

The Indy Insider

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Indy's Got Talent

Photo by Alex Le



By Jannissa Le

This year's talent show opened with numerous musical acts showcasing the talent at Indy. With all the seats booked out, students and families streamed into the theater on a Friday night. After the show's cast of emcees introduced the show, Bazz Jand entered the stage first, playing the song Yellow by Coldplay.

"It was better than last year," said Crystal Nguyen, senior and audience member. "It was pretty fire, I liked it."

It was a night filled with singing and dancing. Acts ranged from dance performances, band performances, to solo singing acts. Of course, many clubs and groups performed at the show, like VSA, Ukulele, K-Club, and iDance. Students' bands played at the show, including REM and alison. Students like Akasha West and Mizella Cuevas sang solos. Senior Duong Nguyen was one, performing My Way by Frank Sinatra, all while dressed in a suit and mouse ears.

"I was honestly terrified before I got on," said Duong. "but I pulled it off."

Students were not the only ones performing. Mr. Na, an English 1

and ERWC teacher, sang a solo rendition of Sins of the Father.

When asked why he decided to perform, Mr. Na said, "My students have told me they really like it when teachers are in the talent show, and no one else was doing the talent show, so- I'm doing the talent show."

Some students seemed to agree. "I liked Mr. Na's singing," said Crystal.

Almost no moment was quiet at the talent show. Laughter echoed in between acts, as the emcees cracked jokes ranging from puns related to the performances to rap battles and call-and-response games. Applause filled the theater after each performance, many audience members cheering and shouting. The night ended with a performance from CLUB.

Angelina Nguyen, a senior, was one of the audience members. After the show, she said, "I had a great time. There was so much talent at this sixer show. My favorite part had to be the entire synchronization of clubs- It gave me goosebumps."

Psych Fair Fun

By K. Tran

Psychology Fair, a campus-wide occasion welcoming students and staff to explore the fascinating world of psychology and enhance their understanding of the subject. Students from psychology class conduct experiments and have the students test their experiments.

"The event allows students to practice research methods by creating and conducting their own experiments. They collect data all day at the fair and analyze it after to produce results and draw conclusions," says the psychology teachers in charge of this event, Mrs. Kavanaugh and Ms. Dang.

The students further investigate beyond the human mind, focusing on the behaviors of human activity. This hands-on experiment allows students to understand people better and how the thought process is conveyed.

Mrs. Kavanuagh and Ms. Dang also add

"Psychology is an important subject because it helps us better understand human thought and behavior."

Not only is this fair helping the understanding of others and behaviors, but it also allows students to open up and learn how to communicate with others. A few students who participated in psychology fair have spoken about this,

Zainab Shaikh states "I learned that a lot of people like to get experimented on and it creates a fun environment... it was good for me but it was tiring to talk to so many people that day."

Although it was tiring to talk all day, the experiment created a fun and communicative environment. It gives them a chance to explore the mysteries of human behavior and outcomes. This was not just a project students were assigned to do, but a long-term lesson and learning experience.

Photo By D'lina Johnson



Leonardo Peret says "The different outcomes of my experiment was the most interesting and engaging thing to me."

Psychology fair serves as a better connection between students and their minds and an engaging experience of interacting with one another.

London Band Trip 2023

By Chris Vazquez

During the holiday break our 76th Cavalry Marching Band and Colorguard in collaboration with Oak Grove High School had the opportunity to travel to London during the 2023 Holiday Break to perform in the London's New Year's Day Parade along with 20 foreign delegations.

This unique experience is one few in the entire country get to do, and the students that were able to go have said this to be one of the most memorable experiences of their lives. Here Andy Pham who's been in Marching Band for two years was asked what was one of the most memorable, "That's tough, since there was tons of memorable stuff that I still laugh at to this day. It would probably be getting to hang out with the people that I was able to. I got to know them a lot better, got to meet some new people along the way, and overall had a great time touring

around London with them."

When asked how overall how was the experience senior Anneliese Nguyễn had this to say, "London was a very different yet beautiful experience compared to San Jose. Many busy streets and amazing monuments with many stories behind them. The skies were cloudy, but when cleared an amazing colorful sky was visible. I enjoyed every moment in London and would've loved to go back."

Since they were in London for quite a bit, Annelise was also asked if they were able to explore the city and go on any excursions, "Everyday we'd have an itinerary of different places we visit as well as listen and learn about their history. Out of all the many places we visited, I enjoyed Windsor Castle because of the many different and unique rooms. The workers were nice and so sweet. There were many shops around the castle as well as a plaza where one could buy food. It was also a beautiful day with the sky clear. Overall it was such a beautiful place.



