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WARRIORS

LEADING THE CHARGE IN GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL

Get ready to see a new sport on campus next year, Girls Flag Football! Dive deep into its implementation on campus and plans for the upcoming season.

Compiled by Tyler Cordova, **SPORTS EDITOR**, article by Finley Dalley, **PUBLICITY**, graphics courtesy of ChatGPT



Flag football has existed for decades but has only recently made its way onto the high school field. This relatively new introduction, which began in the fall of 2023, grants a new opportunity to high school students, allowing them to take a break from highly competitive extracurricular activities and try a new one. Flag football is a welcome addition to the Warrior’s campus, one that has a large collection of the student body extremely excited.

“[Flag football] was a confluence of different things that brought it together,” incoming flag football Coach Dave Shiota said. “It was a mix of joining a new conference, where 10 of the 15 schools actually had girls’ flag football last year, and also a lot of the girls throughout the district really wanted it to be a sport since it was a sport at so many different schools.”

While the sport is derived from

classic American football, it has many drastic differences, the biggest being the complete lack of physical contact. Although there are other differences, such as the number of players in flag football being seven on seven, as opposed to American football being 11 on 11, or the time change from four 15-minute quarters to two 20-minute halves. However, the lack of contact between players, substituted with the use of flag belts, is the most eye-catching to its onlookers. This change allows the sport to be slightly more approachable as the classic game upholds a very intense stereotype. With the consistent collection of concussions, broken bones and other injuries, largely resulting from tackling or being tackled, flag football presents an alternative that is just as physically challenging but less physically costly. Flag football being completely tackle-

free allows its competitors to simply have fun with the game, in which Coach Shiota wants the team to have an atmosphere that radiates pure positivity.

“I hope it brings another level of excitement,” Shiota said. “The big thing we want to do is promote fun, and winning will take care of itself.”

If someone is interested in potentially joining the team next year, Coach Shiota recommends attending flag football Fridays, meetings which are held in his room weekly, that go over the sport in detail, and general information, all to prepare the students who are interested in joining the team. Another way to share interest would be to fill out the interest forms, linked through QR codes all around campus.

“First of all, please reach out to me [by email], at dshiota@fjuhsd.org,” Coach Shiota said.

He shares that the biggest skill when it comes to flag football is speed, and the ability to be aggressive. Coach Shiota states that it is a very different skill set than most sports, that a lot of students have the potential to be great at. Just like Varsity football, flag football will hold free spring practices, followed by summer camp, and finally tryouts in the fall of the next school year. All of these additions to the schedule will allow students to become the quickest and most aggressive versions of themselves on the field. Many lady Warriors are looking forward to attending the meetings, practices and eventually games, including junior Finley White.

“I’m hoping this sport will bring more attention to women’s sports on campus,” White said. “I’m hoping it will bring excitement to go support our girls’ teams.”

