

Remembering Elias Kim

By ANELIESE YEAGER and REGINALD BROWN

Elias Kim's passing has left peers, teachers, family, and Lane community in mourning. The gifted junior, suddenly passed on Nov. 27, Thanksgiving night, at age sixteen.

Elias was commonly known as one who made others feel seen and cared for. His friends remember how he always noticed the small things, and was always willing to be there for a friend. Elias gave compliments constantly and genuinely, never out of habit. It was natural for him to make others feel seen and heard; something that constantly drew others to him.

Dylan Rose, junior at Lane, said that Elias was not just his best friend but closer to a brother. Dylan and Elias have been inseparable since LTAC. "We did everything together," Dylan said. Dylan describes Elias as confident, em-

pathetic, funny and outgoing. "We're super similar... he taught me how to be confident and just trust myself, my relationships and the things that I want to do. He inspired me a lot," Dylan explains. Dylan holds those values Elias had taught him, with him every day.

Myah Shakom, senior at Lane, Elias's former girlfriend, explained that even after they had broken up, their bond never faded. Confident, stubborn, hilarious, intelligent, determined, Myah describes Elias with a smile. Over the last summer, the two spent almost every day together, skating, taking photos, and talking for hours. Myah and Dylan continue to honor Elias by looking at old photos, wearing his clothes, and staying close with Elias's family. "It really helps," Myah said.

Sarah Zavala, another one of Elias's friends since LTAC, is remembering him as someone who

made people feel safe and welcome. One of her favorite memories of Elias was a conversation they had about love. "He talked about how powerful love was... like it's a thing that you can't control or get rid of, you know? I think that that conversation really sums up who he was as a person." Sarah didn't hesitate when asked how she wanted Elias to be remembered: "As someone full of life. Welcoming. A Pillar. Colorful is really the best word for Elias."

Elias's personality was heavily reflective of his creativity, especially in photography. Ms. Diamond, his Photography II teacher, describes him as "dynamic, magnetic, and innovative." Returning to her classroom after his passing has been extremely difficult for Diamond.

Continued on Page 2



PHOTO COURTESY OF MYAH SHAKOM

20th annual Women in Lit festival

By ANELIESE YEAGER

From "Buy, Buy, Buy: How social media forces women to consume" (Dawn Roman), to "Disney Princesses: Role Models or Destructors of Feminism?" (Scarlett Guenther, Shayna Sharpe and Emma Casillas)—there is no presentation at the 20th annual Women in Lit Fest worth missing.

Students in Lane Tech's 'Women in Literature' course have been working vigorously all of our first semester, researching, constructing and reviewing their unique and creative projects to share with all of us. "The students do so much work to make this happen. This is not a me organizing thing at all... everyone chips in and it's amazing," Mrs. Feuer, Women In Literature founder and teacher said.

"Yeah, the class is just like kind of a passion project," Feuer said.

"I'm really grateful that there's an opportunity like this to learn

more about, stuff like eco-feminism that I've never heard about, but that I can actually have the opportunity to learn about," Sam Damiani, senior, visitor of the festival said.

Damiani took a particular liking to Alice Tomlin's presentation, "Her lore wild," which focused on the issues surrounding ecofeminism and activism. "Eco-feminism, which is a branch of feminism that focuses on how women are affected by natural disasters and how in areas of the world where women are kind of like overlooked, how they can be affected during natural disasters. There's a lot higher mortality rates and dangers for women than there are for men...which I thought was absurd," Damiani said.

Lillie Sullivan and Jackson Caffey had similar projects relating to women in a medical setting and common experiences that are often overlooked and shoved under the rug.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Senior Miles Edel gives a presentation on his project titled "Women in Music."

Sullivan's presentation, "Diva save that cup," focused on the lack of healthcare/medical research provided for women, and how that negatively impacts each woman's life. Sullivan mentions a few of the most interesting things she'd learned during her research, "there are more powerful stem cells in period blood than there are in bone marrow, and it could

be a lot easier for people to get stem cell transplants from period blood than bone marrow, but it only makes up a quarter of a percent of all stem cell research," and "when studying how humans age, we use mice... except for female mice don't go through menopause and often haven't been pregnant."

Continued on Page 3

The truth of Lane Tech's graffiti

By NAIMA JOHN

Whether it be a small heartfelt doodle or political hate-speech, school graffiti is on an increase in Lane Tech, according to an email sent Jan. 8 to the entire student body. The email, sent by Dr. Hanly, one of Lane Tech's assistant principals, urged students to have pride in their school building, and warned that perpetrators will face serious punishments.

"There were two things that we saw an uptick in," Hanly said in a recent interview, noting the graffiti is usually seen in both the boys-plus and girls-plus bathrooms. Some of it is "very distinctive" in its design, and according to Hanly, "not appropriate." "We are seeing things such as people talking about other students, and some political statements that shouldn't be made," she said.

Continued on Page 2

Looking forward to 'Twelfth Night'

By ELLIE SANDERSON

Hear ye, hear ye! As the temperatures drop and snow falls, students try to hunker down—but a specific few are drawn to the auditorium. The lights are shining bright and the energy is high; it's almost time for Lane's winter musical with a Shakespearean twist: "Twelfth Night."

Twelfth Night, originally written in 1602, is a story about love, deception, mistaken identities, and among all of this lies a love triangle. The musical's spoken aspects, according to Olech,

is Shakespearean language—but fret not, the songs are all in a jazzy and blues-style modern English.

Getting in the zone of Shakespeare's times is not easy, and a task that takes months of preparation. Sam Olech, a senior who plays Duke Orsino, said there are audition meetings, initial auditions, callbacks, and only then rehearsals begin (which can be either dancing, scenework, or music). It's a lot to keep track of, and all of this takes over three months, according to Olech. "[Rehearsal is] usually everyday. It's like a

sport. It's a commitment," said Olech.

Schoolwork, of course, still exists for these actors. And despite daily rehearsal, they manage to find the time to get it all done. "I do a lot of my homework backstage, or in the auditorium," said Lydia Vodopic, a junior who plays Maria, "A lot of times rehearsal will end at 5:30, 6, or 6:30, but it's not too bad. You have a lot of downtime when you're not rehearsing."

Continued on Page 2

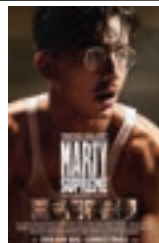


PHOTO BY ELLIE SANDERSON

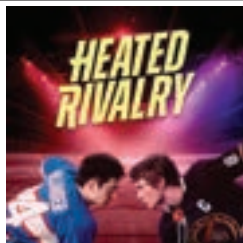
Actors are taught how to perform a punch on stage.



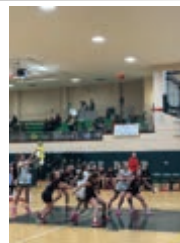
Is AI the new calculator?
Page 6



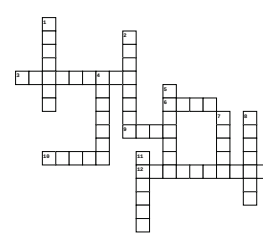
"Marty Supreme" Review
Page 9



"Heated Rivalry" Review
Page 10



Girls Basketball
Page 12



Crossword
Page 12

Remembering Elias Kim

The Champion
2025-26

Editors

Julia Hickson
Charlotte Kneer
Alana Nichols
Elaine Nguyen
Dash Rorem
Ellie Sanderson
Hannah Sperling
Valentina Vianna
Sophie Wu

The Champion is a student produced newspaper published by the Journalism students at Lane Tech College Prep High School. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those shared by the staff, editors, faculty or administration.

Website:

lanetechchampion.org

Instagram: lanetechchampion

Principal

Ms. Edwina Thompson

Lane Tech College Prep
2501 W. Addison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60618

Adviser

Mr. David Strom

Use this form to write a letter to the Editors:



If you spot an error that should be corrected, let us know:



Suggest a story idea:



PHOTO COURTESY OF DYLAN ROSE
Continued from Page 1

"This is the single hardest thing I've had to experience as a teacher," she said. "I still expect him to walk through the door every day." Ms. Diamond explained that Elias was no average student or person; Elias had a unique way of seeing the world and bringing people

together. "But just being able to see through a lens, how he viewed things... Like, it felt personal. And he was an observer, and he was able to get across an idea in a way that wasn't typical... he had an eye."

Through his photography, Elias didn't just take pictures, he showed the world how he saw it. His photos captured details others may miss, and many now see his work as pieces of his perspective preserved forever.

Beyond his art, Elias has a special ability to bring people together. He was always able to change the mood of the room, make people laugh, and ease tension. In his short sixteen years, he left behind a legacy of kindness, confidence and creativity. He saw the beauty in others, when they didn't see it themselves. He pushed others to believe in themselves and see the potential that he saw. His friends say that changed them, permanently.

Even now, Elias's spirit lives on through his friends and family.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DYLAN ROSE

They continue to share memories, keep his soul alive, and support one another. While his life was tragically cut short, the impact he made continues to ripple throughout the communities blessed to know him. Elias Kim will be remembered not by the length of his life, but by how fully he lived and how deeply he touched the lives of his loved

ones. His kindness, creativity, and irreplaceable self, will continue to live on through the people who knew him.

To support Elias Kim's Family and to view his photography, please visit: <https://freshlenschicago.org/eliaskim>

Looking forward to 'Twelfth Night'

Continued from Page 1

This musical is shorter than ones from years past, which may be a good thing, according to Vodopic. "It's nice to be able to learn everything really quickly, and then work on making it better. And have time to work on character, and really clean everything and make it really good," said Vodopic.

Rehearsal time for "Twelfth Night" is being put to good use, especially when it comes to tackling the Shakespearean dialogue, according to Olech. "[Speaking Shakespearean] is a new thing

as an actor, I've never had to act in Shakespearean before. So I'm learning new things as well," Olech said.

All hands are needed on deck, and that extends beyond just the actors. Stage Krew president Evrn Durham said "We paint the sets and build the sets and then do all that fun stuff with the sets, and props on the occasion." It's a lot of work, according to Durham, and it all piles up during the final week of rehearsals: tech week. All of the struggle is worth it though, said Durham, especially when it comes to seeing the final production on stage.

Between auditions and rehearsals, there is a lot of time to spend with castmates, and "Twelfth Night" has a smaller cast compared to last year's production of "Spongebob the Musical." Actors like Olech and Vodopic have been involved with theater at Lane for every year they have attended, forming a tightly-knit and welcoming community.

"It's just really nice to be able to connect with everybody and, just, the community we have formed is just a really special place," said Vodopic.



PHOTO BY ELLIE SANDERSON

Actors recite their lines and learn where to stand.

The truth of Lane Tech's graffiti

Continued from Page 1

Lane Tech is very adamant in its stance about any sort of graffiti, despite the intentions. "Even if it's [writing] 'you're beautiful'" Hanly continued, "I wonder if we could do that on a flyer instead of graffitiing our doors," she said.

The students who are tagging the building are likely a small number, maybe about 3-4 kids at a time, Hanly said. "This isn't ten students across ten different bathrooms," she said. "It's the same drawing, the same design." Hanly said. "We don't like any of it."

Catching these constant graffitiists takes some strain, as the process described by Hanly is a tedious one. It includes using the 100+ new security cameras throughout the building to pinpoint time periods. This means essentially time blocking the students who entered and departed the bathroom, then tracking when the graffiti was there. "Our camera work is a really good way to kind of find out who's doing what," Hanly said.

Despite the use of new cameras to catch graffitiists, the Lane graffiti isn't exactly a new issue. "We see

these spikes every now and then," Hanly said. Despite the frequency, punishments for graffitiing can be hefty, including suspension, and financial responsibility. The CPS Student Code of Conduct views graffiti as a type of vandalism.

Though, one student, who preferred to stay anonymous due to concerns of retribution, has other ideas about graffiti in public places. "I think that graffiti can be really beautiful, and actually uplifts urban spaces," the student said, who admitted to have tagged the Lane bathrooms at least 100 times, as well as around 500 in the city of Chicago.

Their passion for graffiti seemed to have stemmed from a young age, partaking in sharpie graffiti in their elementary school bathrooms. "As I got older, coming to Lane, now I bring my Sharpie with me everywhere," the student said. They believe graffiti is a positive addition around the city, as well as Lane when "done meaningfully," and not in a disrespectful way. "I think it brings a little bit of fun into the world," the student said.

