



PHOTO BY VALENTINA VIANNA

View of Science Fair during set up for participants in first period before peer judging.

The annual Lane Tech Alpha Science Fair showcases student innovation and research

By SARAH ROJAS

This year's Alpha Science Fair brought together students from freshmen to seniors to present months of research, experimentation, and independent discovery. The event filled the cafeteria with poster boards, models, and data displays, but even more impressive were the stories behind the students' work.

Sophomore Mark Buenvenida explored a connection between medicine and artificial intelligence. His project focused on creating an AI model that predicts lung-cancer survival using CT scans, gender, and age.

"I've been really interested in AI specifically, the machine learning field," Buenvenida said. "I just happened to find a good data set

of lung cancer patients and their survival tools."

Though the science fair is required for freshmen and sophomores in the Alpha program, Buenvenida says he plans to continue participating in the next years. "Science fair is a really good research experience," Buenvenida said. "I would definitely consider looking more into the research field."

Freshman Zia Rabani went a completely different direction and studied behavioral science in the form of finance and psychology. Her project questioned how financial illiteracy and color psychology affect investment decisions in America.

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Exploring Science Fair

By VALENTINA VIANNA

The biannual Science Fair, regarded almost synonymously with the Alpha STEM program at Lane, takes about a whole semester worth of work, planning, and dedication. Senior Payman Rajaie, an Alpha student who won the recognition of "Alpha-tastic" for his first two years in the program, said: "I think [Science Fair] is an excellent platform for people to explore their passions or explore new fields."

Science Fair is a CPS wide event required for Alpha underclassmen. This year, 4 seniors and 4 juniors participated, while the rest of the participants were made up of the freshman and sophomore classes.

Throughout the course of preparing for each fair, students carry out their own individual research projects and experiment with topics of their choice, analyze their findings and construct 30+ paged papers on their research. Projects range in specificity and

include a wide variety of focuses, and can be experimental or design based. Students are in charge of designing their own experiments, and make extensive prototypes covering their choice from the 20 topic categories ranging from electronics to microbiology.

When asked if this process generates stress, Rajaie said that it absolutely does.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MS.HESSE

Lucy Young, Alpha STEM program chair, far left, photographed with the top three finishers of the science fair: Yairely Marchan, Riley Coomer, and Evelyn Mooney.

Curly hair: a mark of resistance, power, and beauty

By JULIA HICKSON

As nerdy, awkward Mia Thermopolis from "The Princess Diaries" finds out that she is not just a normal teenage girl but actually a princess, she undergoes a massive makeover. In this makeover, her glasses are removed and her messy, frizzy, unkept curls are tamed with a beautiful blowout.

As Mia removes her cap withholding her new look, her classmates gasp in astonishment at the sheer sight of beauty that is a girl with perfectly kept, conventional, straight hair.

But, why is this "clean" hair deemed as more beautiful than her natural curls?

Through centuries worth of racism, natural curls have been deemed as lesser than straight hair. As Africans were transported to America through the transatlantic slave trade, their natural curly hair became the standard of what was "unprofessional or dirty," according to Curl Bou-

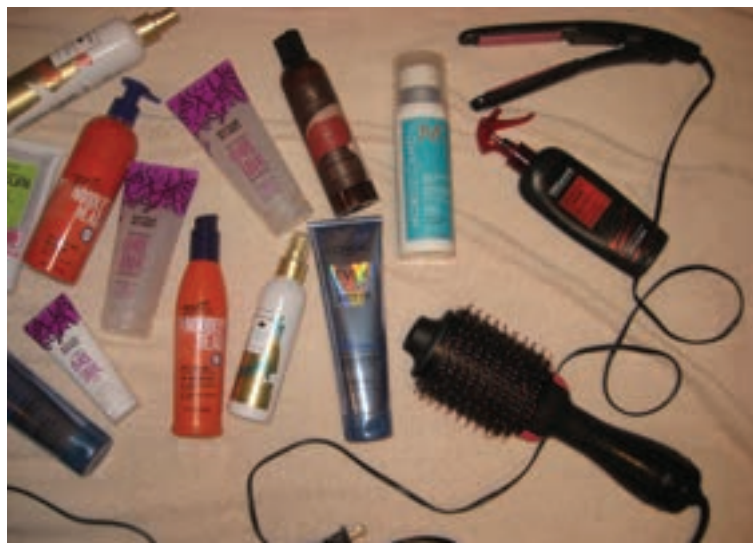


PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

A chaotic array of curly hair products alongside heat tools used for straightening hair.

tique, a specialized curly hair salon from Maine.

However, into the 1960s-70s in unison with the Black power freedom movements, wearing natural hair became more popularized as it was a sign of power and was associated with the Civil

Rights Act of 1964.

This era was unfortunately short lived into the 1980s with the new popularization of the "Jheri curl."

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Students gear up for Makers Lab Holiday Bazaar

By ELAINE NGUYEN

Some Makers Lab students made ornaments. Some made T-Shirts with heat transfer vinyl. Some heat-transferred a design onto a little zipper pouch, a makeup bag, or a tote bag.

The Makers Lab students were required to produce and sell items for the Makers Lab Holiday Bazaar for their final grade, for the first semester. The 8th Annual Makers Lab Holiday Bazaar is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 10 after school.

Amy Wozniak, one of the Makers Lab teachers said, "The Holiday Bazaar allows students to learn how to run a small business [as a group]. It allows them to use their creative ideas and put them into practice by creating really unique things in the lab, and then allows them to raise money for the computer science department, which they benefit from directly by being in the Makers class."

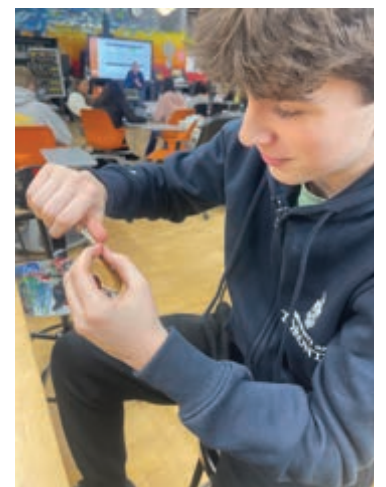


PHOTO BY ELAINE NGUYEN

Senior William "Liam" Minkov crafting an item during his 5th period Makers Lab class.

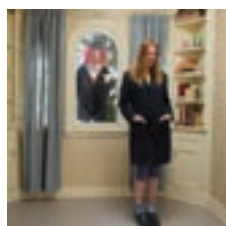
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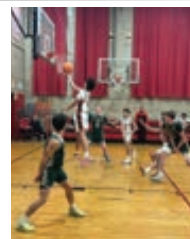
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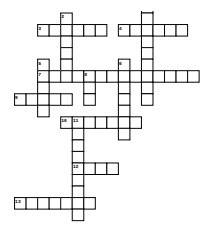
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Curly hair: a mark of resistance, power, and beauty



PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

A chaotic array of curly hair products alongside heat tools used for straightening hair.

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Jheri curl is a chemical treatment that many Black people did at the time to loosen their natural curls into a more conventional, wavy pattern and was famously worn by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie.

This once again was a short lived era as in the 2000s, a resurgence of the Natural Hair Movement was widely spread along social media. The movement was centered around Black people who wore their afro-textured hair in its natural coiled and curly state as well as in styles such as hair twists, braids, or dreadlocks.

One Lane student who wears her hair natural is senior Addy

Biggs. “It took me a while to get there, but I do like my hair,” Biggs said. “I had a hard time liking it because it was just so hard to manage, and it still is really hard to manage, but I figured out how to make it work.”

Despite the struggles women face with wearing their hair naturally, senior Novella Cage finds curly hair to be worth the hassle. “I feel so beautiful with curly hair. I feel like I can do so much cool stuff with it,” Cage said. “People always compliment me and I’m always so happy because I think it’s cool too, and I’m glad other people appreciate it.”

To Cage, her curly hair isn’t merely something beautiful on the outside as it also shares the

history of her family. “My mom is half black and my dad is a quarter Jewish and a quarter Greek, and so both of my parents and two of my grandparents have curly hair, and I think having curly hair is really cool because it’s a part of our history,” Cage said. “I’m very proud of my curly hair.”

While these students have been able to feel beautiful and content with their curls, many women in the workplace face struggles regarding their hair and being perceived as professional.

This hotly contested idea of one wearing their natural hair and whether or not it is professional leads into another question: what does it mean to be “professional?”

While Merriam Webster defines it as “exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace,” I looked further into the stigmas placed upon women to wear their hair a certain way in the workplace.

According to a study conducted by Harvard Business Review, “More than half of the Black women surveyed felt like they had to wear their hair straight in a job interview to be successful. Two-thirds reported that they had changed their hair for a job interview.”

Similarly, senior Angel Otis said she received pushback for having curly hair when she was younger. “I was always told that my hair was ‘nappy’ and stuff

like that, so it kind of made me ashamed,” Otis said.

The term “nappy” once again connects back to European enslavement of African Americans with the term deriving from the word “nap,” the fuzzy material that forms at the top of fabric. This term began being used derogatorily to refer to the hair of Black people as frizzy or unkempt similar to that of the fuzzy fabric, said NPR.

This pushback upon curly hair has also led to women feeling as if they are perceived as less than with their natural hair. “I do like [my hair] straight because I feel like I fit in more,” said junior Kashish Kranthi, “and it’s less of a hassle to deal with. I feel more confident and put together when I have it straightened.”

In terms of feeling beautiful, Kranthi also shared the struggles she has faced. “[Curly hair] makes me feel beautiful on occasion,” Kranthi said. “I’ve gotten so used to straightening it, that now I can only see myself with straight hair. It’s like I only feel pretty when I have my hair straight.”

Despite the constant pushback upon young women with curly hair for decades on end, especially Black women, the hair you are born with is always a part of you. Whether one decides to wear their hair natural or otherwise, it should be a choice of their own and not based upon societal pressures.

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Students gear up for Makers Lab Holiday Bazaar

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“The Holiday Bazaar does become a competition for the students, so we do give out prizes for the groups who have the most profit and we do that,” Wozniak continued. “It makes it a little more fun and engaging for them to be inspired to sell more.”

The students at Makers Lab have to figure out what they think people might want to purchase in-person or virtually in order to raise money. The two machines these students have learned to use at the time of preparing for the Holiday Bazaar were the laser machines and the silhouette Cameo machines.

“The silhouette Cameo machine can be used to make heat transfer vinyl so they can even make T-shirts,” Wozniak said. “They could heat transfer a design onto a little zipper pouch like a makeup bag or a tote bag.”

The grade for preparing for the Holiday Bazaar was based on how much creativity was used to design the products, as well as the complexity and the amount of detail presented onto them. The execution of making the products mattered for the grade.

Wozniak said the preparation for the Makers Lab Holiday Bazaar took over a month, including the time the intro project started for the students. She said the intro project that preceded the preparations for the Holiday Bazaar involved students making smaller items for a “pretend profit.”

