



PHOTO COURTESY OF MS. COLEMAN

**April Coleman photographed with ABC7 reporter Rob Hughes and Principal Thompson. Five students in Black Rev. Literature created a presentation on the life of Jesse Jackson that was featured on the news following his death. Students are taking the opportunity to research his life and learn about activism. The presentation will also be part of the Black History Month Assembly Friday, Feb. 27.**

## Creating Revolutionaries

By REGINALD D. BROWN

When a revolutionary looks at systemic racism, according to Lane's Black Revolutionary Literature teacher April Coleman, they see it for what it is: "Cancer."

"You cannot put a bandaid on this. You have to pull out some of these systems by the root and replace them with institutions that work. That's a revolutionary," Ms. Coleman said.

Black Revolutionary Literature did not begin with that name — it started out as African American Literature, a course that became available to Lane students in 2008. The goal of this course could be viewed in its name, simply to introduce under-appreciated African American literature to students.

Under its original name, African American Lit. was designed and taught by Lane's current principal, Edwina Thompson. Principal Thompson taught African

American Lit. for two years, until she entered an administrative role at Lane in 2010 as Assistant Principal.

Ms. Coleman then took on the task and evolved the course into Black Revolutionary Literature, an "inviting," yet, more radical education utilizing the writings of Black activists throughout history. The class is offered to seniors as a core English class or an elective. Her decision to change the course was sparked by the death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, a Black boy who was profiled and ultimately shot to death by his neighbor in 2013.

The class needed to be more revolutionary, needed to aid students in understanding, uprooting, and replacing systems built to oppress them and/or their peers, Ms. Coleman said. Five years after its creation, African American Lit evolved into Black Revolutionary Literature.

"The reading that we do is designed to teach students how to revolutionize," Ms. Coleman said.

"My students are taught to revolutionize health care, revolutionize education, and whatever field they go into; and that requires a different kind of writing, a writing that is more unapologetic, less user-friendly, and more demanding," Ms. Coleman said.

Nikia, a captain of Lane's Majorette team and senior taking Black Rev. Lit., said she has begun to recognize the importance of being involved in the problems she sees around her.

Ms. Coleman's teachings stick with students beyond the classroom too. She recalls a time she was able to witness one of her former students go from learning what it means to be a revolutionary, to practicing the act of revolutionizing.

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## Passion vs. Profit: A high school senior's dilemma

By JULIA HICKSON

The season of college decisions is right around the corner, and has already begun for many Lane students. While some artistic students who have participated in activities such as band, visual arts or choir have decided to continue to pursue them as a career, others have decided to keep their skill as merely a hobby.

Senior Diego Patino has been active in the school's musical community for the entirety of his time at Lane, as a member of the marching band and a frequent performer in Lane's monthly open mics. Despite his passions for music, Patino decided to ma-

ajor in political science in college.

"I decided a long time ago I wanted to be a lawyer," said Patino, "And now I was thinking, 'what's the best way to prepare myself for that post high school education wise?' I decided on political science, because there's a wide range of things you learn, but it's very applicable to law."

Even with Patino's passions for music, he is also deeply passionate about law. "I talked with the lawyer who represented my parents, who helped them become legal immigrants. She said that she majored in political science and then went to law school somewhere else. So, that was definitely a big

influence on me, because of her influence on my family."

While he felt a strong draw to political science, music was not absent in his considerations of college majors. "I definitely think about [music as a career] sometimes, especially as I get older, because my dad's a musician, so he can sing very well, and I've been playing drums for quite a while now. It's definitely something that's crossed my mind."

Ultimately, Patino has a desire to help people in his field of work.

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PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

**Senior Asha Westrope Pellot working on piece 3 of her 7th period independent study class.**

## Students savor foods at Taste of Africa

By ELAINE NGUYEN and ARIANNA GUERRIER

Students tried foods served by the Middle Eastern North African (MENA) Club, West African Club, and East African Club and had laughter and chatter after school Feb. 12 in Room 210. Lane's Black Student Association (BSA) organizes and hosts the annual event.

Room 210 was loaded with people. All the seats were filled with students; which even subjected others to having to resort to sitting on the floor. But despite the lack of space, everyone seemed to be having a good time, enjoying their food.

Although Taste of Africa has previously been held in the lunchroom, this year's event as well as last year's event took place in Room 210. According to Senior Sanyah Bovan, the BSA President,



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIFFANY WILLIAMS

**Students get foods served by West African Club, East African Club, and Middle Eastern North African Club.**

the change was due to scheduling and space conflicts.

"It used to be in the lunchroom," Bovan said. "But during this time, I-Days Clubs also start to practice in the lunchroom be-

cause it has more space. So due to spacing, we decided we could just use 210."

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## Catalytic converter robbery in the Lane Tech area

By DASH ROREM

When science teacher Leah Roskin went to turn on her car on Nov. 13, she was met with a loud sound. At around 11 a.m., Lane administration notified her that something had happened to her car while it was parked in the Lane Tech parking lot, and it turned out her catalytic converter had been stolen. This was the first of two times this happened to Roskin at Lane, and of five total instances in Lane community since Nov. 13.

Once again, on a morning in early February, Brenda Remess, a computer science teacher at Lane, had her catalytic converter stolen from her car parked near the driver's ed building, and she saw the security camera footage of it happening.

"One [of the thieves] started el-

evating the car, the other one was just walking around, but I could also see students walking by and cars passing by," Remess said. "Finally a guy came out with [what], I believe, was the machine to cut it out. It took, I believe, less than a minute."

This was just one of three robberies that happened that day, according to Roskin.

"They didn't care about the people around," Remess said. "It doesn't matter where you park, it could be right in front of cameras, or you could be all the way next to Western. It doesn't matter."

According to Edmunds, the catalytic converter is a component of a gas powered car that transforms the pollutants coming from the car into less harmful substances,

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The Champion  
2025-26

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

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## Creating Revolutionaries

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"I have a student who went to a college on the East Coast, and it was a nightmare for her because she was the only Black fill in the blank. She came home after her first semester and she came to visit me; she said: 'I can't go back there. I was faced with so many people wanting to touch my hair.'"

However, these are just the situations that Ms. Coleman intends to teach her students to work through. "It takes courage to be a revolutionary," Ms. Coleman said. "First of all, let's start with the definition of the word radical, which is a word that [activist] Angela Davis often talks about. Radical means to pull something out by the root. A revolutionary is a radical."

The courage that it takes to become a revolutionary is what Ms. Coleman intends to instill within

her students.

"I can't go back there," the student continued, according to Ms. Coleman, "but if you tell me to go back, I will."

Ms. Coleman recognized the significance of her student putting that responsibility in her hand. "Do you know what I told that baby?" Ms. Coleman said. "I said, you gotta go back. You have to go back. You need to be in that space. You deserve to be in that space."

Taking Ms. Coleman's advice, her former student returned to the college. "But she went back like a revolutionary goes back," Ms. Coleman said. "Do you know that this student started the first Black Student Association at that college? There wasn't one. She created and opened the doors for so many, many students who were black and were there at that time, and students who would go there."

"That's just one example, of the many examples, of my revolutionary students getting out there changing the world," she added.

India Davenport, a student of Ms. Coleman, spoke about how Black Revolutionary Lit. affected her post secondary education plans: "The Black community is held back by the criminal justice system," Davenport said. Black Rev Lit. has inspired her to pursue a degree and eventually a career in criminal justice with hopes of revolutionizing the system, she said.

Jacob Cipolla, an Italian student taking Black Revolutionary Lit said states that the class and diving into Black history helped him change his "perspective". "It's definitely important to be informed about Black history so we can have different perspectives going into issues and maybe have a little bit more tolerance and respect for one an-

other."

A tool Ms. Coleman emphasizes to her students is the ability to read and write at an intellectual and professional level. "Ms. Coleman definitely taught me to write better," Davenport said, "She really is dedicated to teaching kids how to write better."

Her daily quotes, such as Mos Def's "Speech is my hammer. I bang my world into shape," allow Ms. Coleman to draw the interdependent relationship between being a revolutionary and being an intellectual.

"Lane Tech students are problem solvers," Ms. Coleman said. "And so, what I find myself doing is presenting them with a problem, a model; and I'm providing space and tools for them to find the answers."

## Passion vs. Profit: A high school senior's dilemma

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"The way I see what I want to do in the future, I think about it as being productive, or even helpful," said Patino. "That's the way I consider my goals. So, I want to be an immigration attorney and I feel like that would be a very helpful thing to do. But I feel, on the other hand, music is definitely helpful to some people. It can be inspiring, it can be moving. You know, it acts like a voice for people."

For many students deciding on a major, money can be the final deciding factor when choosing between one's passions. "I think if money wasn't a factor, then I'd definitely lean towards [music as a career] more," said Patino.

Similarly for senior Henry Wachob, an active member of Lane's choir, glee club, and acapella club, money was not absent in his choice of major. "It'd be really cool if I could write music for a living, but it's not the best career path for most people," Wachob said.

Wachob is majoring in Psychology in college and like Patino, he has a desire to help others. "I've been in therapy for most of my life, ever since my parents got divorced, and it helped me a lot," said Wachob. "And I realized that I would really like to help other people, and I think that a very good way to help people is with therapy. So, I want to pursue that."

Despite both Patino and Wachob pursuing careers in fields outside of the arts, they still have intentions of continuing with their arts as hobbies in the future. "I'm

gonna go to Notre Dame, so I'm going to join the marching band there and hopefully try to see if there's any niche music scenes I can get into," said Patino. "Because I love music. It's great."

Wachob said he hopes to develop new friendships in college through music. "I do want to keep singing," said Wachob. "I think it'll be a good way to make friends in college and find like minded people."

While students such as Wachob and Patino have other passions outside of the arts that they ultimately have decided to pursue, senior Asha Westrope Pellot, winner of the All-City Senior Portfolio Exhibition, knew from an early age what she wanted to do post-college. "Since I was really little, I kind of always knew I wanted to be an artist," said Westrope Pellot.

"I want to be an illustrator for graphic novels or character design, book covers, anything like that," said Westrope Pellot. But, despite her life long passions of being an artist, she has still received push back for her career choice. "I feel like certain people are just like 'oh, you should go into teaching instead or another kind of more stable career path within art,'" said Westrope Pellot.

Senior Grey Baum, a songwriter and MC of the Lane open mics, received backlash for choosing a career in the arts. "I did post that I got into Berkeley College of Music on Tiktok when I first got in... there were a lot of comments being like 'congrats,' but there were also a lot of comments being like, 'this



PHOTO BY JULIA HICKSON

Senior Diego Patino practicing drumming before school in room 154 (the guitar room).

is gonna just end you working as a barista at Starbucks, I don't know why people actually go here. Just think about your future. And how you'll do it financially," said Baum.

However, despite the negativity she faced around pursuing music, Baum has remained firm in her decision to have a career in the arts. "I think that I can most likely get into some stable job," said Baum. "It doesn't have to be the most financially rewarding, but I think that people underestimate what music careers can actually do for you, because it's really hard to get jobs and even internships, paid or unpaid, without having a degree in it. So, I think that my degree will help me with that and help me get those connections that I need."

While there are outward setbacks that she faced, there were

also internal obstacles that Baum needed to overcome. "I'm kind of worried that people will see where I'm going and think I shouldn't be going there, that I'm not talented enough or that I won't be able to make a career out of it," said Baum.

However, despite these mental setbacks Baum said, "I realized that I'm going to be with people at my school that understand a big part of my life."

In spite of the pushback that both Westrope Pellot and Baum faced in choosing their college major, their passion was ultimately the driving factor for their decisions. "I feel like once I started looking at colleges sophomore/junior year, that's when I was like, 'I think I could go into the industry and be happy with my job if I'm just in music in any way,'" said Baum.

## Catalytic converter robbery in the Lane Tech area

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essentially working as a filter. Without it, the engine of the car risks breaking down. It is also illegal to drive with a broken or missing catalytic converter. The cost of replacing a catalytic converter is typically between \$1500 and \$3000.

This has been very difficult for teachers. "It's super frustrating because you can't really drive your car and it's frustrating that something like that is happening while you're

working and that we really don't have any recourse," Roskin said.

"I wasn't mad," Remess said. "I was more upset and sad that now it doesn't matter where you go, right? It's no guarantee that your property is going to be safe."

This is also a big safety issue. "I think there's some concern about people that are coming into our lot, and if a student walks up to them or a teacher or somebody is like 'what are you doing.' I don't think they're necessarily people that you would want to interrupt,"

Roskin said.

Remess agreed: "I don't think it's right for [security] to confront them because [security] can risk their lives, but something has to be done," she said.