The essence of Mr. THS lives on in its modern rebranding, Troy’s Got Talent

By Victoria Yang
STAFF WRITER

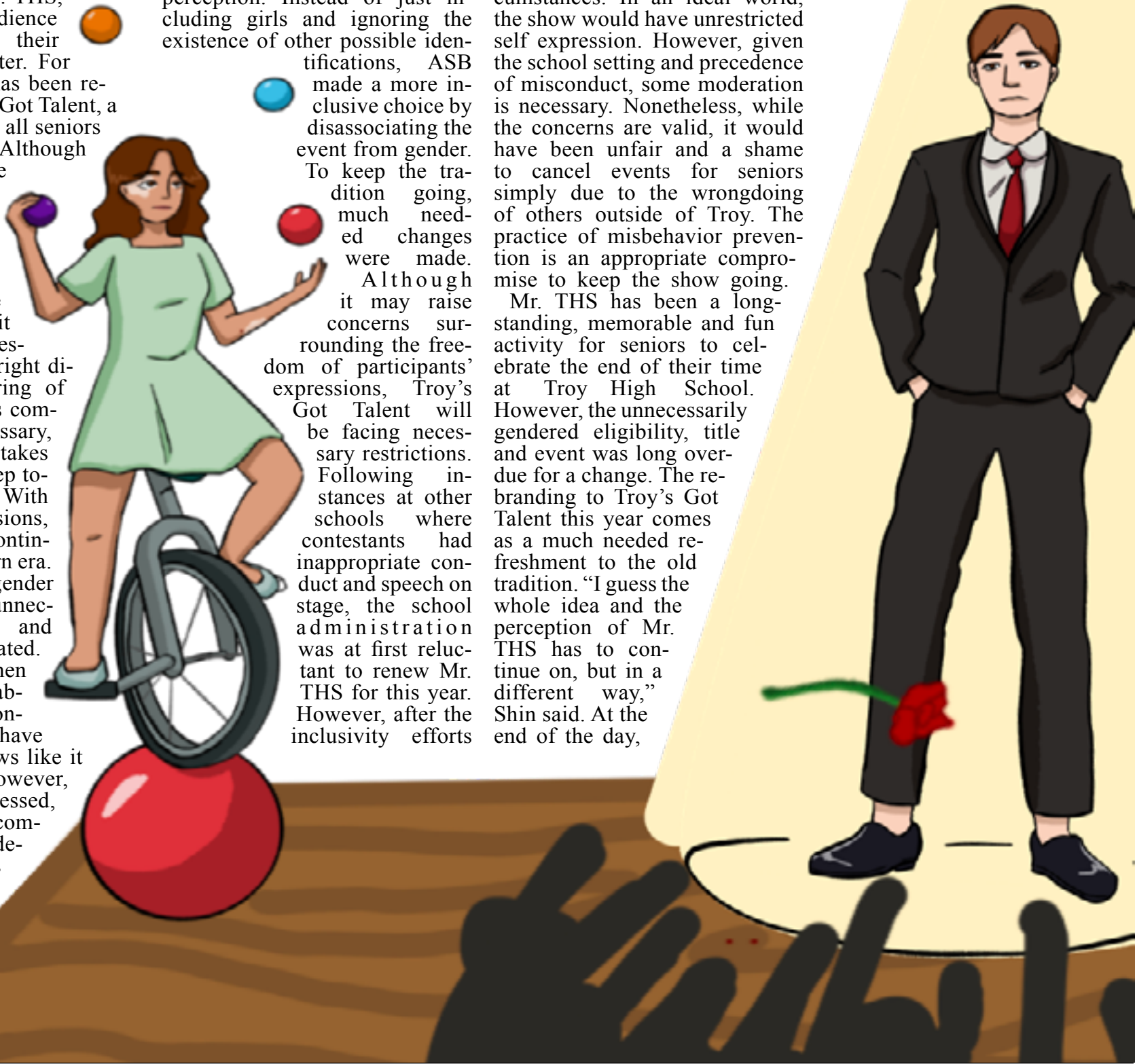


Troy is finally taking steps towards inclusivity through changing Mr. THS to Troy’s Got Talent. A tradition for decades, Mr. THS has been a talent show open exclusively to male seniors. It was a beauty pageant style competition where participants try out for the title of Mr. THS, voted by the audience after performing their talent in the theater. For the first time, it has been rebranded to Troy’s Got Talent, a new show open to all seniors to compete in. Although the previous title has long held a special place in the hearts of Troy students and the changes will likely take getting used to, it represents a progressive move in the right direction. The barring of other genders was completely unnecessary, and the new show takes a much needed step toward inclusivity. With changes and revisions, the old tradition continues into the modern era. The previous gender restriction was unnecessary, exclusive and extremely outdated. In the 2000s, when Mr. THS was established, the male-only entries may not have raised the eyebrows like it would today. However, as society progressed, the practice is becoming increasingly debatable. There has been increasing advocacy for greater female

representation. Also, society has gradually started to accept gender-neutral pronouns and non-binary gender identifications. “Just because of the modern age...we don’t want...a negative...perception on us anymore,” ASB Vice President Grace Shin said in regards to the old title. Although the decision was not a result of student complaints, the school administration disliked the old title due to the possible tainted perception. Instead of just including girls and ignoring the existence of other possible identifications, ASB made a more inclusive choice by disassociating the event from gender. To keep the tradition going, much needed changes were made. Although it may raise concerns surrounding the freedom of participants’ expressions, Troy’s Got Talent will be facing necessary restrictions. Following instances at other schools where contestants had inappropriate conduct and speech on stage, the school administration was at first reluctant to renew Mr. THS for this year. However, after the inclusivity efforts

and promises to further regulate and restrict, ASB acquired approval to continue the tradition. “We would make sure to have people on the mics,...if they say anything, that we cut the mics off right away. Just some simple things...just in case anything goes wrong,” Shin said. A valuable tradition and memorable event for the senior class, ASB has done a great job of keeping the event afloat amid difficult circumstances. In an ideal world, the show would have unrestricted self expression. However, given the school setting and precedence of misconduct, some moderation is necessary. Nonetheless, while the concerns are valid, it would have been unfair and a shame to cancel events for seniors simply due to the wrongdoing of others outside of Troy. The practice of misbehavior prevention is an appropriate compromise to keep the show going. Mr. THS has been a long-standing, memorable and fun activity for seniors to celebrate the end of their time at Troy High School. However, the unnecessarily gendered eligibility, title and event was long overdue for a change. The rebranding to Troy’s Got Talent this year comes as a much needed refreshment to the old tradition. “I guess the whole idea and the perception of Mr. THS has to continue on, but in a different way,” Shin said. At the end of the day,

the changes are going in the positive direction of more inclusivity and preservation of a fun tradition.

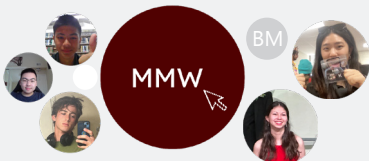


CARTOON BY EDYN MAI AND ALICIA YOON





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mark my words

Angela Marie Vasquez, senior

There were not a lot of people, the hot chocolate was not available for the majority of the dance, and it was frankly boring.

AV

Catherine Pi, sophomore

I thought it was much better decorated this year than with Sadies last year, the snow and lights were really magical

CP

Prachi Dhoot, sophomore

I think Sadies is something that everyone would be willing to go to considering they have in the past. I can't go either way so...

PD

Collin O' Malley, senior

CM

It was fun, but with all other dances it is what you make of it and depends on if you go with friends.

Mindy Huynh, senior

I've just never been a fan of Sadie's and winter formal is generally prettier and suits the winter season.

MH

Ellie Huang, junior

it was super fun and i liked all the new activities and THE NEW LAYOUT IS SO MUCH BETTER, like the mosh pit in the gym surrounded by tables and games and photo booth etc, in my opinion it was better that way. and hot cocoa bar was very suitable. the new entrance hall was also better in my opinion and THE DECORATIONS WERE SO GOOD

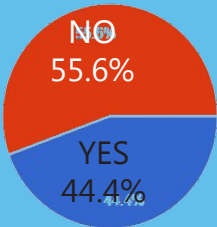
EH

Grace Shin, senior

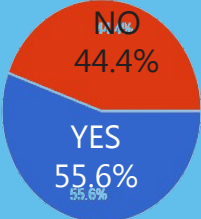
To be fair, if we had both I would've went to both- I think the plus about wofo was the fact that it was super duper cheap for a lot of the underclassman's last dance. the price also convinced a lot of upperclassman (seniors especially) to go because it would be our very last at school dance. If i had had had to choose which one like if i was in a life or death kind of situation i think I would've chosen wofo. the idea of getting together with your friends and taking pictures, eating, and getting ready before a formal dance all adds up to the event overall. SOOO wofo > sadies

GS

Did you attend winter formal?



Should teachers have the right to collect phones?



Want to see all of the responses?



Would you like to submit your own letter to the editor?

Social media CEOs have caused great damage and now need to fix their mistakes

By Chelsea Engelhardt
STAFF WRITER



In a recent Senate hearing, the CEOs of several social media platforms were all questioned on the lack of regulations and legislation on social media and its safety. According to the Senators, social media leadership was at fault for the destruction and damage these platforms allowed for. Social media CEOs need to take responsibility for the harm their platforms have caused and take action to prevent further damage.

Congress has little control over their own power due to social media companies overpowering their decisions. There have been 15 newly introduced bills into Congress aimed to protect and regulate social media in order to prevent further harm. The oldest bill proposed in regards to protections over social media was proposed in July of 2023 and still has not made it past introduction. This timeline gives the bill little promise to be approved by Congress. According to CNN, with the use of lobbyists and money contributions, social media companies are able to influence the congressmen. Tech analyst Ben Thompson calls this “strategy credit”. There are 14 other bills just like this, passed within the last year, aimed to protect individuals on the internet and yet neglected just after introduction. This is a problem that citizens and leaders should no longer ignore.