However, despite the intentions, according to Hanly, the

removal process isn't the easiest endeavour. "It's not like it just magically comes off, and it's like a whiteboard that you can erase," Hanly continued. "It takes a lot of manpower for someone to clean it off."

These "someones" usually end up being Lane's school janitors.

One custodian, Sierra Jingsu, recalls the graffiti she deals with in the school bathrooms. Jingsu sees "mostly R-rated images," as she said, and the cleaning process required is often thorough, and repeated. "We have to scrub it. We have to sanitize, then we have to come back," Jingsu said, "and sometimes, they draw it again."

For janitors who constantly work to clean up this graffiti, it's "very aggravating," she said, "I don't know if it's a vendetta against [janitors] or something," Jingsu said, "but I don't like it."

The additional work for custodians was the main reason school graffiti was proclaimed a serious issue by the school. "It takes a lot of work for our poor custodians," Hanly said. "They're people too,"

Though, the sentiment was shared by the anonymous student as well, noting that they too,

take this into consideration when tagging. "I do sympathize with them," said the student. "Which is why I mainly tag outside."

According to the student, janitors shouldn't need to go through the toil. "Unless it's something that's super hateful, I don't see why they can't just leave it up," the student said.

However, a large issue for Lane Tech's graffiti is associated with the reputation, and overall looks of the school. "We don't want to be the school that people come into and [say] 'Oh, my God, this is nasty,'" Hanly continued. "We've got our own fair share of issues as an old building, but we don't need to contribute to that."

Hanly hopes future kids will refrain from graffiti. "Have pride in your building, have pride in the place that you come to for seven, eight hours, sometimes for kids, 10 hours a day," Hanly said.

Yet, she anticipates the continuation of graffiti, despite the school's repercussions. "I can send a million emails, but I think kids will always do what they want to do," Hanly said.

20th annual Women in Lit Festival

Continued from page 1

So their hormones as we get older are different, which is why we have much less research for women's dementia versus men's."

Caffey's project, "Ms. Doctor," delves into the struggle for women to become surgeons and stay surgeons, in such a male dominated and centered field. "Some of the key points that we were talking about, how females are typically very family oriented and the medical system, especially surgeons, [careers in surgery] are designed for you not to see your family or to start a family... there's actually, some hospitals don't allow females [for these jobs] because of the fact that they may want families. A lot of techniques are also based on males, like biological traits, and physical assumptions." Caffey said. Caffey was personally inspired by his aunt, who is a surgeon and has had to endure these challenges for decades.

Many presentations were based off of personal experiences or upset, and were created to bring awareness. Mary Brunson and Mckenna Casey's project, "That's not funny: an exploration into the impact of rape jokes," and Vanessa Donnelly's "The mental cost of abortion restrictions," were both inspired by real-life occurrences.

Donnelly said, "So my mom, before I was born, had a medically necessary abortion, because she had an ectopic pregnancy, and she still gets backlash from my family that's pro life about it. So I wanted to bring awareness to show that preventing abortion can cause mental health issues down the line."

Brunson explained that they wanted to bring awareness to the upsetting amount of indifference

surrounding sexual assault humor, "just the magnitude of rape jokes we heard and how people were so casual about these jokes, and it was a little bit alarming to us."

Senior Ruby Fuller, was inspired and influenced by many of the presentations about women working in media and film, because of personal goals. "The projects specifically about the roles of women in coming of age movies and then women through media. Both of those were really interesting to me because I want to work in film when I'm older and it just shows how little women are actually in film, like behind the camera and being portrayed through the media," said Fuller. "Only one fourth of the roles behind the camera belong to women in filmmaking, that inspires me because I want to be a director, so knowing that information kind of pushes me and I'm sure a lot of other women, young women, to be in the film industry and do jobs that are male dominated because we need more women."

Mary Brunson, Lillie Sullivan, Dawn Roman, Jackson Caffey, Vanessa Donnelly, and so many more, highly recommended Women in Lit as a potential course for students looking for an interactive, creatively free and fun class. When asked if he would recommend this class, Jackson Caffey said, "100%, women in lit is a very discussion-based class. And for me personally, I'm a very, like, chatty person. I like having thought provoking conversations. Women in Lit is so awesome."

"I think that the class is a community.

And we're all contributing and we're all supporting each other. And I mean, I learned from them every day too," Mrs. Feuer said.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Junior Sophia Abdullah presents her group's project: "Women in Leadership Roles in Sports," also by juniors Kathryn Lynn, Kelly Lynn, and Lena Palus that featured an interactive mini basketball shooting activity.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Students use makeup products to craft their unique looks at Mia Quinones, Victoria Cuevas, and Rony Davis' booth, "Society's Touch on Makeup."



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Senior Skyla Striebel leaving her thoughts on Allysha Villegas' poster asking "Why do you think education is important?" at Villegas' booth, "Evolution of Education."

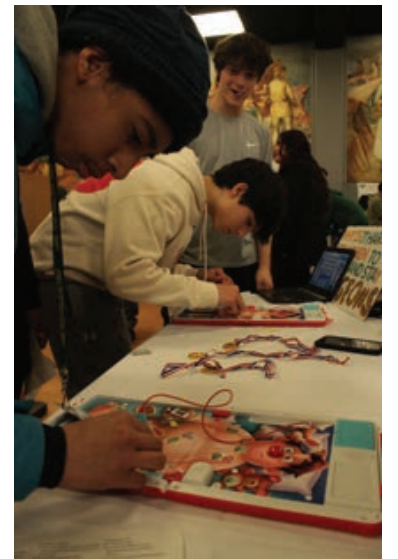


PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Students competing in completing their game of "Operation" on a timer set by senior Jackson Caffey at his booth, "Ms. Doctor."



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Junior Dylan Jacobson guiding students through her group's interactive activity for "A Terror to the Butchers: Historical Continuities in the Fight for Reproductive Rights," also by Mazlin Cimfel and Drew Hogan.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Senior Sam Olech presenting his booth: "Working 9 to 5."



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Seniors Ella Lateano and Penny Dammeyer presenting their Women in Lit Fest project, "Left Out: The Hidden Cost of Representation Gaps in Medical Research."

Course selection considerations

By **ELLIE SANDERSON**

Sitting down to scroll through the nearly endless options on Lane's Course Catalog is a daunting task. There are required courses—like trigonometry or English II—but what about electives? Or when the requirements begin to have options—hey, are you taking AP Calculus AB or AP Statistics? Math in Art, maybe?

For freshman and Omega member Harper Merrill, many classes are pre-determined because of her concentration and grade. "I also try to mix in [classes] I actually enjoy, so I don't hate the school year," Merrill said.

Despite only being a freshman, the idea of applying to college al-

ready floats in the air. "I feel like we've had the whole idea of college shoved down our throats this entire time," Merrill said, "So it's like, 'oh, you have to take these crazy courses that Lane Tech offers if you want to go somewhere good!'"

Beyond that, Merrill also said counselors could provide more guidance during course selection to streamline the process. "If [counselors] provided more year-to-year plans—like 'if you're taking this course then this course is the exact next course you should take,'" Merrill said. The possibility of specific class options for targeted professions, like medicine and English, would also be appreciated, according to Merrill.

Additionally, Lane is expanding its course offerings for the 2026-2027 school year. New classes are being added in various departments, including English and History.

AP Language teacher Dane Haiken is offering Honors Film: The Art and History of Cinema. This English elective, according to Haiken, is a discussion-based course focused on really understanding movies. "[Honors Film is] meant to deepen people's appreciation for—and engage them with—movies as an art form," Haiken said.

And while Lane already offers Honors Film Studies, which studies the creation of movies, Honors Film will involve projects

focused on engaging with movies, not just creating them, according to Haiken.

"If you want to make movies, you have to understand how they work and appreciate them," Haiken said.

US History teacher Timothy Hopps, in conjunction with the City Colleges of Chicago, is offering Dual Credit Topics in United States History. Each semester entails a separate course, totaling six credits through the City Colleges. Semester one is United States Latinx History; the focus being on causes and effects of migration, as well as experiences of Latino people in the U.S., according to Hopps.

The second semester dives into

the history of Chicago. "We'll trace causes and effects of Chicago's development from colonial and indigenous routes to colonial outpost and through its boom, and the Second Industrial Revolution into the present," Hopps said. This class aims to give students the freedom that isn't provided by AP electives, and moves away from typical standardized writing, according to Hopps. Above all, Hopps said, it's crucial to know local and national history: "Understanding the deeper history behind [current events], and migration patterns, and the effects of that in our country are incredibly important."

College resume, genuine or superficial?

By **LILY ROYER**

Sophomore Vera Rosenberg, who participates in cross country, swim, LT Sista club, and Red Cross club, said these activities balance who she is and who she wants colleges to see. "I try to participate in as many clubs as possible in addition to starting my own club because I'm worried about the college application process, how it's harder than it's been in past years, and I want to make myself stand out and seem smart," Rosenberg said.

As Semester two rolls around sophomores and juniors tackle course selection with questions regarding colleges rising up. For some people they may take advanced classes or extracurriculars that line up with their aspirations for the future. For others, taking classes and joining committees are something done just for their resume.

According to the College Board, "Making extracurricular activities a part of your high school experience can enrich your life now and set you up for success in the future." The question remains; are students genuinely interested in the extracurriculars they're taking or are they just joining these for college?

Many students are wondering

what the point of a heavy course load can be or whether it is entirely worth it to take hours of clubs and sports outside of school. Yet students feel a lot of pressure to perform to the best of their abilities. Many worry that without particular classes and clubs they won't get into their dream colleges.

Erin Driesbach, the college and career counselor said, "I think that students, particularly at Lane, feel a lot of pressure to seem like they are perfect for colleges. I don't necessarily think that it comes from Lane though. I think a lot of social media these days really skews students to be more stressed about the college application process than they need to be."

Some students find that this pressure comes from family or peers. Either way it impacts their desire to build a perfect resume. "I feel like there's a lot of, especially at Lane Tech, there's a lot of pressure to be the best or do the best," Nuha Rahman, a junior at Lane said, "because everybody around you is constantly excelling. So it's a lot of pressure from that, and then also from family."

This pressure may entice students to take classes that are deemed harder or encourage students to join programs they

weren't initially interested in. "I always encourage students to really think about what they want to focus on, and dive deep there, while also balancing, like being a human and doing well in your classes." Driesbach said. "And I think finding that balance, it's gonna be different for different students, but that's what's really best."

Many students are able to find this balance between classes and clubs with a general scope of what they are interested in pursuing in the future.

"I try to match my activities with my interests, but also something colleges would like," Rosenberg said. "I try not to do anything useless, like with my classes. I try to match my career aspirations with something that colleges might like, and same with the clubs I choose to participate in."

Mixing both interests and aspirations, Rahman said that she enjoys activities and internships where she is participating in something she likes and is interested in. "But then there's also some stuff that we do in school that I'm kind of like, 'Oh, I'm doing this to look good for college,'" Rahman said.

Even the most selective colleges are looking for a diverse



PHOTO BY LILY ROYER

Katie Cartwright working on homework during her lunch period in the college and career center.

group of students. "They want you to be genuine and be a real human being, and that's going to come across if you're being real in your application," Driesbach said. Colleges may not be able to tell whether an activity truly inter-

ests you, but they're looking for humans not robots. According to Driesbach, colleges know you're a teen and they understand that you may have outside responsibilities, so it's important to be you when choosing your extracurriculars.

Lunch with a Professional: Executive Producer

By **JILLIAN HAYES**

Behind a 30-second commercial that feels effortless to watch, there are months of planning. From budgeting, to script-writing, to casting, and location scouting, Laura Schram knows it all.

Schram is an executive producer, founder of LBS Creative Productions, and the most recent "Lunch with a Professional" guest speaker at Lane's College and Career Center (CCC). Based in Chicago, her company's current focus is marketing and commercials.

With a BA in Broadcast Journalism and Mass Communications, Schram's educational background has helped her better understand the inner workings of her career. "Broadcast Journalism showed me how to make televi-

sion, it showed me the behind the scenes of production specifically," Schram said.

Though Schram is now involved in the creative side of television, her dream was to be a news anchor originally. The experience she had pursuing news led her to discovering her interest in the creative field. "News taught me how to shoot something and what it is to make something that will air on television," Schram said.