But what can be done about this issue? "Maybe we should have a secure entrance and exit; [people can] scan who-comes-in who-comes-out," Remess said.

She also noted, "Maybe the parking lot should be closed to anyone, even the parents. If they want to come in, they need a pass."

According to Roskin, this issue is not specific to the Lane community. It is also happening at other schools, including Northside.

Lane administration is aware of this issue, and in an email to staff in January, they advised staff to not confront suspicious people, to alert the administration, and to call 911 if comfortable. They also said they would save video footage and work with people affected to create a police report.

# Students savor foods at Taste of Africa

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According to Tiffany Williams, the sponsor of the BSA, the purpose of the Taste of Africa event was to incorporate Black and African cultures in terms of food as a way for “the kids to experience the type of foods and what they need to the culture.”

Adding to Williams’ statement regarding the purpose of the Taste of Africa event, senior Karter James, the Vice President of the BSA said, “I feel like it’s very important for other cultures to be included and for Africa as a whole to be noticed, and even through food, our culture is very unique, and I feel like people need to know about it in order to have a more broader perspective of just the world in total.”

The Taste of Africa event started with a slideshow, in which each slide focused on a particular club, the food they brought to the event, and a description of each food. In

the order of the slides, East African Club’s sambusa, West African Club’s jollof, and MENA’s baklava.

Food for the event was largely contributed by Club members. According to Bován, in previous years, much of the executive board personally prepared the dishes. However, after many of those members graduated, BSA expanded the event to include more clubs, specifically clubs that focus on specific African cultures.

“This is actually the first year we’ve included East African Club as well as the Middle Eastern and North African Club,” Bován said. “Since they graduated last year, we decided to make it a multi-club event.”

MENA brought baklava to the Taste of Africa event. According to the club presidents of MENA, baklava is a common pastry mainly has ties to Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt in North Africa and Turkey

in the Middle East. This Middle Eastern and North African dessert is popular in North Africa after “the Ottoman Empire influenced their desserts”.

The West African Club brought jollof rice to the Taste of Africa event. According to the West African Club, this rice dish is popular in West Africa and originated in Senegal, representing “the cultural unity of West Africa.” Jollof rice is described as “a staple at parties, celebrations, and family gatherings in Nigeria.”

The East African Club brought sambusa to the Taste of Africa event. According to the East African Club, this pastry is connected across East Africa and the Middle East. Sambusa is often served during traditional holidays, and “a reflection of the countries’ rich food traditions.”

In order for MENA, East African Club, and West African Club

to show up to the Taste of Africa event, James said BSA contacted them to bring food together on the same day and at the same time. “It brought us together to create Taste of Africa, because we just, we kind of just combined these two, all these clubs, and we got together, and we’re like, ‘oh, we’re gonna bring this, or we’re gonna bring that,’ and that’s kind of how it really got started.”

The Club Presidents representing their participating club either brought dishes from different African restaurants or they made their foods at home. “We set [the foods] up just like the regular Chicago tastes, where we had little plates and everybody got a sample of each piece after we did the presentation of the foods,” Williams said.

Despite the Taste of Africa event being overcrowded in a smaller setting, students were able to taste and eat foods from North Africa,



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIFFANY WILLIAMS

## Students trying and eating the jollof rice served by the West African Club.

West Africa, and East Africa, making themselves aware that these foods exist. They were also able to have an enjoyable time in the event, laughing and chatting all throughout the time.

## Are we in a DIY Culture Craze?

By NAIMA JOHN

In 2020, COVID-19 spun the world into a full global shutdown, trapping us in our homes, but more importantly, tethering us all to our devices. This shift has caused almost a revolt backwards in recent years, pining for handmade craftsmanship, and doing things ourselves.

“A lot of our everyday experience is mitigated through digital respects,” said Kelly Novak, a metalsmithing teacher at Lane. “So the ability to work from idea to complete object existing in the world is something that a lot of people are craving.”

Her metalsmithing class takes place during 7th and 8th period, giving students an opportunity to step away from their devices.

Novak recalled that for her students especially, metalsmithing is

a great way to unwind, and acts as a “a nice way to kind of close the computer, and fixate on what your hands can do, and also to have a sense of agency when it comes to power tools or crafting objects.”

Novak’s own work consists of a process called “hybridity of materials,” which layers different contexts as well as interpretations onto “more commonly used” objects, as Novak describes. Her personalized work, as well as art by hand tends to give her a lot of joy. “I love the media,” Novak said, referring to metal.

Personalization seems to play a large role in the rise of certain hand made hobbies as well. One student in Lane’s textile department, Denise Oggie, says that this increase is due to a rise in “individualism,” a recent trend defined by “personal style”, said Oggie. “Nowadays,



PHOTO BY NAIMA JOHN

## Lane’s textile students working on project.

I feel like people want to make things that scream, ‘them,’ she said.

Along with the textiles class, Oggie also crochets on her own time, making accessories, and things she “wants to have that [she] doesn’t re-

ally feel like buying.”

Another textiles student, Violet Rhodibush, agrees with this as well. “I just really like making things that look nice to me,” she said. Rhodibush joined Lane’s textile class in her junior year, and crochet club her freshman year. “Crochet is everywhere,” she said, noting the recent increase. “It’s really cool to see someone just pull out a project in the middle of class.”

Rhodibush said she’s really trying to learn more about making clothes in textiles. “My dream for high school is I want to make my prom dress for next year,” Rhodibush said. Environmental concerns also play a certain part in Rhodibush’s decision to create. “Human rights concerns, with fast fashion, and how we store our clothing are really important,” she said.

Rhodibush’s largest drive may be the most simple, as she stresses the production process of her hobbies the most. “Making things is part of what makes me enjoy finished products,” Rhodibush said.

She described embracing human error, something that goes hand in hand with the process. “Something I make by hand will have way more issues than a store bond garment,” Rhodibush said. “But I know that I made it. I made something happen, and I think that’s more valuable to me than the convenience of getting things from a store.”

Oggie pushes this thought further, saying, “If you’re not interested in the arts, I already sort of don’t trust you,” she said. “It says something about you as a person,” she said. “If you’re unwilling to spend time on something that isn’t already done,” she said.

## Lane Tech, School of... Bats?



PHOTO COURTESY PETER PISSIOS

## A Silver Haired Bat resting on the Lane Tech building.

By JONAS GRAY

When you think of flying animals that make their home around Lane Tech, you would probably think of songbirds or more likely the ever present flocks of geese. But would you believe that Lane makes a great spot for bats to live both near and on the grounds?

Michelle Loh, a conservation sciences and wildlife teacher at Lane said, “Well, bats are attracted to insects, right? They’re insectivores, so here in this area, we have our local park, Clark Park,

Horner Park all along the river, which attracts insects for them to eat, and then we also have some of the greenery around here at Lane Tech.”

The large amount of green space around Lane presents a big space for insects to breed and lay eggs, which then provides a food source for the bats.

The Lincoln Park Zoo has a program called Partners in Fieldwork where high school students and researchers from the zoo collaborate by gathering data at the schools and in turn learning about urban wildlife by doing research projects. Lane has been working with this program since 2023.

Data gathered from a bat monitor at Lane – a device that listens for bat cries – from Partners in Fieldwork shows that four species of bats frequent Lane at night. These species are the Eastern Red Bat, the Silver Haired Bat, the Big Brown Bat and occasionally the Hoary Bat. Experts take the data and, with the help of a program, identify the bat species recorded according to the Lincoln Park Zoo. This lets students and researchers know the general populations of bats and diversity of bat species in

a certain area.

“Something we’ve been trying to improve with Partners in Fieldwork is empathy for urban wildlife,” said Niki Melnick, a program facilitator and correspondent at Lincoln Park Zoo. “Living in a city, and especially growing up in a city, it can feel very distanced from nature and the wildlife living around there. Melnick said, “You can see the common types of animals more as pests or just nuisances, or they’re just also here, but learning more about them will allow you to see things from their perspective and that they’re also just trying to survive in this environment that was changed very rapidly.”

Last school year, the bat monitor picked up an average of 253.4 recordings per day according to data gathered through Partners in Fieldwork. The second highest average number of recordings was 65.0 per day at the Lincoln Park Zoo. The monitor takes a recording whenever a bat makes a sound.

Although bats frequent Lane, it isn’t likely that they are living in the building. “There might be some roosting areas, but I wouldn’t say here at Lane,” Loh said. “Originally, I thought, maybe they were

in the clock tower. I know they like to get into small areas, but I’m sure the school has done a good job sealing the area. We have had students see bats in the area or hanging around roosting on the corners of the building, and I think it’s mostly because we’re next to the greenery.”

According to the Lincoln Park Zoo, most bat species in Illinois prefer to roost in the woods in tree crevices or underneath loose bark, however the big brown bat will roost in “any crevice available.”

Bats provide a lot of value to the ecosystems that they inhabit, and for the school community, as they control insect populations. Loh said that bats are helpful for “decreasing the mosquito population around here. Especially since we’re by the river, and there’s always a lot of spaces for there to just be pools of water here on the greenery.”

Nationwide, species like the long ear bat, the tri-color bat, and the little brown bat are under threat from white nose syndrome, according to the Lincoln Park Zoo. White nose syndrome is a fungal infection that results in bats waking too early, expending too much energy, and starving.

Programs that monitor bats, such as Partners in Fieldwork, help to determine how populations are affected by white nose syndrome, and what are the best ways to protect America’s bats.

For schools to help these bat populations Melnick said that, “We have been learning about light pollution and noise pollution. Those are two very big things for bats, hunting and surviving, so making sure the lights are turned off. I know sometimes that can be a safety thing, but as much as possible.”

Loh also offered ways to help: “Definitely having some bat houses connected to the building, like on the sides, especially if they’re in the neighborhood.

It does take about a year or more for bats to actually use the bat houses, so that would take time, but it is wonderful seeing the increase of the bird houses that were added by the art department. So continuing that conservation and idea into a display for the bats would be nice.”

Bats remain an often overlooked part of our city, but they seem to have found a place at Lane.

# Incentives in education

By VALENTINA VIANNA

This year, the demerit system has shifted and developed past that of the previous years. With differences spanning from eliminating the half demerits for cuts to full demerits, and the new website updated each Tuesday to show each student their demerit count, a question arises in terms of what can be done to either punish or reward students for coming to school or being in the classroom itself.

Gabriela Escobar, the student director of the culture and climate committee sent out an email as of Feb. 6, labeled “Demerit Reduction Opportunity.” Upon opening the email, students and teachers alike could find that Lane is piloting a new program called ‘Rang.’ The program is intended to reward strong attendance for students with gift cards earned through points called ‘Rangs.’

“I think it’s a nice way to reward the students that are here, every day, make the effort, you know, to be in the building, because more often than not, those students aren’t getting recognition,” Escobar said. “It’s very difficult for a school this size to be able to provide students with rewards.”

Since the program is still in the early trial stages, it has yet to produce data in terms of effectiveness. While the target demographic is technically meant to motivate the entire student body, “In terms of grade level, I feel like LTAC would love this program,” Escobar said. “I feel like probably everybody, with the exception of the seniors, would be excited.”

And seniors, you know, it’s just because they’re ready to check out.”

But, this incentivization is generally targeted to getting students into the building; begging the question about what teachers can do inside the classrooms to motivate students. However, this works differently for students in varying grades. Robert Bartelt, a chemistry teacher said of seniors, “I mean, they’re older and they’re more mature and they’re, for my organic chemistry, students, for most of them, simply saying, like, learn this now so that you don’t fail it in 20 months when you take this in college, and then there go your ambitions to be a healthcare professional.”

Like, that’s enough for them.” He also spoke on his experience teaching middle school, and the difference between teaching freshman and sophomores; reporting noticeable differences in dedication from the beginning of sophomore year to the end.

As far as reasons go, Bartelt mentioned his rationale stating: “Well, I mean, every teacher has to come up with a way to incentivize student behavior. Because, in the end, what can we really do for you?”

Other than give you terrible grades or call security in on you, you have to provide, and ideally, kids will be intrinsically motivated because they want to get good grades and go to college and then build the future that they always dreamed for themselves and all that stuff.”

By itself, incentivization is simply a wide umbrella term that teachers use in order to motivate their students. As said by Bartelt, “They’re [students] learning to prevent a bad outcome, not to bring about a good outcome.”

A new English teacher at Lane,

Haley Nielson said “I try to show interest in student lives outside of school, and try to make a point to ask them about their extracurriculars and activities as they walk in the room.”

In trying to bond, Nielson added “I try to chat with groups during in between times and move around constantly to assist them and see what they are working on during independent work time. This doubles as checking in to make sure they’re doing the work. With high schoolers, this sometimes means I end up in a conversation about nee-dohs,” she said, “but sometimes education is about meeting students where they are at and making those connections with students.”

