



Lane's annual Oktoberfest takes over Memorial Garden

By ELLIE SANDERSON

As a chill begins to hang in the air and the days grow shorter, fall begins to set in; there is no better time for the autumnal activities, like Oktoberfest for Lane's seniors. This annual celebration landed on Halloween, with seniors flocking to the Memorial Garden as anyone but themselves—Minions and honeybees and Scooby Doo and Hagrid and Alvin and the Chipmunks had taken over.

Seniors (who are medically compliant and meet attendance requirements) could sign up to attend Oktoberfest during one of two sessions: third and fourth periods or fifth and sixth periods, depending on their lunch schedule. For fifteen dollars, attendees were offered a plethora of pizza options, a churro bar featuring three different flavors, as well as apple cider.

The Senior Student Council came together the day before and the morning of Oktoberfest to set up and ensure the day ran smoothly. Senior Senator Hudson Finn said that Oktoberfest has been a really fun experience in years past, and that this year's event would also be really good (because class of 2026 has the best Student Council, of course.)

But it wasn't just the Student Council helping out, the event was a collaborative effort from many groups. Senior sponsor Emilyne Villasenor said, "Me and Ms. Loving put a lot of effort into this, along with the school clerks, admin, and parent volunteers." There are many moving pieces for an event like Oktoberfest, and it was this type of collaboration that allowed the show to go on.

Continued on Page 2



PHOTO BY ELLIE SANDERSON

Students participate and spectate the toilet paper mummification challenge.

Students advocate for change in Native American Inquiry Projects

By ELAINE NGUYEN

Jim Thorpe of Sac and Fox Nation won a gold medal for pentathlon and decathlon in the 1912 Olympics. Meanwhile, Maria Tallchief represented the Osage tribe as the first ever Major Prima ballerina in America, becoming an inspiration to women around the world.

All of this information came from a digital flyer created by Alexa Larez, a junior, for her Native American Inquiry Project. Including links to the Native American (NDN) Sports website and the First Nations Development Institute website, this flyer encouraged readers to learn more about important Native American athletes and the significance of their achievements.

Rebecca Daly and Diamond Dadej, the Honors US History teachers, assigned their students to do their own Native American Inquiry Project. Dadej said that the aim of this project was to encourage students to choose a lesser-known topic in Native American history to learn about in a hands-on way, and to turn this into something they can be proud of.

"Illinois has been pushing for way more Native American education in history classrooms in our home state," Dadej said. "I'm so happy that Illinois has made that initiative because it's crucial for students to learn about histories that are often overlooked or

forgotten about."

Dadej said there were three criteria used to grade the project. One criterion focused on whether students used mostly Native American sources, such as specific organizations, scholars, and activists; another criterion focused on whether or not the message behind the project was respectful, responsible, reliable, and engaging; and the third criterion focused on whether students reached a Native American community and/or talked with their family members about the Native American history they learned about and compared to what their family learned in the past, with submitted proof of evidence.

"That's something that students will find a lot in learning about Native American history — that the Native American perspective is often skewed or not fully presented, and there's a Eurocentric narrative, but the Native American narrative sometimes gets left out," Dadej said.

Students could help alleviate this problem by creating a YouTube video, a slideshow, or a Canva flyer to present their research. These flyers were printed and posted or digitally displayed on screens in the halls of Lane Tech. One of these flyers was titled, "Boarding Schools and Their Effect on Native Americans," created by Maya Nelson, a sophomore.

Continued on Page 2

Student Art Show: an inspiring display of vast materials



PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

Austin Johnson, Asa Troccoli, and Julia Pentangelo view oil pastel still lifes at the art gallery opening Oct. 23.

By JULIA HICKSON

While Lane Tech offers nearly twenty different art classes, they all came together for the first student art show of the year. On Oct. 23, doors opened to room 147 and welcomed the entire school community to join the artists for the grand opening of the gallery. As visitors walked in, they were greeted with a table full of candy and various student made films playing on the TV to the right of the entrance.

While some may have come to the gallery opening purely for the free candy, others came to see their friends and support their artwork.

Senior Lucy Arnold wasn't merely a viewer of the artwork as

three of her own art pieces were also included in this gallery. "I'm in independent study art with Ms. Chisholm, I'm in digital mixed media with Ms. Faletto, and I'm in metalsmithing with Ms. Novak. I have a calligraphy piece, a self portrait painting, and I have a felt piece [in the gallery]," Arnold said.

This self portrait painting created for independent study is titled "Loosey Goosey." "It is a picture of me in my shower cap," Arnold said, "and it has bubbles with my face on it. I just wanted to make something silly, because my whole AP portfolio was really serious, and I wanted to make something fun."

Continued on Page 2

The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Crisis

By SOPHIE WU

The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Crisis is exactly what it sounds like: the decades of Native women's disappearances and murders that have gone long overlooked by the public and the government.

According to the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), Native women face murder rates up to ten times higher than the national average.

"Indigenous women are the most likely to be murdered, experience some type of domestic violence, or be kidnapped," said Dnisa Oocumma, a Cherokee and Seneca member of the American Indian Center (AIC). These causes also include dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or sex trafficking, which happens to a range of Indigenous women from youth up to their forties.

A senior at Lane Tech who identifies as Navajo, or Dime, and Cherokee also addresses how Native American women are raped twice as much as white women.

Continued on Page 3



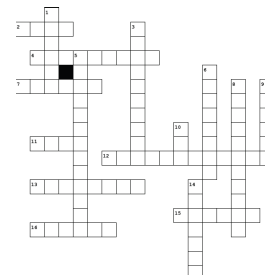
Water Pie
Page 3



Open House
Page 5



Music Review
Page 7



Crossword
Page 8



Fall Comic
Page 8

The Champion
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Lane's annual Oktoberfest takes over Memorial Garden

Continued from Page 1

While volunteers helped serve pizza, Senior Student Council members initiated many activities for this year—from the classic Best Costume competition to the toilet-paper-mumification challenge.

Participating students hopped down into the drained fountain in the Garden, and spectators gathered and sat down along the perimeter. Contest winners earned a variety of prizes, ranging from pieces of candy to different gift cards.

Cornhole and giant Connect4 gave way to more friendly compe-

tion for the Senior class, as well as a space to relax and enjoy the day. Students played games and gathered on the nearby benches to take in the scene. Senior Imara Legg, dressed as Wybie from Coraline, said, "A lot of people dress up."

And despite the cold, said Vil-lasenor, the general atmosphere

was "very autumn themed, very Halloween." The typical green shrubbery had been covered in spiderwebs, tombstones, and warnings to Stay Out! and Beware! Inflatable tentacles could be seen in the fountain, along with inflatable archways on either side of the garden.

Students advocate for change in Native American Inquiry Projects



PHOTO BY ELAINE NGUYEN

"Boarding Schools and Their Effect on Native Americans" flyer, created by sophomore Maya Nelson, taped to a hallway wall.

Continued from Page 1

There was a scannable QR code that directed the user to The Na-

tional Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition website "to find ways to help out and raise awareness."

This flyer informed that boarding schools have abused Native Americans, with punishments involving Native Americans cutting off their hair, as an example. It featured a National Museum of American Indian quote, "These lessons humiliated the students and taught them to be ashamed of being American Indian."

Charlie Gehl and Naylanni Perez, both sophomores, worked together on a digital flyer, which was titled "Indian Lands in Indian Hands." This flyer identified the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi tribes as native to Chicago, and explained that they need more support as they return to the lands around Chicago after being forcefully removed.

There was a scannable QR code that directed the user to the Native

American Rights Fund website, if they desired to support Native American organizations.

"I was pretty proud of how it came out," Gehl said. "It was simple, but it was nice, and I got what needed to be done."

Perez said, "[Our project] had details on it that actually proved a lot of things about Native American culture."