“Once they have profit in the group, then they can start making

and buying materials for the bazaar project,” Wozniak said.

Senior Martin Villa and his group made ornaments to sell at the Makers Lab Holiday Bazaar. In order to make these products with wood, acrylic, and keyrings as materials, they used softwares on the computer, with the laser cutter machine making the products.

“I’d say I’m proud [of my group’s ornaments] because we made them and our ideas come to life,” Villa said.

Senior Jahir Miguel-Martinez and his group made a Christmas gnome inspired by Matryoshka dolls from Russia, using wood, paint, and acrylic as materials. His group used Adobe Illustrator to design the Matryoshka-inspired Christmas gnome, which was sent to the laser cutter machine to make the product.

Along with the gnome, there was a scannable Spotify quote on it that led the user to a Christmas playlist to get them into the holiday spirit.

Miguel-Martinez said, “We’re also going to make snowflake coasters, you know, more winter themed, so people can put their drinks on it.”

There were more ideas that came up by Miguel-Martinez’s group, showing that this group was creative in brainstorming new ideas, which can present a challenge.

“I think one of the main challenges was us coming up with the original idea because we originally had a lot of ideas, but we had to narrow it down a bit and then



PHOTO BY ELAINE NGUYEN

Junior Theo Streit-Hurh in the process of crafting an item during his 5th period Makers Lab class.

when we come up with those ideas, we had to come over with design as well, which is pretty challenging, but we were able to get it down,” Miguel-Martinez said.

In order to solve the challenge of having too many ideas, he and his group combined ideas.

“I’m pretty proud of my products because my group and I’ve been putting a lot of work into it,” Miguel-Martinez said.

He said the designs of the products looked “pretty cool,” and said he liked seeing his group work well together. A group with its outgoing members can have an opportunity to raise the most profit to win the competition, from selling their products that demonstrate their creativity and effort to raise money for the computer science department.

Alpha Science Fair showcases student innovation and research

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“A lot of people don’t understand what the stock market is, how it works and stuff like that, which causes a lot of misconceptions,” Rabani said.

With the use of a Kahoot quiz and red, green, and gray stock charts, she measured how color influenced people’s willingness to invest. Her hypothesis was partly supported as when charts appeared red, people avoided answering the question altogether. Rabani found it interesting to study people’s emotional response and color association in stock. She said she would enjoy returning to the fair in the future saying, “It’s a very unique thing not everyone gets the opportunity to do it.”

For sophomore Joey Li, the science fair was an opportunity to confront the growing health problem of antibiotic resistance. His project tested four herbal compounds: baicalein, quercetin, luteolin, and chlorogenic acid, alone and mixed them individually with the antibiotic amoxicillin, to see if they could inhibit bacterial growth.

“In the face of antibacterial resistance, which is a rapidly growing problem, we have to find new alternative ways other than antibiotics to inhibit bacterial growth,” Li said. Using disk-diffusion experiments, he found that baicalein, quercetin, and luteolin produced significant zones of inhibition, or areas where bacteria growth is prevented.

“This is great for a future development of drugs, for the control of prevention and control measures,” Li said.

Li plans to continue competing in the science fair in his junior and senior years. “I have a strong passion for science,” he said. “I like to work really hard and advance in my science.”

Sophomore Munia Abdelradi, who researched body language and emotional identification in neurodivergent individuals, approached science from a behavioral angle. She studied how different types of body language impacted neurodivergent people.

Yairely Marchan receives an award at the science fair.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GIANNE RIMANDO



PHOTO COURTESY OF MS. HESSE

Yairely Marchan, Riley Coomer, Payman Rajaie, and Jolie Boyke pose with their awards.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCAS ROSE

Jolie Boyke presents her science fair project to a younger student.

“I looked into what neurodivergency was, what types of body language there were, and specifically how neurodivergent people took body language and how they read emotions,” she said. The science fair helped her find out what she wants to major in and what college research would look like.

Freshman Edison Gong examined the relationship between population density and freshwater acidification. His research explored how acidification affects animals and how it occurs. He said he might return to the science fair if he had the right project and more time to complete them.

Senior Riley Coomer conducted ecological research on seasonal urban wetlands. She wanted to know if algae species in seasonal wetlands were unique or if they were simply reintroduced from river floods.

After collecting samples across multiple different watersheds and examining them under a microscope, she found that seasonal

wetlands host unique species compositions. Her findings show that wetlands operate independently from nearby rivers and emphasizes the need for ecosystem protection.

“This is important because for conservation efforts, it’s important to understand that there’s differences in ways to protect these ecosystems,” Coomer said.

Another senior, Yairely Marchan, investigated whether the compound emodin, which is released by the invasive buckthorn plant, could be absorbed by allomelanin, a form of plant melanin. Since many invasive species release harmful chemicals through allelopathy, understanding how to neutralize those substances could help restore ecosystems.

Marchan collaborated with Northwestern University to conduct this advanced lab and research work. “Over the summer, I did an internship with them. So it was just easy to get that connection,”

Marchan said. She also mentioned that she continued participating in the fair as she could use lab equipment and find meaningful research opportunities.

Marchan won first place in this year’s science fair, followed by Coomer and Evelyn Mooney, who designed a protective biodegradable packaging. They, along with the other top 15 contestants, will advance to the Regional Exhibition at Von Steuben High School on January 10th.

This science fair could not run without volunteers, teachers, and mentors. Alpha STEM Program deputy chair Michelle Loh, and several seniors including Anna Tataryn, Olivia Jones, Diego Landeros, Emily Ba, and Zoeh Olmedo-Muniz, were some who helped to guide the younger students and keep the event organized and running smoothly. Furthermore, Mrs. Lucy Young, the current Alpha STEM program chair, has contributed to the science fair for over a

decade.

Seniors described the many responsibilities they had, ranging from directing late arrivals to assisting with setup. Yet, they can also serve as mentors. “It’s a really nice thing to kind of go full circle and help out,” Landeros said. “When you were a freshman and sophomore those same mentors helped you out.”

Students typically begin researching at the start of the year, though some juniors and seniors continue multi-year projects. Freshmen spend nearly the entire school year learning how to conduct research, while older students often begin over the summer to prepare for the December science fair. Projects are evaluated by teachers, student judges, and guest judges based on the quality of their presentations, scientific writing, creativity, clarity, and research depth.

Beyond awards, many students say that the fair shapes their academic futures. Senior Emily Ba said participating helped her discover her future career.

“I did three years in a row of aerospace projects and discovered multiple fields within aerospace that I’m interested in,” Ba said. “That was really important for me because I’d never really seen a place to explore aerospace before [the science fair]. And that really gave me that opportunity to delve into that interest, which now I have love enough to major in it in any college I go to.”

The seniors also credited the Alpha program with connecting them to internship opportunities from cancer research at UIC to pediatric brain organoid studies at Northwestern. “Alpha just gives you those opportunities,” Landeros said. “It’s just a great aspect, [and] a great program for the community too.”

As the fair wrapped up, it became clear that its purpose extends beyond the projects displayed on the tri-fold boards. For many students, the science fair is where passions and futures begin to take shape.

Exploring Science Fair

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He pointed out that time management and dedication are important factors, but said the process can definitely be stressful. “If you really want to present something that is reaching its full potential, you never stop. You never stop,” Rajaie said. “And it induces stress in that you are constantly updating it, and you have to reread your language and your material and make sure that everything flows.”

But, students are made aware of all those around them available to provide a foundation for them throughout the school year. Sophomore Evelyn Mooney said, “Despite the challenges that we face during the process, there are several support systems from teachers, mentors, and sponsors,” which has proven helpful to many through what she described as a “long term process.”

Fellow sophomore Kaitlin Rebaya seconded that dedication is a requirement. “Science fair was definitely a difficult project to accomplish as there was many hours put aside outside of school to complete my experiment,” Rebaya said.

Nathan Nordlund, an Alpha English teacher said, “If you’re going to do it really well, you dedicate a lot of your extra time to it.” He added “Not just for the experimentation, but to the efforts that are made for the mathematical analysis and statistical analysis that they have been presenting.”

Yet, the time constraints on Science Fair seemingly both help preparation and simultaneously stress some. “I don’t like the stress of Science Fair mainly because I’m a big procrastinator,” said Alpha junior Olivia Tryggstad. “But I do appreciate the skills it has taught me, and in that case I am glad I did it.”

Rajaie also touched on the stress factor saying, “Since there’s no fixed answer to the question of what you’re studying, it’s just stress inducing; it never stops.”

But this stress, funnily enough, can be a stepping stone to success.

“Avoiding stress is never going to be productive,” Nordlund said. “I see students who are excellent at managing the

ir time, and I also see students who are not good at it, and I also see them getting better because of their experiences, and I think that’s how we learn, and that’s how we grow. And sometimes that’s painful.”

Jake Apple, a sophomore, said on the day of Science Fair, “I don’t want to do this next year because I don’t have to.” Though he still intends on staying in the program, Apple is planning to opt out once Science Fair is not a requirement

for him in order to have more free time.

According to Mooney, the December fair deadlines are tighter than those in May. Nonetheless, the deadlines and focused learning experience give lessons on both hyper specific topics and how to trouble shoot.

In recounting a conversation with one freshman about the troubles of collecting data, Nordlund said that part of the value of participating in Science Fair comes from combatting issues and learning time management, which oftentimes stems from trial and error.

“Her mistakes from the year one project will directly lead to improvements she will make on her second year project. This problem-solving process is really valuable to come across. Running up against the practical considerations, dealing with them, and growing as a result is a life skill that people will

always use.” Nordlund said when recalling the interaction.

The fair, which fell on Dec. 4 this school year, showcased many brand new topics with research compiled by driven students across grade levels of Alpha students. And while the process can be strenuous, Kaitlin Rebaya said she is looking forward to seeing the array of completed projects. “I’d say it was worth it in the end to see everything put together,” she said.

Teachers like Nordlund in the Alpha program, and others who bring their classes to help peer judges on Fair day, have much to anticipate, saying, My end goal is that they have something that they feel really proud of, that they put [good work] in front of judges and celebrate their learning.”

New Staff Spotlight Pt. 1



Heather Jaskowiak

Ms. Jaskowiak is a SECA (Special Education Classroom Assistant) in the cluster program. While this is her first year at Lane, it's her sixth year working as a SECA/paraprofessional. She's loving working at Lane and says she has a great relationship with her bosses and students. She's surprised by the positive work dynamic — she says everyone works together really well. She's originally from Michigan, but moved to Illinois with her wife in 2012. Outside of work, she loves doing crafts and decorating for holidays and parties; she used to own a wedding decorating business. Fun fact: She used to have chicken and ducks that she raised from babies.



Nicholas Skorin

Mr. Skorin is a freshman physical education teacher coming to Lane after two years at a different LTHS—Lyons Township High School in the southwest suburbs. He took on a role with the baseball coaching staff earlier this year, working with the boys' Frosh-Soph team, and plans to continue his Lane coaching career with the girls varsity water polo team this spring. "Students have been phenomenal," he said. "The best of the best. I can't complain about any of them."