According to Bartelt, the productivity of the students is also impacted by both classroom layout, and environment alongside their motivation. “There’s a rule for both, but I find that positive reinforcement tends to lead to intrinsic motivation,” Bartelt continued “and intrinsic motivation is always gonna get you better outcomes as a teacher, because then you have a class where the students more or less monitor themselves.”

In Bartelt’s classroom, he uses specific messaging to let his students know when they are doing well. But, he also tries to arrange his classroom in ways that he said “They keep themselves going, like a group of three kids, one kid gets off task, you know, I can come by and just knock on the table.”

Nielson said, “I try to build a relationship with my students and a classroom community so my students feel a responsibility to do their assignments. But I want my students to know that I am reason-

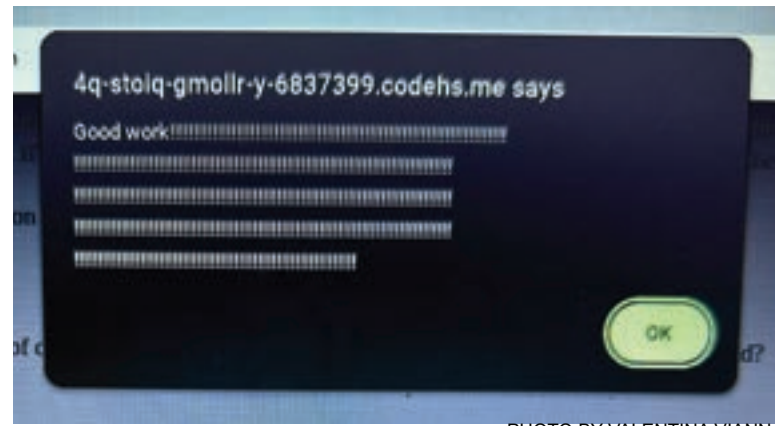


PHOTO BY VALENTINA VIANNA

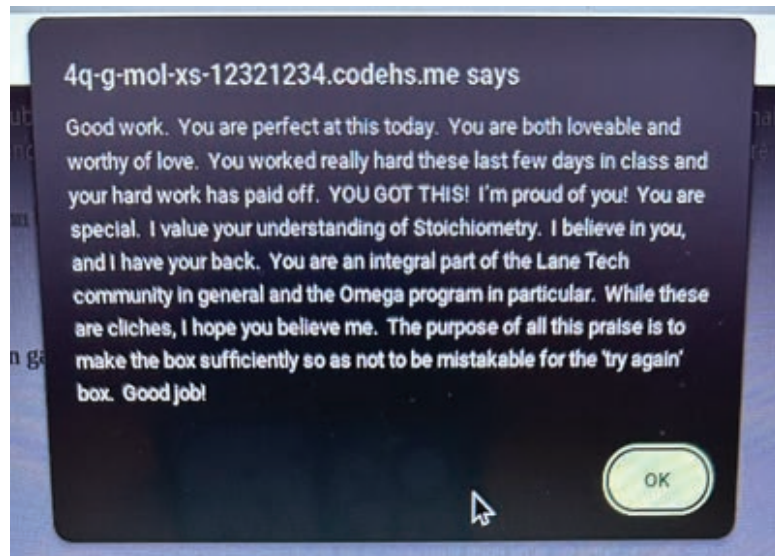


PHOTO BY VALENTINA VIANNA

## Messages from chemistry teacher Mr. Bartel to his Omega students

able and understanding if things come up.”

Yet, both interviewed teachers ultimately found that students were generally motivated to focus by their grades. “In terms of how, I use extra credit and things to incentivize them. I would just say like occasionally incentivising students for going above and beyond on their work makes students focus on their school work and striving to achieve mastery,” Nielson said.

Teachers and admin alike are taught in school about the importance, and differences in types of motivation in schools. While this varies in levels of schooling, and education philosophies, Escobar said, “I feel like, for us, it’s important to have a system where we’re holding students accountable, because that’s life, right?” in terms of the views at Lane.

# Rack up Rangs in new attendance rewards program



By HANNAH SPERLING

Available to all Lane students who sign up by March 1, the free program Rang will soon begin incentivizing and celebrating strong attendance.

For the past month, Student Newsletters have been broadcasting the explanation, “With Rang, students earn points called “Rangs” when they arrive on time and stay for the full school day. These points can be redeemed for rewards such as gift cards, event tickets, and family activities. This program is designed to reinforce the importance of daily attendance, celebrate student effort, and make showing up every day fun and motivating for students and families.”

Assistant Principal Joshua Dresser, who oversees attendance at Lane and acted as the point person between CPS and Lane during the process of introducing Rang to the school, said that 1,115 students

had signed up as of Feb. 23, and that excitement about the program is growing.

“One of the big things for me is I want to reward the students that are already doing a great job with attendance and no one gives them a pat on the back. There’s not really anything they get other than, of course, being in school and going to amazing classes and being with their friends. But, like, there are so many students that have zero tardies, that have attendance rates over 92, 95 percent, and this just seems like an easy way for those students to really get something for all the great work that they’ve been doing,” Dresser said. “In a secondary way, if it can provide an incentive for students that are struggling with absenteeism or tardies, I would say that’s great. Anything will help.”

“18.9 percent of our student body is chronically absent, which means they have below 90 per-

cent attendance rate,” Dresser said. “We’re on track with many of our peer schools, but it could definitely be better.”

Senior Zoeh Olmedo Muniz said, “Honestly, I think it’s a really good strategy. Because a lot of students just feel like, ‘Oh, it’s just a regular day of class. I don’t think it’s that important.’ But if you’re giving them rewards, or just having that sort of system, that definitely will motivate them to want to get stuff.”

Attendance Clerk April Navarette said she anticipates Rang will make the most sizable impact in motivating students who aren’t already benefited by demerit or tardy reduction programs such as Goal Weeks, either because these students already have strong attendance, or do not expect to participate in eligibility required events such as school dances or I-Days. Since the Rang program will benefit all students regardless of their current eligibility status and needs, Navarette said, “Why not give this incentive to other students or anyone who wants to partake?”

Elisa Flores, a junior who expressed interest in taking advantage of the experiential opportunities Rang provides throughout the city, said, “A lot of students really work hard. Especially with some

certain classes they take, they get a lot of workload, so I think a reward would be nice for them.”

Junior Camilo Valerio said that he thinks even showing up to school in the first place deserves recognition. “I know some people take a really long bus drive to get here or take a really long time to get here. So yeah, I think [rewards] would be important,” Valerio said.

Dresser said that being able to make this positive impact is a key motivator for sponsors such as “people that want to give money to schools, specifically CPS schools, and other businesses that want to provide or can provide very low cost services or rewards for students.” Dresser said that in a meeting with Rang founder and CEO Brian Hill, Hill explained the example that the Bulls “really like when they give away tickets. They like to see the impact of their giving on the community, like who was actually going. Did the students’ attendance improve? Did their gift of this ticket make an impact on a student? And so that’s a compelling story for them,” Dresser said.

Dresser said that the program was first pitched to Lane when “CPS invited us to a meeting, RANG presented to about eight or

nine high schools in the district, and they ran a pilot program.”

“We weren’t worried that this partnership would have any kind of negative drawbacks, because this is something that CPS had already vetted and said was appropriate and something they wanted to try in schools,” Dresser said.

Even so, to mitigate potential concerns about how student data is used and protected, Dresser said, a parent consent form must be submitted upon sign up “to make sure that student or the parents know that they’re allowing the student data to be shared with this company.”

However, the consent form submission turned out to be one issue identified in this trial run. “There was some paperwork involved that was pretty frustrating to people,” Dresser said. “What I am told for next year is that there will be no paperwork. It will be an electronic consent form.”

Regardless, about a quarter of the student body signed up, which, considering those frustrations, Dresser said, was “pretty good for a free program.”

“Hopefully, it’ll just provide some rewards to kids that are doing a great job anyway,” Dresser said.

# Social media transforms the fashion scene in schools

By LILY ROYER

Sophomore Sloane Lattin said social media has transformed how people dress. “Trends become popular so quickly because people see influencers that hold a lot of power over imagery and how girls should look, and then people who see that want to try it. And then those trends quickly spread,” Lattin said.

The same popular shoes, brands, sweaters and patterns circulate the average teen’s closet. Whether going to work or school, people are continuously wearing identical popular brands and styles.

There is a term for this known as the “bandwagon effect.” “The bandwagon effect refers to an individual’s tendency to conform to the predecessor’s decisions,” according to the International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. “[...]Early theoretical reasoning, the ‘Spiral of Silence’ model of Noelle-Neumann, 1974 emphasizes the apolitical and irrational factors like conformity embedded in an individual’s fear of social rejection, isolation, or a person’s desire to be on the winning side.”

Individuality is getting expressed less as movies and modern television increase the amount of desired standards in

clothing and fashion. Sophomore Addison Ozelie sees trends influencing individuality. “I think everyone is influenced by society a little bit at least because you’re seeing all these people wear these things or do certain things which can influence you a little bit, even if you don’t think it will influence you that much, it still influences some things,” Ozelie said.

The idea that people, especially students, must conform in society is strong in today’s world generally due to social media. According to Pew Research Center, “Younger social media users are the most likely to say influencers affect their purchasing habits: 54% of 18- to 29-year-old social media users say influencers impact their purchasing decisions a lot or a little.”

Today trends are a way to fit in, and many students find it easier to fit in than to stand out. Brooke Schiender, a junior at Lane said, “A lot of people are worried about judgment, and it’s hard to understand that not everyone is worried about you. So people will believe that if you stand out, that you’re automatically going to attract attention, and people are going to hate you.”

It’s easy to conform to society because then you won’t have to worry about what people are going to say to or about you. A lot of

people, especially students, worry about how they are perceived by others. This is directly related to a growing insecurity resonating in adolescence today. According to a survey done by Harvard Graduate School and Indiana University, “The majority (81%) of American teens report feeling negative pressure with respect to achievement, appearance and their future.”

Abigail Pierson, a sophomore, said that a fear of judgment directly impacts how people perceive not just themselves but how they want to express themselves. “I definitely think that it can influence how someone feels about themselves, like if they don’t have a certain type of clothing, or they don’t look like every girl or guy, then they feel like everyone else is just judging them,” Pierson said.

Trends popularizing clothes and lifestyles can form a sense of conformity in not just clothing but beliefs. Lattin said that trends can influence more than just clothes but opinions and beliefs. “Once you influence one thing, things in the community start shifting. And along with standing out, it changes what happens around you. If you start to change, then other people’s opinions about certain things might start to change, and it just keeps going,” Lattin said.

“I think that the fear of being



PHOTO BY LILY ROYER

**A group of students wearing popular shoes and pant styles.**

judged can limit people’s creativity, like if you want to wear something that you might think people will judge you for, you might hide that a little bit,” Ozelie said. This impacts who teens and students are, along with what makes them unique.

Although students may not always follow a trend if they don’t like it, “I would never choose something that I think is ugly and wear it, but I would wear something because it is trending, but I will not choose something that is trending and that I think would look bad or that I would hate,” Schiender said.

A common trend in fashion

at the moment is Uggs or camo print. Additionally, it’s trendy to wear low-rise jeans which have been transformed by a lot of old trends that’ve been returning. “Right now they’re bringing back a lot of the 80s trends, 90s trends,” Pierson said.

Trends are so uniform in society today and quickly popularized with social media that it is easy to find people with the same brand or shirt on. “I think [trends] create community through people bonding over similar interests. But it can also create individuality through trying to discover one’s identity,” Pierson said.

## Social media: Creating insecurity or motivation?

By IRELAND COSTELLO and SAMIRA SOORYA

Juniors are just approaching college application season, as seniors are in the homestretch. As Junior Zehra Krvavac said, “Social media tends to remind me that college applications are just around the corner, which makes me want to become more prepared.”

Annie Lombard, a junior committed for rowing at University of Virginia, said she has seen the effects of social media throughout her commitment process. “I think it impacted me in both a positive and negative way,” she said.

Lombard said social media helped her better understand team chemistry when searching for schools. “I would see what their practices look like, and how fast the team was, and how productive they were,” she said.

She also shared how looking at

teams’ social media pages influenced what she thought her role would look like at different schools. “I would see schools posting like inside of practice either not putting in a lot of work or being way too harsh. Sometimes seeing this would make me feel like, ‘Oh, I wouldn’t fit in at this school.’”

Junior Kennedy Sindelar is also going through the commitment process for rowing and has noticed the impact of social media. She said, “It is helpful seeing other people going through the same application process online.”