Before founding her production company, LBS Creative Productions, Schram had been freelancing, meaning she was being hired per production. While freelancing, Schram realized rather than being hired by separate companies, she could create productions herself and have clients come to her. Now, LBS

Creative Productions has shot all over the world for companies ranging from McDonald's to the Olympics.

Amy Carqueville, school counselor and organizer of LWAP events, said it is important to have guest speakers in creative fields, considering finding a career in the field does not fit the standard routine of going to college, getting a degree, and then applying for a job.

"It's important for people to come in from those fields to really highlight the need for hustle, the need for outreach, and networking," Carqueville said. She described "hustle," as taking unpaid internships, "getting your foot in the door," and talking to people who can act as a mentor or guide into the creative field.

In regards to students interest-

ed in the creative field, Schram said, "My advice is to volunteer, internship, shadow. Do anything that you can to get into the field you're interested in." As a teenager, Schram would audition for plays to gain the experience of being in a live production. She went on to volunteer at a cable company and became an on-air host for a local talk show called "Teenage."

In her adulthood, Schram made bigger moves.

"I started just calling directors, calling creative people, and asking if I could go on set for a day, or join them, or help them in any way,"

Schram said. "I can guarantee you that got me where I am today."

Though Carqueville typically

aims for 30-35 students to attend a "Lunch with a Professional" event, she allowed 45 students to come to Schram's presentation on Jan. 16 due to a high student interest.

Junior Peyton Kravitz described her thoughts of the creative field after attending Schram's presentation. "I wasn't as interested before, but now I would love to look into getting a job from her or with other productions," Kravitz said.

Carqueville said future guest speakers will include a pediatrician, dentist, nutritionist, non-profit founders, a structural engineer, and a circuit court judge, all located in the CCC, Room 135.

Is AI the new calculator controversy?

By VALENTINA VIANNA

Calculators weren't commonly accessible until the mid to late 1970s according to the National Museum of American History. But was the introduction of calculators as big of a deal as AI is today?

Widely, teachers and students alike see a stark difference between calculators and AI. Angela Sanders, a math teacher at Lane thinks "As far as calculators go, I don't personally see a graphing calculator as being an AI tool".

Calculators were first allowed on the SAT in 1994, over 3 centuries after the mechanical calculator was first made by Blaise Pascal in 1645. In the year 1990 a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 47% of 4th graders never used calculators in their math classes, and by the time they reached 8th grade, that number decreased to 22%.

In higher levels of schooling, the demand for calculators increases exponentially with some, like sophomore Marissa Rodriguez, reporting she uses her calculator around 10 to 15 times per day. While this can be largely credited to the increasing difficulty of math courses through the years of schooling, if the calculator is seen as a facilitator to math now, why were they so controversial, specifically in earlier years of schooling at the time? Today, the National Council of Teachers and Mathematics (NCTM) stands by the use of calculators for concept exploration (learning new topics), and learning aids.

But this took time. In 1983, the College Board allowed students to use calculators on the AP Calculus test, but banned them a year later.

Effectively forcing students to do complex, long equations by hand in sake of fairness for those who didn't have calculators. A decade later, calculators were not simply allowed, but mandated for the exam.

Rodriguez noted she does occasionally use AI for help with math, "Not necessarily to give me the answer but to explain how to get the answer" she said. Though she also noted it was only right half of the time she used it.

AI itself can be viewed as merely a product of the time that builds on previous technology. "Using AI as a tool to help understand what's happening, kind of the same way that 10 years ago, [you could] watch this YouTube video to understand what you're doing, right? It's a video of someone doing it versus ChatGPT telling you I did it this way," Sanders said.

When calculators were first implemented into the educational system, they were controversial because educators found them to be a shortcut, allowing students to simply plug numbers in, and receive an answer based off of a memorizable formula, which bypassed understanding according to the U.S Department of Education.

Today, calculators are given to students for common use once they showcase basic mathematical skills, and aptitude in order to ensure strong mental math capacity for real time application, by a rule of making sure a student could manually do a problem before they use a calculator to do one (NCTM).

Though Sanders said that, "Every year I tell students that I know they're going to use some kind of photomath, AI, ChatGPT, or something, and not to shy away

from it necessarily, but to use it as like a 'checking my work' and asking 'Did I do this correctly?'"

This long integration, and continuous controversial exploration is reminiscent of AI: A controversial calculation tool that can be used to 'bypass' learning, that is considered less controversial when used by those past schooling age. Much like calculators once were.

Timothy Bristol, a math 3 teacher, said "It's changing very, very fast, and it's hard to keep up with" in regards to AI.

However, despite the manual input required for calculators, AI is widely regarded as less accurate for math. Which comes down to the fundamental intentions of each tool. This is seen as AI aims to emulate the human brain, whereas calculators are used to aid calculations, and increase speed, as they remove the need for as many handwritten functions, and memorization of things like trigonometric ratios or logarithmic functions.

Bristol said "I know that graphing calculators will always produce answers and graphs that are accurate, unless there is some type of user error when you type it into a calculator. With AI, I've also witnessed if I'm trying to throw in something for a math question into ChatGPT or whatever, it sometimes has produced an incorrect answer."

As it is an ever-developing technology, we have yet to see the full capacity of AI in any regard. But, any developments come with consequences that have also yet to be seen in full swing. Things like water usage and job replacements are already beginning to be noticed throughout communities feeling the effects.

"I think what we will start to see is less busy work worksheets that teachers will give, and I'll be more inquiry-based. Those are the types of questions that AI has a problem answering, and that's where the problem solving skills really start to develop as a person," Bristol said.

In sum of most discussions, AI and calculators are widely different tools. The variable of AI's produc-

tivity level is mostly defined by the angle students take in using it. "I think it's our responsibility as educators to help our students navigate the AI a little bit better and not rely on it so heavily, especially when they sometimes might not be aware that the AI does produce some incorrect answers every now and again," Bristol said.

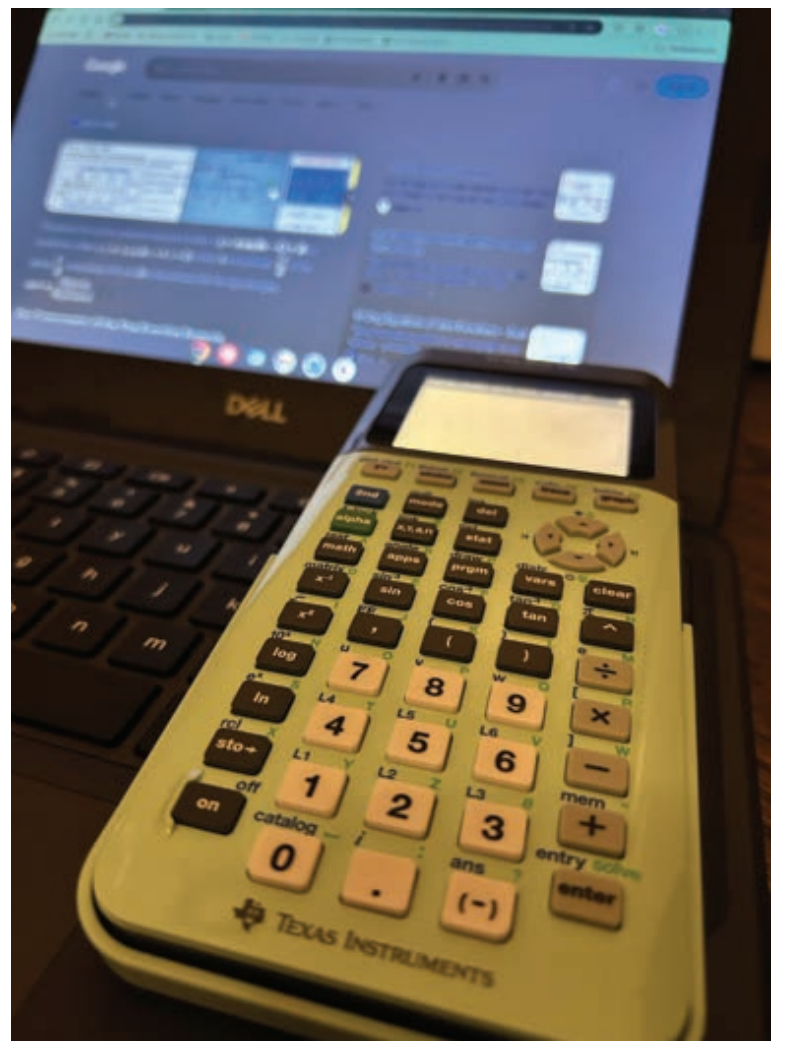


PHOTO BY VALENTINA VIANNA

Student calculator over automated AI answers that appear when looking up math questions.

Solving second semester senioritis

By FAITH GALIK

The burnout second semester seniors face is a definite challenge. To begin, the transition from first semester, or the lack thereof, creates struggle.

"First semester is 26.2 miles," said Dr. Platten, a Lane school psychologist, who described this part of the year with an analogy. "It's a marathon. You get two weeks and then usually for a marathon, you ease back into training after a period of time. But after your two weeks of break, you're back and running. And so there's no time to recover from that stress of the first semester into the second semester."

The first semester was prime college application time for most, where it's school work by day and supplemental by night. Now, second semester means applications are in, decisions are coming out, futures are being envisioned.

"I don't know if academic motivation and second semester, senior year should be in the same sentence personally," said 2025 Lane alum, Grier Burke.

With the end to seniors' long-time reach to impress colleges and



PHOTO BY FAITH GALIK

Seniors, Lila Shapiro, Annabelle Glick, Molly Hanly, and Lindsay Peterson hanging out in AP Lit before the bell rings.

the stress of admissions, a lack of motivation spreads through seniors.

"Half the class is gone sometimes," senior Jazleen Roman said. "A lot of people walk in super late,

not caring."

How can students combat this?

Current senior Lailani Rosa-Santiago describes the smaller joys that aid in her personal battle against senioritis. "I reward

myself with treats after school, or maybe even during school," said Rosa-Santiago. "And I'm just remembering that I have fun things like prom and I-days coming up."

The mindset shift for seniors is

the key to overcoming the struggle.

"Oftentimes what happens is when we're feeling stressed, we get stuck in black and white thinking where it's either all good or it's all bad," Dr. Platten said, "I'm either really motivated or not motivated at all."

The events and excitement built into the second semester senior year can be redirected as fuel to power seniors throughout the tough weeks.

"The first thing that I would suggest doing is just taking a moment to reflect on what has gone well and what is going well," said Dr. Platten, "[...]the classes that you do have interest in, that you are enjoying and trying to figure out what it is about those classes and what it is that you're doing. Seeing if you can take some glimmers from those classes and apply that to the classes that, or the things, that you're not feeling motivated for."

Grier also encourages seniors to stay present. "I'd say the main thing is to live in the moment, because this time of your life will never be replicated. Nothing will be like it ever again," Burke said.

Unprofessional professions and student loans

By SOPHIE WU

One of the most difficult decisions for high school seniors can be choosing a college to commit to come time May 1. Some might have their eyes set on the prize, receiving their confetti-popping congratulatory letter; some might've gotten deferred or rejected by their top choice, and must now have a second school in their back pocket ready to go; and others might not even have a dream school they've been aspiring to attend, which could make matters all the more complicated.

While one of the biggest contributing factors when committing to a school is financial aid and return on investment, student loans flew directly into the president's radar late last year when he refined the list of majors that are considered "professional," excluding vital occupations to society from that list.

According to National Nurses United, students pursuing a professional degree can borrow anywhere from \$50,000 - \$200,000 in aid whereas students earning a graduate degree can only borrow around \$20,500 - \$100,000 total. Students attending graduate programs less than full-time will not have nearly as much support to cover their basic needs, and after July 1, 2026, the bill will eliminate students' access to Graduate PLUS loans as well.

With so many shifts in the political climate, this change to the One Big Beautiful Bill has been buried under the pressing headlines of aggressive ICE raids and the president's recent attack on Venezuela. But this issue of redefining

the line of professional level careers is one that students and instructors have yet to be more aware about, despite it altering the lives of millions of high school seniors staring down the road to college.

National Nurses United notes that many of these fields seem to be more "women-and-minority dominated." And without greater access to financial resources, many women and people of color might turn to private loans which are difficult to obtain and repay. "I have concerns about the demographic that it's targeting," said senior Shay Field, who wants to study Psychology and possibly get a masters degree in Social Work. "The fact that a lot of the degrees are more female dominated is strange, and it's also a lot of necessary fields."