Matthew Slusher

Mr. Slusher is a sophomore driver's education and sophomore P.E. teacher, he is also a varsity football coach. He's spent time working in the suburbs, but most recently taught freshmen and sophomores at Lincoln Park High School, where he also coached Boys Varsity Swimming, Girls Varsity Swimming, and Girls Water Polo. Mr. Slusher is also a Lane Tech alum! "Feels good to be back teaching at Lane," Slusher said. "It's pretty cool to be back home."



Aaron Lai

Mr. Lai is a SECA and also an assistant cross country coach. This is his first year at Lane for both coaching and working as a SECA, but he most recently worked at Walter Payton as a coach. He thinks working at Lane is awesome and finds the environment to be so supportive. He's surprised by the amount of students who attend Lane after seeing the amount of people that walk through the door each day.



Brittany Monaco

Ms. Monaco, a Chicago native, currently teaches English II and English III classes here at Lane. Before then, she spent six years at the De La Salle Institute in Bronzeville teaching all levels of English. Both schools, she says, feature a diverse student body, which she appreciates as a product of Chicago education herself.

By JILLIAN HAYES, ALANA NICHOLS, and HENRY LANDAZURI-MORTENSEN

The Lane Tech Democrat club's mission is to educate students on democratic politics

By ETHAN MAZZEO

Jackson Kochowicz and Benjamin Rivera want you to know who your congressional representative is.

"It's really surprising — if you go into an AP Gov class or an AP US History class, half the kids in there don't know who represents them," Kochowicz said. "And I just don't think that's right. I think kids should know."

The Lane Tech Democrats is a new club to Lane and is currently the only democratic club,

founded by seniors Rivera and Kochowicz. They are also a part of a larger group outside of Lane Tech called the High School Democrats of Illinois.

Rivera's long interest in politics led him into creating the club. "I've always been into politics, and I feel like it's such an important part of our lives," Rivera said. "There's no way to escape it, and I think that people need to see that more."

Kochowicz said he wanted to create the Lane Tech Democrats because he had become inspired

to educate students. "Our club focuses on civic engagement and making sure we back Democrats to get in these elected official spots," Kochowicz said.

Currently, the club has discussed what has happened within the ninth district of Illinois. "We as a club voted on the different people in that election, who we want to support and who we feel like is the best person, and we ended up endorsing a candidate from that race who we believe is the best," Rivera said.

The Lane Tech Democrats

help back these elected officials into their spots by building student connections to politics through field work. "Me and Ben are working on getting some of our students to lobbying workshops and to meet some elected officials at some really cool events," Kochowicz said.

This lobbying is possible due to their affiliate High School Democrats of Illinois which is a political organization that acts as an entry point for democratic politics for students in Illinois.

Stated on their website, the

members of the high school democrats work together "to advance the ideals of the Democratic Party, engage fellow students to become active within the local and national political system, and elect Democratic candidates to public office."

Overall, the Lane Tech Democrats' goal is to help people think more about politics.

"So whether you're a strict Democrat or Republican, it's an extremely safe space to talk about politics and to think in different ways," Rivera said.



A photo of the high school students from the LT Dems who went to a political lobbying workshop event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKSON KOCHOWICZ

LASA: an impactful Lane Tech community

By JILLIAN HAYES

Something as simple as a game of Loteria and being surrounded by the laughter and excitement of students with similar backgrounds and interests as oneself can create a meaningful impact, especially when stepping into a school with an overwhelming student body. It can be hard to navigate one's identity without feeling a sense of belonging or support. According to their co-presidents and sponsor, Lane Tech's Latin American Student Association (LASA) offers a space for Lane's Latino students to feel safe, welcomed, and supported.

"LASA is a space for students to feel connected to their culture in a school community, especially in a big school where it can be hard to find your people and connect with them," said junior and LASA co-president, Isabella Chavez.

LASA has hosted numerous events from social gatherings like dance lessons to important resources involving ICE safety and more. Spanish teacher and LASA sponsor, Juanita Mendoza, said that when students join LASA, they feel as if there is now someone there to help them, whether it be academically or socially and even outside of school.

Junior Julissa Gudino, also a LASA co-president, said that

LASA creates a deeper meaning for students. "I feel like a big part of it is representation; knowing that you can be Latino and still accomplish things especially in this big school," Gudino said. "It shows that we're here for a purpose."

While LASA does elect new executive board members every year, the club still offers opportunities for general members through their various events and workshops. "As a general member – you don't even have to be an executive board member or have leadership – they feel they've actually helped," Chavez said. "They made a difference and provided to communities. They're seen and they feel like they can have that space where they can be seen while they're also helping."

One of the club's most recent events was an ICE safety workshop. On Nov. 13, the club invited students from all over Lane to create pins in opposition to ICE and whistles with instruction cards with rhythmic patterns to blow into the whistle if ICE is nearby and/or taking somebody.

Mendoza said it was essential for LASA to include the entire school's contributions, and said it was very helpful as more than forty students attended the event. "Events like that really help back home," Mendoza said. "I think it was important to act quickly, be-

cause it was happening every single day."

Chavez explained spreading the word had become important to the club not only to help Latinos, but all students affected by ICE. Considering how close the recent ICE activity has been to Lane, LASA created infographics providing information on what students can do within their own communities regarding ICE. They also created safety classrooms for students who would prefer to avoid going outside. "It's one of our priorities and biggest thing that we want to be able to help and support students who are being affected by immigration and ICE being near them," Chavez said.

The club's co-presidents and sponsors said they make an effort to share resources through Instagram. This way, they can provide students with information quicker than a community text message. They have previously reposted "Rapid Response" Instagram pages or family hotlines that can be called if an individual notices something wrong. They also provide resources throughout the entire school, such as "Know Your Rights" cards and whistles in various classrooms, counseling offices, and the CCC.

Chavez, Gudino, and Mendoza all said that they want students to know LASA is a place that offers



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULISSA GUDINO

LASA presentation beneath various flags.

community and nourishes growth. "I want them to know that they're gonna grow as a student, but also as a whole person," Mendoza said.

Mendoza has been the sponsor of LASA since the club began about five years ago, and she says she has seen growth from students who have participated in the club throughout the years, some having carried on to joining already existing organizations like LASA in college, or even creating some of their own. Whether you're a board member, general member, or even just someone who has attended an event, "There's a lot to be proud of when you're part of LASA," Mendoza said.

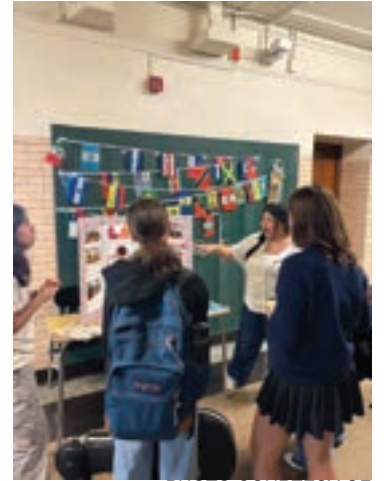


PHOTO COURTESY OF JULISSA GUDINO

Students participating in a game of Loteria

Running on empty: Lane Tech's sleep crisis

By IRELAND COSTELLO

Junior Rose Collins says she averages about 6 hours of sleep each night.

"The second I roll out of bed and open my eyes, I feel like a zombie," she said.

While many people may assume that the hardest part of high school is tests, homework, and navigating new relationships, for many Lane Tech students, the real problem is something quieter: getting enough sleep.

"It is the hardest thing just to

get myself to do basic tasks like brushing my teeth and driving to school," Collins said. "I just feel awful."

Junior Emma Shortlidge, a varsity Tennis Player says, "On average during the school week," Shortlidge said, "I would say I get about six hours of sleep every day." She and other students find that a busy schedule, packed with homework and extracurricular activities, is a major obstacle when it comes to trying to get to bed on time.

Shortlidge said that sports

make her nights a lot longer. "I'm on the Lane Tech tennis team, so practices went on really late, and then I had to come home and do homework. I go to bed late every day, which has been an issue."

According to a 2006 National Sleep Foundation poll, the organization's most recent study of teens' sleep, found that more than 87% of high school students in the U.S. get far less than the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep per night. This trend was described by a 2015 Stanford Medicine article as "a serious threat to their health,

safety and academic success."

Collins helped explain the connection she saw between sleep and her well being. "I feel like sleep is a reset; I feel energized and ready to start the day. It's especially a reset for my social battery. But when I don't get enough sleep, the reset just doesn't work." She said. Collins helped to reveal that exhaustion isn't just about falling asleep in class, it's much more.

Collins said sleep affects her relationships, attitude, and overall communication as well. "Sleep affects how I act around my friends too—I'm in a better mood and communicate better when I'm rested," Collins said. Similarly, Shortlidge said that the lack of sleep often puts her in a bad mood which can result in strains on her relationships.

Not only is sleep a physical issue for these students, but also a social-emotional one. "When I don't get enough sleep, I'm not in a good mood and it's really hard to focus," said junior Isabel Sagami. "I feel like I'm falling behind, and that affects my interactions with friends."

Bad sleeping habits are not just a routine, but merely the new normal for these students. This has caused Sagami to turn to other coping techniques, like caffeine. "I feel so much better on days when I'm naturally awake, not when I'm running on caffeine," she said. Sagami is aware of this "sleep issue" and admits that nothing really compares to a full night of sleep.

So, the real question is: what can actually change? Sagami,

Shortlidge, and Collins all have ideas on later start times, adjusted schedules, and less homework, and experts agree with them.

A 2022 meta-analysis from the American Academy of Pediatrics, which used data from 1.7 million students, concluded that "later school start times are associated with longer sleep duration, less daytime sleepiness, and improvements in a range of developmental outcomes for adolescents." They also stated that a delayed start time of 30 minutes is significantly more aligned with the biological sleep rhythms of adolescents.