Photo By Katie Pham

MLK Day

By Dominic Todd

Martin Luther King Jr was an activist and prominent leader in the civil rights movement from 1995 until his assassination in 1968. His legacy is set in stone as one of the greatest civil rights leaders in history. But what did his family do with his legacy after his assassination? Martin Luther King Jr's four children all became civil rights activists in hopes to carry their fathers dream.

Martin Luther King III, the oldest son, founded a non profit organization called "Realizing The Dream " in 2006 and he continues to advocate for his fathers dream of non-violence.

Yolanda King is the oldest child and she has continued her fathers legacy by becoming a motivational speaker advocating for equality and non-violence. She passed away on May 15, 2007 at the age of 51.

Dexter King, the second son, contributed to his fathers legacy on a more quiet scale. He believes he is better behind the scene rather than in the spotlight, he can call people at the highest level to help support his dad's mission. Dexter King passed on January 22, 2024 at the age of 62 due to prostate cancer.

Reverend Bernice Albertine King, the youngest daughter of the bunch, pursued a career in ministry like her father and she is currently CEO of the King Center in Atlanta. She said it was her mother who helped the King children understand the measure of their fathers legacy.

All of MLK Jr's children have been leaders of the Martin Luther King Jr. for Nonviolent Social Change center and they are all continuing to work towards their Fathers dream.

ASB Elections: Indy students make their choice

By Ethan Nguyễn

Associated Student Body officers have been elected for the 2024-2025 term.

On Monday, February 5th, 2024, all those running had an in-person Q&A forum during lunch at Senior Stage where they were asked a series of questions pertaining to their candidacy.

When asked about policies she wishes to see the following school year, candidate for Vice President of Communications, Amy Tran, states "A new idea I would like to implement into the next school year if I am elected is to... continue to announce what bathrooms or what is open, as well as reminders to keep it clean."

The next question asked was "What is your favorite school event and why?" Contenders were allotted one minute to come up with an answer.

Francesca Truong, running for Vice

President of Performing Arts, states "My favorite school event is the Talent Show. I really like how a lot of people who aren't really used to performing at rallies or things like that, they get to have a chance to actually perform for talent show and it's nice to see everyone get together and watch it."

The following day, on February 6th, 2024, candidates give pre-written speeches in the school library during lunch.

Kai Nhan, who's running for Vice President of Special Events, says "I'll be sure to bring a smile to your faces with swaggy rallies, lit lunchtime activities, and the most memorable school year you'll ever have."

Rovin Inoncenio, who's running for Executive Vice President, "What sets me apart from my peers running for the same position is... experience, not just in ASB

serving as your current VP of Finance and Records or as your past class of 2025 secretary and vice president, [I also have] experience in every position offered in club leadership, ranging from president to treasurer."

On February 8th, 2024, official voting polls were blasted and on the following day, results were revealed via the announcements. The official ASB officers for the upcoming school year are: Genesis Arroyo for Executive President, Rovin Inoncenio for Executive Vice President, Amy Tran for Vice President of Communications, Kathy Vu for Vice President of Finance and Records, Francesca Truong for Vice President of Performing Arts, Karen Tran and Katie Pham for Vice President of Athletics, Dorothy Ho for Vice President of Student Outreach, and Kai Nhan for Vice President of Special Events.

Dance The Night Away: District Dance Festival 2024

By Jhenelle Sevilla

After the pandemic, East Side Union's District Dance Festival has made its triumphant return! Students from three East Side Union schools have gathered together to showcase their performances, ranging from different genres of dance including Hip-hop, Modern, and Ballet. This year's District Dance Festival was hosted by Silver Creek High School with Independence High School and Yerba Buena High School as guests.

"It's always for a performance arts class to get ready for a performance" says Ms. McKellan, the Ballet and I-DANCE teacher, at Independence. "And I get along well with the dance teachers from Silver Creek, Leslie, and Yerba Buena, Rhonda. It was fun getting to choreograph [Dance The Night Away] together and seeing it all come together."

Yerba Buena and Silver Creek had spectacular dancers, performing dances with Hip-hop influence, with catchy and Pop songs alongside it.

In between the performances, dancers from each school would discuss what dance and being a dancer means to them. The speeches were incredibly moving, especially since some students shared their love for dance in their native language. It allowed for all audience members to truly understand why dance plays an important role in their lives.

Towards the end of the show, the IHS Ballet class performed "Anitra's Dance," an elegant and bewitching dance from the composer Peer Gyra. It was definitely different from the rest of the big and energetic pieces from other schools. Yet, that does not take away the sheer beauty of

the performance.

Finally, the show ended with a thrilling performance of Dua Lipa's "Dance The Night Away." The act included students from all schools, doing the fast-paced choreography in a rotating motion. The dance drew influences from Ballet and Modern Dance and a true representation to the whole message of the show. In which all of the dance classes, from different schools, came together, to share the joy of dance.