AP U.S. Government and Politics teacher Kenneth Lewis further spoke about the potential dangers of seeking loan assistance from private loans as they tend to be less forgiving. "If you go through a financially hard time, and you go through bankruptcy, student loans are not allowed to be discharged through bankruptcy," Lewis said. "This is something that you could take on for life, and you have to pay this payment, and it can be really harsh."

Senior Julia Pentangelo, who wants to study physical therapy, talked about how stressful gaining financial aid will be under this new refinement of majors and the restrictions on student loans. "It's really important for me to go to an out-of-state college, not only to branch out socially but to experience a different healthcare

community. I understand that means that I'll face higher tuition for public schools, but I trusted that I would get good need-based and merit aid like my older brother did," Pentangelo said. "Now, the reality is that I won't, and I'm going to have to adjust and really focus on my finances for the foreseeable future. Especially since I'm going to need to go to grad school, which already gives limited financial aid."

The list of "unprofessional" majors has caught the rapt attention of prospective students who are also concerned about what kind of precedent this might set for the future. The U.S. Department of Education also stated that 95% of students studying nursing usually borrow less than the annual allotted limit and will not be affected. However, National Nurses United believes that these new limits will definitely make it more difficult for students to chase their dreams in such critically essential fields.

Pentangelo touched on how the diminishing of student loans for specific majors might shift students away from pursuing these fields in college. "College is super expensive, and I know a lot of people don't even bother applying to schools that they think won't give them an affordable financial aid package," Pentangelo said. "The reality is that it won't be worth it for a lot of people to pursue these degrees when they know they won't be able to pay for grad school. A future where there is a shortage of any of these degrees really scares me because they are all so important."

Pentangelo also shares her own personal experiences in seeing

how crucial these newly deemed "unprofessional" degrees are to society. "I volunteer at a hospital and I see how important physical, occupational, speech therapy, psychotherapy, and especially nurses are to a patient's recovery. Nurses are really at the front lines of healthcare," Pentangelo said. "Shortages in these careers could lead to a serious health crisis in the United States where people won't get the care they need."

Senior Bella Snopek, who wants to major in political science, expressed her concerns about the effect this new development might have on our healthcare system as well. "We had a lack of nurses, and it's been the trend for God knows how long. We need them," Snopek said. "So if you're gonna deem these careers unprofessional, people are probably going to stray away from that, and that's gonna have such a detrimental impact on our society."

Not only does this apply to nursing, but the idea of losing more people in a variety of fields also bleeds into education and how that fosters growth in the younger generations. "Professions like teaching — we need those, that's how kids start, that's how kids grow, that's how they learn things," Snopek said. "That's how they get to the point where they can go into other jobs and continue contributing to our society — looking at it from an economic standpoint."

This feeling of uncertainty is now starting to fester in the crevices of students' minds such as Chayse Radcliff, a senior hoping to study Communications. "I think the future is just so un-

clear because these might be the ones considered [unprofessional] now, but that could change, and obviously we've seen how quickly things can change already," Radcliff said. "So where does it go from here?"

It's important to note that the Department of Education states that a "professional degree" is defined by its qualifications for higher loans, not the value of the specific programs. But to students, it still feels degrading to hear that their dream careers are now called "unprofessional."

"I think to hear what you like being [called] unprofessional, it [would] make me feel unappreciated," Senior Ben Pham said. Pham, who wants to study Civil Engineering, also talked about how when deciding whether or not a major is still worth pursuing, to instead think about "what impact you want to have on the world."

D'Alessandro also contributed to this sentiment by talking about how students should be able to follow their aspirations and choose a college that aligns with their passions, rather than having to worry about financial aid. She also discusses how passionate she is about pursuing a career in teaching and education, despite feeling that her choice of major is already devalued by society. "Hopefully this new generation of educators, and just like all these degrees that are now considered unprofessional, will show that we are professional — we build the world," D'Alessandro said.

2026 could bring transit changes for students

By JONAS GRAY

2025 was a drama-filled year for the CTA.

Even if ridership has stabilized since the pandemic, it is still under 2000s levels, according to the University of Chicago. Because of this, along with threats from the Federal Transit Authority to cut funding due to safety concerns, the future of Chicago's public transportation was up in the air, only saved by the new city budget passed at the end of the year.

Now, looking ahead to 2026, the CTA may have more bumps in the road that could affect Lane students' ability to get to school. "I probably would have gone to my neighborhood school if the CTA wasn't in existence," said freshman Sarah Bagdy. "I need it to get home because parents aren't free to drive all the time."

Lane is a large school with a student population from all across the city. Buses and trains play a big role in getting students to school. According to the culture and climate survey, 36.7% of Lane students who responded use public transportation to get to school.

While the service is recovering from the pandemic six years ago, there is still a funding cliff of around \$250 million. The cliff means that they are funding more

than they can raise money for in the short term. They may be able to fill it this year, but it could reoccur year after year. Limiting the CTA's ability to expand, according to the University of Chicago.

The CTA relies heavily on fares, so a slow decline in ridership since COVID has caused this underfunding. One way to help alleviate the cliff could be through cuts.

"There were lots of programs and spending that was added during the pandemic," said Paul Sajovec, the chief of staff for Roscoe Village's Ald. Scott Waguespack. "And there's a camp of people who say these things are all warranted and they need to stay, and we can't cut any of that stuff. And there's another camp of people that say, 'Look, you know, that was an emergency kind of a situation, and now [...] that we've emerged from that, we have to take a really hard and careful look at all the stuff that was added and try to figure out whether or not all of it's actually necessary moving forward.'"

Programs like the rigorous cleaning routine of buses and trains as well as discounts on passes during holidays such as Labor Day were implemented during the pandemic.

Any changes in service could result in more frustration for people such as Lane students who rely on

buses and trains and have become accustomed to the new programs.

A way to address the cliff without cuts would be to find new streams of revenue for the CTA, Sajovec said, but that is much easier said than done. Raising fares has the potential to create a loop of losing ridership due to higher fares, and because of that needing to raise fares again according to WBEZ. And changing or raising taxes can anger residents.

"We hear from constituents all the time, and a lot of them in Roscoe Village in particular, that you know they're sort of maxed out on their property taxes," Sajovec said. "Their willingness to continue to pay more for this and that. There's a sense sometimes from our constituents that they're getting nicked and dimed by all this stuff."

Raising fares could put many students in a difficult position. When asked if they could get to school without public transportation, senior Zeke Bradshaw said, "In theory, yes, in practice, much more difficult. I can bike. It is technically faster, but it's also more physically demanding, because I live very far and it's somewhat hostile to bike on Addison."

An increased fare would only add further obstacles to get to school. The current student fare is \$0.75 while standard fare is \$2.50



PHOTO BY JONAS GRAY

Lane students piling into the bus at Western and Addison.

(\$2.25 if using a Ventra card on a bus). The 3.2% funding increase that came with the city budget avoided raising fares or cutting

programs. However the cliff still exists and will need to be addressed eventually, but how it will be dealt with hasn't yet been seen.

The rise and fall of American shopping malls



Shoppers in the Harlem Irving Plaza shopping mall.



PHOTOS BY JULIA HICKSON

By JULIA HICKSON

From “Let’s Go To the Mall,” sung by fictional popstar, Robin Sparkles, in the sitcom “How I Met Your Mother,” to Eleven telling Mike “I dump your ass!” in season 3 of *Stranger Things*, malls have been ingrained into American culture for decades.

Since their peak in the 1980s-90s, malls have been suffering a major

decline in foot traffic following the rise of online shopping and the effects of COVID. While there were nearly 2500 malls open in the U.S. in the 80s, there are around 700 remaining today according to Total Retail, a news and analysis source for the retail industry.

According to the American Prospect, “Twenty-nine retail companies have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, leading to the shutter-

ing of 2,368 apparel stores, 1,433 home furnishing stores, and 907 department stores,” following the COVID-19 pandemic, and this was merely aided with the rise of fast fashion, the rapid nature of consumer culture, and micro-trends.

The growth of fast fashion is accredited to a “desire to capture current trends and deliver them to consumers at an affordable price,” according to the University of San Diego. This can lead to shoppers becoming increasingly impulsive with purchases, and in turn can cause the environment to suffer.

The manufacturing of clothing is responsible for 2-8% of annual greenhouse gas emissions. This is more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined, according to EarthDay.org. Despite the many negative effects that online shopping has, it is still appealing to consumers due to its ease.

“I prefer to shop online,” said senior Stella Yarusso, who rarely shops at malls, “I feel like it’s easier and more convenient, and most of the shopping malls are more in the suburb areas, and I live in more of the city area of Chicago, and it’s just less convenient for me.”

Senior Luka Thompson, an infrequent mall shopper, shared a similar viewpoint on online vs. in person shopping. “I find [online shopping] helpful, it’s easy to find things that you’re actually looking for, because if you go to a store and it’s not there, that could be a big time waster. Then, you have to go somewhere else to find it.”

While online shopping may serve as an easy tool to get shopping done quickly, that neglects the fact of shopping malls serving

as a “third space.” The term created by Ray Oldenburg, an American sociologist, describes the home as the first place, one’s workplace or school as the second place, and the third place as a space “where people go to converse with others and connect with their community,” according to the University of Chicago.

“I feel like most of the time [I attend a mall], it’s been with friends to hang out, because I don’t buy things that often,” said Thompson, “So, most of the time I’d say it’s for leisure, unless I actually need something.” Yarusso similarly said “I’d say [I go to the mall] more often in the summer when I have more free time and I’m not in school. But even then, it’s only when my friends want to go.”

With certain retail chains such as Target placing age restrictions only allowing those 18+ to enter their stores, it deters young people from being able to spend their time there. According to the *New York Post*, “The teen problem has less to do with shoplifting... and more to do with general delinquent behavior and loitering,” and was set in place as an attempt to lessen fights taking place in the store.

For junior Mila Maksimovic, the main draw of the entire mall is the Target and in regards to the age restriction, “it makes me feel a little bit less welcomed, because it means I have to take my mom with me in order to go into the Target,” said Maksimovic.

However, this idea is contrasted by junior Eva Sharma. “I like that there’s a lot of options from different places I can go to [in the mall], and it’s a nice environment,” said Sharma. But, despite this welcoming environment, there has been a



PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

Sign placed outside the Harlem Irving Plaza Mall Target requiring minors to be accompanied by an adult.

shift in her reasons for attending the mall.

“Usually, I go to the mall just to pick up one or two things or to go with my friends just for fun,” said Sharma, “But I feel like it used to be a lot different, where I used to go to the mall genuinely to just have fun with people.” This once again relates to the shift in malls becoming less of a welcoming third space for teenagers.

With this decrease in welcoming nature, it has also led to a decline in popularity. “I feel like [malls have] become a lot less popular over time just because you used to see a lot more people going to the mall on any random given day, but now there’s not as many of them,” said Maksimovic, “so, I would say it’s a lot less popular.”

Through the increasing amount of mall closings and bankruptcies of popular chain stores, the prevalence of in person shopping will merely continue to decrease. Only time will be able to tell what the future of shopping malls will look like.

Meet Cloud Dancer, PANTONE’s Color of the Year

By ELAINE NGUYEN

PANTONE, a company known for its standardized color matching system that provides a language for color communication across industries, announced Cloud Dancer (designated color number: 11-4201) as Color of the Year 2026 on Dec. 4, 2025.

According to PANTONE’s website, Cloud Dancer is described as “a lofty white that serves as a symbol of calming influence in a society rediscovering the value of quiet reflection.” This same color is also described as “a whisper of calm in a noisy world.”

Also according to PANTONE, the purpose of Cloud Dancer is to “encourage true relaxation and focus, allowing the mind to wander and creativity to breathe, making room for innovation.” The purpose of Cloud Dancer also “invites a space where function and feeling intertwine to build atmospheres of serenity and spaciousness, providing a refuge of visual cleanliness that inspires well-being and lightness.”

However, there are critical comments from multiple users on various social media platforms, stating that this specific color is “bleak,” “boring,” not even a color and “tone deaf.” In addition, there are comments that state

that Cloud Dancer is “biased” or “white washing,” considering the rise of white nationalism in the US at the time of the release. On the other hand, there are people who have agreed with PANTONE’s designation, especially wedding planners.