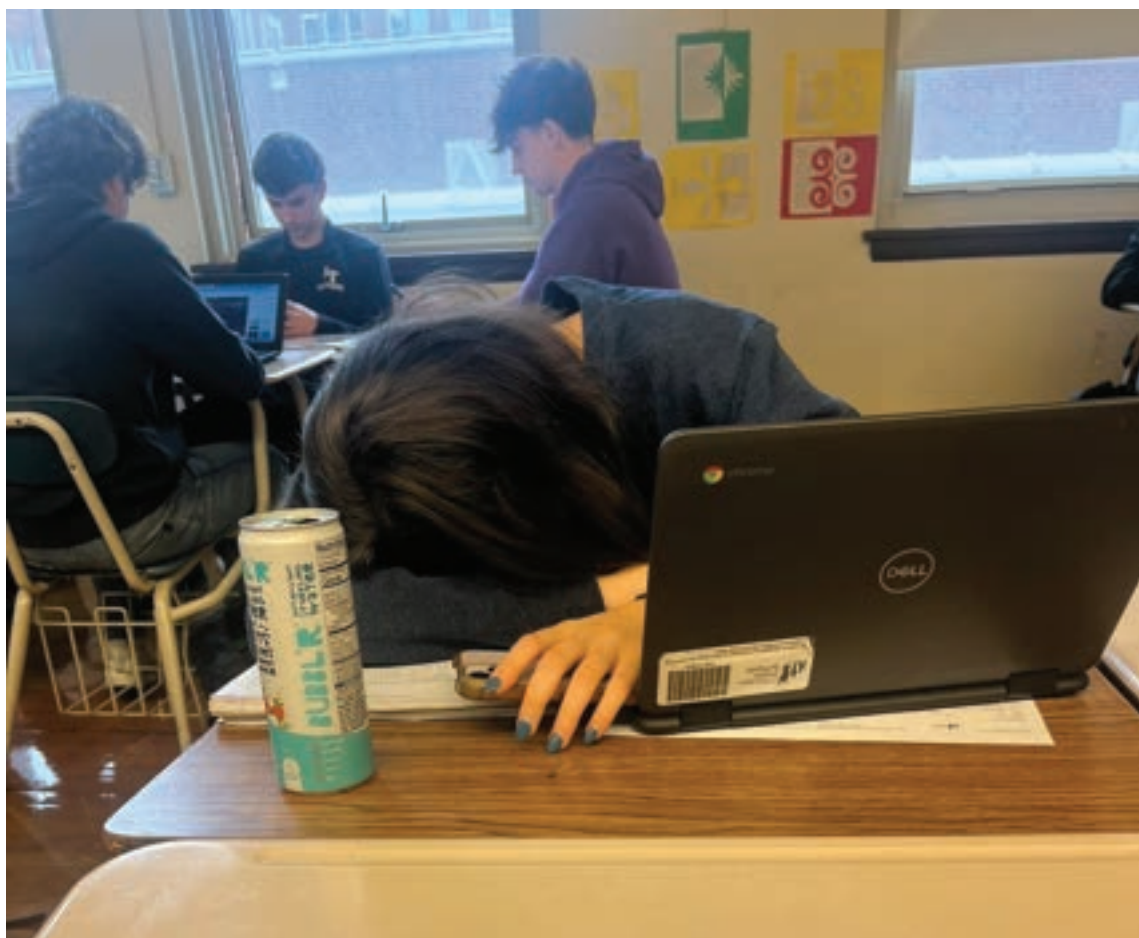
Due to data like this many states are starting to take action, particularly California.

A California law was put into effect in 2019 stating that no high school was allowed to start before 8:30 a.m., solely due to awareness of the drastic negative effects from lack of sleep.

While it may seem reasonable to think that weekends can be your "catch up time" this is not the case.

A Stanford Medicine article based on California's new start time mandate, written by Katie Chen, explores a common sleep misconception.

While teens may think they can catch up on lost hours of sleep over the weekend, it's not likely they can. "Research has shown it can take up to four days to recover from one hour of sleep deficit and up to nine days to eliminate sleep debt, which is the cumulative effect of the hours of sleep your body needs."



Student sleeping during advisory with energy drink on desk.

PHOTO COURTESY OF IRELAND COSTELLO

Israel-Hamas conflict affects religious identity across an ocean

By CHARLOTTE KNEER

The controversy regarding the strip of land in the Middle East sometimes called the “Holy Land” has existed for as long as Jerusalem has been a religious capital of three major faiths. Recently, the war between the Jewish state of Israel and the Islamic militant group Hamas in Palestine has brought the complicated issue into the scrutinizing public eye once more.

Amid massive criticism of both warring nations, corporate boycotts, and complicated political policies, the significance of this issue can feel far away. But despite the fighting being thousands of miles from the U.S., both Jewish and Muslim Americans are feeling the effects, even at Lane Tech.

When the war began on Oct. 7, 2023, the United States was moving into a major election year. Con-

tention grew over Israel, as did the importance of the issue in the eyes of many American voters. Most importantly here, however, was the rise in discrimination against both Jewish and Muslim Americans.

Jewish sophomore Sloane Lattin said she’s never felt particularly safe expressing her Jewish identity. Further, when major world events put religion into the spotlight, Lattin says, “It affects how I show it, it affects how I interact with showing my religion around people.”

An article published by PBS News on Oct. 6 cited a Pew Research survey done in 2024 saying that 56% of Jewish Americans were modifying their behavior to avoid one of three actions, including actions that would publicly broadcast their Jewish identity. This number is up from 38% of individuals three years ago.

The same 2024 survey found

that publicly, “concern about discrimination against Muslims was about as high as concerns about discrimination against Jews.”

There had been a surge in anti-Muslim language in New York preceding their mayoral election, where Democratic front-runner Zohran Mamdani stood to become the city’s first Muslim mayor. Far-right conspiracy theorist Laura Loomer posted a multitude of comments following Mamdani’s win with one reading “America is about to become a very violent country, Mamdani will encourage Muslims to commit political assassinations to acquire power and silence critics.”

Lane Tech junior Sara Cenano said she generally feels safe expressing her Muslim religious identity, but partially attributes that to not being “easily identifiable” as Muslim.

“I think it would be an issue for other people who do wear the hijab especially after like other events such as 9/11, like a lot of people were really scared to show it off.”

Sophomore Joey Weiss, who is Jewish, said the war hasn’t had an effect on his sense of safety at Lane. “No it hasn’t affected me, I don’t think, like that,” Weiss said.

Despite the rise in discrimination and widespread fear of violence, Cenano said she was more inclined to talk about being Muslim since the war started.

“I feel like a lot of the events that I do now are more like catered towards, like showing off, that I’m Muslim, because I think that’s really important during these times,” Cenano said.

Cenano, Lattin, and Weiss all said they’d consider themselves to be very connected to their respective religions, even when express-

ing it can be a challenge.

“I feel more comfortable posting online,” Lattin said, compared to showing her Jewish identity in person. Cenano partially echoed this sentiment, saying, “I think it’s just easier to express it online.”

Lattin said she has felt more connected to her religion since the war began. She went on to say she’s talked more about being Jewish in general. “It just comes up more frequently,” Lattin said.

War has devastating effects on everyone involved, changing lives and affecting the identities of people across an ocean. But despite the tough times experienced by a lot of Muslims, Cenano said it’s made her more involved.

“I feel like during this time I’ve also been going a lot more to the Mosque, like my Mosque, and I think I’ve just been showing up a little more,” Cenano said.

Illinois State Board of Education wins ACT fee waivers

By HANNAH SPERLING

Less than four months after the Illinois State Board of Education entered a contract to provide and mandate the ACT in high schools statewide, the ISBE realized they had made a mistake drawing the terms of the contract: the ACT would not provide fee waivers for low income students to submit the scores of tests taken in high school to colleges.

Erin Dreisbach, the College and Career Coach at Lane Tech, said that she first noticed this issue in October when the fee waivers she had issued to students completing their college applications were not working.

“I flagged this, talked to some people higher up than me at the Illinois State Board of Education, and also in CPS,” Dreisbach

said, thus beginning a weeks-long process of renegotiation with the ACT.

Dreisbach, the College and Career Coach at Lane Tech, said that this came as a surprise to officials across the state of Illinois, because this had not previously been an issue with the SAT.

“For the last five years, we’ve taken the SAT as part of the school day,” Dreisbach said. “When the SAT was done during the school day, we could give low-income students fee waivers to send their test scores for the tests they took during the school day forever. I even sent them during the summer.”

In June of 2024, however, this contract with the SAT came to an end, allowing the state to reevaluate which college admissions exam vendor they preferred.

Offering a science section and a more highly rated testing expe-

rience at lower costs than the SAT, the ACT exam seemed to be the favorable option, and was awarded a new deal with the ISBE — notably omitting what had come to be seen as standard provisions for low income students.

Explaining, Dreisbach said, “Every student can do score sends immediately after taking an ACT. You get your score, I think, and you have two weeks or something to send it. But low-income students cannot send that score again additional times for free. They have to spend \$20 per school per score, which really adds up for low-income students as they navigate the process or they tend to change their plans more during the summer.”

For instance Dreisbach explained, students attending city colleges without fee waivers to send ACT scores may have had

to take additional placement tests at each college, an option which could also become costly.

The ACT website states that qualifying for a fee waiver means “You can send additional ACT score reports for free to colleges and/or scholarship agencies at any time during your college search process. Your fee waiver covers one report to your high school and up to six college choices. After registration, you can request unlimited score reports for free.”

However, the website failed to specify that only students who take the national version of ACT outside of school would qualify for these waivers, no matter how helpful they can be for students.

Senior Emily Valova, who submitted SAT scores, said that her college application process benefited from policies granting fee waivers.

“Having a waiver really helped me because I didn’t have to worry about the financial aspect, especially because I got a fee waiver for a lot of things, like taking the SAT, submitting the SAT, all of that. So I think it just took away the financial burden,” Valova said.

Due to the advocacy of Ms. Dreisbach and educational officials throughout Illinois, the ISBE ultimately won out, becoming the first state board of education in the nation to convince ACT to provide score-send fee waivers for those who qualify.

Senior Dax Kato said that in recent weeks, he was able to work with his counselor to successfully obtain this waiver — a crucial step in the direction of achieving equitable access to higher education for all high school students.

Caffeine consumption grows while understanding falls behind

By SAMIRA SOORYA

Junior Isabel Sagami is a daily caffeine drinker, similar to countless teenagers.

“It’s easy to start one day because everybody’s drinking all these fun drinks like Alanis and Celsius,” Sagami said. “Then you just want to try one, and then realize, why would I not be drinking these and getting energy from a bottle?”

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), around 73% of children and teenagers consume caffeine on any given day.

Junior Mia Pyka said she started drinking caffeine at the start of high school. “I really needed the extra boost to get through the day,” Pyka said.

Similarly, Sagami’s caffeine intake began freshman year. “I used to get a Celsius every day in the morning, and then it kind of just went up from there,” Sagami said.

Junior Brooke Schneider said she believes that caffeine culture is extremely normalized for many teenagers. Despite the common trend of caffeine use, Sagami says

that she does not know a lot about the effects of caffeine.

With the amount of caffeine consumed by teens, education and awareness on the severity of the effects of caffeine addiction is highly unaddressed. There is a lack of education and a spread of misinformation.

Schneider said her mother tells her that it causes cancer. Pyka said, “I’ve heard that it stunts growth, but I don’t know if that’s true or not.”

Those are both long-standing myths and misinformation about caffeine. Caffeine is not a carcinogen, according to the American Cancer Institute. Also, it does not stunt growth, according to the Cleveland Clinic. The increase in caffeine consumption is far ahead of the awareness and education of consumers, as well as researchers and scholars.

Since the early 2000s, there has been an increasing trend in energy drink consumption, and energy drink sales are six times higher than they used to be. There has also been double as many caffeine related visits to the emergency

room, according to the CDC.