Exposing sensitive images to possible minors and other humans on the platform is inexcusable and undefendable. In this hearing, Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta was especially grilled on aspects of his platform that were directly harmful to the consumers. Some reports from anonymous parents have reported their children seeing inappropriate content. As well as Zuckerberg’s platform would give a warning for a possible sexual abuse photo but still show it rather than blocking the image all together. However, Meta is not the

only company that has allowed for slips like this to occur. Tiktok has had multiple problems recently with templates through cap cut and smaller accounts getting away with posting inappropriate content. Due to poor screening, this is teaching kids that that kind of thing is okay and that kids with social media is acceptable. This is no one’s fault except the leaders of these organizations, the ones that give a warning on child abuse put still allow you to view it. This is a danger in the world that will only grow, unless it is put to an end now.

The lack of policing for social media companies is appalling. At this hearing, the number of employees a part of each company’s safety team was leaked. For Tiktok, there are at least 1 billion users which is an average of 25,000 users per employee. And Snapchat, however, has 2000 people in their safety department with over 750 million users, bringing their ratio to 375,000 users per one employee. These ratios show the number of safety employees to users of the app. Even Tiktok with the smaller of the two ratios has an average of 25,000 users being looked after or screened by an employee. This is not reasonable and would cause skips in content and therefore in safety. Snapchat as well has an even scarier ratio that just shows these company’s priorities. With such a drastic ratio, it is clear that companies cannot pay the due attention to the safety each individual on their platforms deserves.

Technology CEOs have created killing devices and now need to clean up the “blood on their hands” that they have smeared on themselves according to Reuters. The lack of regulations for social media have allowed for great growth and profits in the technology field but also allowed for an appalling amount of illegal activity and predatory behavior. Tech giants have neglected this fact in hopes for better profits but now it is in their face and they need to take accountability. Bills need to be passed and social media companies need to police themselves better.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KTAR NEWS

Senate bill 976 is a step towards protecting minors’ mental health

By Shailey Patel
STAFF WRITER



Social media has been affecting minor mental health for far too long. State Senator Nancy Skinner announced the “Protecting Youth from Social Media Addiction Act,” more formally known as Senate Bill 976, on Jan. 29. If passed, this bill will prohibit social media platforms from sending minors “addictive” material, bar them from sending minors notifications from midnight to 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on school days, and set a default one-hour time limit daily that could be adjusted with parental consent. Although these measures may be drastic for minors, making changes in minors’ access to social media is necessary to protect them and their mental health.

The government must establish guidelines to protect children from dangers associated with social media addiction. This new bill would prohibit social media from showing minors addictive material without the consent of a parent. Using an algorithm, addictive material is shown to all age groups based on the content one engages in. This algorithm has been so successful that according to a 2023 Pew Research Study, 46% of teens described their internet use as almost constant. To remedy this, this bill will require social media companies to make a feed catered to minors that would only show them posts from the people that they follow if it passes. The change is something that must happen, as social media addiction has become more and more prevalent among teenagers.

The bill is crucial to improving the mental health of minors. By muting notifications during specific times of the day when people under eighteen are either at school or supposed to be sleeping, students can get on the right schedule and protect their mental health. According to a 2017 study by CNN of 13-year-olds and their relationships with social media, participants who checked social media 50 to 100 times a day were 37% more distressed than those who checked a few times a day. The constant need for teenagers to check their phones and notifications directly contributes to their mental health problems. This small but effective change with this bill has the potential to make a huge impact on our community.

While the 1-hour limit may be drastic, it is needed to improve teenage mental health. According to a 2023 study by Forbes, the average teenager in the United States spends 4.8 hours daily on social media. Rather than spending this time on social media and viewing the lives of others for hours on end, this new bill would allow children the chance to reconnect with themselves. A 2023 study at McGill University showed that teens who limited their time on social media to one hour a day helped them feel better about their self-appearance and body image. This change will be pivotal in taking away the constant comparisons that are the source of insecurities of many minors. However, since it is a large change, lawmakers should work to make this a more gradual transition, slowly decreasing the time minors are allowed to be on social media.

In the past few years, the problems that social media have inflicted on younger generations have become more and more

SIGNS OF
SOCIAL MEDIA
ADDICTION
IN TEENS

Concerned parents can learn the signs of social media addiction to recognize them in their teens potentially. According to Parentology, the symptoms are:

The desire for constant social media access.

Lack of understanding of potential “real-world” consequences.

Oversharing.

Awakening in the middle of the night to check social media.

Ignoring real life.

Difficulty conversing outside of social media.

Becoming stressed about posts.

Exhibiting symptoms of ADHD.

Stalking others.

Inability to curb social media use.

Spending more than four hours on social media daily.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOCIALMEDIAVICTIMS.ORG

detrimental. It is now the time to limit the social media use of minors to allow them to develop a life outside of their addiction to social media. Even though these changes are extreme and a big change in minors’ lives, this bill is essential to protecting minors’ mental health.

IB Philosophy students attend La Habra Poetry Club’s first open mic night

Four Warriors attended an Open Mic Night at La Habra High School to present their prose in front of an audience of peers.

By Jenny Huang
STAFF WRITER

Warrior IB Philosophy students attended an open mic night at La Habra High School to share their creative writing pieces Jan. 9.

IB Philosophy is a course exclusive to students pursuing the IB diploma. According to junior Bhavna Malladi, the class is unique because there are no long lectures. Instead, students partake in daily seminars during which they discuss various topics.

“The class has opened my mind to different ideas, cultures and opinions that people have,” Malladi said. “It is easy to be close-minded and have a circular feedback loop of your own ideas, but hearing other people’s opinions, even if at first it daunts you, is very important.”

The La Habra Poetry Club hosted their first open mic night on the La Habra High campus. Four Warriors, accompanied by IB philosophy teacher Laurelin Varieur, presented what they wrote for This I Believe, a writing competition which features short essays students compose about a personal belief.

In September, Poetry Club president Kenna Dutil-Baker



PHOTO COURTESY OF BHAVNA MALLADI

OUTSTANDING ORATORS: From left, juniors Hellen Cui, Bhavna Malladi, Zhuoran Zhou and Anya Pramanick attended the first open mic night with teachers Laurelin Varieur and Lauren Vargas.

and club adviser Lauren Vargas came up with the idea of hosting an open mic night. The club wanted to bring a dose of creative writing to high schoolers in hopes of sparking a passion for the subject, Vargas said.