Juliette “Juju” Renteria, a freshman, agrees with the critical comments surrounding Cloud Dancer as PANTONE’s Color of the Year.

“I feel like the PANTONE 2026 color was kind of in poor taste compared to the [past Color of the Years],” Renteria said.

Liana Faletto, Lane Tech Printmaking teacher said, “I think it’s kind of a boring color, but it is kind of a pretty color, but it is a little lame.”

Aldrin Guerra-Cruz, a junior, also agrees with Renteria and Faletto on the boringness of PANTONE choosing Cloud Dancer as Color of the Year.

“To put it simply, [Cloud Dancer] is bland, and it kind of defeats the whole purpose of the Color of the Year,” Guerra-Cruz said. “The white form has been known for a long time to be the color of nothingness, for it to be considered Color of the Year.”

Guerra-Cruz also said that Cloud Dancer looks “kind of corporate,” with a trend in corporate

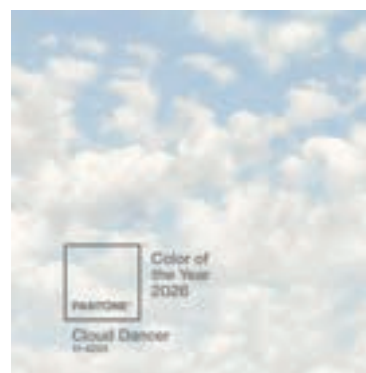


PHOTO COURTESY OF PANTONE

An official photo from PANTONE promoting Cloud Dancer as Color of the Year 2026.

minimalism, in which companies like PANTONE are trying to make their designs more appealing to their audience by simplifying them. He also said companies are “making their design language less human-like and disconnected.”

There are questions surrounding Cloud Dancer amidst controversies. Faletto questioned whether Cloud Dancer is truly a color or not, Guerra-Cruz questioned why PANTONE should “justify a blank white being the Color of the Year.”

“Why do you think this would reflect the year?” He continued questioning, “What is the symbolism? What is the purpose? Is there even an emotion to be con-

veyed?”

Some have connected Cloud Dancer to the current political climate involving white nationalism and ICE raids.

Renteria, who identified as Hispanic, said, “[Cloud Dancer] seems like a dog whistle of anything, especially with stuff like the Sydney Sweeney commercial [the one with perceived eugenics undertones] that came out earlier this year, other stuff with ICE raids, and just a lot of issues regarding race.”

“[Cloud Dancer] was a little tone deaf considering the political climate,” Guerra-Cruz, who also identified as Hispanic, said. “I understand their concerns and how it be a terrible choice for a year, but it’s a pure white, like it’s not like a skin tone white.”

Renteria said, “So seeing what kind of sums up to a white supremacist, dog whistle was kind of startling, to say the best, especially with a lot of other, kind of anti-Semitic, anti-migration, xenophobic, racist comments and advertisements.”

Faletto said that people should start expressing themselves more colorfully, in order to influence PANTONE’s future Color of the Year. PANTONE might not have to designate non-rainbow colors to become the Color of the Year,

and making sure this same color reflects the trend.

She said that people need to “kind of zest it up and start wearing” clothes in certain colors more often. Faletto said that people have added more vibrance to fashion and clothing. She said that people should stop looking boring with their appearance. “Why are we wearing so much cream and beige?” Faletto said.

PANTONE released a variety of items that showcased Cloud Dancer on their website: a “limited edition” mug, classic and vegan leather notebooks, long and normal-sized keychains, a “limited edition” latte cup, a cortado cup, an espresso cup, an “artist series” tote bag from Emiliano Ponzi, large paper swatches, cotton swatch cards, a plastic chip, and color guides from both Formula and Fashion Home + Interiors.

PANTONE has collaborated with various companies such as Joybird on various furniture products, Play-Doh on the Play-Doh toy, and Motorola on various technology devices, along with others, to sell more Cloud Dancer, Color of the Year 2026 products, while promoting the color itself to those who are not aware of it.

Inside I-Days

By IRELAND COSTELLO

For more than five decades, I-Days have been one of Lane Tech's most captivating traditions. This celebration of culture has grown into an experience that shapes leadership skills, community, and connections. Students claim I-days have become much more than a performance.

"I-Days has helped me bond with a lot of people that I wouldn't have otherwise met," said Chinese club's Vice President, junior Amelia Wang, "It's helped me build a community that connects with my culture." For many Lane Tech students, this rings true. With over 33 ethnic clubs and numerous students involved in I-Days, they have become a meaningful and unique part of the school's high school experience.

Wang said that her experience and position in the Chinese Club have definitely helped to grow her organizational skills. "Having 20 people working with you is a lot, and you need to stay organized for everyone to know what they're doing," Wang says. Wang's involvement in I-Days highlights the impact the event can have on students, especially those in leadership roles.

Junior Caitlyn Faul, and Roma-

nian Club President, agreed with this sentiment and spoke to how she has also seen her leadership skills develop through I-Days. She elaborates on how coordinating practices and leading dances for her club members can be difficult, but has helped her grow. "I've had to evolve into not only learning the dance myself, but teaching a dance too," Faul said.

Audrey Beebe, a junior in the Polynesian Club, mentioned how she has also seen student leaders taking ownership and pride in I-Days. Specifically with club leaders, she said, "I think the people with these roles take it very seriously, and really want the best for their club."

Presidents aren't the only students experiencing the benefits of I-Days. Students in non-leadership roles also report growth they have noticed.

Senior Theo Balustein, a member of the Pakistani club, said I-Days have positively impacted his high school experience, helping him to meet new people and become more social.

Although the club does not align with his cultural background, Balustein said the opportunity to learn about a different culture made his I-Days experience more

interesting.

Beebe also shared that her involvement in I-Days helped to improve her time management skills. "I've definitely learned to better manage my time with homework and other activities to make time for this commitment," she said.

Students also mentioned how participating in clubs outside of their own cultural identities helped to broaden their perspectives. "Learning Tahitian dance has definitely expanded my cultural knowledge of a different part of the world," Beebe said. Similarly, Faul says, "I've become a lot more open-minded, being influenced by a culture that's not my own."

** Faul also says that she's tried her best to be very communicative with club members and, "Be as respectful as I can to the culture."

In addition to leadership, I-Days also require a significant time commitment, which students such as Wang and Faul highlighted. Faul says her club normally practices around 3-4 hours a week, after school and on weekends. And Wang noted that "when we get closer to I days, it definitely becomes a bigger time commitment, but in the beginning and end of the year, it's not a lot."

This sense of community and



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAITLYN FAUL

The Girls of Romanian Club executing a Lift at Sunday Morning Practice.

tradition isn't new and has existed at Lane for many generations. According to the Lane Tech website, I-Days have long been a part of Lane Tech's culture, and will be approaching their 56th anniversary this year.

Students at Lane show no signs of letting this tradition die,

and express their excitement for the future of I-Days. Wang says if she could give a piece of advice to younger students interested in I-Days, she would say, "Go for it, because it's really a special experience that you can only find at Lane."

Shakespeare in the classroom: a question of relevance

By SAMIRA SOORYA

AP Language teacher and English Department Chair Hameem Mohammed has taught Hamlet for 7 years and Macbeth for 10 years. "I can't wait for it every year!" she said. She compares it to rewatching a movie, explaining that she loves to see everything she didn't notice previously.

English I and English II teacher Elizabeth Ayala said, "I am actually one of the teachers that don't enjoy reading or teaching Shakespeare." Ayala said that for this year the English I team decided to replace the Shakespeare unit with speeches in order to prioritize different standards.

Mohammed said this was a decision made to align with both the AP curriculum and to cater to the understanding of students. She said that older students often have a "greater ability to appreciate and foster his work."

Junior Saylor Schwartz said that when talking to peers, she did not find anyone who particularly enjoyed learning about Shakespeare. "I think a lot of people were kind of struggling like I was, or just not very interested in the topic," Schwartz said.

Ayala said students often "glaze over the actual language and then focus on No Fear Shakespeare and any other tools like SparkNotes or CliffsNotes to help them understand what they just read."

Mohammed said, "Comprehension and language is a barrier, because language changes from

generation to generation, but the reward of studying Shakespeare is increased vocab, sophisticated style, and appreciation for how his writing has influenced so many aspects of our lives."

Schwartz said she found the language hard to comprehend. "I feel like I was missing out on the main concepts just with the word choices he used," she said.

Junior Sabrina Kaloudis said she does not understand the relevance in being taught Shakespeare. "There have been so many works since then that have, in my opinion, been just as good, if not better, so I don't really know why we're so focused on Shakespeare," said Kaloudis.

Mohammed said that her goal when teaching Shakespeare is for students to understand why he is a big deal. "He influenced so many aspects of English literature," Mohammed said. "His writing is an art with the way he connects words. Layers upon layers of sophistication that is hard to find in contemporary literature."

In contrast, Ayala said, "I think a lot of the skills that go with Shakespeare can be taught using more culturally relevant text."

Schwartz said that she also believes there are better ways to learn about English than Shakespeare. She said it would be helpful to "maintain current events and read about things that are happening right now."

Despite the prevalence of Shakespeare in English classes,

Ayala said, "I think there's a lot of cultural currency when learning about Shakespeare, because there's a lot of allusions to a lot of his works throughout movies, TVs, and other books. So I think that because schools keep teaching it, it continues to be important."

Mohammed said that many modern works are inspired by Shakespeare, and viewers are often unaware of this. She lists the book "Twilight New Moon" as inspired by "Romeo and Juliet", the song "Demons" by Imagine Dragons inspired by "Macbeth", and the movie "Lion King" inspired by "Hamlet". "You don't appreciate it until you study it," she said.

Ayala said the Shakespeare unit included a performance that was often intimidating to many students.

Kaloudis performed Macbeth in her AP Language class this year. "It helped me with my performance skills, because I do get a little nervous in front of my classmates, but it ended up being a lot of fun getting to make our own costumes, and, like, getting creative with it," Kaloudis said.

"Shakespeare's works are meant to be seen, watched, and heard," said Mohammed.

Kaloudis said she enjoyed performing Macbeth better than reading it. "I actually found that really fun, and I feel like it really developed my understanding of Macbeth."

She said she enjoyed seeing her classmates' different interpreta-

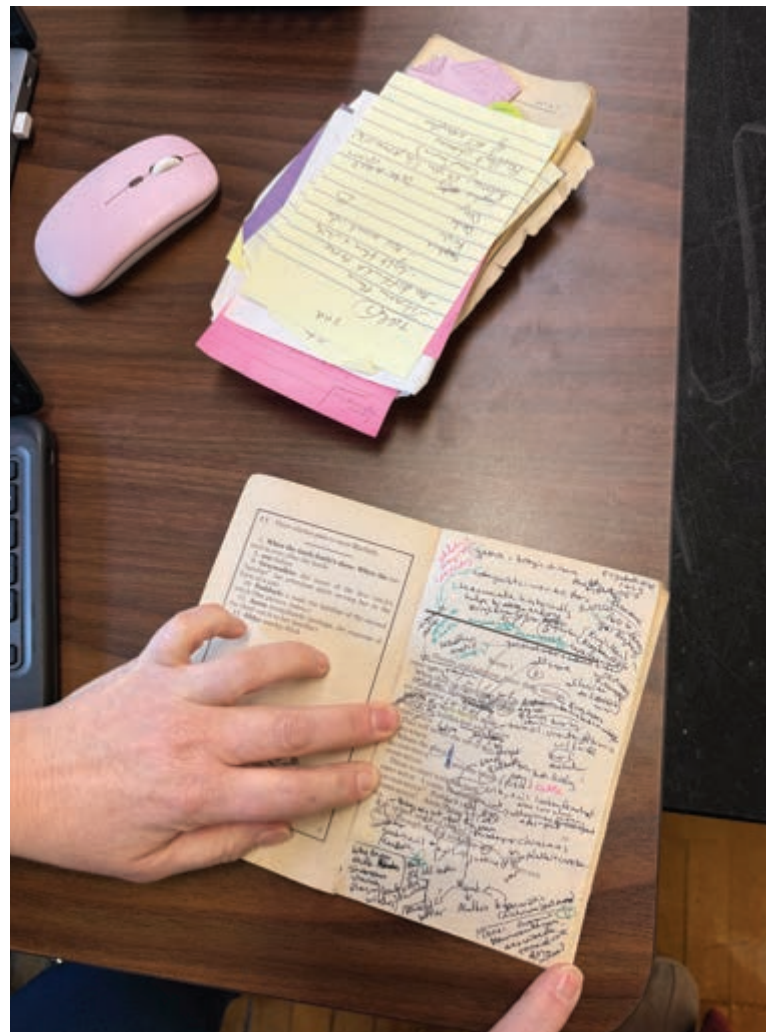


PHOTO BY SAMIRA SOORYA

Ms. Mohammed's personal copy of "Macbeth" with new revisions added every year.

tions and performances of Shakespeare. "Shakespeare's a lot of, like, interpreting, because you don't really know exactly what's going on all the time," said Kaloudis.