Senior Alizay Kashif said that social media has definitely impacted where she applied, and while it can create insecurity, it’s exciting to see other students’ hard work pay off. “I feel like decision posts are more than just decision posts. They’re kind of like a reflection of how you’ve worked for the past

four years,” she said.

The presence of college acceptances on social media not only gets students excited for their friends but has them looking forward to their future too. Junior Lya Brenner said that seeing the social aspect of college portrayed on apps like Instagram makes her eager for her college experience. She said that seeing Tiktoks about girls’ sororities rushing, and advertising fundraising events makes her excited to do the same.

Similarly, Sindelar said, “I’ve been seeing a lot of my friends recently committing for rowing. And it makes me feel really excited.”

But, students also feel pressure accompanying their anticipation. Sindelar explained that along with the excitement for her friends, she feels a pressure on how she will compare during her application process.

Senior Kashif said, “I’m happy for the other students, but then at the same time, I want to have that for myself too.”

This sense of comparison also persists in the academic form as well. Junior Remi Fleishmann said that seeing posts of other people’s extracurriculars, activities, and grades makes her feel like she is underperforming. “I think that some people are posting unreal expectations that may be very hard for an average person to meet,” she said.

Brenner elaborated on another aspect of college that she sees portrayed on social media. She explained how she saw college counselors on Tiktok and how this made her feel. “They tell you you’re kind of not doing enough and it stresses me out,” she said, and Brenner isn’t alone in this feeling of not doing enough. Lombard also mentioned the inferi-

ority she feels comparing herself to other student athletes online.

Lombard said that social media makes the application process “More stressful, because you see yourself compared to all of these other athletes and students that actually go there, and you feel kind of inferior to them.”

Clearly, the process of applying to college is constantly changing with the influence of social media, and students at Lane have noticed the impact. Social media can be a constant reminder of college decisions and applications. Students are coming to terms with the anxieties introduced by social media, and learning to find the bright side. As Brenner said, “it makes me feel like I’m not doing enough,” but “it also inspires me, and it motivates me.”

## February, no end in sight

By ANELIESE YEAGER

I, senior, Aneliese Yeager, am currently writing this article, past the deadline. February is notoriously the worst month for seniors, academically and motivationally, according to Lane counselors. Senioritis overtakes.

What does senioritis look like to students?

**“I have so much to do, but I have no time to do it... So if I have something more to do it’s just torturous.”**  
- Stella Steckler

**“It’s just really a lack of motivation to try in school and to even come to school and wake up.”**

- Laura Lucas

Many seniors struggle to find the motivation and drive to come to school and be their best selves, especially after post-secondary plans are in order and college acceptances have been released.

“That’s why I’m in high school is to go to college. I know where

I’m going.

I’m committed there,” Laura Lucas said, “It makes it more difficult to stay motivated when I feel like I already achieved the goal I was working towards.”

Stella Steckler said, “I got into one of my top schools, somewhere I’m gonna be happy going, so I feel like, why do I have to deal with this, guys?”

**“The closer and closer I get to graduating, it’s just been getting harder and harder to come.”**

- Laura Lucas

So what makes February so special? What causes the spike in senioritis at this time of year? Students and staff have mentioned many factors but collectively agree on one thing.

“It’s the weather. It kills us,” said Ms. Agosta, Math in Art and Math 2 teacher, a sentiment echoed by Steckler and Lucas. “We don’t see an end in sight. We’re buried in winter,” Steckler said.

“I look at it as like the darkest part of winter,” said Ms. Harden, a Lane social worker, “If we were animals this would be hibernation time.”

**“When I see students get Senioritis, you also see this big change in like, independence.”**

- Ms. Agosta

Harden and Agosta suggest seniors focus on self care, and remember we just have to push through a couple more months! Find a balance in your schedule and remember how good it will feel at graduation.

## Defend or defy? The ads behind ICE's 'Defend the Homeland' campaign



PHOTO BY NIANI DARDEN

**“Stop ICE” protest sign located on Wrightwood and Sawyer highlighting one of the recent responses of Chicagoans amidst ICE’s deployment to the city.**

By NIANI DARDEN

“America needs YOU.” When you open ICE’s website, a photo of Uncle Sam looks back at the viewer as his finger points past the screen. The word “YOU” stands out in bold red letters beneath him.

Scrolling further, viewers are met with a list of jobs offered by the Department of Homeland Security to those willing to participate in its mission to “protect” America, including General Attorney, De-

portation Officer, and ICE Officer. With one click of acceptance, applicants are encouraged to participate in enforcing federal immigration policies within major cities.

The Trump Administration’s multi-million-dollar nationwide “Defend the Homeland” campaign was launched July 29 of last year by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. According to DHS officials, the campaign was created in hopes of fixing the Biden Administration’s “failed immigration

policies,” referring to “open border” regulations they claim allowed the immigration population in the U.S. to grow.

In the months following the campaign’s initiation, DHS used federal funds given under the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” to release promotional advertisements on major streaming platforms, including Hulu, YouTube, Amazon Prime, and Spotify. According to The Guardian, the push to remove undocumented immigrants was followed by approximately 12,000 Americans joining the organization to support ICE’s recruitment of upcoming agents.

The advertisements display mugshots of imprisoned civilians along with their names and alleged criminal histories, often lacking specificity. While many of these ads labeled all immigrants as convicted felons, recent data analysis from NBC7 San Diego shows 93% of those arrested by ICE have no violent criminal convictions against them.

These ads have raised concerns amongst educators and community members, as enforcement actions continue, leaving room for different interpretations based on these facts.

“When you look at data, immigrants in the US commit crimes at lower rates than natural born Americans,” said an educator at Lane Tech who requested anonymity for fear of retribution.

“If you look at the people who have been detained, kidnapped, and sometimes deported, there are people who came here, sought asylum, and then that act was crim-

inalized and they committed no crimes within the US and were treated as violent repeat offenders anyways,” the educator said.

Additionally, recent cases reported by The Guardian showed some criminal allegations made by ICE to be untrue. Five-year-old Ecuadorian-American Liam Conejo Ramos, for example, was relocated from suburban Minneapolis to a family detention facility in Texas, due to his parents’ Ecuadorian immigrant status.

The DHS characterized his father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, to be an “illegal alien,” notifying the public they were “seeking a deportation order for the Ecuadorian boy.” Homeland Security records show no sign of criminal history for Arias or his child in Ecuador or Minnesota.

Concerns about the campaign message have been voiced before, specifically involving its militaristic visuals and stringent language. “They are using AI videos for their promotion, they’re trying to paint themselves as warrior patriots, and it all seems really violent,” said Cameron Blome, science teacher at Lane Tech. “A lot of the people that they’re going after are not violent people. Even if they were, we shouldn’t be making it seem like we’re going to war against people in our own country.”

“We all belong here, we’re all important members of this community,” said Courtney Feuer, an English teacher at Lane Tech. “We all have interesting things to contribute. We all have things to learn from each other.”

The DHS official website noted

that the Trump administration has previously stated the purpose of this campaign is to persuade potential applicants and put “America first.” Phrases such as “Defend the Homeland,” “fulfill your mission to protect America,” “we will have our home again,” and “One homeland, one people, one heritage,” are shown repeatedly throughout the campaign as a message to Americans.

These slogans have coincided with recent ICE enforcement and discourse throughout the nation. As these ads continue to air, ICE agents continue to branch off into different states on a regular basis — Texas, Florida, and California — clearing the area of those they identify as violating immigration law, and raising questions about its ethics by the public.

According to The Guardian, earlier this year DHS officials ordered agents to arrest 3,000 people per day, which would total up to nearly one million per year. The organization has stayed underneath the goal, arresting over 1,000 people per day, and has had recent surges in cities like Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Discussions about loyalty-based language and militaristic messaging have emerged in response to concerns about how patriotism is portrayed. “It can really give an underlying sense of that message as being the only or the correct message, and it’s not,” said the teacher who requested anonymity. “The messaging from DHS has been pretty extreme in the way that they represent what they’re doing and the people that they’re targeting.”

## Lane students participate in nationwide school protest of ICE



PHOTOS BY DASH ROREM



**Lane Students Participate in Nationwide School Walkouts in Protest of ICE.**

By DASH ROREM

“No ICE! No KKK! No fascists in the U.S.A.!” chanted hundreds of Lane Tech students as they peacefully protested ICE during a school walkout on Feb. 6 during 7th and 8th periods. Students walked around the Lane campus with signs denouncing ICE and chanting.

As they protested, Lane students received support from their communities. Cars, trucks and pedestrians honked and shouted words of encouragement to show their alliance with the protest.

Students came together to protest ICE for many reasons. “We are protesting the government organization known as ICE who have been illegally and brutally taking down immigrants, purely based on a racial purely based on racial profiling, and in the past week or so, they’ve been killing American citizens,” said Jose Diaz III, a junior at Lane.

This was referencing two killings that have happened in Minneapolis by ICE agents. The first of Renee Good on Jan. 7, and the second of Alex Pretti on Jan. 24, according to PBS.

Again referencing the Minneapolis killings, junior Oliver DeMarea said, “We don’t want federal agents on our streets in light of the recent murders in Minneapolis. I call them murders because that’s what they are. They’re not killings. They’re people murdered with political intent for speaking out against ICE, and that’s fascism, and I don’t mean to suggest that it hasn’t been happening in America. We know that political activists have been being slain in the streets since America’s conception, just now it’s in a much more visible light.”

Similarly, senior Hope Maciel said, “This is important because

immigrants are a really important part of our country, and Trump is trying to take them out forcefully. It is not right, and we need to do something about this.”

Junior Charlotte Braund said, “I think the unconstitutionality of [ICE] and the inhumanity is kind of really scary the way [ICE agents are] not treating these people like people.”

Additionally, many protesters were generally happy with the turnout of the walkout. “[the turnout is] incredible,” said Diaz. “I am just so proud of our school for being able to turn out this much. You can really feel like most of the people want to be here and protesting.”

Braund agreed that the turnout was “awesome,” and was surprised at the number of attendees given that she had only heard of the protest the day prior.

Though he was happy with the turnout, DeMarea thought there could have been more people. “We’re a huge school so there could always be more people, and I’d like to see more people, but I think this is a pretty big turnout,” he said. “I’m sort of in the middle of the crowd and there’s,— I’d say,— roughly a couple hundred people in front of me, and probably a couple hundred people behind me.”

In the end, many hope that protest will show the federal government that the youth of Chicago does not want this for their future.

# What does being Black mean to you?

By NIANI DARDEN

Plantains. Jerk chicken. Cornbread. Warm aromas that float in Black households are transcultural — conjoining different circles at Lane Tech and across the globe. As students recount the memories that came along with their Black experiences, ethnic boundaries begin to blur, uniting them as one through the gift of community.

At Lane Tech, students describe Black identity as a shared feeling reflected by history, culture, and resilience.

“Whenever I smell different seasons, I get different memories from when I was a young boy — when people would cook for me — and I think of all the aromas that my grandma would put up together,” senior Yasir Beloch said.

“Every day after school, I used to go to this jerk shop around the corner and eat everything there,” said senior Aaliyah Adediji. “They had mac and cheese with a side of bread and a 6 piece jerk chicken combo.”

Through migration and generational resilience, African/African-

American culture has manifested in many different ways, gathering communities across continents — visible through subtle references and everyday practices. While differing by region, the impact of “Black” culture still stands as tall to African students at Lane Tech.

“Technically, I’m Nigerian-American,” said Adediji, “I grew up around other Black people who looked like me, and I adopted that culture, and I strive to uphold the beautiful parts of that culture, not the assumed stereotypes about the culture.”

Feb. 1 officially marks the start of “Black History Month” in the U.S. It aims to honor the thriving culture, achievements, and historical figures that brought Black people to salvation, humanizing their efforts while setting the precedent for those to come.

The yearly ritual started back in 1926, when Harvard graduate and historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson advocated for Black history to be properly taught during the second week of February, which purposely coincided with Abraham Lincoln’s (Feb. 12) and Fredrick Douglass’ birthdays (Feb. 14) — two histori-

cal figures whose birthdays were nationally celebrated at that time due to their notability in African-American history.

His project was first announced as Negro History Week by The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) — also founded by Dr. Woodson — promoting his initiative by providing lesson plans and historical photos to schools lacking a well-rounded understanding of African and African-American history. The traditional week rose in popularity within Black communities over five decades in major cities, until federally recognized by President Gerald Ford in 1976 in the U.S. Bicentennial.

In 1986, Congress passed Public Law 99-244, formally establishing “National Black (Afro American) History Month,” later shortened to Black History Month as more began to recognize the diaspora of African culture. Late President Ford’s executive action came with a message of unity to all Americans: “Seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout

our history.” And seize they did.