Ruth Smith and Johnathan Ngo, both sophomores, worked together on an infographic slideshow titled, "Native American Reservations." Reservations are pieces of land given by the United States government to Native American tribes to govern after being forced out of their home lands, where many reservation residents are living in poverty, according to the infographic slideshow.

Smith and Ngo encouraged the audience to donate to Native American organizations that focused on returning/recovering

original sacred land back to Native Americans, supporting Native American programs to help children, and more. There was a link directed to the Indian Land Tenure Foundation website for a user to click, if they were interested in learning how they can help the Native American community with land possession.

"We felt good about it," Ngo said.

While Smith and Ngo were in the process of creating the Native American Reservations project, they faced challenges. Ngo said there was a time restriction for this inquiry project, as they had four to five school days and a long weekend to create it, according to Dadej. The expectation was that all of the collected information was accurate, in order to successfully reach and inform their audience while the project was presented in an appealing way.

Student Art Show: an inspiring display of vast materials

Continued from Page 1

"Well, I think the federAnother one of her pieces included in the gallery titled "Bert and Ernie" is a felt keychain created for her metalsmithing class. "[The prompt] was 'iconic duo,'" Arnold said, "so I made Bert and Ernie because I love Sesame Street."

Many of the artists included in the fall art show were in attendance at the gallery opening. "I came to see my art, also all my friends' art, and to see all the other classes' art," said junior Brenna Lacey.

Lacey had a piece from her Mixed Media I class included in this gallery. "I did one of the murals over there — it's about healthcare workers and the importance they have and how they help Chicago," Lacey said.

This was Lacey's first time attending a student art show at Lane, although many have frequently attended this quarterly display of art.

Senior Lexie Antoine, a frequent art show attendee, had her art featured for the first time at this gallery. Her piece for Photography II was included from an experimental assignment with ringlights along with many of her classmates' pieces.

"I've wanted to take [photography] since freshman year," Antoine

said. "I was just really interested in being a better photographer." Being that this is the first art class that she has taken at Lane, Antoine said, "It's really fun, and it's a nice way to end the day."

While many of the artists included in the gallery attended its opening, junior Milo Soss attended to see student work with his friends. "I thought a lot of them were super great," Soss said, "and I was surprised that high school kids can do that."

Although he has never taken a visual art class during his time at Lane thus far, he has always had an interest in printmaking.

"I really think people should choose whatever medium speaks to them," Soss said, "so they're all good, it's just that printmaking probably speaks the most to me."

While students are the ones with their work being featured, teachers are the ones setting up the show and guiding the lessons that led to the creation of the pieces included. Some of the projects in the art show include pinch pots made by Ceramics I students and vases made from paper templates by Ceramics II students.

For those seeking inspiration for their artistic endeavors, attending the student art show is a lens into the minds of fellow students and a

never ending bounty of influence. The fall art gallery will be open until the week preceding winter break

before teachers prepare for the next art show on Jan. 13, 2026.

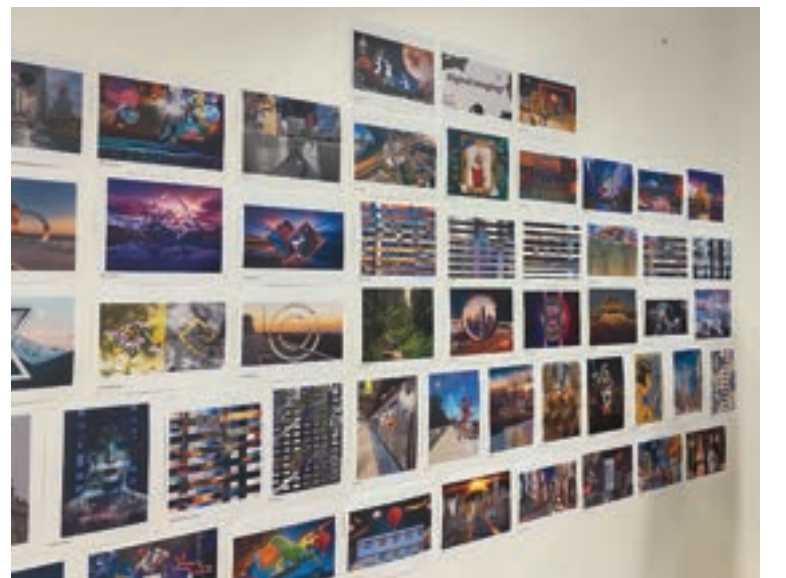


PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

Digital Imaging I artwork displayed in the gallery.



PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

Pinchpots created by Ceramics I students.

Crossword Answers:

1. greens	5. twentyseventh	9. leaves
2. corn	6. plymouth	10. ham
3. cornucopia	7. mashed	11. pies
4. lefovers	8. cranberries	12. grandmothers
		13. November
		14. stuffing
		15. turkey
		16. gather

The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Crisis

Continued from Page 1

“Around 50% had been sexually assaulted in their life at some point, whether that be by a family member or spouse or an outsider,” they said.

Oocumma said their disappearances are difficult to track due to the lack of priority they hold in the eyes of the government and is also a matter of jurisdictional powers.

“Once the Indigenous person is removed from the reservation, it’s outside of the police’s jurisdiction, the local tribal jurisdiction, and so it has to be reported to the federal government,” Oocumma said. “And that’s a process that is not a priority for the federal government so it’s difficult for them to locate the women.”

The senior states that tribal police are also not funded nearly as much as the police force in non-reservation areas, therefore, hundreds of cases get easily brushed under the rug.

“I believe in 2016 there were over 5,000 cases that were reported, and around 100 were actually written down,” the senior said. “And a lot of the government websites have not been updated since 2015 or 2017 and there’s a lack of information that comes to this.”

They also said that when searching for a list of the missing Native women, one must search through

individual tribal reservation databases, rather than looking through a uniform site containing cases from all reservations. And Native women don’t even come up on regular search results for missing persons, only updated to their specific reservation sites.

Oocumma said the MMIWG Crisis even traces back to European colonization and the Doctrine of Discovery that was created in 1493 by the pope of the Catholic Church. The doctrine was created as a justification for Europeans to conquer any land they “discovered,” and treat anyone who did not believe in or practice Christianity as less than. However, this doctrine was only recently rescinded in 2023, leaving lasting detrimental effects on Indigenous rights.

“With legitimacy, it was difficult to prove that Indigenous people had ownership over land,” Oocumma said. “And so systematically, land and our bodies have been taken away [from us] up until the 90s.”

Oocumma also mentioned the boarding schools where Native children were shoved into, away from their homes. They had their hair cut, were physically abused for speaking their Native tongue, forced to learn English, and overall be stripped of their Indigenous identities.

She said that these schools

opened in 1819, and were run by Christian communities. Even now, there are discoveries that many children ran away from the schools which contributed to a tremendous loss of Native generations.

“We make decisions based on several generations ahead of us, and so it was very harmful for us to lose generations of children—especially whenever we’re thinking about blood quantum,” Oocumma said.

According to Oocumma, many tribes are matriarchal, bestowing upon Native women the roles of being crucial decision makers and people who offer guidance. In these matriarchal tribes, women are also typically the heads of their households and their clans.

For example, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy consists of several tribes within upstate New York and southeastern regions of Canada, and within each tribe there are multiple clans. “The way that the Confederacy was established, and the diplomats that go to serve or represent their tribes, were decided by the [female] elders of each clan of each tribe,” Oocumma said. “[The] mother would decide who would be a delegate for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to speak on behalf of their individual tribe or their individual clan. And so they had a lot of influence in politics and also within their tribe in gen-

eral.”

Also within these matriarchal societies, children born into two separate clans will be associated with and raised by the mother’s clan, not their father’s; and their father’s clan will not even show up on their blood quantum report which, Oocumma says, detrimentally impacts how many Natives are recorded in history.