“Watching students being on stage, having a voice, saying what they want to say, is super empowering,” Vargas said. “This could change some kids’ lives. We could be giving them the exact space they need to discover a talent.”

At the event, 31 students from across the district presented their prose on stage. Standing up in front of an audience improves confidence and performance ability, Malladi said.

“Going out in front of a crowd of strangers and setting the room on fire with

prose is one of the coolest things I have done,” Malladi said. “If we are writing and keeping it within ourselves, it is basically pointless. [Writing] is meant to be shared.”

Students shared a wide range of prose about a variety of topics. In addition to short essays, speakers presented slam, confessional and political poetry. The topics of their writings ranged from current events to personal experiences.

According to Malladi, the performances highlighted each student’s unique experiences. The night reflected the sentiment that someone’s character can be more than what meets the eye.

“A lot of people seem very plain at face value, but in reality, people are blossoming inside,” Malladi said.

“Everyone is so incredibly diverse, and they have so much emotion, passion and stories hidden inside them that judging someone is completely out of my mind.”

The Poetry Club plans on hosting a second open mic night in May. The event provides writers the opportunity to step out of their comfort zone and share their works, Malladi said.

“Even if you think you are an awful writer and end up writing something that you want to bury in a chest, bury at the bottom of the ocean and then blow up, you need to have a level of self confidence,” Malladi said. “Putting yourself out there and sharing your writing is really important, and everyone who gets a chance to write something should share it.”

UPDATES BAR

FJUHSD AVID presents
“Byte of Reality” 2024

In order to learn about how to properly budget and finance savings and expenditures, Buena Park, Fullerton, Sunny Hills and Troy High School AVID seniors took part in a financial education simulation at Buena Park High School Feb. 2. During the game, student attendees were given limited budgets and had to work through the tasks of buying cars, food and paying for utilities and home mortgages.

Troy SciOly wins 2024 MIT Science Olympiad Invitational

Victorious with a 60 point lead, Troy SciOly scored first place in the 2024 MIT Science Olympiad Invitational Tournament Jan. 20. Composed of three trial events, the competition challenged contestants based on their mastery of scientific figures and knowledge of the Pokémon video game franchise. The invitational also included a scavenger hunt simulation where students had to complete tournament-planning and administrative tasks on the MIT campus.

District Dance Festival

Representing Troy High School at the Fullerton Joint Union High School District Dance Festival, Troy Red Hots and All Male Dance Team performed alongside fellow district high school dancers at the Fullerton auditorium Jan. 26. Warriors aimed to showcase their knowledge in techniques such as the Tahitian dance, Afro-Caribbean dance and musical theater dance.

Surfrider club is doing a beach cleanup

In an effort to protect and conserve the world’s oceans, beaches and marine life, the Warrior Surfrider Association started the new year with a beach cleanup at Seal Beach. Promoting the reduction of single-use plastics and maintenance of local beaches, the club hosts monthly beach cleanups at Doheny State, Huntington and Newport beaches.

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BEHIND THE SCENES OF ALMOST, MAINE

From designing costumes to creating fake snow, read about how Troy Theatre's set team, costume design and cast worked on transporting audiences straight to the East Coast.

Compiled by Iman Babiker, NEWS EDITOR, article by Samantha Luo, STAFF WRITERS, cartoon by Alicia Yoon, CARTOONIST, photos by Lauren Song, PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR.

COSTUMES



Troy Theatre costume designer Julianna Wofford helped plan and craft costumes for each cast member.

Wofford began brainstorming and planning in early January, creating slideshows to provide actors with inspiration for their costumes and inform them of what materials they would need. Actors then brought suitable clothing they had on hand while Wofford sourced uncommon items from a costume warehouse.

Costumes were adapted to reflect the 20 degree Fahrenheit setting of the story. Cast members commonly wore winter gear and layered clothing, which fit the setting but also led to a few roadblocks, Wofford said.

"We wanted to use a lack of black for the costumes, [but] that became a problem because a lot of winter gear is black," Wofford said. "In the last scene, [there was also] a lot of layered clothing, so that was probably

the hardest, to make it look like [the actors are] not just walking marshmallows on stage."

Costume inspiration came from previous productions by Howards Community College and El Camino College. Due to the modern timeframe of the play, actors largely brought personal garments to use in costumes. This led to a smaller budget than that of previous plays, which typically had a budget upwards of about \$1,000.

For each play, costumes are rented or brought from home, though if specific pieces are needed they are handmade. According to Wofford, the garments for this show were simple compared to that of other shows, but costume design still put in a lot of work.

"[The most rewarding part] is seeing it all put together, now [that] we are doing run-throughs," Wofford said. "I get to see everyone with their costumes and the finished set, [and] it is very fun to see."

DIRECTING THE PLAY

In a realistic depiction of companionship sprinkled with the occasional whimsy, Warrior Theatre Arts performed "Almost, Maine" in the campus theater on Feb. 8, 9, 16 and 15.

Inspired by John Cariani's 2004 American play, the production features nine segments that follow the stories of nine pairs of protagonists. Each segment, indicated by scene transitions and cast changes, occurs in a fictitious town in northern Maine called Almost.

Troy Theatre adapted the latest fourth revised edition of the play issued in 2023. According to Troy Theatre teacher Joe Hufford, the play explores the real life nuances

of love, romance and heart-break. "The production also incorporates some magic realism to highlight the random and exciting nature of human relationships. Through the portrayal of various social dynamics, "Almost, Maine" seeks to connect with audiences through the universal experiences of seeking companionship," Hufford said.

"[The script] speaks intellectually or complementarity to the audience," Hufford said. "It knows the audience is smart about this subject and therefore tries to tell an element of truth in each scene that we can all then feel validates our own experience."

As director of the play, Hufford planned rehearsals and collaborated with students to calibrate the tone and emotions of each scene. The directing process included discussions on character motivations and individualized instruction with each cast member, Hufford said.

"I was dealing with a very intelligent group of young actors and students [who] were ready to engage in this process," Hufford said. "And I think all of their acting has improved as a result. I think they are all much more intuitive actors, much more brave and courageous actors, because they really had to focus and dial in to some uncomfortable truths."



OPENING SCENE: Matthew Yarnell (left) and Drina Mirabueno (right) depict the roles of Pete and Ginette, respectively, in the prologue, one of the nine short segments that comprise the entire play.



SET CONSTRUCTION



Transforming the sun into snow, the Troy Theatre set design team planned and built the set of Almost, Maine.

