain doubtful. The body’s of Ariel and Kfir were returned to Israeli officials and identified, but Shiri’s remains were not conclusively confirmed by forensic testing. Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu said Hamas, “put the body of a Gazan woman in a coffin,” while Hamas spokesperson, Ismail al-Thawabta, countered that Shiri’s body got mixed up with other remains under the rubble. According to the *BBC*, in a separate statement, Hamas confirmed that there was an investigation underway and called for the “alleged Palestinian woman’s remains mistakenly handed over to Israel to be returned.”



Image Credit: BBC News



Image Credit: Abed Rahim Khatib (Palestinians celebrating the ceasefire announcement)

Now so close to the end of the first stage, negotiations for the second phase are intensifying. According to the *BBC*, stage two will begin 16 days after the first phase and consists of establishing a permanent ceasefire. During this phase, any remaining hostages in Gaza will be exchanged for more Palestinian prisoners, and Israeli forces will make a complete withdrawal. Like stage one, stage two will last 42 days, or six weeks. Hamas signalled on Feb. 19 that they were willing to “free all remaining hostages in a single swap” during the stage two, as reported by *France 24*.

While the ceasefire agreement has been incredibly unstable and despite the many obstacles presented, its continuation offers a glimmer of hope that a long-term peace is not as far away as previously thought. It will, however, still be a long and lengthy process, and the rebuilding of Gaza will not be easy, estimated to take years, if not decades. Still, many Israelis and Palestinians have expressed that they simply wish for the end of the violence, for the return of their loved ones, and to be able to rebuild their lives as best as possible after 15 months of devastation. Here’s to hoping that a time of peace is possible.



Image Credit: AP News

Second Semester Word Search

By Lily Hawkinson

M	H	N	N	O	M	O	R	K	H	V	B	X	P	F	N	D	C	R	P	G	U	S	E	S
J	V	O	H	I	F	S	Y	J	E	T	A	I	N	R	N	D	H	W	S	H	T	E	K	C
V	J	Y	L	N	N	U	M	X	X	E	N	L	O	T	H	Y	B	R	M	W	F	N	U	P
H	Y	T	G	H	Z	W	M	Z	Z	N	W	O	E	U	E	D	L	N	J	D	A	I	X	I
A	F	M	G	I	J	P	Q	F	Q	F	I	S	M	N	T	W	R	B	R	B	Z	O	N	Z
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Z	U	S	I	N	S	C	B	E	G	E	O	Z	Z	A	A	D	N	E	B	J	M	N	S	Z
A	Z	E	C	A	Y	U	X	R	G	A	X	A	C	K	E	F	I	D	S	L	Q	S	Y	D
K	M	O	T	L	B	C	A	M	X	H	R	X	O	D	I	J	I	S	N	D	X	E	A	K
C	E	D	P	K	Y	D	Z	K	A	E	R	B	G	N	I	R	P	S	E	I	A	T	D	Q
E	F	E	A	S	U	S	T	S	E	T	P	A	F	J	M	F	G	S	J	R	K	Y	T	A
D	V	Y	W	A	T	I	I	U	B	M	I	J	A	O	R	M	T	O	N	O	P	J	I	P
A	T	F	T	S	H	U	P	W	W	C	N	U	R	A	U	P	M	J	P	D	I	J	R	R
C	U	I	E	X	L	H	V	Z	C	T	D	P	N	J	A	P	I	V	F	U	R	P	I	I
A	O	J	K	G	I	A	L	U	N	C	H	A	C	T	I	V	I	T	I	E	S	V	P	L
N	L	B	H	A	R	N	N	Y	A	D	S	S	R	P	X	Y	V	W	U	P	X	J	S	F
T	V	C	U	V	Z	A	Q	I	A	I	K	I	E	D	U	V	Z	D	T	L	I	U	G	O
D	F	I	Z	X	X	M	D	P	F	D	C	P	F	S	N	X	A	X	Q	L	W	Q	W	O
O	L	K	P	V	X	Z	Y	N	E	K	R	X	R	I	A	T	S	H	G	R	I	I	U	L
N	H	M	R	P	N	I	T	C	I	A	M	A	D	A	M	E	M	A	M	M	O	T	H	S
X	D	G	O	A	Z	V	L	Z	L	G	F	V	Q	G	I	X	B	W	J	H	I	H	Q	E
D	W	B	M	H	E	O	Q	L	M	Q	H	A	P	Q	L	G	E	G	N	F	O	Z	V	O
B	X	H	L	N	Q	Y	Y	B	W	R	A	T	F	Z	R	E	D	D	O	D	B	Y	D	S