“We hold women’s ideas and bodies to a really high regard, and so whenever they’re taken, something is lost. Something is lost for sure,” Oocumma said.

The senior from Lane also emphasized the importance of this crisis by stating that this is not only a Native issue, but a feminist and women’s issue too. “A bunch of women are getting raped, killed, [and] murdered, and nobody is talking about it. That just doesn’t make sense,” they said.

Student Culture and Climate director Gabriela Escobar also said that this topic is so important since Native Americans have been constantly neglected, and that this might even connect to an overall greater women’s issue too. “I think that Native American people are often disregarded because of [a] lack of education on our part. Just historically, we know that they are a community that [has] struggled,” Escobar said.

To raise greater awareness to this

tragic crisis, Oocumma suggests that people begin to research more on their own, foster meaningful conversations within their communities to shed light on the topic, and lobby to representatives to improve the federal government’s relationship with Native Americans.

She also said that it would be helpful to expand on accessible self defense lessons on reservations for women as they are often seen as “exotic,” therefore becoming more likely targets of human trafficking.

However, both the senior and Oocumma strongly emphasized the importance of education—to improve history classes to encompass modern Native American cultures, and to debunk stereotypes that overgeneralize Indigenous cultures as uniform and from the past.

“Whenever I was growing up, people would say, ‘[Do] you guys have electricity, or do you guys still live in teepees?’” Oocumma said. “And while those questions seem ridiculous in my brain, they were genuine in theirs. It’s so harmful to have someone speak in a way that’s so confidently curious, because they were always told that we were ancient, that we don’t exist anymore, that we’re not in modern society, but we still are.”

A Recession Recipe: The Water Pie

By DASH ROREM

As the world enters the glutinous holiday season, the cost of groceries climbs, and previous Thanksgiving desserts may not be as accessible as they used to be. However, the country has survived this before. During the Great Depression, many affordable recipes were created in an attempt to recreate the desserts people had prior to economic disparity — one notably being the Water Pie.

According to the Tasting Table, the Water Pie — also called the Hard Times Pie — was popular-

ized during the Great Depression as a cost effective way to make a custard pie filling without the use of eggs or other expensive ingredients.

This was a pretty simple pie to make: A pre-made pie crust filled with a water-flour-sugar mixture, topped with a touch of vanilla extract and 5 unmelted tablespoons of butter. The vanilla and butter were not supposed to be mixed into the pie. It was then cooked for an hour.

The texture of the filling was reminiscent of cherry-pie filling, and the taste was of the icing on

a sugar cookie. Sweetness was certainly the dominant flavor in this pie, and it was overwhelming. Though parts of the filling were solid, it was still very runny. Unfortunately, the pre-made crust was the best part. Because the ingredients were not mixed together, the flavor was inconsistent, and the butter solidified on top of the pie rather than mixing into the custard-filling. I will say, the pie was a good base. Though the flavor was undesirable, the pie certainly had potential to be combined with more ingredients in a promising way.



Left: Water pie before it went into the oven.
Right: Water pie right out of the oven.



PHOTOS BY DASH ROREM

The New York City mayoral election and Mamdani’s victory

By DASH ROREM

Zohran Mamdani won the NYC Mayoral Election on Nov 4. This election was between Mamdani, a Democrat; Andrew Cuomo, an Independent; and Curtis Sliwa, a Republican. This election had nearly twice as many voters as 2021, according to the New York Times.

According to his Wikipedia page, Mamdani was born in 1991 in Kampala, Uganda. He then immigrated to South Africa, and finally NYC at age seven, maintaining dual citizenship between Uganda and the U.S.. He started in politics with Ali Najmi’s 2015 campaign for City Council, and joined the New York State Assembly in 2020.

Mamdani is a democratic socialist, which Britannica defines as a “political ideology that supports the establishment of a democratically run and decentralized form of socialist economy.” He believes in raising NYC’s minimum wage to \$30, universal childcare,

raising the upper class’s taxes, and free public transportation.

According to his Wikipedia page, Cuomo was born in NYC in 1957. In 2011, he became the New York governor, but resigned in 2021 due to controversies, such as his use of tax-payer money for personal expenses, poor COVID-19 protocol, and many sexual misconduct accusations.

Though he ran as an Independent in this election, Cuomo is a Democrat. His campaign website states that he believes in improving NYC’s education, affordability, safety, healthcare, economy, and also combating homelessness, mental-health and addiction crises, and antisemitism.

According to his Wikipedia page, Sliwa was born in NYC in 1954. He’s a radio show host and a former member of the NYPD. In 1977, he created a group called the “Magnificent 13,” who stood up against violence on the subway. It was later revealed that they faked 6 incidents for publicity. Though Republican, Sliwa does

not identify with MAGA. He’s an advocate for gay marriage, separation of church and state, women’s right to abortion, gun control, and lowering taxes.

Mamdani began campaigning a year before the election, going door to door in every NYC borough and building his social media platform. He specifically focused his campaign on the middle class, expressing his plans to make NYC a more affordable city. Mamdani also had the help of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders, who appeared at his rallies.

During the debates, Cuomo’s main argument against Mamdani was his lack of experience: “This is not a job for on-the-job training. He never has had a job. On his resume, it said he interned for his mother,” said Cuomo during the NYC Mayoral General Election Debate.

“What I don’t have in experience, I make up for in integrity. And what you don’t have in integrity, you could never make up for

in experience,” responded Mamdani during the debate.

During a debate, Mamdani spoke out against Cuomo’s past controversies. Previously, a woman named Charlotte Bennet spoke out against Cuomo for his inappropriate questions about her personal life. “[Bennett] cannot speak up for herself because you lodged a defamation case against her,” said Mamdani. “I, however, can speak—what do you say to the 13 women that you sexually harassed?”

Sliwa made remarks on both of these issues during the debate, stating, “Zohran, your resume could fit on a cocktail napkin. And, Andrew, your failures could fill a public school library in New York City.”

Another hot issue was Cuomo’s relationship with Trump. “It is a balance, but you’re going to have to be adversarial when you need to,” said Cuomo during the debate. “But you want to cooperate to get good things done in this city, and you need federal help.”

Mamdani then called Cuomo “Donald Trump’s puppet.”

In the end, Mamdani won with 50.4% of the vote, according to CNN. His initial goal is to make NYC more affordable through various methods, according to the New York Times.

His first and most expensive method is to create universal childcare for every child 5 and under. This would extend childcare to older children, create new daycare facilities, and hire more childcare workers. Another plan includes creating free and fast buses for everyone. Currently, the buses move at 8mph on average. He wants more bus lanes and free fare. He also plans to create five city-owned grocery stores. This idea, borrowed from Chicago, includes the city covering the stores’ expenses so food can be sold at the cheapest price. He also plans to freeze the rent.

Having a boyfriend is NOT embarrassing



OPINION
By SOPHIE WU

Vogue published an opinion piece Oct. 29 by Chante Joseph with the headline, “Is having a boyfriend embarrassing now?”

But I would like to say that no, it is not embarrassing for a woman to have a boyfriend.

To me, Joseph’s article states that women are becoming increasingly hesitant to post their boyfriends on social media as they do not want to come off as “boyfriend-obsessed.”

She asserts that traditionally, women have been wrongly pitied for their lack of a man’s presence in their lives.

However, now it seems we are turning around to say that having a boyfriend can be construed as something just as pitiful?

These questions are always especially pressuring women, and

yet, no one seems to direct such questions towards men. I highly doubt that people would ask them if it’s embarrassing to have a girlfriend.

Other claims made by Joseph say that it is embarrassing for women to make their boyfriends their entire personality. And she refers to women who claimed they found posting about their boyfriends as “cringey” or “boastful.” Someone even shared how she noticed other women, and herself, becoming more “beige” and “watered-down” when there was a man in the picture.