“Alanis are definitely centered towards teens and stuff, so it’ll be very promoted towards our age group,” Schneider said.

Marketing also plays a big role in the growth of caffeine culture. Many energy drinks are packaged and advertised to appeal to a younger audience. According to Torrence Memorial Hospital, Dr. Rhea Matthews said, “Energy drinks and coffee-based beverages are being marketed like candy — colorful, trendy names, celebrity tie-ins. They’re placed where teens will see them, just like sugary cereals at kid-eye level. It’s intentional.”

Despite the increase in ER visits, caffeine toxicity in young adults is mainly a result of ingesting greater amounts of caffeine along with alcohol and drugs, according to the CDC. But the rules and regulations around energy drinks are both understudied and underregulated, according to Torrence Memorial Hospital. The caffeine content of energy drinks is not currently regulated by the FDA, due to the stimulant being considered dietary supplements, according to the



PHOTO BY SAMIRA SOORYA

Lane Tech student selects from a variety of energy drinks

CDC. Caffeine is considered a stimulant drug — it is the most commonly used drug in the world, according to the National Insti-

tutes of Health. Habitual overusers of caffeine can develop caffeine dependence, which is considered a clinical disorder.

Continued on Page 7

Your digital footprint

By FAITH GALIK

When tossing posts up on Instagram, Twitter, or Tiktok, do you consider a future employer when your finger looms over the post button? These posts and your overall internet presence might be more significant than you realize.

Your digital footprint is composed of the actions you take on the internet including posts, comments, searches, and more. These are all tied to your name and if researched, can be used to assess things like your identity and behavior.

Digital footprints are accessible to the public; one could research their own for fun, but surveys have found that they are additionally used in more serious situations.

Kaplan, an educational service company, conducted a survey in 2023 and found that 67% of col-

lege admission officers believe that "checking out applicants' social media posts on apps like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, X, and Threads to learn more about them is 'fair game' to help them make decisions about who gets in."

When thinking about the kinds of posts you have on your accounts, do you feel confident that a college recruiter would be fond of it?

In a press release found on the Kaplan website, Christine Lilley, Kaplan's executive director of college admissions programs, said that admissions officers do take social media into consideration.

"Our research additionally shows that when admissions officers do visit applicants' social media pages that they are much likelier to find something that negatively impacts their chances

of getting in than helping them." said Christine Lilley.

Not only is this present in college recruiting, but in workplace hiring. Computer Science and Data Science teacher Daniel Stone said, "If you say something that a company disagrees with, they are not obligated to ignore that when they consider hiring you."

In a 2023 survey done by Resume Builder, they found that 74% of hiring managers say they use social media to screen candidates. Additionally, the survey revealed that 85% of those who screen using social media have passed on candidates due to information obtained.

Senior Adna Sero doesn't consider her digital footprint. "Before I post things, I obviously make sure that it's appropriate for it to be public," said Sero. Similarly, referring to her digital footprint, se-

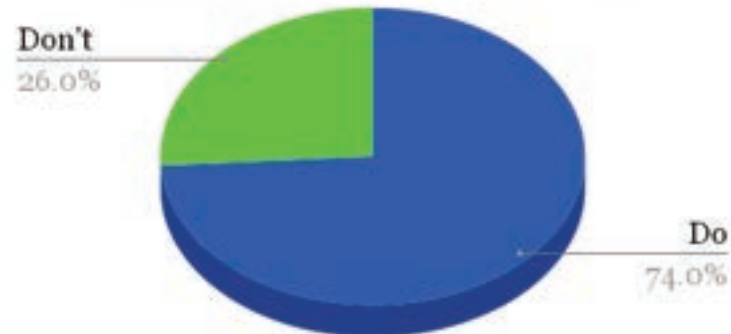
nior Bridget Smith said, "I maybe think about it twice a year."

Whether it's posting an opinionated Tweet or pictures on your Instagram from your weekend, remind yourself of all the eyes

of importance possibly viewing these publications.

Stone said that a general rule of thumb is, "Would you say it in person? Would you feel comfortable being associated with that?"

Hiring managers that use social media to screen candidates



GRAPH MADE BY FAITH GALIK

Source: Resume Builder

Public funding staggers post-shutdown: Lane Tech's response

By NIANI DARDEN

This year marks the seventh year anniversary of the Lane Tech food pantry. Culture and Climate director Gabriela Escobar has made it her mission to provide essentials to those in need. When the federal government went into shutdown, Lane Tech's established food pantry saw a change in quantity, as individual students sought for services to provide for their families as well.

As Democrats and Republicans in the federal government debated, an email was sent to students on Oct. 28, as Escobar announced the creation of a confidential food service program.

"As soon as I mentioned it, they were already starting to ask for additional donations because of the SNAP benefits being suspended," Escobar said. "And then

in terms of identifying who needed it, I don't ask. I just put it out there, and whoever wants to take advantage of it can."

With the help of the Lane Tech Alumni Association, she has organized food and clothing drives to support low-income families. Overall, the recent government shutdown left families financially vulnerable and in need of assistance.

From Oct. 1 to Nov. 12, the U.S. federal government went into a nationwide shutdown after a budget impasse between Democrats and Republicans. The budget deadlock meant many "non-essential" federal employees were left without pay, disrupting the lives of millions of Americans.

TSA agents, judicial branch staff, Coast Guard members, and other public safety workers were

required to report to their jobs without pay, facing potential termination if they took unauthorized time off. Agencies that rely on continuous staffing suffered from setbacks as airport lines grew and emergency responses slowed.

Social welfare programs also endured partial suspensions along with food and drug services, leaving the public at risk for health issues. SNAP benefits faltered, routine FDA inspections were delayed, and the Women, Infants, and Children and Nutrition program (WIC) alerted families about reduced clinic operations.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides monthly benefits through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to support low-income households, serving citizens since 1964.

According to CNBC, the suspension of EBT/SNAP benefits left approximately 42 million Americans—22.3 million of them families—at risk of food insecurity and struggling to buy groceries.

Chicagoans immediately felt the effects in their city. Pilsen Food Pantry has been serving families since 2018. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, the pantry saw new faces emerge as the crisis continued. "We saw it in the weeks leading up to it. More people came in because they were worried about not having enough

food, so they were tending to stock up particularly on items that they aren't always popular," a faculty member stated.

Delays in social welfare services created financial shortcomings on families going into the holiday season, raising the likelihood of food insecurity. Families who once relied on government assistance faced new uncertainty.

On the first day of the shutdown, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) issued a statement denouncing the White House's actions. "The Trump administration and their congressional allies are playing political games at the expense of everyday people," the Union said. Following the shutdown, the CTU worked with CPS schools to share resources and inform the public of their rights through the union's website.

"We want to bring joy back to our classrooms and create a better school day for all students," the CTU said. As CPS schools search for ways to help students and their families meet their needs, Lane Tech has utilized their own methods to support the community.

The House voted to end the government shutdown on Nov. 12, making it the second-longest government shutdown in American history, beating the initial 35-day record in 2019 during President Donald Trump's first term. Congress reached the decision to create a temporary bill eligible up

to Jan. 1, and pay partial compensation to a portion of workers who missed pay during the impasse.

As low-income students and teachers face direct challenges, Lane Tech shows effort in trying to provide safe communities to their students. Dean Martin has worked for years with students, helping Lane Tech students navigate personal challenges.

"I think continuing to have honest conversations about what they're going through, not trying to provide an instant solution, but to empathize with one another, have compassion, and then also reach out and let us know how we can actually help encourage one another through it," Martin said.

Starting Feb. 1, Chicago will enforce new rules that require adults ages 18-64 to show proof of work, volunteer for hours monthly, or endure training in order to continue to receive SNAP/EBT installments. This was a direct order from the federal government post shutdown. On the City of Chicago website, it stated that "over 340,000 Illinoisans are at risk of losing benefits and meals on their tables if they cannot demonstrate that they meet work requirements or qualify for an exemption."

As new financial shifts come into fruition and the holidays begin, Americans cautiously prepare changes that have yet to come.



PHOTO BY NIANI DARDEN

"Be Kind" sign outside of Gabriella Escobar's food pantry located in room 127.

Caffeine consumption grows while understanding falls behind

Continued from Page 6

Abuse of caffeine can cause behavioral and physiological effects similar to dependence on other addictive drugs, according to the NIH.

While these are examples of long term effects, there are fewer extreme short term effects, including spiking the body's natural stress response. According to Cleveland State University Clinic, sleepiness is a result of a buildup of the compound adenosine in the brain. Adenosine slows down nerve cell activity, which causes the tired feeling. Caffeine binds to receptors in the brain so that it

cannot sense the adenosine. This blocks feelings of drowsiness, but increases nerve cell activity. This causes the brain to stress, as it assumes an emergency is occurring so it releases adrenaline and sugar, causing a boost of energy.

This cycle creates the addictive aspect of caffeine. Once the buzz wears off, the body becomes fatigued and depressed, facing caffeine withdrawals. It can create cycles of anxiety and poor sleep, where the consumer would then reach for more caffeine. It is easy to get caught up chasing the energy boost that these drinks give you according to Torrence Me-

morial.

"I think that once you have it, you gotta keep having it, 'cause then you get yourself in the mindset, and you're, like, oh, I need this now," Schneider said.

For adults, daily doses of caffeine up to 400mg are considered safe, but can create dependence and mild side effects such as anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, irritability, muscle twitches/tremors, agitation, and irregular heart rates, according to the NIH.

"When I'm having heartburn or my heart is racing, I get scared that's the energy drinks," Sagami said. "And then I'm like, oh my

God, I cannot get them again."

Growing teen bodies are often more sensitive to the effects of caffeine. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry recommends ages 12-18 do not exceed 100 - 200mg per day.

While caffeine consumption comes with side effects, sometimes students find that a boost of energy is necessary to get through a busy day. "I think so many teens rely on caffeine because it's so hard with all the work and late nights we have," Pyka said. "We don't have a lot of hours to sleep to be energized for the day."

When caffeine is consumed

in a controlled way, it can help with alertness and cognitive function, endurance and exercise, and boosting overall mood, according to the American Medical Association. The issue is not caffeine itself. It is the growth in consumption without education and knowledge following.

For many Lane students, caffeine is a common part of their lifestyle and culture. As Pyka said, "I just don't know a lot about the effects, but I feel like a lot of teens think they need it just to get through school, and it's just very normalized."

A crafty and thoughtful approach to gift giving



By SOPHIE WU

As the holiday season approaches, the rush of gift shopping comes faster than the flurries of snow and bites of cold air. But instead of searching for hours for a perfect gift in jam-packed mall courts and worrying about whether certain items are in stock, there are some simpler alternatives that might prove to be even more thoughtful than just another store-bought item.

Embroidered or patchwork hoodies

For the comfy friend, a hoodie with a cute embroidery or patchwork design might be the way to go.