Overall Schwartz said, "In history his works have been seen as very important pieces of literature,

and it has maintained its importance for so long, but I feel like with the times changing, maybe we should adapt to that and maybe not hold on to the same pieces of work that we've used for 100s of years now."

- 1. January
- 2. Firework
- 3. Champagne
- 4. Goodbye
- 5. Leap
- 6. Toast
- 7. New York
- 8. Kiss
- 9. Horse
- 10. Grapes
- 11. Resolution

Art Department Winter Gallery: a celebration of student creativity

By HANNAH SPERLING

Displaying everything from portraits and pottery to metal-works and mixed media designs, Lane hosted its second student art fair of the year on Thursday January 22nd.

Senior Spencer Martinez said that he stopped in because the art fair was a great way to “see some of my friends’ paintings, and some wonderful arts that I am also interested in.”

Martinez said that he was impressed by the large extent of raw talent shining through every piece in the fair. “Not every school has an art department or even the ability to host something as big as Lane has with different types of art, such as from metalsmithing or actual painting to sculpture or ceramics,” Martinez said.

Art Teacher Gretel O’Donnell shares appreciation for the fair. “Having a designated space like our gallery allows us to feature more of our students rather than the limited space in the hallway. And it also inspires kids to take

these classes in the future, which is always a plus,” O’Donnell said.

As a student artist featuring a metal bracelet, Senior Myah Shakom said “It gives you a sense of personal gratification that your work is good enough to be put on display.” Due to having developed an interest in painting and metalsmithing, Shalom said, “I definitely want to minor in some kind of art.”

Advising students who wish to pursue art in their future or to incorporate it into their daily lives, O’Donnell said, “I recommend taking a wide variety of art classes. So not just sticking in one category, but kind of diversifying because Lane Tech is amazing because we have nine art teachers in so many different classes.”

“Definitely take ceramics and textiles... and drawing and painting,” O’Donnell said, laughing.

Senior Asha Westrope Pellot displayed a painted portrait as well as her All-City Senior Portfolio Exhibition winning mixed media piece Window, and is one such

student who has explored a wide variety of Lane’s art offerings. From Contemporary Painting to Studio Drawing and Painting to AP Drawing, Westrope Pellot is now in Independent Study, which she said involves “making your own curriculum and deciding what goals you have for yourself.”

“You really have to stick to your own goals because if you don’t you’re not going to make anything,” Westrope Pellot said. “It’s kind of helped me stay on top of actually creating my own art more.”

In addition to goal-setting and discipline, life-long skills Lane Art students can learn extend as far as designing careers, brand styles, and product packaging in Mixed Media, or reflecting on complex identities in Art I.

O’Donnell’s students in this class practiced such self-reflection in an alter ego portrait project. “The inspiration was definitely working on their drawing skills while developing an alter ego based on their own personality,



PHOTO BY HANNAH SPERLING

Students view Honors Art I hand-drawn portraits

whether it’s the positive or negative side of it, and kind of exaggerating it,” O’Donnell said.

Surveying the wide variety of

works around the room, O’Donnell said, “I do love everything on display here. I can’t pick a favorite.”

‘Marty Supreme’ is perfectly unsatisfactory and anxiety inducing

By JULIA HICKSON

“Marty Supreme Christmas day, Marty Supreme Christmas day” has been heard widely over the internet for the months preceding its release date. With jackets promoting the film worn by celebrities from Frank Ocean to Bill Nye, there was no sector of the internet that was left out of the promotion for this film.

Amassing an astounding 94% on rotten tomatoes, the Josh Sadie film “Marty Supreme” was a box office smash hit, and has certainly lived up to the hype that formed around it months prior.

The film begins with Timothee Chalamet as Marty Mauser in his natural element, working in his uncle’s shoe store, where we quickly learn he doesn’t enjoy this profession. He has bigger dreams

ahead of him: becoming a world champion ping pong player (an uncommon goal to many).

While the anticipation surrounding the film painted this as a triumphant ping pong movie and even potentially a biopic as the character of Mauser is roughly based off of the real life “Marty Supreme,” Marty Reisman, it is far from that.

At the start, we are placed into the 1950s, sharply contradicted by the soundtrack of primarily 80s synthpop including songs such as “Forever Young” by Alphaville, “The Order of Death” by Public Image Ltd., and “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” by Tears for Fears. However, this directorial choice sets the tone for Mauser’s mindset in the rest of the film.

As we follow Marty, we see him

constantly striving for goals so far out of his reach, just as the 80s soundtrack is so far from the era of the 1950s that Mauser does not conform to.

While going into the film I expected Mauser to come out the victor in all of his endeavors through the classic hero’s journey, we see him fail time and time again with each passing act. His selfish actions, although appearing to pay off in the moment, always end with him receiving karma that he is certainly due for.

However, with each selfish act Marty made, I still felt a desire to see him succeed. Whether it be the charisma of the character Marty Mauser or of Chalamet himself, the smooth talker finds a way to finesse himself into getting all that he wants.

While it is relieving to see him face his karma, I felt a stronger draw to the exhilaration I felt each time Mauser would get himself caught in a terrible situation and still find a way out of it. The perceived ping pong movie turned out to be so much more than met the eye and quickly brought about a thrilling 2.5 hour endeavor shared between my friends and I, followed by a much needed debrief after the chaos we witnessed.

Through the viewing spent with my hands cupped around my mouth in shock and cringing with my teeth pressed against each other, “Marty Supreme” is well worth the watch for those who enjoy thriller movies and constantly being on edge, although this may be one to pass on watching with your parents.



A24

Zach Bryan opens a new chapter in ‘With Heaven on Top’ Amid changes in both life and musical process, Bryan produced a verbose new album

By CHARLOTTE KNEER

Zach Bryan returned in all his songwriting glory on Jan. 9 with his 6th studio album “With Heaven On Top,” a work different from his previous albums in both topic and process. Across 25 songs, the album delves into family, love, substances, and Bryan’s relationship with fame while he carves a place for himself in the world of creativity.

Bryan shared on Instagram that this album felt different from his other recent albums, stating that “This one felt like recording music with my best friends again.” His last studio album, “The Great American Bar Scene,” focused on childhood memories and was followed by a very public, messy breakup. Since then, Bryan has gotten sober, gone on a world tour, and gotten married. The album’s contents reflect how different his life has been since his last full release; it talks about alcohol with a different tone, the love songs are far less tragic, and he’s more critical of popularity.

Bryan showcases his newfound

love in “Drowning,” where his emotional vocals are backed by a siren-esque female voice as they sing the classic extended metaphor of drowning in love. Flush with creative lyrics, the song has a folkier, Elvis-like vibe that feels perfect for playing around a late-night campfire. A near-perfect ballad, the swinging melody, horn section, and calming guitar of “Drowning” draw you into Bryan’s mind and heart.

In another change, Bryan spoke in depth on his complicated relationship with fame throughout the album. The topic isn’t necessarily new – he sang the line “Like all your pain is just another f****g singalong” in his 2023 song “East Side of Sorrow” – but it is featured a lot more on this album. Bryan reveals his guilt over the success he’s had with a lyric in “South and Pine,” singing, “A f****g show for more blood money.” Categorizing the money he’s gained as “blood money” makes a powerful statement on how he views his fame. Bryan has been very open that he wants

to be remembered as a musician and songwriter, not as someone categorized in a genre or class of celebrity.

“Anyways” is also centered on this topic, as Bryan speaks on burning out but coming to love his music again. The song tells of when he was terrified to perform, singing that “she” (presumably his now-wife) said, “Saw you back when you played West Virginia / When you were too scared to go on stage / But played anyway.” In the second verse Bryan sings about escaping from his life of fame for the summer to recharge and fall in love with both his wife and music again.

Bryan’s first overtly political song “Bad News” has received both praise and backlash following its highly anticipated official release. The previously unreleased track criticizes the current administration and their actions with ICE, earning Bryan harsh statements from the White House. However, the song is less “Liberal vs. Conservative” than many are making it seem.

Some have related the song to Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the USA” where both former-military songwriters speak on the decline of America. While the progressive statements are certainly appreciated, especially within the genre of country, “Bad News” is more critical of the polarization of the current political landscape, featuring the line “I got some bad news / The fading of the red, white, and blue.”

One thing that’s stayed the same throughout Bryan’s musical career has been his poignant tribute songs to his late mother. From his debut album being titled in her name, all the way to his 2026 release, Bryan has brought his mom’s memory with him throughout his fame. In “DeAnn’s Denim,” Bryan reflects on his mom and her family with heart-breaking lyricism, singing “Was she strong enough to stay away from family genes? / ‘Cause sometimes denim is an ugly thing.” The song is emotional and lovely, using the metaphor to tell about his mom’s history and the process



Warner Records

of closure.

“With Heaven on Top” spotlights both Bryan’s life changes but also his timeless talent and dedication to his music. In bangers like “Say Why” – with its swelling and passionate bridge – or strumming love songs like “Plastic Cigarettes,” Bryan leaves no room to contest that he’s one of the great artists of our generation. Country may not be for everyone, but Zach Bryan has shown again that his music is so much more than that and asserted that “With Heaven on Top” is well-worth the 1 hour+ listen.

Scoring on the ice and with the fans

Two rivals and one heated romance to melt the hearts of watchers everywhere



HBO MAX

By SOPHIE WU

The Montreal Metros' Shane Hollander and the Boston Raiders' Ilya Rozanov battle head to head on the ice, but share hushed whispers and secrets on the twelfth floor as a decade skates by. And with tension that hangs there so thickly it could be sliced with a blade, their epic love story has ultimately become one of the biggest must watch shows of late 2025.

Adapted from Rachel Reid's "Game Changer" book series featuring two couples: Shane and Ilya, and Scott Hunter and Kip Grady, this six episode TV show is just as utterly binge-worthy. Rapidly capturing the attention of millions of viewers, "Heated Rivalry" has championed straight to the top becoming one of the most popular shows on HBO Max after picking the show up from Crave.

While it becomes increasingly viral with every edit posted and hashtag shared online, the mini

series has also sparked discussions across social media asking how and why it became such an eye-catcher for the female gaze, and I think we're all beginning to realize just how deep it goes.

Throughout the show, we are introduced to four very masculine seeming men taking the shape of Shane, Ilya, Scott, and Kip; but nothing about their masculinity was ever depicted as the toxic kind.

As Shane and Ilya faced the turbulence of the media constantly pitting them against each other as rivals on the ice, they shared truly tender moments with one another — expressing their insecurities and revealing a side of themselves too vulnerable to be captured by flashing cameras and conference microphones.

Across a variety of media, women have continuously been subtly pigeonholed into the role of "emotional teacher," written as someone who guides other characters, especially men, to reaching a point of greater emotional intelligence and maturity.

However, with "Heated Rivalry" focusing on Shane and Ilya, and Scott and Kip exploring their new relationships and sexual identity discoveries, they've pushed themselves on their own, without needing a woman in the mix to help them explore and process their newfound feelings.

In this series, while there are some supporting female characters such as Ilya's friend Svetlana and Kip's friend Elena, women mainly

take a step back out of the spotlight, as they watch men who play a stereotypically masculine sport feel comfortable enough to learn, grow, and overcome obstacles on their paths, becoming more emotionally intimate and vulnerable with themselves and one another.

Women don't want to see women fixing men, but rather men holding themselves accountable.

Another reason why women find such comfort in "Heated Rivalry" is because all characters are equals and they treat each other as such.

Many women have fled to social media expressing how heterosexual relationships are unbalanced with women typically being viewed as less than her male counterpart, and I completely agree.