But posting about someone that you love and share your life with should not feel embarrassing or induce guilt.

Women should not have to feel self-conscious of how others will respond to their posts about their boyfriends. And they especially shouldn’t fear being perceived as a changed person, which strangers online would attribute to the presence of a man in their life—wrongfully overgeneralizing women as shapeshifters who will easily mold to the man they’re with.

Claiming that a woman’s boyfriend seems to “water-down” her personality is an unfair character assessment and is no more than public shame for no good reason. And they’re commenting on

someone they likely know nothing about on a personal level.

I strongly agree with Joseph that women are finally breaking out of the once rigid cage that having a boyfriend elevates their status, however, I don’t see how that is the case in 2025.

And now, I feel like women are being forced into yet another cage. A new cage that pushes women to be more insecure about how many followers they gain or lose, and how people are perceiving them through a screen all based on their relationships with men.

And these cages are being constructed by the very women who are actively leaving backhanded, and sometimes blatantly rude, comments.

But saying that a boyfriend subtracts from a woman’s independence isn’t wholly universal—it’s rooted in the foundation of how healthy or unhealthy individual relationships are.

And I disagree with Joseph’s statement that being single is something that is more of a “flex” than having a boyfriend.

This so-called “flex” of being single just continues to serve the idea that women cannot catch a break.

We’re pitied for not having a man and should be actively on the hunt for one, then once we find a

boyfriend, we’re now being told that it’s nothing special and that being single is more in style?

At some point, all it sounds like is a lose-lose situation for women. The concepts of being single or being in a relationship shouldn’t be seen as a battle of which lifestyle is ultimately better, but rather as equals that coexist.

And again, these arguments do not puncture the sphere of questions men are asked. If a man is “obsessed” with his girlfriend, they’re even perceived as a “green flag,” while women who are “too boyfriend-centered” are not.

If having a boyfriend is “embarrassing,” then why are we still judging and blaming women, and not holding men accountable?

Joseph even goes as far as to say that women’s heterosexuality is facing “a politicization of [their] identity.” Comparing heterosexual women’s societal struggles to other sexualities’ hardships of discrimination, oppression, and criminalization is a false claim of equivalence.

Love is something that is constantly judged in society—always under a glaring microscope where critics like to stick their noses and point with prodding fingers. But it shouldn’t be used against someone or used to make a snap judgment of someone new; it should be cele-

brated and left alone.

Joseph even touches on how there is nothing wrong with trial and error in love. And I think finding someone to love, to be in love with, or to be loved by is something extraordinarily special in a world so often filled with hatred.

But to put someone who found that for themselves to shame is not embarrassing on their part, but on the person who decides to ridicule someone’s choice to post their partner.

A woman should not feel guilty for posting about her boyfriend, or worried that she’ll incite jealousy in faceless strangers by doing so; it’s really none of their business to comment on other’s relationships.

I really feel that this is a matter of women supporting women, and learning to not care whether one has a boyfriend while the other doesn’t. But nonetheless, love is love, and it comes in a multitude of forms.

Instead of judging other people, we should redirect our energies and engage in uplifting women, and target the societal pressures that make these debates boil to the surface—not find ways to make excuses for the men in question and tear women down with an argument for the double standard.

Costume controversies: ignorance laced into Halloween

OPINION
By SOPHIE WU

As the autumn season shifts its attention to the upcoming festivities of Thanksgiving and other soon-to-be winter holidays, there are lingering aspects of Halloween that still haunt my thoughts.

Dressing up for Halloween is a beloved tradition, but I’ve seen a darker twist in the ideas that have been produced this year.

All over social media, people were praised for their creativity in putting together niche costumes.

However, some people seemed to ignore the fine line between being unique and being offensive.

Julia Fox dressed up as Jackie Kennedy—clad in her blood-stained outfit following her husband John F. Kennedy’s assassination.

On Instagram, her caption said that she was dressed as Jackie “not as a costume, but as a statement.”

Fox’s argument claimed that Jackie’s demonstration of unwavering bravery and strength was also a showing of women’s resilience in the face of trauma and grief.

But by wearing such an outfit on Halloween, I just don’t see how someone could claim that it is not a costume as she clearly intended to wear it on that day.

I find it incredibly ignorant of her to be wearing Jackie’s outfit as a Halloween costume, especially during an era of prominent political violence — now breaching into the idea of glorifying such violence.

While I think that Jackie was

unbelievably strong through the events that unfolded on November 22, 1963, it’s wrong to highlight her bravery in the form of a costume.

If Fox had truly meant to revive that feminist sentiment, she shouldn’t have done so in a manner that glamorizes Jackie’s pain and grief. Therefore, her costume is, in truth, not a feminist statement at all.

Not to mention, there are still living relatives of the Kennedy family, and to play dress up as their mother or grandmother on possibly one of the most scarring days of her life is incredibly insensitive.

Even Jack Schlossberg, Jackie’s grandson, tweeted about Fox’s costume on X, calling it “disgusting, desperate and dangerous,” clearly showing discomfort and dislike towards the actress’ costume.

But Fox was not the only one to cross this line.

On Instagram I saw a group of friends dress up as the aunts from the “Mulan” movie, even though they weren’t Asian. They painted their faces a pallid white and drew on the Chinese makeup looks from the film.

Except this time, people fled to the comments with compliments for the group that thought of such a unique costume, praising them for their creativity.

But it was not creative as I found it rather offensive.

In “Mulan,” the aunts’ makeup depicted actual traditional Asian beauty practices. For example, many actors and actresses

in Chinese operas used to paint their faces a pale white, exaggerating their features with dramatic dark and vibrant shadows. Similar styles also existed in Japanese Geisha and Kabuki performances.

It’s one thing for people to dress up as Disney princesses and movie characters who are prominent figures with different cultural backgrounds. But it’s another thing entirely to dress up as supporting characters who portray an aspect of traditional culture, especially on the night of Halloween.

This only further perpetuates the notion that someone’s culture is a costume, and it looks like the mocking of someone’s culturally historical traditions.

More examples of people dressing up in derogatory costumes also include the person at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago who wore something resembling a reference to the Ku Klux Klan. And there were also numerous reports of people dressing as pimps, and a sighting of someone dressed as a Nazi soldier at Fright Fest this year.

While all of these costumes could have occurred in previous years, this is the most I’ve heard about them coming up simultaneously.

And to those who say that we are wasting our energies worrying about how disrespectful these costumes may be, I don’t think that’s true.

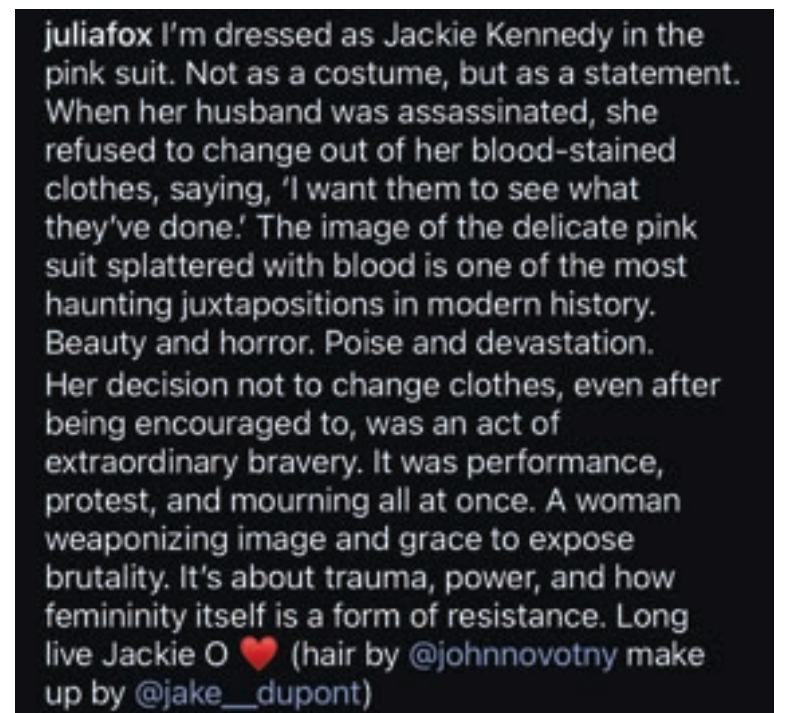
I think these issues are worth discussing as they clearly relate to the way people are currently viewing our society and our world with ignorance.