These styles are completely customizable, and it would be fun to sew on some symbols or words that might remind you of that person or your friendship.

You could look into short song lyrics or quotes to sew on; and you can even add some colorful details on the pockets, sleeves, and hood.

You can also pick out different patterns and colored threads to use while crafting your design.

You could opt for a big graphic on the front, or a small corner front design with a larger one on the back too.

This way, they can wear your comfy present whenever they feel like it while remembering the person who had given it to them!

Just remember to ask them for which size hoodie they might wear before you begin.

CD mixtape

For the avid music lovers, who also conveniently happen to own a CD player or have one in their car, a CD mixtape would be an amazing gift!

If you have the supplies and resources, you could burn the CDs yourself, or you can find shops on Etsy that can make them for you; and I would also suggest getting a CD for yourself if you have a way to play it.

By loading the CD with songs that remind you of your guys' friendship, this mixtape can prove to be extremely thoughtful while cranking out some fun tunes for those late night car rides or homework cram sessions.

You can even make a tracklist so they can see which songs you've included.

But just be sure to clarify whether they have a CD player at all before you get them a disc.

Annotated book

As a reader and book lover myself, I've given and received a decent amount of annotated books now, and they're some of my favorite gifts I've gotten. Just grab some annotation tabs, pens, and highlighters that match the color scheme of the book cover and get to reading!

It could be a book you've already read, or one that you read for the first time so your notes in the margins reflect your genuine thoughts

upon reading for the first time. And you can even leave a cute little note on one of the first few pages of the book for them and doodle where there are chapter breaks!

Either way, an annotated book is an incredibly thoughtful gift as it almost feels like you're reading and talking to that person simultaneously, seeing their inner thoughts about the book making it all the more meaningful.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

Gifted annotated books featuring "Beach Read" by Emily Henry and "Nothing Like the Movies" by Lynn Painter.



PHOTO BY FAITH GALIK

A patchwork hoodie Faith Galik made for Sophie Petrucci for a Zach Bryan concert with his song lyrics on the back.



PHOTO BY JUDE HIRSCH

A CD mixtape Julia Hickson gifted Jude Hirsch with the tracklist included and a beautifully drawn cover.

The Museum of Us

A creative gift for the sentimental friend would have to be a mini art gallery! By finding some tiny, decorative gold photo frames, a shadow box, superglue, and some mini people figurines online, you can put together a super cute gift that looks like a small scale art museum with portraits of you both

hanging from the walls.

The little figurines would also serve to make it look like museum goers passing by and observing your photos together!

This mini museum can be used as decor to give their room a little more character packed with meaningful sentiment.

Movie scratch-off poster

For the movie lovers, a scratch-off poster would be a spectacular present! You could compile a list of movies that you would like to recommend, that were mentioned before in conversation, or even referenced in books.

When my cousin and I read "Better than the Movies" by Lynn Painter, my cousin made a scratch-off poster of all of the movies ever

referenced in the chapters and I'm still working my way through the list.

This creative gift might even make them more inclined to try watching new movies, especially if they're a chronic re-watcher like I am; and it makes them feel rewarded for completing another movie as they can go and scratch off another one off their list.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE WU

A "Better Than the Movies" themed movie scratch-off poster with every movie referenced in the book and its sequel.

DIY calendar

For the organized friends who like to plan out their days, a fun idea for them could be a DIY calendar which is a mix between a standard calendar and a personalized scrapbook.

You can print out images of you two and your friends to put as the covers for the different months, and you can even doodle on the sides and create whatever kinds of fun monthly designs you'd like.

You can try drawing the month names in different colors and fonts, decorate the months with their own color scheme, and even draw the lines and write the numbers for the dates and days of the week.

Not only is this gift super cute, but it's also very useful, and just think that every time they cross another day off their calendar or add another appointment, they'll see all the photos of you two together!



PHOTO BY MAIA KHETANI

A calendar gifted to Maia Khetani with collages of photos of her and her friends together as the month's cover image.

A nostalgic winter watchlist



Paramount Global



Disney



Disney



Paramount Global

By JULIA HICKSON

With the holidays rapidly approaching, I feel myself quickly reverting to my younger self in terms of the content I wish to consume. Being raised on Disney and Nickelodeon TV shows and movies, these are the ones that I remember most fondly from my childhood. I have created a watchlist of my most nostalgic media to watch so that everyone can feel the holiday vibes this December.

iChristmas

iCarly: Season 2, Episode 7

In December of 2008, *iCarly* released its first Christmas episode, “iChristmas.” In this episode, Carly’s older brother, Spencer, who is an artist, welds a metal Christmas tree to celebrate the holidays; this unconventional tree catches fire and burns all of the presents underneath it, including all of the gifts that Carly bought.

In her fit of anger towards her brother, Carly makes a wish for a “normal brother.” In a shocking turn of events, her wish comes true from a Christmas angel and

she is allowed a glimpse into a life where she has a “normal” brother. As she sees how different her life would be without her wacky brother, she begins to regret ever making this wish.

In the end, Carly’s life is switched back to normal and she becomes grateful for her brother despite his annoyances, but it is not without a struggle—including chicken wings—that Carly is able to get her life back.

This episode has become a classic in my family that is rewatched yearly as its comical antics allow for my siblings and I to drift back into our childhood.

Good Luck Charlie: It's Christmas!

The Duncans are taking a family trip to visit their grandparents in sunny Palm Springs, California to escape the cold of Colorado. However, the oldest daughter, Teddy, wants to go on a trip to Florida for spring break with her best friend, Ivy.

In order to show her parents that she is ready to travel on her own, when offered a free ticket if she takes the next flight to Palm

Springs due to over booking, Teddy jumps at the offer. However, her mom is not so fond of the idea, and they are both forced to leave the flight. This proves to be an issue as there are no flights to Palm Springs until after Christmas.

This tasks the Duncan girls with finding their own way to meet the rest of the family. They traverse through snow, losing their luggage and performing to get money for their travels. Through all of the chaos, the family is drawn closer together and they are able to spend a special Christmas together.

This movie is a heartwarming film best enjoyed with the whole family. As the Duncans face hardship after hardship, it reveals that in the end, anything is possible with the support of one’s family.

Cloud 9

In the 2014 film starring Dove Cameron and Luke Benward, Will Cloud experiences a traumatic accident while attempting to do a snowboarding trick he invented called the “Cloud 9,” cleverly named after himself. He ended

up severely injured, halting his career and leading him to work at his family’s dog kennel.

As Kayla Morgan, a fellow snowboarder, and her boyfriend Nick were sledding, they lost control and while Nick jumped off, he left Kayla alone to crash into a historic sign and break Will’s sled (which they stole). Due to the damage Kayla causes, she pays back the family by working at the kennel.

Kayla and her boyfriend break up following the incident and Kayla learns that she is not the amazing snowboarder she has always been told she is. So, Kayla asks Will to help her train for a competition, eventually getting him to oblige.

With the movie soundtrack including original music such as “Cloud 9,” sung by Cameron and Benward, this has become a nostalgic favorite of mine. Set in the wintertime, it is the perfect time to grab a cup of hot chocolate and rewatch this childhood classic.

Christmas Who? SpongeBob SquarePants: Season 2, Episode 8

Sandy Cheeks, a squirrel who lives underwater with her fish friends, decorates her tree dome with colorful lights. To Spongebob, unfamiliar with Christmas traditions, he becomes panicked.

Sandy is shocked that Spongebob doesn’t know about Christmas and informs him of the legend of Santa Claus. The idea of Santa excites Spongebob and he informs the other town members of this mystical man.

The whole town bands together to await the arrival of Santa as they gather around a lit tree singing the words “Santa’s coming tonight tonight.”

This singing continues on until the morning as they all realize Santa never came. As the town is nearly ready to give up, the usually grumpy Squidward has a change of heart and tears his home apart in order to provide gifts to all of the Bikini Bottom citizens.

This episode perfectly encapsulates the giving spirit of the holidays. As Squidward was initially opposed to the idea of Santa, when he saw how sad his community was at the lack of a visit from this mythical man, he sprung into action to make others happy, in the true Christmas spirit.

The Duffer brothers have done it again (spoilers ahead)

By SOPHIE WU

Following the catastrophe that ripped up the seams of the earth at the end of Season 4, we’ve now been launched back in time to Hawkins, Indiana during the fall of 1987.

The first of three parts of “Stranger Things” Season 5 kicks off fast as there is a clear time jump between the previous season and this one, skipping ahead possibly months later to a new reality the citizens of Hawkins must assimilate into.

The once torn up streets of the town have been smoothly banded up with metal plates that cover every gate to the Upside Down, and those locations have been heavily guarded by military personnel.

Some of the events from the former seasons have also been distinguished as we see Max is still in her coma, and Dustin is

still standing up for Eddie, whose character died last season.

There are even some character parallels when it comes to the way some of them are styled. For example, I’ve noticed that Dustin’s hair has grown out to almost resemble what Eddie’s used to look like. And Nancy’s clothing in some scenes look like the iconic outfit Eleven wore in the first season with a denim jacket or blue sweater on top of a pink outfit. This brings me back to Season 1 when Eleven was briefly admiring Nancy’s beauty and even wore some of her old clothes (the pink and blue outfit mentioned earlier). This may signify some character parallels between Nancy and Eleven, and perhaps Eleven, while already being powerfully independent, might grow into someone like Nancy in her future.

Overall, I feel like the characters have remained relatively consistent across the entire series; and while some relationships may

feel strained, others seem to be growing stronger.

For example, Dustin’s friendships with the other characters in the series seem to be worn thin, and there seems to be an ongoing competition between Jonathan and Steve over Nancy’s attention.

But we can also see how Karen Wheeler, Nancy and Mike’s mom, turns from a mother who used to seem neglectful in her parenting to be one who truly protected her youngest daughter Holly from the demogorgon.

Will’s relationships with Robin and his mother, or even Hopper’s relationship with Eleven, seem to be growing stronger as well after some more thorough communication about the way they view the same situations and risks.

The music, cinematography, and directing has also remained as sharp as before. The clean transitions from scene to scene and the intensifying sound effects amplify the tension which makes the

watching experience even better. The slicing of scenes and compiling them all over each other, like the moment Will realized he was seeing through Holly’s eyes, is a signature style that I love about the directing — the overlapping moments when everything clicks into place.

Each episode also ends on some insane cliffhangers, ones that I would not have predicted — like Max returning in the world Henry built for Holly’s subconscious, and Will having powers by the end of the fourth episode. The Duffer brothers also effectively generated this suspense by introducing slight hints of foreshadowing carefully sprinkled throughout the scenes.

The new season of “Stranger Things” is off to a riveting start with its loveable characters and signature comedic lines, and I can’t wait to binge the rest of the episodes as they come out on Christmas and New Years Eve.



Upside Down Pictures
21 Laps Entertainment
Monkey Massacre Productions

'Wicked For Good,' not as good as the first

By NAIMA JOHN

Hauling in \$150 million on its opening weekend, "Wicked: For Good" proved to be a box office success, even surpassing the first "Wicked" movie at \$112.5 million, and becoming the highest grossing Broadway musical to movie adaptation ever.