A century later, that push to recognize Black contributions and honor history connecting millions by blood continues in our classrooms at Lane Tech. For some students, being Black is rooted in specific sounds, places, and moments.

“Grandma’s house, specifically on Thanksgiving.”

“Pump up the Jam.”

“Friday.”

These references are more than distant memories; they show how history is lived through everyday experience across the African diaspora — where countless stories all branch from the same root of united power in the face of discrimination.

Beloch explained that being Black can mean navigating both acceptance and discrimination in everyday spaces.

“Sometimes it’s negative, sometimes it’s positive,” Beloch said. “Some people might not treat you as well as they would their own race... But when you’re with people in the community who are the same race as you...you begin to build a bond with them,” Beloch said.

From stolen land to sovereign homes, from slavery to Jim Crow, and from Trayvon Martin to George Floyd, Black people have stood beside one another, forming movements to push toward freedom.

And while free in theory, Black Americans continue to face discrimination within spaces they were promised equal access to.

“I feel that with more time and a couple more revolutionaries, we can finally get this done and be stronger together,” Beloch said.

In the early 20th century, renowned Jamaican activist Marcus Garvey, founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), advocated for Pan-African pride and self-determination. Garvey once said, “The Black skin is not a badge of shame, but rather a glorious symbol of national greatness.” This ‘glorious symbol’ he speaks so highly of has had a profound impact on American culture, creating a unique identity that could never be replicated—an identity too substantial to be forgotten.

# Calling ‘checkmate’ on gender imbalances in chess

By SOPHIE WU

It’s no secret that the queen is a powerhouse on the chessboard with the ability to move every which way across the black and white squares. But while the queen yields so much authority in the game, there is still an incredible gender imbalance that occurs among players.

The Conversation describes how there are only 37 women who have been declared grandmasters in chess as compared to the 1,600 men who also hold that title. Not only can this imbalance be found in the titles women hold in chess, but also in their ratings as well.

Junior Natalia Hoffman, and the only girl on Lane Tech’s chess team, said shared that when attending co-ed competitions, there are hundreds of people swarming about, but there only seem to be a handful of other girls competing.

“In the end, chess has definitely always been more of like a male dominated sport, so I definitely think some girls are probably more intimidated by that,” Hoffman said.

Hoffman also said that it just seems that men don’t want women competing against them simply because it was traditionally male dominated.

“When I was younger, and I would go to tournaments, boys would just not be very nice to me,” Hoffman said. “[They’d] say straight up to my face, stuff like, ‘Oh, you’re going to be easy to beat because you’re a girl.’”

Former chess team coach Steve Parsons said also mentioned that while Lane’s chess team used to have a decent number of girls playing in competitions, many other schools that attended those conferences only had a couple.

“I think you always want more people to feel included, and a lot of times, I think what happens with people in general is, if they don’t see people like them doing a certain activity, then they think that that activity is not meant for them,” Parsons said.

However, Parsons also said that he’s never witnessed coaches from opposing teams ever blatantly discriminating against women or female players, and that a strong player is a strong

player regardless of gender.

Senior Dario Pjevic, the varsity chess team captain, also talked about the skewed demographic gap between women and men in chess.

“One interesting thing I’ve noticed is that the gap between the genders tends to be less noticeable the younger the demographic is,” Pjevic said. “The optimistic way to interpret this would be to argue that it is becoming more socially acceptable for girls to play chess from a young age, which may be true to an extent, but sadly I think that it is more likely that girls quit at younger ages than boys due to various social factors.”

Pjevic continues to elaborate by talking about how he thinks these social factors revolve around “arbitrary gender roles” and “blatant sexism.” He argues that there is no standing basis for how women could be inferior to men when it comes to chess as opposed to more physical sports like basketball, “I distinctly remember my grandpa telling me that he and his brother were really into chess but that his sister wasn’t just because, ‘Boys play chess and girls don’t,’” Pjevic said.

Pjevic even says that while

most men are “normal” during competitions, there are some who exhibit inappropriate behaviors such as making women uncomfortable by hitting on them, despite their disinterest.

“There is also somewhat of a permission structure for this behavior even at a high-level,” Pjevic said, describing the recent events that occurred when a Grandmaster was kicked out of the U.S. Championships after punching a female photographer. And while he was able to play again in the tournaments, he also harassed another woman and attempted to gain access to her hotel room.

While these stigmas swarm chess competitions, Pjevic believes that they can be reflected in Lane’s very own team as well.

“Throughout my time at the team, girls usually only made up two of the top eight or so players on the team, and this year there was only one girl on the varsity team,” Pjevic said. “That being said, when a girl does join the chess team they usually tend to keep playing until they graduate so I think we’ve done a fairly good job of making it a safe space.”

But in order to encourage more girls to join the team, Chair President of the Lane Tech Local School Council Ben Wong, and father of three previous chess team members Matthew, Ryan, and Megan, shed light on some of the possible routes they could take.

“Exposure and outreach are key,” Wong said. “Many of the girls who participate in CCF’s All-Girls Tournament would be strong additions to Lane’s team. Because Lane is a selective enrollment school, not all of those students ultimately attend here. However, continued encouragement at the elementary and middle school levels, mentorship from upperclassmen, and visible female leadership within the team can make a real difference.”

While the popular worldwide game of chess may seem daunting, Wong boils it down to “discipline, resilience, creativity, and long-term thinking,” encouraging curiosity to take over and try something new. “The board doesn’t care who you are — only how you play,” Wong said.

**Crossword answers:**

**Across:**

5. February
7. Madam CJ Walker
8. Maya Angelou
9. Rosa Parks
10. Stevie Wonder

**Down:**

1. Martin Luther King Jr.
2. Nelson Mandela
3. Harriet Tubman
4. Thurgood Marshall
6. Ruby Bridges

**PRODUCTION PLAYLIST**  
(February Edition Vol. 1)

1. The Great Divide - Noah Kahan
2. Drag Path - 21 Pilots
3. So Much Wine - Phoebe Bridgers
4. Jackie and Wilson - Hozier
5. To Space - Kings of Leon
6. American Wedding - Frank Ocean
7. Writings on the Wall - ROLE MODEL
8. Beach House - Del Water Gap
9. Roommates - Malcolm Todd
10. Isimo - Bleachers
11. Sweater Weather - The Neighbourhood
12. Dreams - The Cranberries

Curated by CHARLOTTE KNEER  
Made by SOPHIE WU

# Weighing the odds: Sports betting

By ELLIE SANDERSON

It's Superbowl Sunday, and you can't wait to watch the concluding game for this NFL season—or maybe you just tune in to see the ads. Either way, you are sure to see various announcements or graphics detailing the odds of the game and offers promising hundreds of dollars of bonus bets, as long as you offer up just five dollars.

Despite gambling being illegal in Illinois for people under the age of 21, students still find a way. And this isn't the occasional poker night with friends, but part of a much broader online betting scheme.

A senior—who wished to remain anonymous—said that he was introduced to gambling by his friend. What started out as online poker turned into occasional sports betting, which eventually became more for entertainment than the money.

"I'm going to be so bored watching the Super Bowl without gambling on it. So I put \$25 on rushing yards, the Seahawks win, and both teams for a passing touchdown," the senior said.

Another Lane senior who remains anonymous got into gambling under the wing of his father. "[Betting] really helped me enjoy a lot of sports, sporting events. It helped me connect with

my father on a deeper level," the second anonymous senior said.

**"It's like a drug. It's basically like alcohol or nicotine. You get dopamine from gambling on these websites, and it's not about the money for me. It's about that feeling of risk"**  
- first anonymous senior

In May of 2018 the Supreme Court decided *Murphy v. NCAA*, legalizing sports betting and apps, according to the *New York Times*. In August of that year, sports betting giant DraftKings expanded to an online app; competitor FanDuel followed suit later in 2018, according to the company's respective websites.

Since then, sports betting has exploded. According to a poll from Pew Research, 22% of adults say they have personally bet money on sports in the past year—up three points since 2022. Apps allow users to customize their bets, including multi-leg parlays (and each section or "leg" needs to hit to actually win).

"My first parlay, I did two

parlays for \$2 and \$5," the anonymous senior said, "They both hit for \$30. And I won big, my first time[...]And I was like, this is great. I'm really good at this."

These types of bets make watching the game that much more high-stakes: when earning money is on the line, every game feels like the Super Bowl, according to *US News*. The feeling of winning is addictive, is something the second senior said he is willing to chase after.

The risk factor is exactly what the apps are set up to identify and exploit, using algorithms designed to profile users before they even place their first wager, according to *The Economist*.

Forty-seven percent of men under the age of 30 say that legal sports betting is a "bad thing for society"—despite them being the largest demographic for sports betting, according to Pew Research.

This sentiment rings true here too, even among our bettors. Both seniors gave notice to the dangers of betting, and how the system—these algorithms—is designed for the profit of online and app-based sportsbooks.

"You're going to lose. You're losing, but you still do it. I was out, and they dragged me right back in," the first anonymous senior said.

"You just have to assume you're going to lose all the mon-



PHOTO BY ELLIE SANDERSON

**One of many DraftKings ads enticing new customers with a possible \$300 payout after betting \$5.**

ey you put into it," the second anonymous senior said.

If you or someone you know struggles with gambling addic-

tion, there is help available. Call 1-800-GAMBLER or text IL-GAMB to 833234 to receive free guidance and resources at any time.

# Looking back at Super Bowl LX

By ELAINE NGUYEN

Super Bowl LX, a revenge rematch of 2015's Super Bowl XLIX between the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks, took place in Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California on Feb. 8. In this Super Bowl match, the final score was 29-13, in which the Seahawks outscored the Patriots. Because the Seahawks won this championship game, the MVP (Most Valuable Player) was from this team, namely running back Kenneth Walker.

This Super Bowl marked the New England Patriots' 12th Super Bowl appearance and 6th Super Bowl loss. This Super Bowl marked the Seattle Seahawks' 4th Super Bowl appearance and 2nd Super Bowl win.

Before the game started, there was a coin toss, in which Joe Montana, the former quarterback of the local team the San Francisco 49ers, was in charge. The Seattle Seahawks, the designated visiting team, called tails on the opening toss and lost. The New England Patriots, the designated home team, elected to receive the ball at the start of the second half of the game.

People who supported the Seattle Seahawks during the Super Bowl were fortunate to not see the New England Patriots win their 7th championship, which would have put them the only team with the most Super Bowl wins.

Eric Golden, a math teacher at Lane, rooted for the Seattle Seahawks to win the Super Bowl.

"I am happy that [the winner of this year's Super Bowl] was not the Patriots," Golden said.

Similarly, freshman Hunter Palaniuk is a Seahawks fan. The reason he is a supporter for the Seahawks is that he was originally from the state of Washington. "It's honestly really great to see the Seahawks win," Palaniuk said.

On the other side, people who supported the New England Patriots during the Super Bowl were disappointed with their loss.

Junior Julius Raymundo rooted for the New England Patriots during the Super Bowl. Raymundo said, "I felt like [the New England Patriots loss] was very disappointing because I have [seen] they didn't really put up that much of a fight."

During the first quarter, the Seattle Seahawks scored only one field goal consisting of three points, which was successfully done by placekicker Jason Myers. The New England Patriots however did not score anything by the end of the quarter, having the Seahawks lead by 3 points.

During the second quarter, the Seattle Seahawks scored two field goals, scoring another six points. Both of these field goals were also successfully done by Myers. Like the previous quarter, the New England Patriots did not score anything by the end of the quarter, having the Seahawks extend their lead to 9 points.

Because the Seattle Seahawks were the only team to score during the first half of the game with field goals only, people felt like the game

was boring at this point. Palaniuk said the Super Bowl was "kind of boring in the 1st half, honestly, with only 3 field goals and nothing else really that happened."

"But I was happy that the Seattle Seahawks were up at halftime," Palaniuk continued.

This could be explained by the defensive strength on both sides of the game during the first half. The Seattle Seahawks were 1st in the NFL (National Football League) for scoring defense and the New England Patriots were 4th for the same metric during the 2025 NFL Season.

Raymundo said, "[The Super Bowl] was more of a defensive game."

Palaniuk agreed with Raymundo on the fact that defense was a significant part of the game.

"I just really liked how [the Seattle Seahawks] defensive linemen were getting a lot of sacks, and yeah, they put on a good defense," Palaniuk said.

Raymundo questioned what the New England Patriots were doing every time quarterback Drake Maye got sacked.

"[The New England Patriots' offensive line] need to be protecting the quarterback," he said.

During the third quarter, the Seattle Seahawks scored their fourth field goal in the game, which was also successfully done by Myers. Like the previous two quarters, the New England Patriots did not score anything by the end of the quarter, having the Seahawks extend their lead to 12 points.