The Warrior set design team began exploring other "Almost, Maine" productions by early January. Students analyzed various adaptations through compiled slide decks and gained inspiration for Troy's own stage. The set design and stage props were also inspired by the terrain of the East coast.

Construction work was split between the three Theater Tech classes and one Theater Ensemble class. Students worked together to construct the main set, which included building flats and painting surrounding scenery. The set

design team sourced materials from stores such as Home Depot or reused from previous shows. To create the appearance of snow, students arranged polyester fluff and fabric.

Projects that were not completed in one class period were taken up by the next. According to Theater Tech student Khuey Doan, every single class helped make every item on set.

"It is not one specific thing that a class makes," Doan said. "[Set design] is a pretty long process, but because there are just so many helping hands, I think it is a pretty fun process."

The set design faced a few challenges due to the size and shape of Troy's stage. The team struggled with ensuring the

sets were small enough to hide between transitions while providing enough space for actors. There were additional concerns that part of the audience would not be able to see certain scenes due to the shape of the stage.

The set design team and cast members collaborated in order to resolve these challenges. Hearing positive feedback about the set was really rewarding, Doan said.

"Mr. Hufford was talking about how his [family] really liked the set, and [others also] told me they liked the set," Doan said. "I think the most rewarding part is just seeing the end result, seeing [everything] all come together and help the show."

Create Code Construct collaborates with MIX Academy to host STEAM events

Create Code Construct aims to engage children in STEAM by leading classes at MIX Academy.

By Salman Waheed
STAFF WRITER

In order to inspire Orange County upper elementary school students, Create Code Construct partnered with MIX Academy to teach classes on a variety of STEAM concepts in Santa Ana Feb. 7 to Mar. 6. Merged with Warrior club STEAM for All, CCC aims to educate youth about technology and engineering. In search of a host organization with a platform to hold seminars, CCC acquired conference space from the youth center MIX Academy. Founded in Santa Ana during 2014, MIX Academy partners with Charitable Ventures, a non-profit organization which sponsors humanitarian efforts in the Orange County area. MIX offers free meeting space for students or school clubs to use for tutoring, studying or hosting events. The organization also provides its own instructive lessons on various subjects that students in the area can take. MIX has accumulated more than 5000 hours of mentoring. Since the majority of club members attend the Orange County School of the Arts, CCC took up the offer from MIX due



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALISTA WONG

CREATIVE COLLABORATORS: Warrior CCC Co-President Calista Wong along with members from Sunny Hills and OCSA crafted intricate paper aircrafts at their first STEM event with MIX Academy.

to its close proximity to the public charter school. Both organizations share the vision of inspiring and educating underprivileged children through personal enrichment classes. Throughout the month of February, CCC held five classes about aerodynamics with paper airplanes, flipbook animation, coding with LEGOs, balloon cable cars and printmaking. Led by club board members, every class was entirely student-run. MIX Academy funded all needed materials for the courses. Most activities covered in the

classes were hands-on demonstrations that involved several trials. Guided by CCC mentors, students were required to problem solve and experiment with different physical and scientific factors as they examined their test runs. According to Co-President Calista Wong, coordinating classes entailed locating an ideal classroom space as well as planning out the curriculum. CCC members had to commit to a lengthy process of making the necessary arrangements, Wong said. “Sometimes it can be really hard to find a venue or somewhere to

teach, and we typically receive a lot of rejections from nearby youth centers,” Wong said. “We also have to prepare a lot by bringing the boards of CCC and STEAM for All together to brainstorm different activity ideas that would teach kids by use of hands-on learning and then we slowly refine our teaching methods until they are properly constructed courses.” In order to fully cover the principles of STEAM, CCC merges all their course modules with art as well. The members taught their students to develop code for stop-motion animations which they executed on robots during their seminars. According to Wong, every attendee learns something by engaging in educational tutoring. Through these volunteer experiences, Warriors shared their passion for STEM and became more involved in their community, Wong said. “These experiences help us become more nurturing and more caring as we continue to serve young children in the Orange County community and help our students receive an easy introduction to STEAM,” Wong said. “This specific way in which our seminars were able to provide both the contributors and the students clear benefits is what helped make the event so remarkable in the end.”

Vietnamese Student Association showcases first fan dance in cultural exhibit

Loara High School invited Warrior VSA to perform at a Tết festival to celebrate Vietnamese culture.

By Paulina Lee
STAFF WRITER

In celebration of Vietnamese Culture, the Warrior Vietnamese Student Association celebrated Tết, also known as the Vietnamese New Year, with a fan dance performance at Loara High School Feb. 2. To honor Vietnamese heritage and the preservation of cultural traditions, the VSA board founded a subcategory within the club that focuses on fan dancing. The club incorporated various aspects of Vietnamese culture, including áo dài, the national traditional attire of Vietnam, as well as modern Vietnamese music. Upon learning about Warrior VSA’s newest addition, Loara High School extended an invitation for them to perform at their Loara Tết Festival. Tết, also known as Tết Nguyên Đán, honors the arrival of spring based on the Vietnamese calendar. The festivities include traditional performances such as fan dancing and lion dancing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY PHAM

FABULOUS FAN DANCERS: Clockwise from left, Amy Pham (sophomore), Kayla Nguyen (sophomore), Anh Nguyen (junior), Alison Do (junior), Trinity Pham (sophomore) and Edyn Mai (junior) performed at Tết festival.

In preparation for their first performance, the VSA fan dance members met every Wednesday in the quad after school to practice. Phoebe Levan, a graduate and member of University of Southern California’s Vietnamese Student Association, choreographed the fan dance. Collaborating with fellow dancers, Levan conducted practices and ensured thorough execution of the routines. According to Co-Treasurer and Inter-Club Council Amy Pham,

the traditional design of the fans and the upbeat tempo of the song “Tết Đông Đây” by singer KHOA and rapper Kay Tran, inspired the club’s choreography. Through the dance, the club aimed to convey a positive message to the audience about the idea of embracing fresh beginnings in life with the coming of spring, Pham said. “[The song] is talking about how spring is finally coming and how it is time for a new period of life and a new future,” Pham

said. “I think that overall, the song’s positivity and upbeat tempo are fun to dance to, and I think people would enjoy it.” Despite initial nervousness, the members felt excited to advocate and represent their community, Pham said. The club was determined to expand VSA growth by attracting new members to the club. “It is very important that our students here at Troy have clubs and have places where they can go and feel connected to people of their background and their culture,” Pham said. “I hope that VSA can be a space where we can all talk about it [families] and get to know people who are like us.” According to Vice President Anh Nguyen, after their performance at the Loara Tết Festival, the group experienced a sense of pride, acknowledging the effort they had dedicated to their performance. “After [the performance] I felt so relieved and proud because our hard work really showed in our performances,” Anh said. “I felt very proud and safe because I knew everyone there also had the common goal of representing Vietnamese culture. Seeing the other performances motivated me to do my best as well.”