Taking off where "Wicked: Part 1" left off, the story continues after Elphaba, played by Cynthia Erivo, performed her large show stopper, "Defying Gravity," and flew out of the Emerald City. Now hiding out in the woods, The Wicked Witch of the West makes efforts to convince the public of The Wizard's (Jeff Goldblum) lies and causes certain disruptions throughout Oz. Glinda (Ariana Grande), on the other hand, is navigating through her role as an uplifting political figure of Oz after being taken under Madam Moribble's (Michelle Yeoh) wing.

As someone absolutely blown away by the first "Wicked" movie, my expectations were through the roof, but I felt a bit split after watching the movie. "Wicked: For Good" offered a darker sequel

to the first, and was a bit disorganized. However, I really enjoyed the movie, though it didn't leave me as starstruck as the first.

The Good

The best aspect of "Wicked: For Good" in my opinion was the chemistry between Erivo and Grande, and there's no doubt this flawlessly transferred to Elphaba and Glinda. Even within a more serious and jarring conflict than the first "Wicked" movie, the clear friendship and connection is distinct, still able to share many playful and humorous moments throughout the movie.

Not to mention their strong joint vocals and bittersweet performance of the song "For Good," where they both reminisce on the positive changes they inflicted on one another. In addition to "For Good," Erivo particularly provided an engaging cinematic performance on her solo "No Good Deed," which was my personal favorite scene and song from the movie.

Another aspect of the movie that I enjoyed was Glinda's character arc, which I think Grande demonstrated quite impeccably. Her por-



Universal Pictures

trayal of Glinda was notable from the start; she perfectly captured her bubbly, ditzzy, and almost saccharine demeanor in "Wicked: Part 1." However, "Wicked: For Good" gives Glinda greater depth as she decides to pop her bubble of bliss, and discover what it means to be truly "good."

Her revelation further attests itself in her new song, "The Girl in the Bubble." This song was written just for the movie, and has received much hate with people online criticizing its unfamiliarity and redun-

dancy. "We don't learn anything new about Glinda," says one reddit user, claiming "The Girl in the Bubble" was a pointless addition. However, I think quite the opposite, as this song is Glinda's reflection on her "life built on lies," and crucial for her character turnover. While I agree that the song felt a bit unfinished, and the difference was notable compared to the other songs, the messaging it provided was key.

What Could have been for the Better

While "Wicked: For Good" was a staggering 2 hours and 17 minutes, Act Two of the Broadway musical only clocks in at about an hour. This resulted in a more glacial movie, as the production was forced to stretch out much of the plot. That being said, the end of the movie still felt rushed, hastily working to tie up all loose ends created, and leaving some strong political themes underbaked. This proved to be a distraction from other good elements of the movie.

The structure was not the only thing that seemed to be lost, though — "Wicked: For Good" lost much of its magic. This is due

to the subtle set changes from the first movie, turning glittering and excitingly green Oz of Act One into a matte profile. Yes, while this was likely due to the movie's overall darker themes, for me it resulted in the loss of the whimsical energy, leaving the atmosphere desaturated and dull.

Another unnecessary aspect was "No Place Like Home," which was the other new song written for the movie, sung by Elphaba. Though Erivo gave a strong and emotional performance, I felt that the song fell short, not adding much substance to the movie, and seemed like pure filler material to compensate for the movie's length.

Should you see "Wicked: For Good?"

The short answer: Yes, I would recommend it, and I believe if you liked the first "Wicked" movie, chances are, you're probably going to enjoy this one as well. However, whether you enjoy it more than the first is based on personal preference. And though the flaws tend to show through, the bottom line is, "Wicked: For Good" is a solid, entertaining movie, and even though it doesn't quite live up to the first act, I'd say it's worth the watch.

'Who's the Clown?' is an instant pop classic

By JULIA HICKSON

Audrey Hobert's first studio album "Who's the Clown?" is an experience meant to be perceived as a whole. While each of these tracks can be received as a stand-alone song, as a whole, Hobert tells a story.

From the release of the album's first single, "Sue me," Hobert received mixed reviews. The unconventional "talky" kind of singing that Hobert uses conveys the angsty themes that her lyrics follow. Hobert begins the song singing "I knew you'd be at the party / Drinking a Coke and Bacardi / Not that it matters, but I'm breaking patterns / And getting so good at Pilates," conveying that while her ex has stuck to his same immature habits, she has been working to better herself.

Although responses were varied, this track carried Hobert into the mainstream before the release of her second single "Bowling alley." Hobert sings "So I walk in hot / Oh, great, nobody noticed / 'Til I hit that strike, then everybody noticed me, uh-huh / (Everybody loves a winner) / Who's gonna tell 'em I'm a lucky beginner?" as she alludes to the success of her first single.

As she stepped into the music scene, no one noticed until she received rave reviews of her first single and it seemed as though everyone loved her although she merely felt like a "lucky beginner."

While the first two singles offered something new to the music scene, the third single, "Wet hair," fell short for me as the sound was reminiscent of other pop songs currently taking over the charts. However, it still added to the overall message that she conveyed through her first two singles. "Sad old me showed up with wet hair / Like it didn't matter and I didn't care," Hobert sings in the chorus. This adds to her idea of having imposter syndrome in the music industry, feeling out of place and even worrying that she is perceived as not caring.

Released Aug. 15, the album includes new tracks "Thirst trap," "Chateau," "Shooting star," and "Silver Jubilee."

As I sat down to listen to the album, track one, titled "I like to touch people," almost deterred me from the project as a whole. Hobert begins singing in her same "talky" voice of her fantasy in which she is asked what she likes to do and she responds, "I like to touch people." Although it is understood that this is a lighthearted song about a desire

for physical intimacy, it is weird, while still setting the tone for the rest of the album.

In "Thirst Trap" Hobert shares the importance that she has placed on her physical appearance and how she believes that it has made her less "cool." In the chorus Hobert sings "I'm takin' thirst traps in the mirror in my room / I think I look bad so I change the lightin' / I used to kick back, watchin' movies and the news / But now I'm lame, it's such a shame, I used to be so super cool."

Hobert reminisces over when she used to place less value upon her outer appearance and how she was cooler before she cared about it. "But now I listen to my playlists and pretend I'm you (Pretend I'm you) / Look at what I posted and pretend I'm you (Pretend I'm you), uh / I'm sick and twisted and borin' (Uh-uh)," Hobert continues.

She paints a picture of a typical teenage girl fantasizing over her own photos as if the boy she liked was viewing them. She continues to convey her idea that her new found obsession with herself and a man makes her boring, even going as far as saying she feels "sick and twisted."

At the release of this album, "Thirst trap" was the track that stood out the most to me, but after returning time and time again

to this project, I have become obsessed with "Chateau" and "Shooting star." In Chateau, Hobert creates an image of being invited to a prestigious event (being the Chateau) and how she desires to get out, stating that even being in high school would be better than being stuck in this place.

This continues upon the main idea of the album: feeling like an outcast or fake in the music scene. The second most present theme in the album, desiring to be perceived as beautiful, continues into "Shooting star" and most of all in "Phoebe."

In this track, Hobert compares herself to the character Phoebe Buffet from "Friends." "And who cares if I'm pretty? / I feel like I'm Phoebe" Hobert sings. She highlights the fact that Phoebe Buffet was often considered an eccentric and weird person, but Hobert doesn't care that she is perceived as non-attractive because she sees herself in this beloved character.

This track is different from the others in the album as she is no longer reminiscing over her past self, but coming to accept and love the person she has become.

The final track of the album, "Silver Jubilee," is a celebration and a release of the tensions and stressors that Hobert referenced throughout the album. "I'ma put



RCA Records

my drink up, it's drinks up now / I'ma tell my sister she's perfect / Yeah, I'ma live it up like my life starts now / Blink and you could miss it, it's over, it's all night" Hobert sings.

She acknowledges the rapid nature of life and creates the perfect conclusion to her first album. Overall, Audrey Hobert acknowledges all of the ways in which she does not feel like she fits in, whether it be in professional settings or with beauty standards. In the end, she finds the beauty within this and lets go of her grasp on the perception that others have of her.

"Who's the Clown?" as a whole is a therapeutic release of happiness, anger, sadness, and a plethora of other emotions for Hobert as well as all those lucky enough to listen to it.

Unscramble Answers:

1. snow
2. santa
3. rudolf
4. eggnog
5. frostbite

6. menorah
7. hannah
8. mistletoe
9. ornament
10. nutcracker

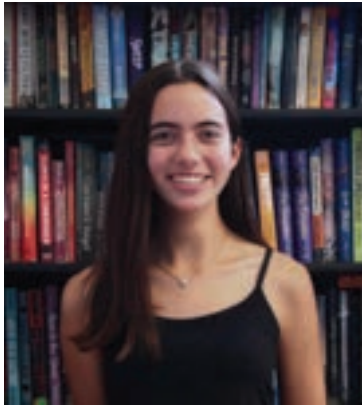
Crossword Answers:

1. Chocolate
2. Mitten
3. Grinch
4. Frosty

5. Igloo
6. Dreidel
7. Gingerbreadman
8. Elf

9. Boots
10. Scarves
11. Christmas
12. Soup

Ben Johnson brought back the Chicago Bears



SPORTS OPINION
By ELLIE SANDERSON

With 23 seconds left on the clock, five yards from field goal range, one time out remaining, and down the three points a field goal could provide, the Chicago Bears, led by head coach Matt Eberflus, chose to let the clock run down completely. The team lost a game that was almost certainly supposed to be a clutch win. The Chicago Bears, as everyone would tell you, are not a clutch team.

But have you seen the Bears play this year?

There is a new energy in Chicago, and it's spearheaded by rookie head coach Ben Johnson. The former Detroit Lions offensive coordinator has brought Detroit's grit to the Midway: the Bears lead the NFL in takeaways, and are fifth for total offensive yards through week fourteen, according to ESPN. In 2024, the Bears fin-

ished 31st in the League of 32 for offensive yards. Something must have changed.

Johnson has confidence in his new team, a feeling nearly foreign to Bears fans. When the Bears were down 14-9 to the Las Vegas Raiders, sideline reporter Aditi Kinkhaiwala asked Johnson, "Do you need to change what you're doing?" with Johnson responding: "I don't know, you think so? We're going to be just fine." This clip gained popularity online nearly instantly, and was quickly incorporated into fan-made hype videos for the team — showcasing Johnson's feistiness and faith in his team.

These comments from Johnson were not as well-received by the media, and Johnson later told ESPN that he "didn't take [that question] very well, so [he'll] do a better job with [those interviews] going forward."

The 2025 season opened with a typical Bears fourth-quarter loss to the Vikings. It would have been easy to count the Bears out — many sports commentators did — especially after the blow-out loss in Week 2 to Johnson's former Detroit Lions.