Raymundo was disappointed

with how the New England Patriots went three quarters into the game, without scoring a touchdown, nor even a field goal.

The fourth quarter was when both teams made their first touchdown of the Super Bowl. For the Seattle Seahawks, its first touchdown involved tight end AJ Barner catching the football thrown by quarterback Sam Darnold for 16 yards and the extra point was successfully kicked by Myers. The New England Patriots' first touchdown involved wide receiver Mack Hollins catching the football thrown by Maye for 35 yards and the extra point was successfully kicked by kicker Andres Borregales.

"Drake made through a really good touchdown," Palaniuk said. "Honestly, that had me a little bit worried."

Raymundo said, "I liked at the end when [the New England Patriots] started getting touchdowns."

The Seattle Seahawks made their fifth field goal in the game as an addition during the same quarter, which was also successfully done by Myers. The New England Patriots did not make a field goal in the fourth quarter, nor in any of the first three quarters of the Super Bowl.

"I did like seeing Jason Myers kick a lot of field goals [at five field goals]," Palaniuk said.

There was only one touchdown in the game that involved an interception. Maye, who is the quarterback for the New England Patriots, was hit by cornerback Devon Witherspoon of the Seattle

Seahawks, which caused the ball to come loose. Linebacker Uchenna Nwosu picked up the ball and scored a touchdown for the Seahawks, in which the extra point was successfully kicked by Myers.

Palaniuk said he was happy that the Seattle Seahawks "really upped their defense and got that defensive touchdown."

"I really like the interception [from Nwosu] got," he said.

The New England Patriots made their second touchdown during the fourth quarter, which involved running back Rhamondre Stevenson catching the football from Maye for 7 yards.

The second half of the Super Bowl involved both teams making at least one touchdown, causing the number of points scored for both teams to be significantly higher in this half compared to the first half. As a result, people found the second half to be more interesting to watch.

Palaniuk said, "The 2nd half felt a little more fast-paced."

He said as a result the Super Bowl "got a lot better" during this half of the game.

During the Super Bowl, the Seattle Seahawks had 335 total yards, 194 passing yards, 141 rushing yards, and had an average of 4.7 yards per play. On the other hand, the New England Patriots had 331 total yards, 252 passing yards, 79 rushing yards, and had an average of 4.9 yards per play.

## A great American performance

A&E OPINION

By JILLIAN HAYES

A piraguas stand, sugar cane fields, and a child sleeping on chairs at a wedding (presumably after his parents told him they would be leaving 40 minutes ago). These are some of the nuances that created a remarkable performance that will go down in history as one of the greatest.

Bad Bunny's 'Supér Tazón' 60 half time performance was a celebration of love, family, culture, and unity in a time of great division.

Sept. 28, 2025 the NFL released a commercial featuring Bad Bunny wearing a pava, sitting on top of a goalpost. The commercial's release sparked major controversy among viewers, with comments ranging from "Hasn't been a halftime show worth watching in years," "I can't remember the last time I seen a good halftime show," and "NFL prefers trends over traditions"; To "Love to see us Latinos get the shine we deserve," "This will easily be the most watched Super Bowl halftime show in its 60 year history," and "He knows how to create an outstanding show."

The controversy surrounding the NFL's announcement led to the creation of a separate 'All-American' halftime show or-

ganized by Turning Point USA, featuring Kid Rock and various country artists. Wife of TPUSA founder Charlie Kirk and right-wing activist Erika Kirk claimed "People want that," in reference to Bad Bunny's performance, "but they want ours more." Predictably, Bad Bunny's performance received approximately 128.2 million viewers, while TPUSA's performance received about 6.4 million viewers.

In response to the backlash surrounding a Puerto Rican Spanish-language-only performer, Bad Bunny opens the show with the words, "Que rico es ser Latino," (How great it is to be Latino). With this statement alone, Bad Bunny reminds the Latino community not to lose touch with their roots, and to always feel pride in their culture.

Throughout his performance, Bad Bunny places many nods to Latino culture, visually emphasizing the beauty of the culture. The artist has never been shy about speaking on politics, and this performance further shows his stance without directly saying anything.

While performing his first song of the set, 'Tití Me Preguntó,' the camera follows Bad Bunny walking through a path featuring multiple aspects of Latino culture. He passes a 'Coco Frio,'

stand (a popular beverage in Latin America), a group of men playing dominoes (a game popular in the Caribbean considered to be a symbol of community and competitiveness), a piraguas stand (a popular Puerto Rican treat), and a taco stand. Featuring these cultural staples shows Latinos' ability to appreciate each other's cultures and the unity within the community.

Before performing his own old-school reggaeton influenced song, EoO, the artist features a tribute to iconic reggaeton artists before him, such as Don Omar, Tego Calderon, Hector "El Father," Divino, and Daddy Yankee. Not only does the feature create a nostalgic feel, but Bad Bunny also pays his respects to pioneers of the genre and further showcases the exciting aspects of his culture that are enjoyable to people across the globe.

Stepping out of his role as a performer, the artist introduces himself as his real name, Benito Antonio Ocasio-Martinez, reminding the audience that he is also a normal person. He announces that the only reason he's made it to a stage like the Superbowl is because he never stopped believing in himself, and he reminds the audience that they should also never stop believing

in themselves.

The overarching theme of Bad Bunny's performance is love and unity, and he furthers this idea with a wedding ceremony and reception, and a heartfelt salsa rendition of "Die with a Smile" from Lady Gaga. Not only do the romantic lyrics of 'Die with a Smile' create a segue into the theme of love with Bad Bunny's 'BAILE INOLVIDABLE,' but the performance from Lady Gaga represents unity across Latinos and Americans.

Bad Bunny moves on to perform his song 'NUEVAYoL,' with a diverse crowd dancing together and bodega in the background. The song blends together genres from different cultures, including salsa, reggaeton, and primarily dembow. The lyrics reflect on the experience of being Puerto Rican in New York, and the song represents the influence of Latino culture on American cities. This song choice for the Super Bowl is a subtle reminder to those who were opposed to Bad Bunny's performance that we are not so different from one another.

The artist does not fail to highlight issues in his motherland that are at fault of many mainland-Americans. Guest performer Ricky Martin, a Puerto Rican artist who had formerly been

heavily pressured by the music industry to sing in English, sang Bad Bunny's "LO QUE LE PASÓ A HAWAII," which focuses on the gentrification of Puerto Rico that ultimately pushes out locals, similar to what's taken in place in Hawaii. He then performs a song with similar themes, "El Apagon." The song talks about the greatness that comes out of Puerto Rico, while also using the blackouts caused by hurricanes as a theme of the perseverance coming from the island.

Bad Bunny closes out the show by mentioning all countries and territories on the American continent, in which he holds a football with the words, 'Together we are America.' With the flags of various countries behind him, he performs his final song "DtMF," standing for 'Debi Tirar Mas Fotos,' (I should've taken more photos). While the song reminisces on his time in Puerto Rico, claiming he should've cherished time with his friends and family more, the song is truly about all themes developed throughout the show: love, family, and unity. As they walk down the path, the light reflects behind them from a billboard with the most important message of the show "The only thing more powerful than hate is love."

## An incredibly cinematic soundtrack for an undeserving film

### Charli xcx's cinema sweep with 'The Moment' and 'Wuthering Heights'

REVIEW

By JULIA HICKSON

Charli xcx took the world by storm in the summer of 2024 with her breakout album "BRAT." From "360" to "Girl, so confusing," everyone was basking in the glory that was "BRAT summer."

Charli continued to live in "the moment" that was BRAT, releasing a deluxe and entirely remixed version of the album in 2024. However, BRAT is still alive and well to fans of Charli in the year 2026 following the release of a BRAT centered mockumentary titled "The Moment."

In this hour and 43 minute long experience, Charli takes the viewer through the downsides of the music industry. In this A24 film, we begin with a seemingly normal documentary about the BRAT era, but we are transitioned into the pressure of fame and how many artists are pushed far out of their comfort zones for the purpose of capitalizing on their popularity.

Throughout the film, xcx takes many jabs at the toxicity of the music industry and comically ends it with her concert being debuted as an Amazon original, directly displaying how artists capitalize themselves when given the chance to make their fame and wealth last.

While the film wasn't particularly emotional and took a light hearted approach to the downsides of popularity in the music industry, there were still moments in the film where we could see Charli facing intense hardships and pressures from the industry that she is in. Overall, the film is funny and perfect for fans of Charli and her music.

While viewing previews before my screening of "The Moment," the voice of xcx can be heard singing her original score "Chains of Love" for the 2026 film "Wuthering Heights," in which xcx entirely created the original soundtrack.

Released on Feb. 13 along with the film itself, "Wuthering Heights," the studio album by Charli xcx, is cinematic and a work of art on its own.

With the release of the first single, "House," the internet made countless jokes out of the lyrics "I think i'm gonna die in this house." Despite the comical use of the song, it riled up buzz for the release of the film.

Along with "House," "Chains of Love" was released shortly after and absolutely changed my perception of the movie. While I perceived "House" as a comical song, "Chains of Love," is an absolutely breathtaking track.

As xcx sings "Can't breathe without you here / The chains of love are cruel / I shouldn't feel like a prisoner," xcx conveys the deep bonds that love forms and how one can feel so trapped within it feeling as if they are a "prisoner."

Upon the release of the album, the song that stood out most to me was "Altars." With the incredibly catchy chorus, xcx sings "One is not the loneliest number / Won't keep puttin' all my faith in you," flipping the script on the normal narrative that is one must be dating to be happy, but in this case, being single would be better than staying in the relationship that is keeping her trapped.

Despite the catchiness and artistry of the "Wuthering Heights" album, the movie itself is a disgrace to the original story in the

novel created by Emily Brontë.

The main bits of controversy surrounding the film included the age of the cast compared to the age of the characters in the novel, and most of all, the race of the main male character. Heathcliff, played by Jacob Elordi, is originally said in the novel to be a "dark skinned gypsy," with his race being a major factor of the plot.

According to Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett, writing for the Guardian, the act of casting a white man to play a character meant to be portrayed by a person of color has removed a crucial part of the novel's meaning, "There's something outrageous about the stripping away of the politics of Wuthering Heights, but not in the rage-baiting way that I think the director intended," said Cosslett.

Aside from the controversy of the race of the cast, the main characters portrayed by Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie, aged 28 and 35, once again moves further from the original plot with the novel portraying the two in their mid-teens to early 20s with Catherine dying at only 18.

Overall, the casting of Robbie and Elordi were both far from accurate to the original and were in every sense the incorrect choice.

Some side with the director, Emerald Fennell, in her adaption of the beloved novel as being her own perception of it and titling the movie with quotations around it to allow more leeway to stray further from the original meaning of the story. However, the adaption itself displays the lack of intention Fennell had when creating the film as she nearly created an entirely new story.

Despite all of my pre-con-

ceived notions, I attempted to enter my viewing of the film as non-biased as possible, being that my prior knowledge of the story is very slim.

Ultimately, both visually and sonically, the movie was beautiful. The color palette, full of dark reds and whites, as well as the sound track both remained cohesive and gorgeous throughout the entirety of the film. The moments of happy youthfulness were brightly lit whereas when faced with hardship, the characters were often caught in the dark, pouring rain.

However, all of the characters independently had very few redeeming qualities. The love of Heathcliff and Catherine is incredibly toxic with Catherine leaving him for a wealthy man and spending the rest of her years regretting her decision even on her deathbed.

The two constantly hurt each other both mentally and physically, swearing that they would never forgive one another if they hurt them again, but alas, they would get hurt again, and their relationship would still never be altered.

It was a frustrating relationship to witness and although it felt as if I was meant to feel remorseful for these characters, their wrong doings and emotional abuse to their current partners made both of them very unlikely.

The film as a whole was very entertaining, but the provocative imagery and so called "message" regarding the destructive nature of love in the movie fell flat and was unfortunately lessened due to the countless explicit scenes of Cathy and Heathcliff that could have been done without.

All in all, the film does not pro-



A24



Atlantic Records



Warner Bros. Pictures

vide anyone with a happy ending, leaving characters deceased or with a part of their "soul" that has died, but honestly, they weren't very deserving of a happily ever after anyway.

# 'Bridgerton' season 4: Netflix's 'Diamond of the Season'

By SOPHIE WU

Dearest gentle reader, it seems that the "Bridgerton" creators have struck again with another excellent season capturing the magic of mystery and the all-consuming feeling of love, even in the softest of interactions.

Starting off the episode with news that the Bridgertons would be hosting the very first ball of the season, a masquerade, I was immediately swept off in the exciting flurry of preparations right along with the characters.