"I think the attitude of all the dancers was exactly what I was hoping for, where everyone was supportive of each other," says Ms. McKellan, when asked about what went well during the performance. "It didn't feel like a competition because every piece was so different and everyone was cheering for each other."

FAFSA Issues: Seniors Thoughts and Feelings

By Eric Wong

Seniors applying for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) thought it would be as simple as submitting their personal information in under an hour. Instead, there were weeks of delays and issues that have plagued students across the country and students are feeling the anger and disappointment in such problems. In the first few weeks of FAFSA being released in January of this year, students struggled a lot from starting the form itself to being stuck on a certain section of the form unable to continue. Although most of these issues are resolved, it is disappointing that the Department of Education did an awful job this year.

Across the country, students have voiced their complaints

on issues regarding FAFSA and news media have written several articles about this terrible start for students to get financial aid. It was a month of chaos for many students at our campus as many were as angry as others when it came to completing their FAFSA applications.

“The FAFSA application absolutely sucked, you could not do anything about it,” said Tom Duonguyen, a senior trying to complete their FAFSA application. “It infuriated me. Whoever made this application should be fired!”

There are multiple reasons why people are upset as they could not finish the application even if it is not due until later in April unless

certain colleges want students to complete their forms at an earlier time. The lack of information from the Department of Education regarding FAFSA, the inconsistent maintenance, and several other inconveniences caused people to be upset as they wanted to finish the application as soon as possible and not worry about it in the future.

“I think it was a huge mess with a lot of problems that could not be controlled,” said Tony Dang, a senior who applied for FAFSA. “I did not get my SAI(Student Aid Index) that would help determine the amount of financial aid I would receive.”

Even with FAFSA completed, problems still follow

afterward. Students are anxiously waiting on what will happen after they manage to complete their FAFSA applications. It is uncertain how the Department of Education will handle this task and what they are going to do about the future of FAFSA applications. Until later in the year, students will have to wait patiently for more news to come from FAFSA as seniors prepare for their brand new life after high school.

“I believe this was bound to happen because the Department of Education because they needed to make sure that the application goes out smoothly for students to apply for student aid, but they did not expect the mess it created,” said Tony Dang.

Election Year 2024:

Who Are Students Wanting to Vote For?

By Bryant Sumano

The 2024 election season is almost here as the country has something big to decide, whether we re-elect President Joe Biden, or if Donald Trump should get another chance to “Save America,” or if another candidate can be right to be Commander-In-Chief. At Indy City, many people have different types of opinions, but yet they’re still wondering who should be a good candidate for president of the United States.

“I can probably see Trump winning this one,” mentioned a student who wishes to remain anonymous, “If Trump can promise to lower inflation, then he should win.” As we see inflation go down bit by bit, and the gas prices going a little higher and lower, they still feel

stumped about it. Another student who wishes to remain anonymous said “When Donald Trump was president the gas prices were low, like around \$1. But ever since Biden became president, they’ve gone way up.”

Not that many people have that much confidence in President Joe Biden, mostly because of his age, and what he’s been doing, mostly because of his memory. “I’m worried about our president and for the country,” mentioned a student, “I don’t know how he can still handle this.”

Some IHS teachers say “There’s no chance that Biden might win re-election, not the way the country is going.” We’ll see what the people have to say until November 5th arrives.

Music of 2024

By Gavin Tulio

With the new year coming in, many people are excited for their favorite artists to drop songs. Some people are also anticipating when their favorite artists are going to drop.

Andy Le said, “I was really excited about that Don Toliver song that dropped last night, I heard Kanye about to drop, I really want another Daniel Caesar album or some RnB album like SZA”, when asked about some artists that he wants to see drop/artists that have already dropped this year.

When asked the same question, Seth Tambua said, “Kendrick, he’s still popping.” Due to the new year coming in, the opportunity for more collaborations occurs.

When asked who are some artists that you want to see collab with each other, Andy Le said, “I definitely wanna see a collab with Kali Uchis and Don Toliver, like that last album, Fantasy, ima need some more. Ima need some more SZA and Don Toliver or SZA and Travis Scott”.

As more and more music comes out, we see more and more releases come out, we start to see more and more trends come out as well.

When asked about this topic, Seth Tambua thought, “Definitely more rap, or RnB”, when asked about what upcoming trends he’ll think will be in more music. As 2024 continues, people anticipate potential collaborations, and predict emerging trends in rap and R&B genres.



Golden Globes: Was That Necessary?