Warrior cheer teams prepare for a competitive and advanced end of season

Find out how the cheer team prepares for their performances at rallies and competitions.

By Kusuma Kothamasu
STAFF WRITER

Confident presentation and bright smiles were as loud as the music blasts from loudspeakers—the result of year-long late-night practices, hard work and dedication the Warrior cheerleaders put into their performances at rallies, competitions and games. Starting the year strong, the teams consist of many returning cheerleaders who are talented in many of the stunts their performances contain. Varsity placed first place at their first competition of the season in early February for varsity advanced non-tumbling. They began preparing the competition routine and necessary skills immediately following the winter rally in December. Learning from each other proved to be extremely valuable as varsity learned and performed their routine for the competition in a short period. This achievement inspired and built confidence in all cheerleaders for the upcoming competitions. Cheering at games

and performing at rallies, junior Varsity Captain Mackenzie Lannan says, helped people step out of their comfort zone and boost their confidence, making the team progress in hopes of better executions in the future. Cheerleading is not as easy as the Warriors make it seem. “Cheerleading includes so many different aspects like stunting, dancing and tumbling,” Lannan said. “Putting together and cleaning up a routine are difficult steps in preparation for a performance or competition. It’s difficult to perfect timing, skills, cleanliness and stunts.” The story behind the Warriors’ graceful performances is more grotesque than what meets the eye, with their daily practices being two hours 30 minutes long. When competitions began, however, their practices ranged from two to six hours long. During these lengthy practices, the Warriors work on stunts, routines, and conditioning. With cheerleaders being subject to a higher possibility of injury, their conditioning is just as physically demanding as they work on their muscle strength and flexibility to be able to execute their stunts and routines. In the interest of making a strong team, Coach Jordan Echaves

hosts multiple cheer clinics where cheerleaders are taught the necessary skills to accomplish the team’s goals and streak of winning in competitions. With the cheer competition season starting to kick off, junior varsity

began learning more next-level stunts and routines. “This season, I look forward to experimenting with new stunts and tumbling while varsity continues preparing for their upcoming competitions,” Lannan said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JORDAN ECHAVES

VICTORY POSE: The Warrior varsity cheer team smiles in front of their trophies and awards after competeing at the SHARP Championship on Jan. 20.

Teacher Connections

Find groups of four teachers that share something in common!

MR SUTTON

MR HUFFERD

MRS WILSON

MS DRIESSEN

MS BOUCHARD

MR MASON

MR VARIEUR

MR CAMPANELLI

MRS LINK

MR NICHOLSON

MRS ECHAVES

MR THOMAS

MRS MACK

MRS SCOTT

MS ROMERO

MRS EISENMAN

Straightforward

Tricky

Foreign Language Teachers

Troy teacher couples

Teacher coaches

Teachers with grey spinny chairs

DROWNING IN GOOD INTENTIONS

If there is one thing Gen-Z is obsessed with, it is water bottles. First came the HydroFlask, then the Stanley cup and Owala bottle. Read more to find out about the dark truth behind this water bottle craze.

Compiled by Zoey Bahng, LIFESTYLE EDITOR, article by Bianca Naranjo, STAFF WRITER, graphics courtesy of HydroFlask, Owala and Stanley

Do you remember the 2019 VSCO girl trend with its scrunchies, polaroid cameras and—most iconically—Hydro Flasks? This aesthetic sensation’s environmental emphasis on reusable products has set the stage for two new trending water bottles. Stanley tumblers and Owala bottles have made their debuts as the latest, chicest bottles. Stanley’s impressively large 40-ounce Quencher Tumbler has a uniquely tapered bottom, allowing it to fit into conventional cup holders. Meanwhile, Owala bottles offer an innovative duality, with their dual-function straw and spout; they also have caps that resemble a koala’s nose, hence the brand’s name. But with the rise of these quirky bottles, many people irresponsibly hoard collections for the sake of style, which directly contradicts the bottles’ fundamental purpose of sustainability.

Taking a look back, the sustainability movement started to snowball in the 2010s, with many companies promoting reusable products in low-waste packaging. Public awareness increased and quickly spiraled into a societal hyperfixation on sustainability. This development has been incredibly beneficial in many regards, especially with its impacts in bringing sustainable consumerism to the spotlight. Gen Zers have become a particularly prominent part of this movement, given their preexisting fondness for environmentally sustainable trends. These new attitudes towards environmental action on a much larger scale have allowed plenty of insight and action into bettering the ecological conditions of our planet.

Despite these positive effects of widespread environmental responsibility, pushing sustainability

as a marketing tactic has proven to cause more harm than good in recent years. Sustainable shopping should mean investing in long-lasting products instead of discarding single-use items, which is contradictory to constantly shifting trends that cause overconsumption. Companies know precisely how to capitalize off of their sustainable images; Stanley and Hydroflask have each released several limited edition water bottles, intentionally manipulating consumers to think that they are playing a positive role in the environment by purchasing more reusable water bottles. But these consumers are rarely educated about how unnecessarily buying these inherently eco-friendly products is ironically unsustainable.

Unfortunately, this facade of sustainability reaches far beyond the water bottle market, as other businesses have learned how to green-wash their greediness. A common example is the prevalence of cardboard packaging, which is often advertised as being environmentally friendly. In actuality, cardboard manufacturing is water intensive and emits a much larger proportion of carbon emissions. On top of that, cardboard is difficult to recycle if it is contaminated with food or other waste. Fast-fashion brands have also capitalized off their use of recycled fabrics, luring customers with feel-good claims. The disappointing truth is that, recycled or virgin, polyester fabric production perpetuates reliance on fossil fuels and contributes to microfiber pollution. Essentially, sustainability’s reliance on the longevity and repurposing of

products is utterly invalidated when companies feign benevolence to exploit overconsumption.