Rather than properly celebrating feminism and different cultures, there are people who are taking those concepts and making a mockery out of them for the sake of having “Halloween spirit,” and they’re starting to normalize this abhorrent behavior.

People should not be celebrating such a holiday at the expense of others and their cultures, and by doing so, they are only letting ignorance fester in the crevices of these insulting attempts at dress up.



Jack Schlossberg’s response to Julia Fox’s Halloween costume on X.



The Instagram caption Julia Fox made underneath the photo featuring her posing in her costume.

Lane Tech open house gallery

By SARAH ROJAS AND LILY ROYER

The Lane Tech open house is an opportunity for students going into high school or looking to apply to the Lane Tech Academic Center to visualize where they could spend the next 2-6 years. According to the Lane Tech web-

site, Lane is ranked third in the state of Illinois, and along with the academics, Lane offers many opportunities with over 100 clubs, and 31/33 of the IHSA sports for both boys and girls. Lane also offers multiple co-curricular, or additional courses that enhance the academic curriculum, classes such

as drama, holding one of the city's best performing arts programs, debate, art classes, music performance courses and many more. Lane currently holds approximately 4,600 students. The open house is a chance to get Lane's name out in the playing field and open up to a new graduating class.

Below: Principal Thompson outside the auditorium welcoming families to Lane.

LILY ROYER



World language table at Lane Tech open house.

LILY ROYER



Guitar students showcase their musical ability.

LILY ROYER



Boys basketball table at the open house.

LILY ROYER

CLUBS AND ELECTIVES
Lane Tech offers 100+ different clubs and extracurricular activities. Lane offers tutoring from both peers and teachers. One of these instances is the Writing Center. The Writing Center at Lane is a student-run center in which students can receive guidance for all phases of the writing process, whether in need of writing an essay or sending an email. Sophia Burgess worked the

Writing Center table at the open house. She said, "We're kind of just showing an overview of what the Writing Center does and how we're open to all students and to help at all stages of the writing process." In the open house Lane featured both its academics and its wide variety of electives. While Lane is academic, it also surrounds itself with extracurriculars such as guitar, which was featured in the open house, choir, art, etc.

SPORTS AND GYM
Lane Tech offers a wide variety of sports with almost all of the approved IHSA sports available at Lane for both boys and girls. Athletic director Brent Bradish says that athletics is one of Lane's most attractive qualities. Bradish says the open house allows students to see the sports and extracurriculars at Lane. "We want to showcase the best of what we have to offer," he said. "In the end, that is what makes us the number one choice, whether that be electives in your classes that you can choose, whether that means clubs that you can participate in or sports."



Girls volleyball table at the open house.

LILY ROYER



Lane Tech Filipino club rehearsing their performance in the dance room.

LILY ROYER

VISITORS
The Lane Tech open house is an opportunity for students from all over Chicago to visit and explore the hallways of the school. Families spent Saturday looking at all the classes, sports, and clubs Lane has to offer. One parent named Kelly Lowry toured Lane in hopes it would give her son a good sense of whether or not he likes the school. She said, "Lane has a great reputation," and added, "we've not really experienced it before, so we really wanted to kind of get an inside experience of a school we've heard so many good things about." Other students touring talked about the open house introducing them to opportunities Lane has that set it apart from other schools. One girl named Syria said she was hoping to see the community at Lane and the students that go to the school. She said she was specifically interested in the Lane Tech dance team. Quincy Flowers, a sophomore at Lane, explained his role as a tour guide: "The open house

is beneficial for Lane because it shows many of the 8th graders what we have to offer," he said.

PHOTO BY LILY ROYER

Right: Lane Tech tour guides showcase the aquaponics room to families.

Below: Lane Tech choir welcomes families to the Open House visitors.

LILY ROYER



Left: Kate Laroche with Anabelle Murtha and Geneva Duncan as they showcase the Omega program's projects to families. PHOTO BY LILY ROYER

"Having such a strong and exciting culture representing Lane really increases the excitement." -Michelle Loh, Alpha teacher



OMEGA AND ALPHA
Lane offers a core program, a humanities program focused on writing and social studies (Omega), and a STEM program focused on science-based electives and classes (Alpha). Kate Laroche, an English teacher part of the Omega program, worked the open house, helping demonstrate what Omega is to incoming freshmen. Laroche says Omega is targeted towards students interested in the humanities. In this program, teachers work to align the cur-

riculum among the English and social science courses. For some students, the direct opposite of the Omega program may be more interesting. Michelle Loh, an Alpha teacher, worked at the open house to explain what students do especially during the science fair. Loh says the program merges English and science courses with the end goal of writing a 30-page research paper about something they are interested in.

Fall varsity captains spotlight

By CHARLOTTE KNEER



FOOTBALL

Vernon Cole, Daniel Howard, Graham Sumner, Gabriel Xerogianeswhite

Vernon Cole

Position: Running back, defensive back

Favorite memory: Favorite memory is scoring first varsity touchdown in homecoming game sophomore year.



FLAG FOOTBALL

Faith Galik, Jez Davila, Ije Agbakwu, Angel Ativie

Angel Ativie

Position: Safety, wide receiver, running back, blocker

Favorite memory: We played a [...]game at [Taft's] field with a sold out stadium. [...] Going into the game, we had something to prove. Every play was intense, and our team came together like never before. When we won, the feeling and experience of playing in a FNL game was unforgettable.



SOCCER

Miles Morrow, Sebastian Wimmer, Kanan Kraus

Kanan Kraus

Position: Central midfielder
Favorite memory: My favorite memory of playing soccer at Lane is advancing to the state final in my junior year after beating Edwardsville 3-2.

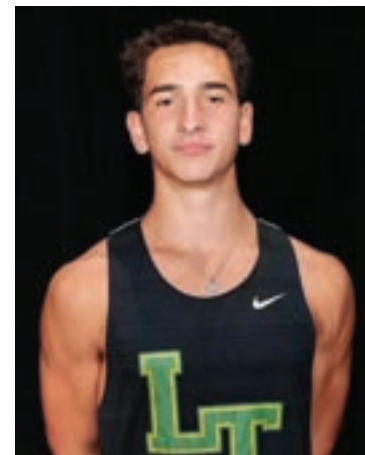


GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

Sydney Van Aken, Ainsley Carter, Caitlin Thomas, Riley Coomer, Izzy Ide, Ada Lavery

Sydney Van Aken

Favorite memory: Winning city for the last three years and qualifying for state with the best team!! Also team overnight trips to Peoria are always fun.



BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

Alex Fitzpatrick, Peter Georgopoulos

Peter Georgopoulos

Favorite memory: My favorite memory with the team was the Richard Spring Invitational in Peoria, Illinois where we got 1st place on all levels for the first time in Lane history.



SWIM AND DIVE

Rheya Ciesla, Lydia Palilonis

Rheya Ciesla

Favorite memory: My favorite memories are definitely from the close races we've had at meets. When everyone on the team is on their feet, and cheering. It's definitely the best feeling to see the whole team come together with that kind of energy.