Losing to two NFC North rivals early in the season was far from a good look for what was supposed to be a reformed Bears team. Following the loss in Detroit, Sports Illustrated commentator Gene Chamberlain wrote, "The Bears defense choked and



Bears play the Saints at Soldier Field.

PHOTO BY ELLIE SANDERSON

collapsed in Week 1 but Sunday they just skipped the choking and went right to the collapse."

But the team dynamic is visibly shifting — and, of course, that is from what fans are calling the "Ben Johnson Effect." In the 2024 season's 10-game losing streak, half of those games were lost in the fourth quarter (meaning the Bears lost a previous lead, or stumbled in critical moments in the closing plays of the game). The opposite is happening now.

Johnson's Bears have the most fourth-quarter comebacks in the NFL through week four-

teen — and the most comeback wins in a single season in Bears history, according to Marquee Sports Network. And for everyone counting these games as what should be "easy wins" — well, winning against reigning Super Bowl champions Philadelphia Eagles in a Black Friday primetime game should destroy any doubt of the authority of the Bears.

For the first time since 2006, the Bears stood atop the entire NFC.

With four remaining games in the regular season, a lot can still change for the previously doomed

Chicago team. Regardless, the Bears have come a long way from their 5-12 record and last place finish in the NFC North in the season prior. They haven't even had a winning season since the last playoff run in the 2018 season; achieving a 9-4 record through week thirteen is a victory within itself.

Ben Johnson was more than worth it, and the revival of the Bears has been a long time coming as Chicago lies in wait for the rest of the season.

52 point difference leads Lane to victory against Von



Lane Tech sophomore Isaac Summers shoots the ball against Von Steuben.

PHOTO BY LILY ROYER



Lane Tech sophomore Cole Christian defending their hoop against Von's attempt to score.

PHOTO BY LILY ROYER



Lane Tech senior Matthew Szafoni dribbling the ball down court. Szafoni was the game's top scorer, with 17 points.

PHOTO BY LILY ROYER

By LILY ROYER

After losing to Depaul and Niles North, Lane Tech boys varsity basketball made a comeback by winning with a significant lead against Von Steuben in their fourth game of the season.

Lane beat Von 82-30 in the away game on Tuesday, Dec. 2. Within the first quarter, Lane was already up 29-7 and won with a 52 point difference. In the fourth quarter, Lane's lead against Von Steuben led the Lane boys to play with a running clock, where the clock wouldn't stop at all.

With only six seniors, the varsity team is mainly made up of underclassmen with seven sophomores and three juniors. Nicholas Logalbo, the head coach for the basketball team, said this year is a unique scenario but all of the boys really care and try. "This is my 21st year, and we've never had this many sophomores on varsity, so it's exciting," Logalbo said.

During the game, one underclassman that stood out was Krishna Dacha. Throughout the game he scored 12 points for Lane, helping them take the lead in the first quarter.

Dacha reflected on the team's performance saying, "Everybody contributed. The energy was high. It's just a great win after a rough week last week."

During half time the score was 51-12. With the game was already in Lane's hands they decided to change the strategy. Senior

and team captain Matthew Szafoni, who is committed to Illinois State University, scored 13 points during the first half alone yet only 4 points in the second half. "We were more aggressive on offense in the first half, and in the second half we focused more on getting into our half court sets, and working on the stuff that we need to work on since we already had the game in our hands at that point," Szafoni said.

This game was a step up from the prior week after two losses to Depaul and Niles North. After the losses, the team worked on getting back on the basketball court as stronger players. "So now it's just about kind of like getting back to it, continu[ing] to build on what we've already put in and just continuing to grow as a group," Logalbo said.

Szafoni said they can work on their communicative energy and continue to hype each other up — working to individually bring positive energy to the team. "Today, we came with energy and we shared the ball," Szafoni said, "We were able to get everyone some touches, and the energy we brought today was great."

Lane continued their season with a game on Dec. 4 winning their game to Lake View 74-43. Lane then played New Trier on Dec. 5 in which they lost 52-27. Lane has 8 games left in their season. The next game is an away game, Lane boys play St. Rita on Dec. 13.

Girls Wrestling grapples with Marist

By JONAS GRAY

Lane's Varsity Girls Wrestling team faced off against Marist in a close matchup that Marist won 41-36 on Dec. 5. This meet was a lead up to the team playing in their first tournament this season, happening on the next day, Dec. 6.

The energy in the gym was electric as Lane got off to a good start, winning most of the first few matches and scoring a lead of 12-6.

Wrestlers score their team six points if their match was won by pinning, and three to five points are awarded if they win by other means, such as having won more match points. Matches end after three periods of 2 minutes, or when one wrestler is pinned.

The next few matches were exciting and suspenseful. There was some great back and forth play between the wrestlers, and the energy in the room continued to be lively and sportsmanlike. Lane maintained a lead with 30 points to Marist's 24.

But, in the last matches Marist managed to pull ahead by winning some long exciting matches with a lot of reversals, leaving the final score at 41-36.

Despite the loss, spirits in the team were high.

"I think my performance went



PHOTO BY JONAS GRAY

Oliwia Wodjak grapples with a wrestler from Marist in the first match of the night.

well," said senior and team captain, Sofia Guerrero. "I worked on some stuff that I wanted to work on. I got a really nice slide by, so that made me really happy, and then the team did really well. I loved the energy in the room. There were some really good reversals, really great pins, by some

of our girls, some of their first matches, so I really enjoyed seeing that."

So far this season, the Girls Varsity Wrestling team has won all three meets, but most members of the team don't focus on the team's score as a whole, but emphasize the growth of personal

skills and goals.

When asked about her performance during the meet, junior Mumtaz Malik said that she will learn from the match despite not doing as well as she hoped. "My goal for today was to get a really good shot and get a takedown and win the match, but I did not com-

plete one of those goals. I did not win the match, but I got a good shot and I got the takedown," said Malik, "My performance, I'm not that mad at myself, but I think I could have tried better when I was on bottom. I swear, if I had two more seconds, I would have gotten out, but it's OK."

Overall, the team remains filled with passion for the sport and excitement for what's to come in the season.

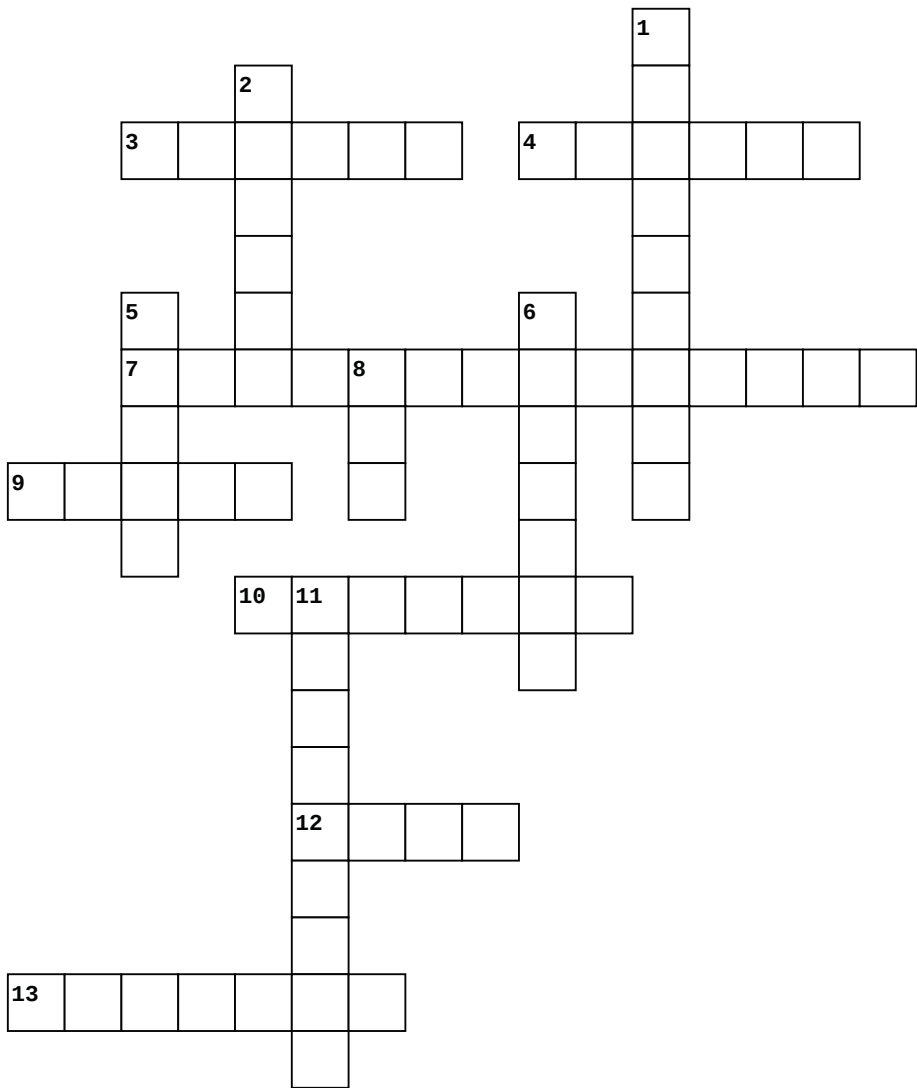
Junior Kenaiece Barrett described her passion for the sport. "There's a team sport aspect of it, as well as individual. That's why I love it so much because you guys are, like, we are wrestling individual matches, but at the same time, it's like we're doing it for the team to earn team points to get team placing," said Barrett. "So it's like, we're doing it for each other and we build a community where it's like a big family."

This passion could be attributed to or the cause of the growing popularity of Girls Wrestling.

Guerrero commented on the current state of the sport. "Girls wrestling has grown exponentially, and especially on our team," said Guerrero, "Like when I first joined, there [were] probably four girls and now there's literally forty, there's so many. So it's grown a lot and it's really good to see, you know, it's really great."

Winter Crossword

BY JULIA HICKSON



Across

- 3. "You're a mean one, Mr. _____"
- 4. _____ the Snowman
- 7. "Not the buttons! Not my gumdrop buttons!" said this character in Shrek
- 9. Footwear for the snow
- 10. "With _____ of red tied 'round their throats"
- 12. The best food to eat when you are sick
- 13. A celebration of African-American culture beginning on December 26th

Down

- 1. "Hot _____," a drink best served with marshmallows
- 2. A two fingered glove
- 5. A dome shaped shelter made of snow
- 6. A four sided spinnin top played during Hanukkah
- 8. 2003 movie starring Will Ferrell
- 11. Holiday celebrated on December 25th

Holiday Unscramble

BY FAITH GALIK

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| nwso _____ | knkuhaha _____ |
| aatns _____ | lotemeits _____ |
| drulfo _____ | estbrfoit _____ |
| gggeon _____ | mnnrotae _____ |
| harnoem _____ | kcrernuatc _____ |

Santa Maze

BY VALENTINA VIANNA