I think that when Sophie Bäck arrives, the main love interest of this season, the ball is our entire focus and it is utterly bewitching—the sceneries, decorations, ball gowns, and masks—almost as if we are experiencing the magic of attending our first ball right alongside Sophie.

Later on, I loved the gazebo scene in the first episode when Benedict teaches Sophie to dance without truly knowing her identity, and yet it seemed that in their conversation about venturing deeper into the depths of their souls struck a nerve with the gentleman, so much so that he was intrigued by the masked woman before him.

As we launch into the next episode, we also rewind the clock to the moments before Sophie leaves to go to the Bridgerton ball, reveal-

ing her character to be a servant for the Penwood family rather than a member of society. And I think the fact that she is a servant herself explains why we also got more glimpses of conversations among the servants in episode one at Bridgerton House.

As we learn more about Sophie's background, we see that there is definitely more of a "Cinderella-esque" dynamic between her and her two stepsisters and stepmother, Lady Penwood—although, Posy seems like a very sweet and loveable character who attempts to defend Sophie and come to her aid sometimes.

Fast forward to when Sophie and Benedict are rendered stranded at his cottage to wait out the storm, and because Benedict at the time had been covering up an injury he sustained in a fight to defend Sophie at her former employer's house, they end up sharing some of my favorite moments of the entire first part.

Their first dance under the gazebo had already set up the rest of the episodes to be ones clearly full of yearning and a need to know more about the other person, and while they were simmering with tension, the heat was not as strong. This is also replicated in the cottage moments shared between them two as they discuss topics like literature, art, and French accents.

And I think this dynamic also speaks to the balance that settles between their characters, like they have already molded together as



Shondaland  
CVD Productions

when she found him at the lake and when they flew a kite together are the moments that truly defined their relationship dynamic as one that is subtle, gentle, and yet ever so radiant. So far throughout the past seasons, there have surely been many heated moments full of passion and lust, sometimes almost feeling rushed, but with Benedict and Sophie, things feel easy, peaceful, and embody a sense of purity in the way no other Bridgerton couples have matched.

And I think this dynamic also speaks to the balance that settles between their characters, like they have already molded together as

one.

I also really love Sophie's character overall and how they show that there is strength in being a softer written character like hers. Where society has depicted "strong female leads" as ones who are typically more masculine and outspoken, Sophie seems to show her strength in even the quietest of ways throughout the season so far.

But later on, when Sophie realizes that she truly wants to keep her job at Bridgerton House, she tells Benedict that she cannot continue to work so long as he is at the house as well, but given the fact that that is his home, I would expect him to be there and spend time with his own family while handling his familial affairs and obligations while Anthony is gone. To me, it would have made more sense for Benedict to offer to leave for her sake instead of her telling him to leave his own family home for the sake of her keeping her new job.

Another scene I didn't fully understand would be the last moments of the fourth and final episode of part one when Benedict returns to Bridgerton House and Sophie goes back inside for her purse, and they meet in the stairway. I personally felt like this scene was so full of passion that it didn't feel consistent with their dynamic in the previous episodes, and I feel like the creators should have taken

that into consideration. Instead of making it a heated scene that felt random, they could have made it more emotionally intimate rather than lustful.

And then comes the oh so controversial words when Benedict asks Sophie to be his mistress. And to be honest, I think the only part I was really disappointed about when he asked this wasn't necessarily the nature of the question, considering it seemed to be consistent with societal norms at the time in the show, but that it was Benedict of all people asking that. I was more upset over the fact that I had expected more from him rather than the fact that he had asked her to be his little secret that he kept hidden—although, that was also quite the low blow.

And then they concluded the episode by reemphasizing their societal power dynamic, something they had been doing ever since Sophie and Benedict arrived at Bridgerton House. Whenever the two had to go their separate ways, Benedict was always climbing up the stairs or standing on a higher platform whereas Sophie descended the steps. This subtle way of portraying the barrier that stood between their chances of being together, the very reason Benedict thought to phrase his question in that way, is so very clever and I'm excited to see what the creators might do next.

## Jane Remover puts her 'Heart' on display in most recent EP

By JULIA HICKSON

Despite creating music since 2021 and before under different aliases, Jane Remover's most recent EP titled "♡" or "Heart" has been a standout amongst her discography. In the mere 26 minutes of content within the EP, Remover creates a wonderfully short listening experience packed with music concerning many different emotions and countless unique sonic elements.

Released Dec 5, 2025, Heart begins with the track "Magic I Want U." Remover starts by singing of a love she continues to reference throughout the entirety of the project in singing "I think I'm getting down with something / And I feel it every time he's around," as she sings of this love as if it is a sickness.

Into the chorus, Remover sings "It's gold in your mouth, what you say about me / And there's gold in my mouth, we make magic," as she speaks of the magical connection made between the two. This track serves as the perfect start to the EP as she only digs further into the relationship dynamics mentioned in the song within the rest of the tracks.

In the second track "So What?," Remover continues to sing of her love "I could be your girl, all I ever wanna be," and posing the question "So what if I like you?," leaving the ball in the other person's court and questioning whether or not they feel the same.

The first track I heard off of this EP was the one that drew me to it entirely: "Music Baby," had an alluring sound to it with its layered vocals, catchy chorus repeated throughout the entirety of the song, and use of sound effects such as glass shattering.

Every second of this 5 minute song is different from the next. As it begins slowly, she sings "You make the city so hot, you can't break my heart / I think about what could've been, I might've loved you from the start," once again referencing this love she feels and how strongly she feels for this person.

But, the slow beginning does not last long as it transitions into an upbeat chorus while Remover sings "We just make music baby B-O-Y / B-A-B-Y-B-O-Y." Following the two choruses, the music slows once again as Remover sings "Please God save me, I just wanna party."

Following the slowing of the music, it builds up once more into the final drop as she recites the opening lines of the song once more. The music layers over itself with "B-A-B-Y-B-O-Y" being heard behind her singing and the many different bits of instrumentation over one another leaving the listener entirely entranced.

The following track "Flash in the Pan," deals with rejection, with the term "flash in the pan" directly meaning having brief success that cannot be replicated. She sings "I like his voice and the way he thinks about me / Then I go to sleep and wake up cryin'," as she expresses the fantasy that she has of someone in her head and how they do not live up to it, thus leading her to wake up crying.

The 5th track, "How to Teleport," has the same alluring effect as "Music Baby" with its upbeat melody and use of sound effects to allow the audience to feel as if they have been placed within the song itself with how the music layers over itself and allows the listener to hear each part of it.

While the other tracks speak of love, this one speaks of lust. She uses the metaphor of teleporting

to refer to being transported while under the influence as she sings "you can close my eyes, take me back home." Despite the track's upbeat melody, the lyricism conveys an entirely different story and makes the song more interesting as a whole.

The final track of the EP, "Dream Sequence," was one that I initially glossed over on the first listen as it was not as upbeat and loud as the other tracks, but upon more listens, it has become my favorite of the entire project.

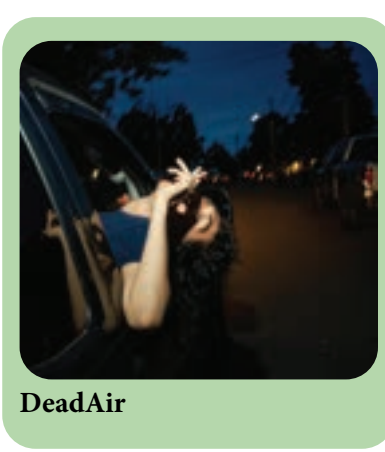
The track itself is much more stripped back compared to the others with a simple drum beat carrying the tempo. This song takes a different approach to love than the others do as Remover puts her heart out in the open and shares her desire to have a long term relationship singing "I wanna make it to Christmas."

The song does follow the same pattern seen in the other tracks of the EP with a build up to a climax in the song, but ends somberly as she ultimately foresees the ending of the relationship. "And when the wind whistles, you'll wake up unlucky again / With none of your things / Your bandmates, your lov-

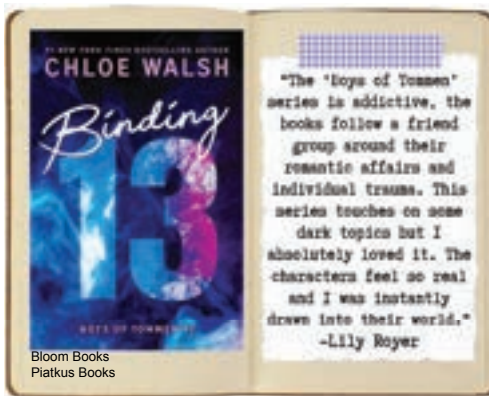
ers, and friends," Remover sings as she closes the project.

The song being so different from the rest, while at first it deterred me from listening, was what made me love it even more. It is so loud and the perfect track to play on repeat while gazing out the window as I find myself wanting to dig into each layer of music individually upon each listen.

The EP as a whole is so cohesive and adequately named as Remover truly does put her heart on display for all of her listeners. What the EP didn't have in length, it certainly made up for in the content of each and every song and has only left me more excited to see what she releases next.



Dead Air



# Winter varsity captains spotlight

By CHARLOTTE KNEER



**DANCE**

Zoe Kirsh, Shayna Sharpe, Violet Novy, Kellen Shields  
**Kellen Shields**  
Favorite memory: Performing at this year's pep rally, where we are able to show all of the hard work we put into our dances.



**CHEER**

Emmy Simone, Riley Coomer, Sofia Voss  
**Sofia Voss**  
Position: Base  
Favorite memory: Winning City with my team this year.



**GIRLS WRESTLING**

Sofia Guerrero, Zahabia Badru  
**Zahabia Badru**  
Favorite memory: Regionals last year, winning against a girl who beat me 2 times before. It was a really crazy moment because she beat me at City in the finals for the second time, just a week ago I think.



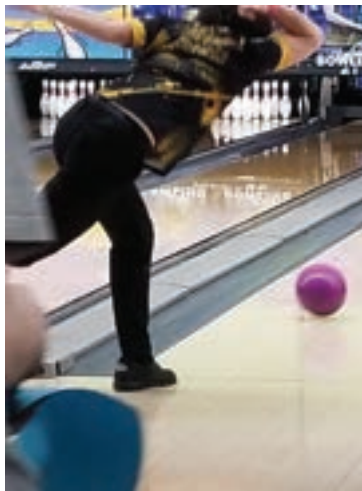
**GIRLS BOWLING**

Ruby Miller, Deniana Clemente  
**Ruby Miller**  
Favorite memory: When we beat Taft at the Crosstown Classic Tournament. Everyone was so excited because they're our rivals.



**BOYS BASKETBALL**

Matt Szafoni, Chase Kaplan  
**GIRLS BASKETBALL**  
Lucy Mehlis, Ella Bush  
**Ella Bush**  
Position: Shooting guard or forward  
Favorite memory: Beating Whitney Young for the first time in school history this year.



**BOYS SWIM AND DIVE**

Owen Huynh, Alek Arsic

**BOYS WRESTLING**

Joe Siprut, Cole Calace

## Cheer and boys wrestling wins City Championships, girls hoops makes it to CPL Final Four Lane Tech sports finishes up a successful winter season

By CHARLOTTE KNEER

As the winter sports season moves into state playoffs and comes to a close, our Lane Tech teams have had another successful season. Here's how they did:

The **boys basketball** team, coached by Nick LoGalbo, went 16-11 overall and 4-3 in conference. The team experienced a transition year: they went from 12 seniors last year, to only 6 this year, filling in the roster with 6 sophomores and 3 juniors. However they still reached success, aided by their Illinois State committed co-captain, Matt Szafoni. The team made it to the Elite 8 round in CPL playoffs, before losing to Curie 76-48. They begin their state playoff journey Feb. 25, with the IHSA Regional Semifinals against Lincoln Park.

**Girls basketball** reached the Final Four round of the CPL playoffs, an impressive feat with their own young roster. They lost to Kenwood in the Final Four round at UIC, and ended in 4th place in the city championships after a loss to Whitney Young in the 3rd place game. The team, coached by Tom Kane, had a record of 15-15 overall and 6-1 in conference. Girls basketball competed in the IHSA Regional game on Feb. 17 where they played Maine East and won 55-39. They won in the Regional Championship Feb. 19 against DePaul, aided by standout

performances from sophomores Vega Ransom-Marks, Scarlett Harris, and Anais Harris, the first regional title in school history!

The **dance team** competed in the IDTA (Illinois Drill Team Association) state finals on Feb. 15, with their jazz team taking home second place and their hip hop team taking home fifth place in state. Also competing was their head captain Kellen Shields with a solo piece. The dance team, coached by Natalie Rodriguez, also placed 6th at the IHSA sectionals.