The two couples' relationships are built to appreciate and embrace the individual person, rather than focusing on gender norms imposed on them by the patriarchy. There truly is no dominant role in the relationship, nor is there the objectification of one's partner, but rather just the two of them existing alongside each other and for each other.

These episodes freely explore the deeper intimacies of a romance that, in terms of gender roles, is untainted, in patriarchal views and societal standards, showing women how it's possible to embrace feelings of desire and for partners to be able to relate without feeling undermined or lesser than the other, a possibility that can be slim in the dynamics of a heterosexual relationship.

So often, I feel like LGBTQ+

characters are typically written to be struggling and coping with discovering their sexual identity, and while the main characters of "Heated Rivalry" certainly explore the uncertain attraction they have for each other, the series focuses on all of the miniscule details that truly pull everything about their relationship together.

While some like to refer to "Heated Rivalry" as just another gay romance, I think they're wrong, because it just feels like watching any other romance.

The show doesn't necessarily focus on the confusing "crisis" of being gay, but rather portrays it as a beautiful thing and the same as any other form of love by focusing on the sparking romance that ignited between the players.

While love might look different, it can feel the same, and this series does an exceptional job of driving that point home.

Since its release, "Heated Rivalry" has ignited the world and united all sorts of communities everywhere, so much so that former hockey player Jesse Kortuem opened up about how the show inspired him to share his own experience navigating his sexuality.

While we await the second season, it's safe to say that even with six episodes, "Heated Rivalry" has made one massive impact on the hearts and lives of viewers globally, and I can't wait to see what the next chapters hold in store.

'Zootopia 2': A cash grab or a new Disney classic?



WALT DISNEY

By DASH ROREM

In Disney's sea of sloppy sequels and rushed remakes, Zootopia 2 seemed like another cash grab. However, this movie, released nearly 10 years after the original, stood out for its high quality animation and loveable characters.

This movie follows Judy Hopps, a bunny, and Nick Wilde, a fox, navigating their unusual partnership as police officers in the City of Zootopia. They reveal misconceptions held by Zootopia citizens about the true nature of reptiles, befriend an adorable snake, Gary de'Snake, and a Lynx, Pawbert Lynxly. The character of Gary is truly an amazing new addition to the universe; he's funny and misunderstood, creating a very endearing character.

Featuring high-stakes mystery, betrayal, and intricate chase sequences, the essence of the original Zootopia remained in the sequel, despite the near decade gap. This movie recaptures the lighthearted arguments between the witty and pessimistic Nick juxtaposed with the optimistic yet impractical Judy. Though the two characters are never officially said to be a couple, the love that they express for each other truly carries the plot, even if they don't always show it.

One issue with this sequel, however, is the characters' lack of memory about what they learned in the original. In the first movie, the animals learn not to judge others for what they are born as, whether they are a predator or a prey. They learn that what's on the outside does not indicate who someone is on the inside. Did all of this fly out the window when they saw reptiles? Is their discrimination only situational? Does a species have to prove their worth to be accepted? The mammals still believe it's OK to want the reptiles dead; they live in fear of reptiles to the point where the reptiles are exiled and banned from the city. They are discriminatory because of a crime committed by one snake a century before. Despite this, there are no repercussions for the species of other crime-committing animals. That is hard to believe.

Another flaw with the movie is its predictability. Yes, this mov-

ie is a children's movie, but there could be more originality with the plot. The plot follows a similar arc to the previous movie, with new (and very similar) characters created to fill the voids left by old characters. However, the target audience probably did not expect all of the twists and turns, so the predictability is excusable.

Overall, though the plot may be unoriginal and the story is predictable, both the movies have taught important lessons to children taking complex real world issues and making them understandable to little kids, the first movie showing issues with police brutality and the second showing issues with gentrification. In a time of such political turmoil, it is important to teach people from a young age about the issues that plague the world, and inspire them to make change in the future.

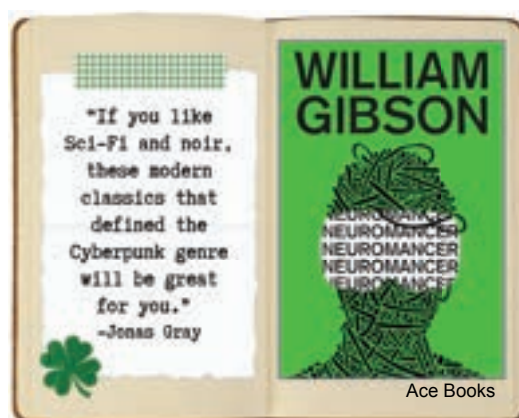
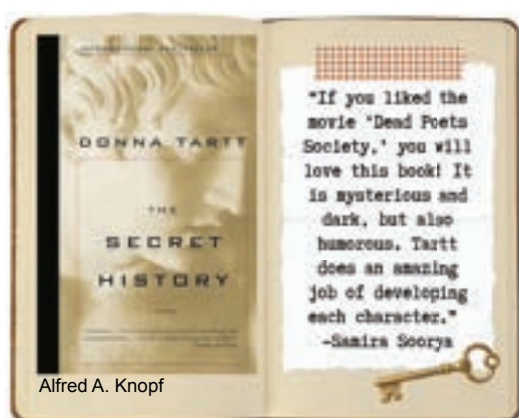
FAN

FAVS

"If you like romantic comedies, similar to 'How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days,' you will love '27 Dresses!'"
-Ireland Costello

"Hands down the best feel good show I've seen, and all the characters are so lovable you won't be able to pick a favorite."
-Naina John

"I love this movie because it's sooo dramatic, and you go into it thinking it's a romcom because of the vibe (also because it stars Jennifer Aniston), but it ends up being a weird story about grief and generational problems."
-Niani Darden



Movies (top-down): Spyglass Entertainment, Fox 2000 Pictures, Dune Entertainment III; Bright/Kauffman/Crane Productions, Warner Bros; Section Eight Productions, Spring Creek Productions

It's 2026; so why are boys' sports still more supported than girls'?



SPORTS OPINION
By CHARLOTTE KNEER

If you've ever been to a girls basketball or flag football game, it's pretty obvious that these games receive less support than a boys basketball or football game. Taking a look at crowd size alone, the disparity is unmistakable. According to junior and varsity girls basketball player Norah Rosenberg, "Sometimes at our games we have like, 20 fans max, and it's like parents mostly, and the boys games the tickets are all sold out and like everyone's always there."

It's 2026, but there are still almost no girls sports games that get the same attendance, publicity, and support that so many boys sports games draw.

The Homecoming game is boys tackle football. The legendary Whitney vs. Lane game is boys basketball.

This story is by no means an attack on the long-held traditions, rivalries, and truly entertaining boys sports games that have come to be iconic events in the high school calendar.

Homecoming is a time for school spirit, and the anticipation of a high-energy Friday Night

Lights fuels excitement for the week of fun. The Lane vs. Whitney basketball game is the last time I lost my voice cheering; our rivalry is a timeless aspect of Lane sports life.

What this story is doing however, is pointing out that despite immense progress in feminism and girls sports specifically, there is still a lack of equality in the way girls sports are treated, attended, and marketed.

For instance, the boys Lane vs. Whitney basketball game is preceded by a week of social media hype, administrative emails detailing requirements for ticket sales and entry, even earning an end-of-day loudspeaker announcement. It has a theme we repeat every year, an intense security and ticketing process, and this year the Lane barstool account on Instagram began a Michigan vs. Ohio State "Hate Week"-esque habit of crossing out all the "W's" on their posts.

In stark contrast, most of the school didn't know the girls Lane vs. Whitney basketball game was happening, until it had already happened. And the reason anyone found out the girls game had been played was likely because they actually beat Whitney, and their win was advertised by administration in a boys game ticket email. Despite the school's attempts to hype sports equally, boys receive the majority of audience support and demand.

Why is it that the boys team, who in this case were predicted by the student population to lose (dramatically), have games that are still more attended and hyped than the girls team who had a real chance to come out on top?

It can't all be attributed to tradition, so what is it?

Rosenberg theorized that it's about exposure: "I don't think it's necessarily because people think we're bad but just because it's not being put out there as much."

Rosemary Carroll, a sophomore on the varsity dance team, said social media definitely plays into support. "Honestly I think our Instagram and everything we post on there is how we get our word out there better," Carroll said.

Student-run, non-school or team-affiliated accounts like barstools play into this a lot. Rosenberg said the official Lane-affiliated accounts "do a fine job posting when our games are, but I think they could maybe try to get more student interaction." Some official accounts act as the engaging account for sports teams, but these are few and far between. For every team's account, except for boys football (with 3,840 followers), the main, all-encompassing, Lane barstool page has more followers, at 3,399.

It's also important to note that many parents, CPS accounts, and teachers will follow the official sports accounts, but barstool accounts are run by students and cater exclusively to students. In a school of approximately 4,500, having the majority of 3,399 followers be students is a telling ratio of how important student-run pages are.

However, these student-run pages promote girls sports events a lot less than they promote boys. I personally believe they promote based on the owners' predetermined judgment of student interest, so Friday night football games get a lot more support than swim team meets. I don't see the disparity between girls and boys promotions as malicious or intentional,

but it is there; and it's impacting how girls sports are viewed and attended.

If there isn't a reason to go – a theme to follow, a sense of school spirit to cater to, a student section energy to be a part of – then people won't come. And a lot of those factors begin on social media, specifically on student-run pages.

There is something to be said for the lack of iconic events and thriving rivalries to encourage attendance and hype at girls sports events. Even with boys basketball, there's a huge difference in attendance whether we're playing a rival – like Whitney, Lincoln Park, or Kenwood – and when we're playing a smaller or unconnected school.

Girls sports support suffers from a deficit of iconic events, and Lane needs to forge new traditions surrounding new events.

In comparing a potential iconic girls sports event to the boys football Homecoming, Rosenberg suggested, "Maybe like a girls volleyball game or something because that's also in the fall, and so if they could get a lot of fans that would be really fun."

Carroll thought about something closer to this time of year. "I think of things like Women in LIT fest, which is something that talks about feminism and stuff," Carroll said. "But maybe we could have something surrounding, like Women in LIT fest, but for girls sports."

Girls face more blocks to athletic success than just under-

whelming audiences and lack of iconic events. Even though sports sexism has decreased dramatically in recent years, it is far from absent in reality.

In my own experience playing varsity golf, my team has been treated distinctly differently than our male counterparts. In multiple situations where the girls' tee times were overlapping with the boys', the boys teams have been allowed to play first, sometimes even getting boosted without a schedule conflict.

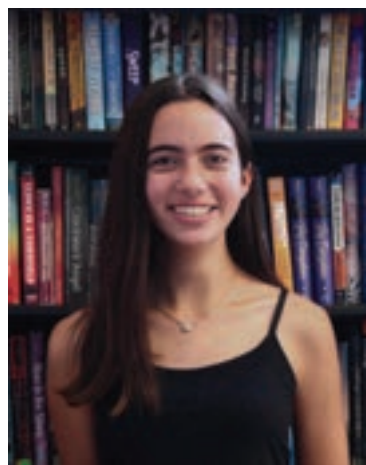
And once we get onto the course, discrimination continues.

During a practice round with three other girls on my team, we were walking to the next hole with a player's dad. A group of older men at an adjacent hole addressed her dad, who was not playing, and was several feet ahead of our group, and said, "You must be the coach, or is this your harem?" When her dad told the men that he was "just a dad," the man replied with "Lucky man" and watched closely as our group of underage girls walked past.

That type of behavior just wouldn't occur if it was a group of boys playing.

The level of discrimination faced by many female athletes can impact their athletic success and mental health, especially when they're younger. Carroll said when she was younger, she faced a lot of barriers as a dancer. "When I talked about 'Oh I have three hours of dance, I have three hours of practice' and I would say a lot of the boys in my class would dismiss it." Carroll went on to say, "[They'd think] that it's not really anything serious, when in reality like this is my life."

Good, Better, Best: A season to remember



SPORTS OPINION
By ELLIE SANDERSON

Twenty-two seconds left in the NFC Divisional playoffs, down seven points on fourth down. Twelve yards to the endzone. Three defensive linemen chasing, scrambling back to the forty yard line. The linemen are closing. A fifty yard throw and extra point later, the Bears tie it at seventeen—forcing an overtime.

What happens next doesn't matter.