TENNIS

Athena Solberg, Olivia Walling

Athena Solberg

Favorite memory: My favorite memory with my team at Lane is when we had the awesome and super fun bus driver that had a karaoke machine, and we all sang karaoke.



16" SOFTBALL

Seth Shachar

Seth Shachar

Position: Outfield, 2nd base
Favorite memory: We were down 10-1 against Solorio in the quarter finals going into the final inning. We scored 10 runs to win and advance.



GIRLS GOLF

Eliana Silva

Eliana Silva

Favorite memory: My favorite memory is playing at regionals because it was of the last matches [and] I got to play with everyone as a team one last time [...] I got to see how much everyone improved.



BOYS GOLF

Frederick Dino, Dean Guttman

Frederick Dino

Favorite memory: My favorite memory with the team at Lane this year was our team dinner on the course after our final conference match.



GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Lena Palus, Abbie Graff, and Colette Heneghan (Sophia Polec also pictured)

Lena Palus

Position: Libero

Favorite memory: My favorite memory of Lane Volleyball was when we beat Jones in the City Semifinal match this season.

Colette Heneghan

Position: Outside hitter

Favorite memory: My favorite memory [is] away tournaments when the team can spend time together eating snacks and bonding. I also love pep rally because we're already in season so we get to make new memories and spend time with the whole program. [...] LTVB is such a warm community of girls of all ages [...]

Boys soccer places 4th in state; Girls & Boys Cross Country finished 9th & 10th

Fall sports 2025 have come to a close

By CHARLOTTE KNEER

As the mascot name may suggest, the Lane Tech Champions are no stranger to athletic passion and success. This year's teams lived up to this legacy and achieved victories across sports and levels. As this year's fall sports season comes to a close, this is how Lane's 2025 varsity teams did.

Boys varsity football finished the season with a record of 9-1, going 6-1 in conference. The team saw great success following a conference switch this season, winning the majority of their regular-season games by a double digit margin. Headed by Coach Deshon Conley, they made it to the state playoffs for the second year in a row, this time entering as the 6th seed in the 8A bracket. The team won their first round game 36-6 against Perspectives Leadership and advanced to the second round of state playoffs for the first time in 20 years. Despite their success, Lane was knocked out of the playoffs Nov. 9 with a

loss to Oswego, 45-10.

Girls varsity flag football finished the season 15-8 (5-1 in conference) and competed in the state playoffs while led by Coach Matt Ceisel. They hold this year's title for regional champions from their win against Taft on Oct 8. Unfortunately, they were knocked out of the playoffs with their loss against Maine South on Oct 12.

Boys varsity soccer had another successful season going 21-2 (6-1 in conference) and achieving fourth place in the 3A state finals. The team was coached by Andrew Ricks, who earned his 300th career win as head coach this year. They advanced to the state playoffs as the two seed in their sectional and won their first two games (Oak Park River Forest in the sectional finals and Schaumburg in the super-sectional). The team played in the state semifinals on Nov. 7 against Naperville North, the one seed. Their season was brought to an end there, with a loss of 1-0.

Girls varsity volleyball, headed by Coach Norman Kwong, had a record of 22-15 (8-2 in conference). They beat Maine West in two sets to become state regional semifinal champions. After a long season, they were ultimately knocked out of the state playoffs on Oct. 30 by Glenbrook South in the regional finals.

Boys and girls cross country had successful seasons as well, with both teams, led by Coach Kristopher Roof, winning state regional finals. Ainsley Carter, a junior, placed first in the city championship this year, alongside seven other Lane girls who placed in the top ten. Nine girls from the team competed in the state finals on Nov. 7, and fourteen boys competed as well. The girls team collectively placed ninth in the state and the boys placed tenth for a strong close to the season.

Girls varsity golf, coached by Alexandra Jados, finished second in the city championship for the second year in a row. Six girls

advanced to state regionals, and two players, Eliana Silva and Julia Blahusiak, advanced to the state finals. **Boys varsity golf**, coached by Leon Kim, also finished second in the city championship and had multiple boys compete in state playoffs.

The **girls varsity swim and dive** team led by Coach Julie Levey achieved the title of city champions for the second year in a row. They also placed second in their state sectional this season.

Girls varsity tennis won third place in the city championship and played in state sectionals while being coached by Darren Olson.

Congratulations to all the athletes and coaches who competed this season! We apologize for any accidental omissions of the fantastic achievements this year. Lane began its winter season Nov 10 with nine new teams.

After's successful resurgence of Y2K pop music

REVIEW

By JULIA HICKSON

Justine Dorsey and Graham Epstein of the band After, formed in 2023, have created a formula of near replication of the iconic pop sounds of Y2K. Similar to the music of Hillary Duff or Michelle Branch, After has developed a sound reminiscent of 2000s nostalgia although they categorize their music under the genre of "trip pop."

However, the similarity to the sounds of these artists are not where the comparisons end. Through all of the visuals included for the cover art of After's singles and EPs, they follow the same frutiger metro aesthetics, a visual style popularized in the 2000s consisting of abstract shapes, flowing lines, and intricate patterns.

After's first EP was released Apr. 4, including songs "300 dreams," "Ever," and "Obvious."

"300 dreams" is a song of staying

true to one's honest self and not forgetting who you are. "Maybe all that you dreamed / And you've ever loved is there / You gotta go for it then, baby," Dorsey sings in the 2nd verse of the song. Into the post chorus, Dorsey calls out in nonsensical syllables that lead into the second track, my personal favorite, "Ever."

"Ever" begins with a heavy synth cut by a dreamlike piano and shifts into the eerie vocals of Dorsey. "I'll wait forever and ever / Be there when you wanna go," Dorsey sings as she yearns for a lost love.

While the lyrics are short and sweet, it is the instrumentals that set it over the edge and transport the listener straight back to the new millennium. It feels as if this song could be placed into the "Twilight" soundtrack aside Paramore and Bon Iver.

The theme of unrequited love is continued into the fourth track, "Obvious." The track begins with the lines "I love you most / But

you'll never show it / And I wanna be close / But you're so in control of it." Dorsey sings as she shares the cliché feeling of falling so deeply into love with someone who doesn't reciprocate.

She continues into the chorus singing "And do I like you? / Don't you think it's kinda obvious?" sharing how blatantly she puts her feelings out into the open and how it is not acknowledged or requited. This being the first song I ever heard from After was the perfect intro into their time machine of a discography.

Although After is bringing back the 2000s aesthetic through their music, it is not currently foreign in the music scene. In the 3rd track of After's first EP, "Lichen," the beat is similar to "Beg for you" by Charli xcx from her 2022 album "CRASH." Both After and Charli xcx have been gaining more recognition recently for their creative music making and iconic album cover art.

After's second EP, "After EP 2," which includes tracks "Deep Diving," "The Field," and "Where we are now" was released on Oct. 17; however, track five titled "Outbound" stood out the most to me upon listening. The usage of synthesizers adds to the dreamlike quality of the music.

"I'll try to tell you / When you come down in the morning, baby / No time for running out on me like that / You drive me crazy," Dorsey sings with the essence of an early Y2K romcom such as "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days."

The fourth track of the EP, "Baroque," heavily leans into the cheesy pop of the 2000s. As Dorsey begins singing "Don't you say that / Don't say, don't go / You know I won't," it evokes the same emotions I feel as Troy Bolten sings "What about us? / What about everything we've been through?" in Disney Channel's "High School Musical" but with a matured spin on it.

This contributes to the nostalgia

factor of After's aesthetic as it draws back to the childhoods of their listeners. The thrashing of the guitar into the chorus adds to the angst familiar to listeners and reminiscent of songs from the post 90s era of Disney movies.