Pep rally
Spring break
Presidents week
MORP
Prom

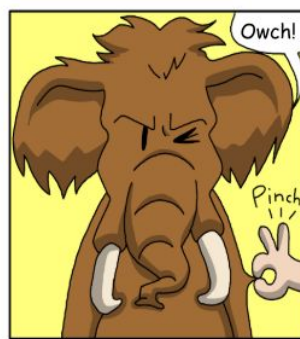
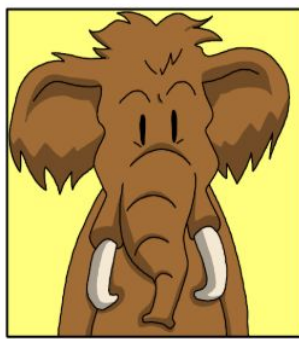
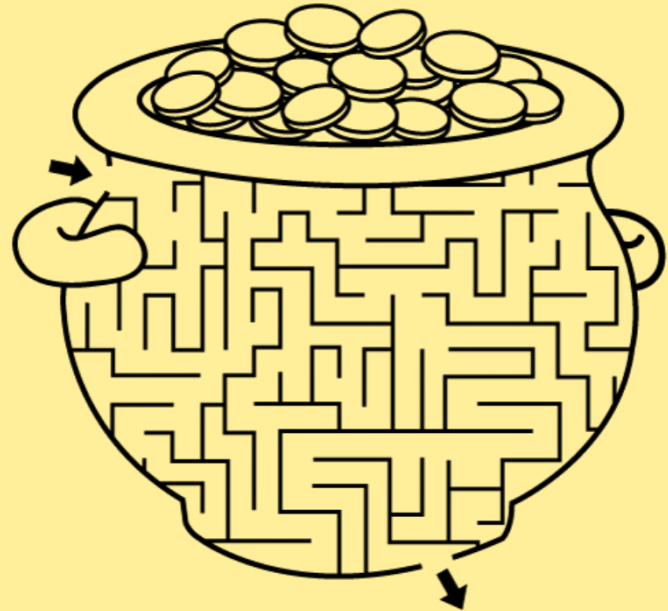
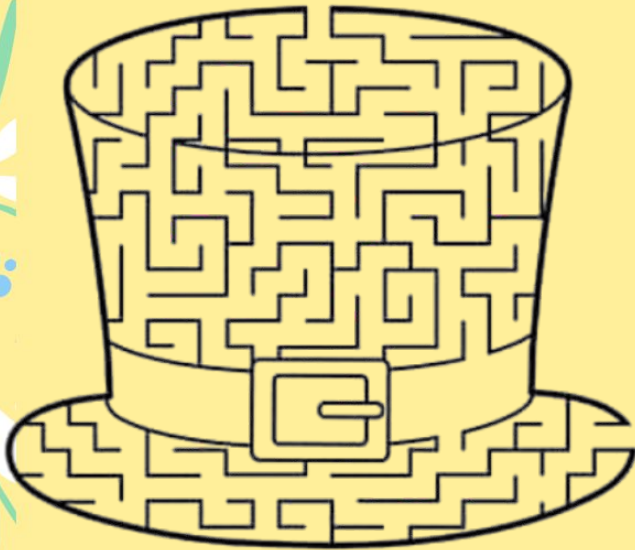
College decisions
Grad Night
Senior Sunset
Graduation
AP tests

Finals week
Spirit days
Lunch Activities
Valentines Day
April Fools

St Patrick's Day
Kindness Month
Acadec
DTASC
Madame Mammoth

St. Patrick's Day Mazes

By Lily Hawkinson



By Alejandro (AJ) Peña

The Mammoth Tribune
Made by Students for Students



Western Center Academy