One loss, while it may have ended the season for the Chicago Bears, was still an accom-

plishment. Because a loss in the Divisional Playoffs at home was something no one expected for the Bears this year, especially during the rookie season for head coach Ben Johnson. The impact he has left on the team—on the city—will not go unnoticed.

For the first time in years, there was excitement for the Bears.

Nearly every sports analyst slated the Bears to finish last in the NFC North during the pre-season, and playoffs were surely off the table. So in some ways, the Bears managed to defy all expectations for this season.

Because this team was special, and they could rally a crowd like no other.

Despite earning the Two seed at the end of the season, the Bears felt like the underdogs every single game. Maybe that is because of the record-breaking amount of fourth-quarter comebacks, or maybe because the Bears have been so terrible for so long, but the Chicago Bears were the underdogs.

Through all that, the Bears managed to become what could be America's team. Ben Johnson

literally fed the city with a swift act of removing his shirt; the Wiener's Circle, a Lincoln Park classic, gave out free hotdogs to commemorate the moment. And the Bears-Packers Wildcard game garnered 31.61 million viewers—becoming the first game to have over 30 million viewers on a streaming service, according to ESPN.

Quarterback Caleb Williams ended the regular season with 3,942 passing yards, breaking Erik Kramer's previous record of 3,838 yards back in 1995. While the Bears remain the only team in the NFL without a passer with over 4,000 yards, Williams is on track to be Chicago's first in the coming seasons.

Even though the Bears' season has ended, it is one Chicago certainly will not forget. Records shattered, expectations obliterated—this team had it all. But according to Ben Johnson, it's back to square one for the Bears. It's impossible to speculate where the Bears will go next season, but one thing is certain: Chicago's got its team.

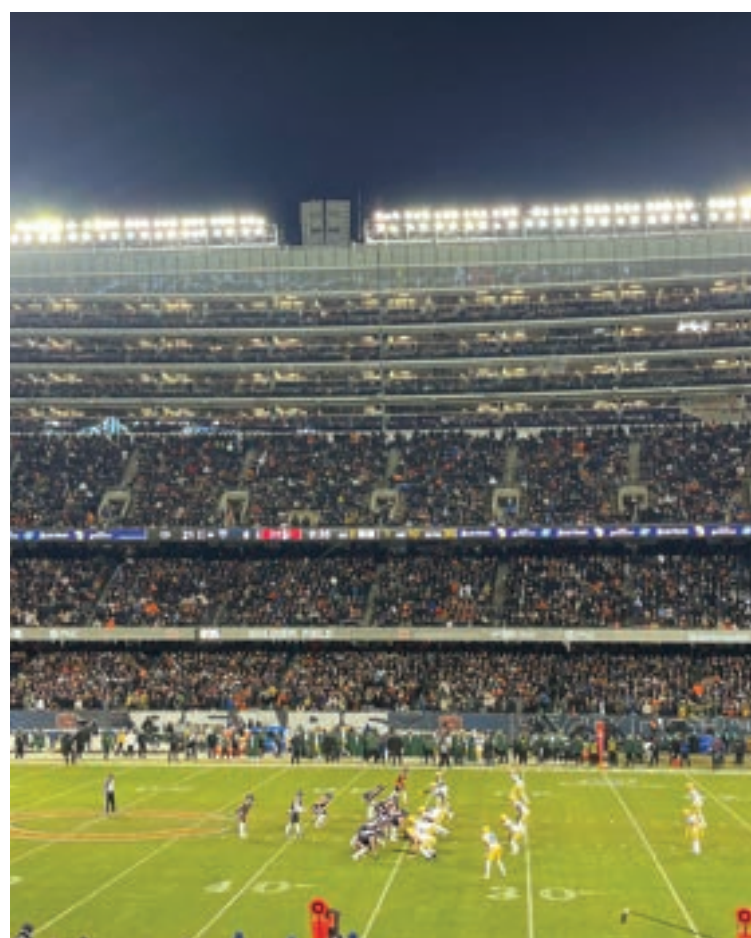


PHOTO BY ELLIE SANDERSON

Bears play the Packers in the NFC Wildcard round, down 21-6 in the third quarter.

Girls basketball defeats Amundsen on senior night

By SARAH ROJAS

The Lane Tech girls basketball team delivered a dominant performance against Amundsen, winning 77-40 at home on Jan. 14.

Junior Lucy Mehlis led the way offensively, finishing with her first 20-point game. "It's senior night so I was just excited to have fun and celebrate [senior player] Ella," Mehlis said. "When I can have fun on the court and enjoy myself, I play better, and so I think that showed in this game."

Lane set the tone early with aggressive defense and quick offense. The first points of the game came off a fast-paced start, highlighted by a standout steal and following layup by sophomore Vega Ransom-Marks.

Lane jumped to a 13-2 lead, forcing Amundsen to call a late timeout with 3:20 left in the first quarter. Despite another Amundsen timeout at the 2:48 mark, Lane continued to control the tempo. Even with Lane's fouls in the first quarter, giving Amundsen the bonus, Lane

finished the first quarter ahead 17-9.

Momentum continued into the second quarter when Ariana Harris threw out a tough three-pointer to extend the lead. With 3:30 remaining in the half, Lane was up 26-15. Amundsen again used timeouts to slow the pace and benefitted from having the bonus for the second quarter as well. Lane entered half-time leading 32-20.

Junior Nora Rosenberg highlighted the team's growth. "In the first half, we had less communication," she said. "And then during halftime, we decided to really lock in, and we were moving the ball around, looking for each other."

With possession to start the third quarter, the Lane's varsity team immediately pushed the ball and stretched the lead. Lane Tech's defensive pressure led to a lead of 20 points by the 3:40 mark. Although Amundsen attempted a small comeback, Lane responded quickly, tightening its defense and continuing to share the ball.

The score reached 54-25 with

one minute left in the third quarter, and Lane closed the period up 59-31. Amundsen opened the fourth quarter with the ball but struggled to generate offense against Lane's pressure.

Head coach Tom Kane credited the second-half execution for securing the 77-40 victory. "Our game plan is always aggressive – push the ball hard and try to score quickly and then turn around and try to press," Kane said. "First half, we're in foul trouble. We just kept them close. In the second half, we managed to keep our hands to ourselves and just kind of ran away with the game."

Lane played against DePaul on Jan. 17, losing with a score of 36-56, and against Homewood-Flossmoor on Jan. 24th, losing 41-46. Their next game will be against Uplift on the 28th.

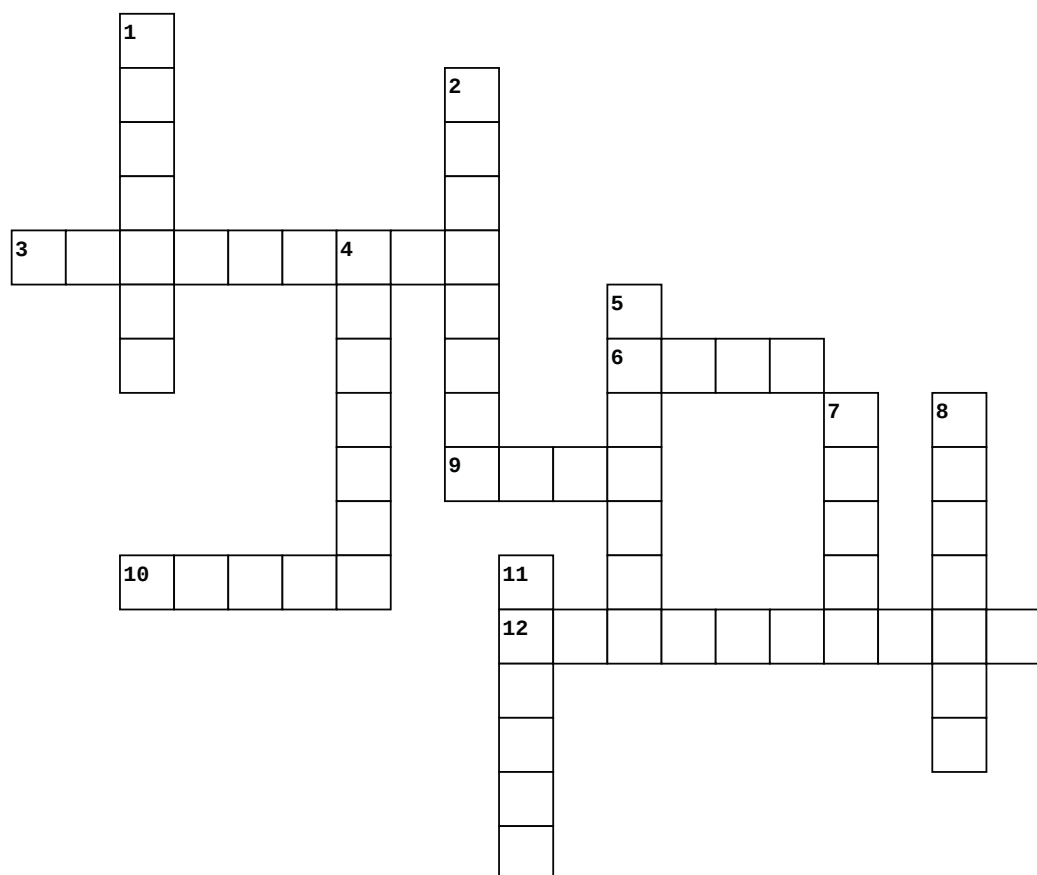
With a young roster and strong chemistry, Lane Tech's win against Amundsen showed the team's potential as they look ahead to the rest of the season.



PHOTO BY SARAH ROJAS

Girls basketball team prepares to get sophomore Scarlet Harris' free throw rebound.

2026 Crossword



Across

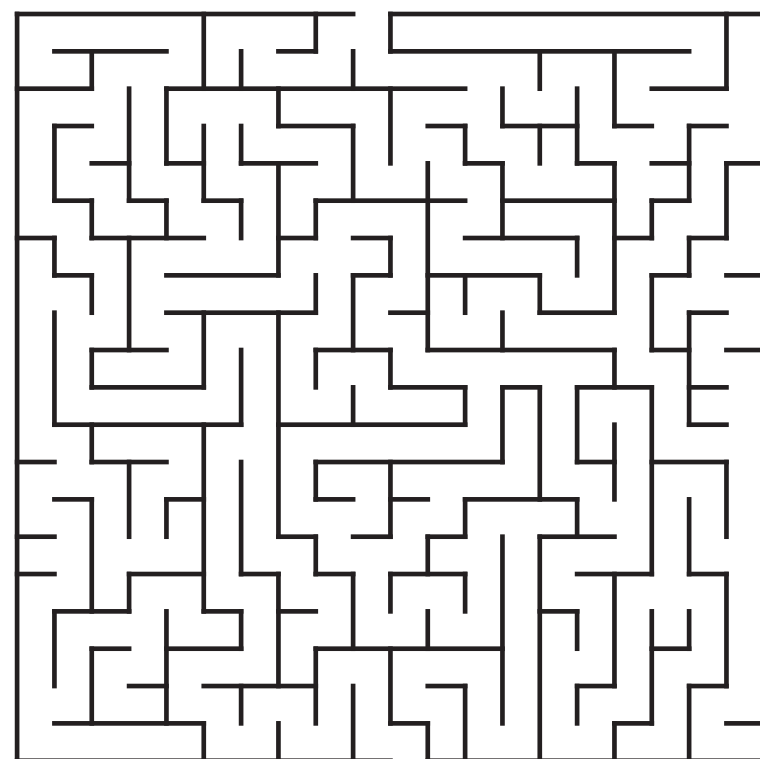
- 3. A drink often sipped to celebrate the new year
- 6. A year with one extra day, the next one in 2028
- 9. An exchange between romantic partners as the clock strikes 12
- 10. The animal that represents 2026 in the Chinese Zodiac
- 12. A personal promise or commitment made to start a good habit/end a bad one

Down

- 1. The first month of the new year
- 2. A loud, colorful explosion set off at 12 a.m.
- 4. A final farewell to 2025!
- 5. An accessory often worn for new years parties that suffered after 2009
- 7. Raising a glass with your peers for good fortune
- 8. The home of the iconic ball drop
- 11. Eat 12 of these fruits before midnight for good luck in the new year

By JULIA HICKSON

Maze



By VALENTINA VIANNA



Curated by CHARLOTTE KNEER, Arranged by SOPHIE WU