While After is not the only band in this new wave of recession back to 2000s pop, they are paving the way for this trend to progress into the future, allowing for younger generations to experience the magic that was the pop of Y2K.



Mom + Pop

Jack Van Cleaf's second album is indicative of future mainstream success

REVIEW

By CHARLOTTE KNEER

Jack Van Cleaf released his sophomore album "JVC" on May 9, 2025 with the deluxe version coming four months later on Sep 5. The original release features 16 songs, with the deluxe version adding a bonus track and four alternate versions of songs from the album.

"JVC" stays true to Van Cleaf's traditional singer-songwriter genre while incorporating elements of folk, country, and rock throughout. The young Nashville-based artist writes about topics ranging from love, loneliness, climate change, and the feeling of instability, to—most prevalently—growing up.

While Van Cleaf remains a majorly hidden gem in the music industry, his lyricism, cross-genre proficiency, and big-name features all indicate his ability to rise

to fame. Van Cleaf has about 471 thousand monthly listeners on Spotify, while Noah Kahan—an artist with a similar sound and genre—has close to 25 million. Although the disparity is large, Van Cleaf has gained significant popularity from his recent release with seasoned country star Zach Bryan.

Bryan was featured on a new version of the song "Rattlesnake" that had been previously released (without a feature) on Van Cleaf's first album "Fruit from the Trees." Bryan's vocals and input add a new level of liveliness to the already amazing track. The lyrics tell a story of self-destruction with poignant lines like "Love is like a rattlesnake / Before it bites it tries to warn you." Each verse and chorus layer new instruments to give the effect of the song building on itself. A horn section carries the melody throughout as both artists contribute incredible vocals up to the very end as the song closes with an emotional postlude.

The song has almost 21 million streams on Spotify and quickly became Van Cleaf's most streamed song. In a similar instance, lesser-known country singer Gabriella Rose was featured on Bryan's newer single "Madeline." The song also became Rose's most streamed song, with 18 times as many streams as she has monthly listeners. In any

event, it is evident that collaborating with such a revered artist is an effective way to boost popularity and bring your music into the public spotlight.

Though his collaborations may give him a boost, Van Cleaf has all the talents on his own to become extremely successful. In this new album his lyricism is showcased in songs like "Hikikomori," "Remember Katrina?," and "Couch Potato." These songs all focus on the deeply personal terrors of growing up, coping, and finding yourself.

"Hikikomori" talks about social isolation and the guilt that comes with it. Using the Japanese psychology term to describe himself, Van Cleaf references the phenomena where (typically young) people completely isolate themselves in their homes for months or years at a time. Educated allusions are often found in songs written by people praised for impactful lyricism.

Van Cleaf's use of the term Hikikomori demonstrates his ability to develop as a renowned lyricist and gain traction in popular music. Taylor Swift (whose lyrics are poetic enough people play the game of "Taylor Swift or Shakespeare") sings of the Trojan princess cursed to never find love in her song "Cassandra," parallels "Romeo and Juliet" in her classic song "Love Story," and makes one line references

to myths, literature, and her own works in countless other tracks, similar to Van Cleaf.

Van Cleaf's allusions continue in "Remember Katrina?" where he references tragic real-world events to emphasize the differences in being a kid and being an adult. He begins the song with "Remember Katrina? / Not that we were there [...] / Remember being so scared?" The chorus lyrics portray the expectation that you're not scared anymore when you grow up, even though the events are just as bad. Van Cleaf sings, "Now you're a big girl, And you're not scared of the big world... Or an airborne hostage crisis, Or an ocean that's rising."

The brilliant lyricism found in "Couch Potato" is, in my opinion, the best on the album. The song is a peek into the mind of a person caught in a deep loop of escapism. For the majority of the track, the lyrics are judgmental and the vocal tone portrays hatred for the lack of action the person is taking. However, at the end, the tone switches to be more appeasing and tells the person what they want to hear. The validation juxtaposes the criticism from the rest of the song and eloquently creates a positive lift to round out the end of the album.

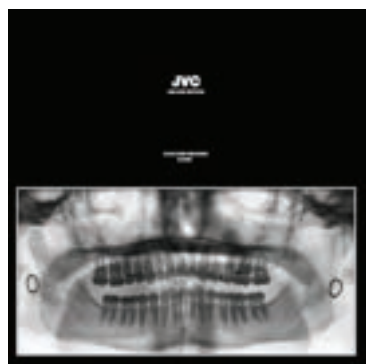
The duality of "JVC" is showcased in side-by-side tracks "Go Home, Danny" and "Shouldn't

Have Gone to L.A.," as well as "Thinkin' About It" and "Green." "Shouldn't Have Gone to L.A." and "Thinkin' About It" are both slower and heavier songs with the former focusing on regrets and the latter dancing around the topic of suicide. "Shouldn't Have Gone" features low, Johnny Cash-esque vocals and mournful guitar that demonstrates Van Cleaf's proficiency at the folksy cowboy-country sound.

In stark contrast, songs like "Go Home, Danny" and "Green" are far more upbeat and exhibit rock influences. Though "Go Home, Danny" is still about trying to help a struggling friend, both songs show how Van Cleaf's lyricism and vocals can span multiple genres and paces.

"Green" personifies the color in a myriad of ways—though always inevitable—and the color acts as a symbol for climate change. The drums drive the song as the lively melody crosses into a more rock-like genre.

Regardless of your preferred sound, "JVC" is living proof that Van Cleaf has a successful career ahead of him. As he rides the wave of an expansion in modern country and folk interest alongside Zach Bryan and others, I have no doubt that Jack Van Cleaf will continue to produce high-quality music.



Dualtone Records

Everybody is screaming for Florence and the Machine

REVIEW

By VALENTINA VIANNA

On Halloween of 2025, "Florence and the Machine" released a new album for the first time in 3 years titled "Everybody Scream." This is the sixth studio album of Florence Welch, the band's lead singer, and could be considered "One of the Greats" (the title of the 2nd track on the album.)

Welch is famous for her wail-esque voice, and is known for her previous songs "Dog Days Are Over" and "Hunger." The biggest track off of the new album so far is the title track, "Everybody Scream;" however, other tracks

like "Witch Dance," "Sympathy Magic" and "Buckle," my personal favorite, showcase Welch's voice much better.

The album as a whole has a dark, witchy, whimsical feel to it—similar to works from artists like St. Vincent, Paris Paloma, or Mumford & Sons. "Everybody Scream" is a bit too aggressive for a casual listener, with some screaming interludes and a less melodic sound.

"Buckle," on the other hand, is a sweet sounding expression of Welch's range, over a heartbreaking set of lyrics about hanging on to someone from the past. "Buckle" switches jarringly into the quick muttering intro for "Kra-

ken"—a fast beating slow progression. Throughout the album as a whole, the transitions lack smoothness as some songs move directly into the next with completely different energy. This is seen again when "Kraken" moves into a more chill, angelic "The Old Religion."

"Sympathy Magic" is a lighter, more indie pop style ballad, where Welch gets to some full voiced notes like in the pre chorus to "The Old Religion" or the focal point of "You Can Have It All."

Through most of the songs at some point during either an interlude without lyrics or in an intro or outro there is almost gregorian chant style wails. This is most

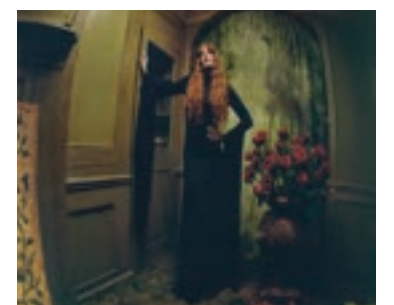
present in 'Drink Deep' which possesses this chanting, alongside some wind chime type ringing.

"Witch Dance," is a depthful personification of death that feels panicked and creepy in comparison to the other themes mainly including female rage, fighting trauma, and working through strong emotions.