Fortunately, we are still able to reclaim consumerism in ways that are actually sustainable. Rather than being swayed by trends, shoppers can use the most efficient ways to promote environmental reform, like buying from local businesses, replacing single-use products with permanent reusables and boycotting brands with ecologically destructive practices. As a way to control already-inflated water bottle collections, people can donate their bottles to thrift stores or regift to friends and family who use single-use bottles. As marketing finds smarter ways to exploit consumers’ good intentions, it is crucial that we find smarter ways to cut back on spending habits that curb the true meaning of sustainability.



DIVINE DELIGHT

Read Oracle’s take on Disney’s new rendition of the critically acclaimed novel, “Percy Jackson and the Olympians.”

Compiled by Kaitlyn Zhang, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, article by Kate Berger, Celeste Hollingsworth, STAFF WRITERS, graphics courtesy of Disney

Disney’s “Percy Jackson & the Olympians” electrifies audiences as it reincarnates the original spark of the iconic fantasy series. The film adaptation of “The Lightning Thief,” the first book in the series, is the riveting film adaptation fans have been yearning for since the utter disappointment of the 2010 movies. In eight action-packed episodes, viewers are held in suspense as demigod Percy Jackson (Walker Scobell) and his two friends journey across America to return Zeus’ master bolt, completing a quest that will prevent war amongst the gods as well as the human world.

Remarkably, “Percy Jackson” is catered to a wide range of ages, shown through the characters’ language and acting. Unlike other popular shows, the characters avoid the cringeworthy language that has been attributed to trending Gen Z content. Instead, the language and humor used in “Percy Jackson” is appealing to new and old fans alike, and does not purposefully cater to any specific age demographic. In addition, Walker Scobell’s portrayal of Percy Jackson brings the character straight off the pages. His eyes conveyed betrayal, terror and love in ways that no words could ever express. Collectively, the characters’ engaging language and acting showcases “Percy Jackson’s” versatility as a book-to-screen adaptation.

The unwavering blue glow of Zeus’s lightning bolt is just one of many examples of flawless CGI in “Percy Jackson and the Olympians.” Whether a fury is soaring at Percy or a Minotaur is charging at Grover, the show’s mythological creatures are crafted with a precise attention to detail, creating a thrill unlike any other. As for scenic shots, the golden hues of Olympus radiate from the distant city, which courtesy of CGI, looks as though it never ends. This impressive CGI also takes place on the battlefield, where an enormous wave looks fluid enough to make viewers question whether a real ocean arrived on set. These aspects bring this fictional universe to life, inspiring a sense of excitement reminiscent of our childhood experience of wishing we could simply step into the world inside the television screen.

The copious amounts of mythological references are lost in confusion for viewers who were not previously familiar with Greek lore. The show’s first episode, while an impressive depiction of the book, springs viewers into the world of gods and goddesses with no warning, assuming that all viewers have some prior knowledge about Greek mythology. The extensive

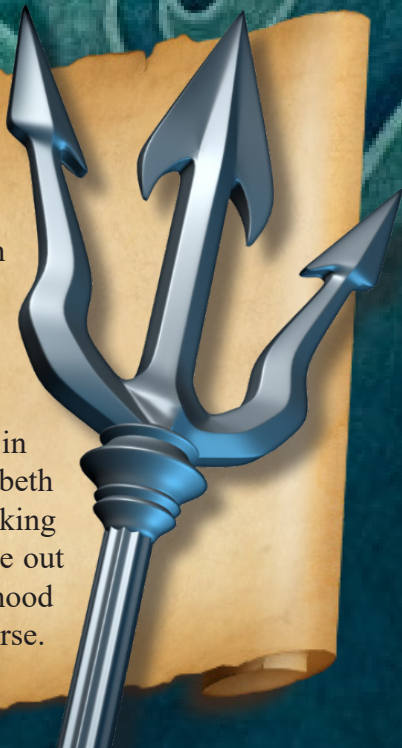
amount of characters and mythological history involved makes it critical for a show like “Percy Jackson” to slowly introduce the Greek world through many episodes, which it did not. In less than forty minutes of screen time, Percy goes from being alienated in middle school to killing a minotaur. The addition of more episodes and further world-building would have allowed viewers who have not read the series to fully immerse themselves into the world of Percy Jackson and Greek mythology.

Fulfilling every fan’s dreams with the entertaining plot and eye-catching visuals, this new rendition of “Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief” surpasses every expectation. This show restores the reputation of novel adaptations in cinema, taking readers for a trip down memory lane. Despite some murkiness in the waters of the mythological background, “Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief” creates a sense of exhilaration in its audience. After previous failed attempts, this adaptation has set the beloved franchise back on the right track.



OFF THE PAGES

Achieving what most novel adaptations can only dream of, “Percy Jackson and the Olympians” manages to create a unique identity while maintaining the integrity of the original movie. Although most major moments are conveyed with accuracy, the series neglects to include some moments dear to the audience’s hearts. One of the major changes is in the Lotus Hotel, a hotel that makes guests lose track of time if exposed to the lotus flower. Although the trio is originally meant to decipher this fact, they are aware of the Lotus flower’s effect as they enter the casino. As a result, the audience does not experience the dramatic irony or suspense that is such a key experience in reading the books. Regardless of this missed opportunity, the casting and portrayal of Percy, Annabeth and Grover is accurate to that of the book. Author Rick Riordan was very involved in the script-making process as opposed to the notoriously inaccurate Percy Jackson movies, where the trio was made out to be older teenagers. This effective depiction of Rick Riordan’s novel appeases our childhood visions of the “Percy Jackson” universe.



BENNIE: HIS-STORY

Senior Bennie Zhu is putting his all into his final year of Brain Brawl and Drill Academics. Read more to learn about his journey in leading his team with commitment and resolve.

Compiled by Eileen Um, FEATURE EDITOR, article by Helen Fang, STAFF WRITER, photos courtesy of Bennie Zhu

The shuffling of historical and naval documents whisper against the evening’s silence. Manuscripts and computer screens radiate from the center of the desk, with Senior Bennie Zhu in the midst of it all, reviewing lesson plans and committing content to memory. Zhu’s enduring passion for history competitions began in the early chapters of high school where interest met dedication. Driven by a commitment to himself and his team, Zhu crafted his own high school narrative, one that deviates from the well-beaten STEM path and stays true to himself.