The **cheer team** has now won back to back city championship titles in the CPL league! Coached by Nicole Vale, they also competed at state sectionals.

**Boys wrestling**, coached by Matthew Yan, won the CPL Championship for the fifth straight year! They also sent two wrestlers to the state tournament Feb. 19, Jeremiah Arroyo-McMullan and Cole Calace, where neither placed but finished with impressive records.

**Girls wrestling**, coached by Liam Cummings, won the title of IHSA Sectional champions on Feb. 16. They're sending 4 girls to

compete in the state final tournament, Zabby B and Layla M took home the sectional title and Sofe G and Eila B who also qualified for the state competition.

**Boys bowling**, coached by Justin Perez, placed 3rd at the IHSA sectionals and qualified to compete in the state tournament.

The **girls bowling** team won second place in the CPL championship while being coached by David Ruge.

**Boys swim and dive**, while they didn't have a diver competing, won second place in the CPL city championships. They scored 267 points in the competition with their coach Matt O'Hagan. They won the State Sectional round Feb. 21 and have five swimmers competing at the state level, Owen Huynh, Alek Arsic, Mason Hauser, Ashton Boeke, and Alex Ivascu.

Congratulations to all the Lane Tech athletes who contributed to another round of successful sports seasons! Good luck to all our teams as they finish off the winter season and all our teams as they start the spring season soon.



Photo by SARAH ROJAS

The girls basketball team, now State Regional Champions, competing on Senior Night against Amundsen.



Photo Courtesy of CAMDEN RUSH

The cheer team, now City Champions, performing at the school pep rally in the fall.



Photo Courtesy of CAMDEN RUSH

The dance team performing as a whole in the fall.

# Lane Tech cheer team fights for recognition

By SARAH ROJAS

On winter competition mornings, while much of the school is still asleep, the Lane Tech cheerleaders stretch side by side, hair curled, and bows tied, ready for another high-energy routine. For them, the season is not just about Friday night lights or packed basketball games. It is about long practices, city championships, and a team bond that grows stronger each year.

For sophomore Chris Griffin, the driving force behind the team is the connection built over months of work. "I'd definitely say like the bond that we all made throughout the season," Griffin said. "We're so close, and I just love that about us." That closeness, he explained, comes from the hours spent conditioning, practicing routines, and pushing through difficult moments together.

Despite that effort, Griffin believes many people at Lane still primarily see cheer as a support squad. "Nobody really goes to like our competitions and they only really see us cheer at football or basketball games," he said. While the crowds may notice them on the sidelines, much of the team's competitive work happens out of the spotlight.

Others on the team however, say perceptions are beginning to shift.

Junior Rosemary Jensen has watched the team grow in recognition, especially following recent achievements. "I think our team has grown a lot into more of a competitive team," Jensen said, noting that strong performances

at city competitions over the past two years have helped reshape the team's image. Because of that progress, she believes people are starting to respect the team.

Still, the athletes say misconceptions linger. A particular one being the claim that cheerleading is not a real sport. "I feel like [people] just don't understand the hard work that we put into our sport every practice," Griffin said, adding that practices include frequent conditioning and repeated "full-outs," or complete run-throughs of routines.

Sophomore team member Avery Stoner, reacts more strongly to the criticism, saying "it's angering" when people dismiss cheer as a real sport. Yet, she remains hopeful. "We're gaining more recognition," Stoner said. "I think people will understand eventually that it is a sport."

Part of that understanding comes from recognizing the time commitment. Stoner described a demanding schedule they have to follow. "We practiced two hours for seven days a week," she said. Jensen echoed that intensity, pointing out that in January alone she practiced four or five days a week, calling it "a very intense commitment, but like, it's all worth it."

The payoff has included major victories. The cheer team currently holds back-to-back city championship titles.

For Junior Janelle Corpuz, the team's strength lies not only in trophies, but in leadership and community. "My favorite part about being on the cheer team is

the leadership that we receive and also the community that we get to build over the years," she said. Since cheerleading relies on trust and teamwork, she believes that having "a really good team around you" is essential.

That sense of belonging is something that she hopes others would see. "I wish more people knew that the cheer team was such a good community and they actually really care about showing people that they are a sport and that we are a real team," Corpuz said, adding that the group deserves more respect. "I think if someone's wanting to join, I would tell them that it's a really fun place to really get to know more people."

Even as they continue cheering on football, basketball, and other sports from the sidelines, Lane Tech's cheerleaders are focused on redefining how their sport is viewed. Through demanding practices, city titles, and a tightly bonded team culture, they are working to ensure that their efforts are recognized, not just as support, but as competition in its own right.

**Top: Teammates Eden Katzfey, Leah Stegh, and Chris Griffin pose with the cheer city championship trophy.**

**Below: Lane Tech cheer team performance from the Pep Rally**

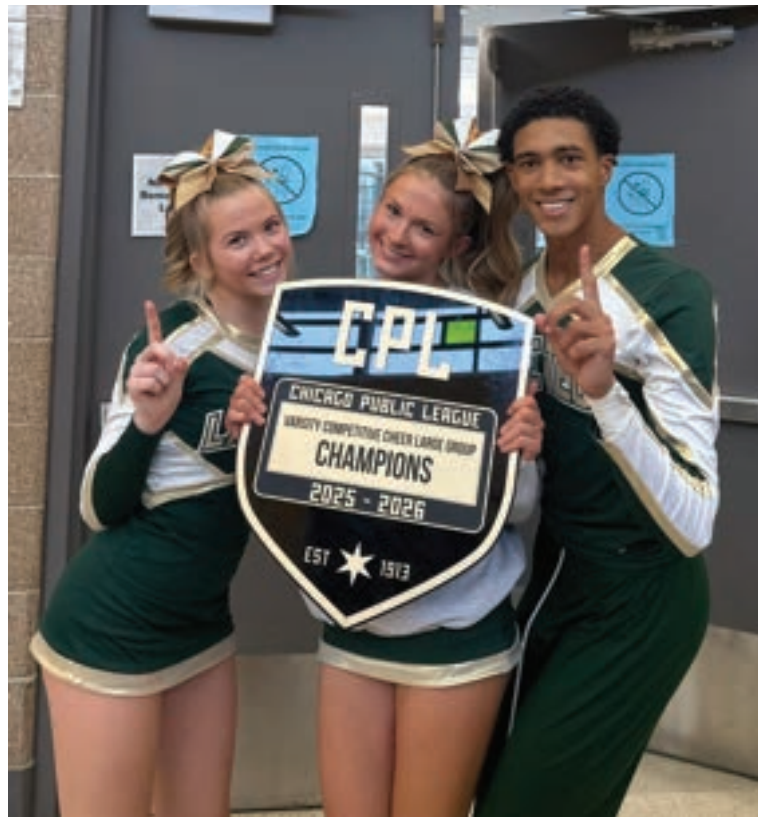


PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS GRIFFIN



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMDEN RUSH

# Valorant Esport team has found success

By ETHAN MAZZEO and ALANA NICHOLS

Lane Tech's Valorant players filled room 337 after school, getting into rows of computers where the clicking of keyboards crowds the classroom. The valorant program has emerged as one of the school's highly successful teams. The team has IHSEA (Illinois High School Esports Association) and IHSA (Illinois High School Association) state titles, a National PlayVS title and was featured in Esports publications, said Paddy Davey, who also teaches Chemistry at Lane. The team is composed of seven Lane students and their

coach Davey.

The team's greatest achievement so far has been their victory at nationals last year. "We had been working almost the whole year," said senior Aurellio Smithivis. This success has garnered attention from colleges and there have been many scholarship offers made to the team, Davey said.

The team provides a sense of community for its members based on a shared interest in gaming. While bad sportsmanship is found in some Esport teams,

Lane Tech's team is known to be an exception Davey said. Also according to Coach Davey, at an IHSEA conference several other teams noted that Lane Tech has demonstrated a positive attitude and have been role models in the Esports community. "Other Illinois High School coaches agreed about how they enjoyed playing with us, even if we trounced their team every time" Davey said.

A typical day of practice for the Valorant team starts with meeting in Room 337 and playing against one another on the computers. But during match days they play

from home, on their own setups, according to senior Oliver Suastegui. The team has an IGL, meaning an In Game Leader. "My role [as IGL] is calling the strategies for what our team wants to do while we're in the game, making sure everyone's on the same page" Smithivis said.

Practices have paid off and some team members have earned high national rankings within the game Davey said. Besides fostering talent, Coach Davey sees the value in building teamwork. "Skill without synergy won't lead you to a first place finish. My goal as

coach is to foster their development as a group rather than a series of talented individuals" Davey said.

Currently, Lane Tech has three active Valorant teams, two in the IHSEA State Division and one in the PlayVS Central Division. One of the IHSEA teams is undefeated in the regular season and is a strong contender for playoffs. The PlayVS team just started but is also currently undefeated. The team is on track to win just like last year and Coach Davey said, "Check back in a couple months and I'll show you the trophies."

## Valentine's Day Word Search

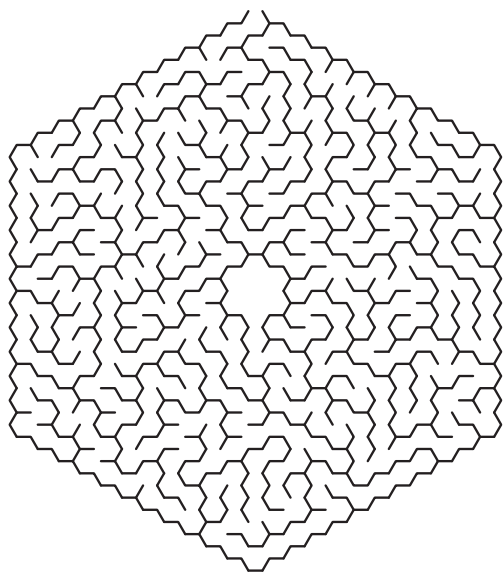
- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Word Bank | Roses   |
| Cupid     | Candy   |
| Arrow     | Love    |
| Heart     | XOXO    |
| Chocolate | Hugs    |
| Kiss      | Romance |
| February  | Flowers |

Made By JULIA HICKSON

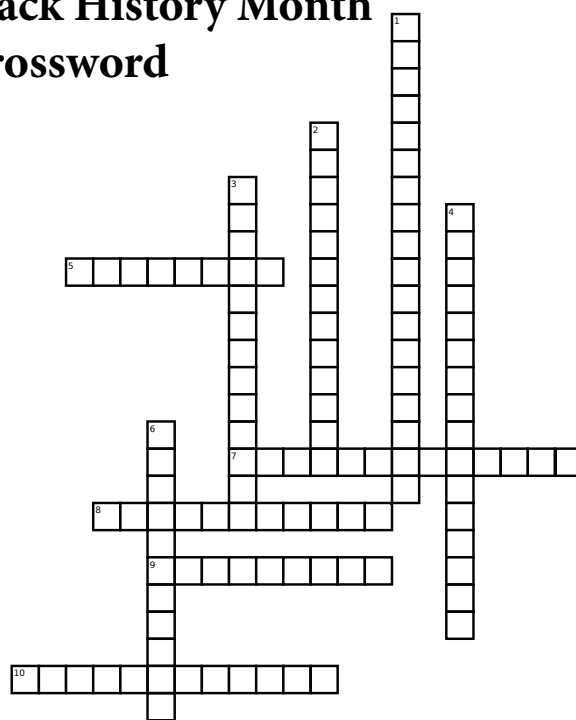
I C A N D Y M C N E J L S K H  
 G X S H W Z M E N I M E B H G  
 X C N W S D M I S S Y O U P R  
 H A Y A K W H C Y O C C K L L  
 R E O T Q I S G U H T K O S L  
 O E A M M C G P V O Y V I L Y  
 M I M R J I T Y S U E G R S J  
 A J D K T F Y R A U R B E F S  
 N Q I X W O R R A J D A Z X F  
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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

## Maze

Made By VALENTINA VIANNA



## Black History Month Crossword



Made By CHARLOTTE KNEER

**Down:**

- Iconic civil rights figure from 1960s famous for "having a dream"
- Anti-apartheid revolutionary and former President of South Africa
- Abolitionist famous for operating the Underground Railroad
- Civil rights lawyer and first African American Supreme Court judge
- Young African-American girl famous for desegregating elementary school in 1960

**Across:**

- The month of Black History Month
- Entrepreneur and philanthropist: the first female self-made millionaire
- Writer and civil rights activist who wrote "Still I Rise"
- Woman who would not give up her bus seat
- Famous singer/songwriter of "Isn't She Lovely"