Most of the tracks can also be differentiated by their guitar backing, since the instrumentals range from acoustic to emphasized electric or bass heavy.

As a whole, the album can be considered a return to the signature cathartic energy "Florence and the Machine" are known for. Deep, emotional, at times rag-

ing, but lyrically masterful, "Everybody Scream" makes the wait for new music worth it. While I may disagree with which songs are currently trending, the album is still fresh and leaves time for changes within the charts as songs become familiar to listeners.



Republic Records

Did She ‘Girlboss Too Close to the Sun’?

REVIEW

By VALENTINA VIANNA

On Oct 3 at 12 a.m. ET, Taylor Swift’s 12th studio album debuted at number 1 on the Billboard Music Charts. “The Life of a Showgirl” was immediately flooded with praise and hate all in one.

First announced on now-fiance Travis Kelce’s podcast with his brother Jason Kelce, the album had seven and a half weeks to stew in the minds of the record-setting 1.3 million simultaneous listeners during the podcast’s initial air time.

The album itself has been stirring up controversy since it was announced, but ever since it came out, I’ve heard criticism develop into appreciation and discussions of underrated favorites.

The first song on the album “The Fate of Ophelia” is currently heading the charts, and was at first the only track most people found tolerable. Now, it is seemingly reaching towards overplayed, though appreciated. This song seems to be one of the few without lyrical criticism, which is a big theme of dislike for those adamant with their disapproval.

Most of the songs that are receiving less hate than others all have one thing in common: their storytelling. The lack of melodic, and slow songs on the album contrasts with some previously loved Swift songs, though the notable faster, beat heavy songs are still trending. Yet, one or two lyrical, heartfelt bangers would have stood out even more to me—though Swift’s new music is undoubtedly a product of her real life happiness.

The album is being regarded more heavily as conceptual starting with “The Fate of Ophelia” and through the next 11 songs before the final “Life of a Showgirl” featuring Sabrina Carpenter. Connections between Hamlet’s Ophelia and Swift’s previous struggles are being made, and the final song ties it together with mention of “Life of a Showgirl giving out bouquets,” which Ophelia notably does out to everyone in her life before she drowns.

More recently, Swift released an acoustic version of the song, which disappointingly lacked any difference beside the accompaniment of the other instruments and effects. However, most of the songs on the



Republic Records

album which were initially disliked due to their overly “millennial” lyrics are apparently growing on the masses.

Songs like “Actually Romantic” and “Father Figure” have gained traction and rose on the charts within the album’s other songs. This lines up with fans tying their lyrics to actual events. The opening lyrics of “Actually Romantics” are being regarded as a response to Charli xcx’s “!Sympathy is a Knife!” off of her “Brat” album, a diss depicting a one-sided adversarial obsession.

“Father Figure” is similarly being tied to Swift’s real life experi-

ences as the song is being linked to Scooter Braun, the former owner of her discography. Lyrics like, “this empire belongs to me” and “You pulled the wrong trigger” can be taken as a reference to Swift regaining the masters to her music.

Less believable but also theorized, the song could also be about Olivia Rodrigo. Though not as public, there are some theories behind a falling out between the two artists due to credits on Rodrigo’s song “Deja Vu” off of the album “Sour”. However, I am inclined to believe that due to the mentor/mentee relationship they have been seen to have, the track is more about the road to regaining her masters.

While most songs are growing on the general population, how much of the late appreciation can be credited to the difference in the production team? The very pop-centric, and less lyrically meaningful, album was produced by Max Martin and Shellback, who are the very same producers who worked with Swift on “Shake it Off” and “Blank Space” which cemented her rise into pop. Notably, her longtime friend and producer

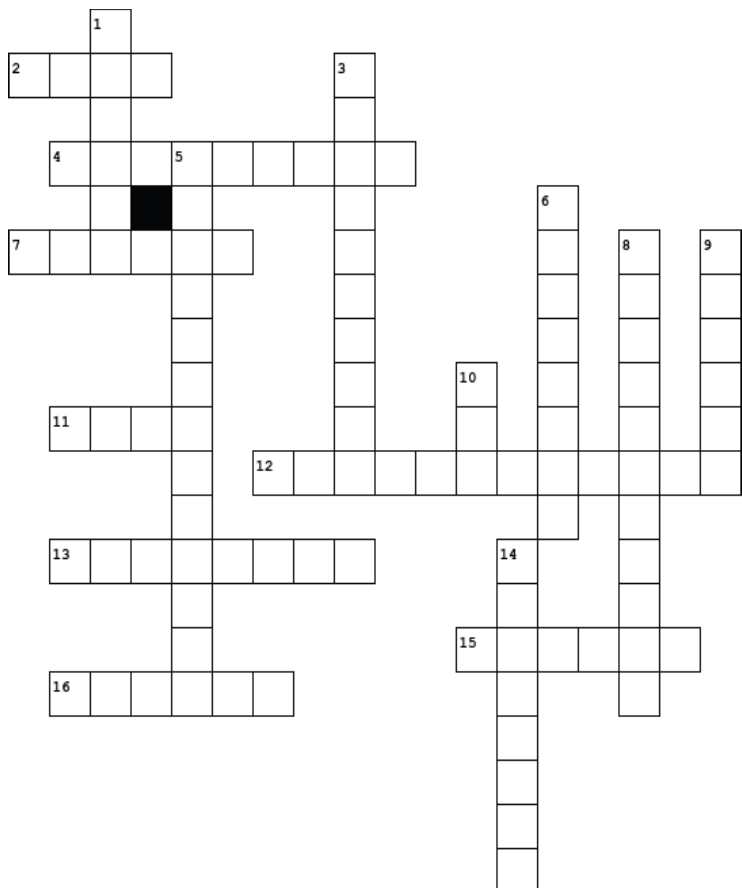
of “Reputation,” “Lover,” “Folklore,” “Evermore,” “Midnights,” and “The Tortured Poets Department,” Jack Antonoff, was absent from the list of producer credits. This absence explains a lot of the transition from lyrical, hard hitting, and oftentimes gut wrenching songs Swift has made with his help.

As a whole, the 13 songs on the album are to me, all more reminiscent of Swift’s albums “1989” and “Reputation,” which seems to be a direct result of her choice in producers. All the songs, with the exception of “Eldest Daughter,” highly regarded as disappointing from what fans expected with the title, have room to grow in popularity, but have already seen major boosts from social media platforms.

Almost one month after its release, the album is being accurately rated by the general population, receiving both criticism and praise, without leaning too hard in either direction. The diehard Swifties have stood with the album, though this is expected since Swift makes music in part for them, “[hoping] they get what they want” off their “wi\$h li\$t.”

Crossword

By JONAS GRAY



- Across**
- 2. ___ beans & squash
 - 4. stretching out the feast
 - 7. Popular way to prepare a popular root vegetable
 - 11. Pumpkin, apple, berry, oh my
 - 12. “To _____ house we go!”
 - 13. Second to last
 - 15. “We’re going back in time, to the first Thanksgiving, to get _____ off the menu.”
 - 16. ___ around a table

- Down**
- 1. collared ___
 - 3. Decorative horn
 - 5. The big date
 - 6. A Mayflower landed here
 - 8. Buoyant berries
 - 9. Natural sidewalk decor
 - 10. Less popular centerpiece
 - 14. Goes in pillows, and on birds

Word Search

Word Bank

- Apple
- Pumpkin
- Leaves
- Acorn
- Scarecrow
- Scarf
- Turkey
- Thanksgiving
- Mitten
- Spice
- Cranberry
- Grateful

WORDS GO FORWARD, BACKWARD, HORIZONTAL, VERTICAL, AND DIAGONAL



Made By CHARLOTTE KNEER

Fall Antics

By DASH ROREM