Upon opening the cover to his story, Zhu’s exploration of history is dedicated to his history teacher, Ms. Darracq. As a fledgling freshman navigating his high-school-firsts remotely during COVID, Ms. Darracq’s patience and support kindled Zhu’s interest in history. As Zhu dived deeper into the past, he developed a deep-rooted appreciation for history’s ability to shape humankind for better and worse. Once school returned to in-person sophomore year, Zhu joined the Brain Brawl and Drill Academic teams after being encouraged by First Sergeant Barnes. Tested on a wide variety of naval and traditional history, Zhu was captivated by the exhilarating buzzer rounds of Brain Brawl and

the focused environment of Drill Academic’s test format. As Zhu advanced through the local and state levels, he qualified for his first Brain Brawl National Championships. Although the rival high school teams he faced were stronger than those in the past, Zhu’s experience and the consistent competition routine allowed him to stay in the zone, with the team bringing home an overall third place. Through every season, Zhu was initially pushed by the competitive environment but ultimately fueled by his own desire to learn.

“I learned all about history so that I could not only excel in competitions but delve more into my interests,” Zhu said, “I can’t stop myself from giving 100% of my effort into everything.”

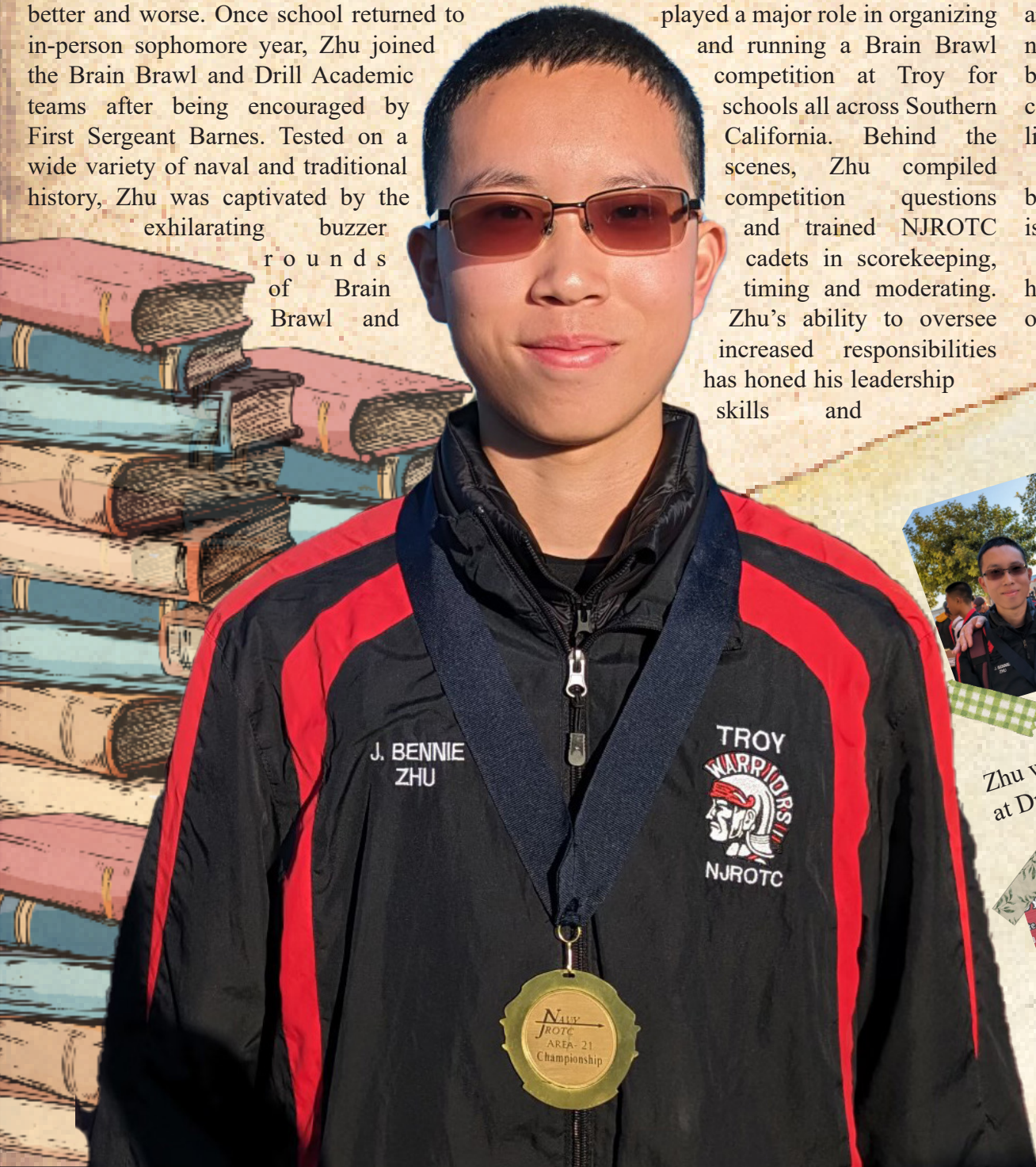
After several competition experiences behind him, Zhu has found his academic momentum, one that he shares with underclassmen. In order to improve his performance and better support his team, Zhu familiarized himself with the minute details of the NJROTC curriculum and textbook content, from history to science and naval information. Now as one of the team commanders, Zhu has the responsibility of teaching the material to other students, helping them with study and memorization strategies. In February 2024, Zhu played a major role in organizing and running a Brain Brawl competition at Troy for schools all across Southern California. Behind the scenes, Zhu compiled competition questions and trained NJROTC cadets in scorekeeping, timing and moderating. Zhu’s ability to oversee increased responsibilities has honed his leadership skills and

boosted his confidence. In addition to his duties as a team leader, Zhu balances his studies with a demanding competition season.

“I devote two hours every day to prepare,” Zhu said. “But they are definitely two of the most enjoyable hours in my life every day.”

Nearing the end of his high school chapter, Zhu is determined to make his mark heading into his final season as a senior. With a third place finish two years ago in San Diego, California, and second overall and third place finish in academics last year in Pensacola, Florida, Zhu is putting in his all for the state and national tournaments in the second semester of the 2024 school year. Despite having finished his college applications, Zhu has not lost his fire and self-motivation. Hoping to finish strong, Zhu is determined to give his all for both himself and his team. Zhu looks forward to writing a new chapter of his life, one that history will be a part of. Having pursued the humanities competitively, Zhu urges others to live a life that is truly and authentically their own.

“Embrace your identity,” Zhu said. “Don’t be afraid to go with your gut. At a school that is heavily STEM-oriented, those of us with a passion for the humanities have our own niche.”



Zhu with Commander Lauper at Drill States competition.