By: Vivian Huynh

The 81st Golden Globe Awards was held on January 7, Sunday night, and was hosted by comedian Jo Koy as a last-minute choice just two weeks before the ceremony. Starting off the evening with a monologue, he set a tone that felt rather uncomfortable and disappointing as he made jokes about *Barbie*, highlighting the underlying discrimination the film faced and the overall point of the movie.

“*Oppenheimer* is based on a 721-page Pulitzer Prize-winning book about the Manhattan Project, and *Barbie* is on a plastic doll...” he said. “The key moment in *Barbie* is when she goes from perfect beauty to bad breath, cellulite, and flat feet. Or what casting directors call character actor!”

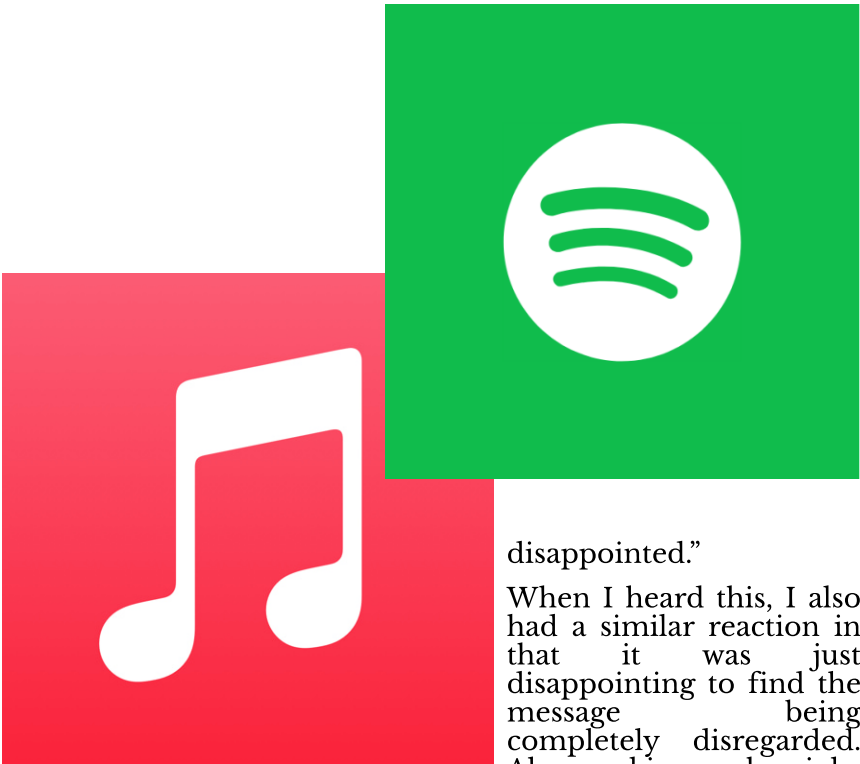
There was a bit more to his comment on *Barbie*, but the rest of his quote won’t be

mentioned here for appropriate reasons. Although, if you’ve watched the Golden Globe Awards, or at the very least, saw Jo Koy’s monologue, then you would be well aware of what he mentioned and of the unimpressed audience reactions to it including the *Barbie* cast and crew. He even got defensive about it, saying how he had little time to prepare for the show.

“Hearing his comment, the crowd, especially women and girls, were definitely affected by his comment the most,” Serina Huynh, junior, stated. “I was also personally affected by this considering how I enjoyed watching the movie, but the fact that he downplayed the message behind it just made me feel so

disappointed.”

When I heard this, I also had a similar reaction in that it was just disappointing to find the message being completely disregarded. Also, making such a joke to begin with and excusing it with ‘lack of time’ is a rather poor thing to do. It would’ve been nice if he never made the joke to begin with considering how he had two weeks prior to the show to prepare his monologue or a different host was picked to begin with. Someone preferably more recognizable to the audience in person and on the internet would be appreciated at the very least.



By *Jhenelle Sevilla*

Journalism Club serves as an extension of the journalism class here at Independence. It is a club open to all students who are interested in graphic design, photography, voicing your opinions, and sharing the news with your fellow peers. Mr. Haworth is the advisor for the club, with Ethan Nguyen (12) and Chris Vazquez (12) as our Presidents and Eric Wang as Vice President (12).

“Our future plan is to recruit more members who can help us take photos for Yearbook and/or write articles for the Indy Insider,” says Ethan Nguyen, one of presidents of Journalism Club, when asked about the club’s long term plans.

Additionally, interested students can contribute photos and even write articles for the Indy Insider! Unfortunately, the club cannot allow students to participate in making this year’s yearbook, only submitting photos. As the current

Journalism Club:

What to Expect

Journalism students are in charge of this task.

Vivian Huynh (12), the secretary of Journalism Club, adds, “If you’re the type of person who wants to keep our community informed on what our school’s up to, share your voice on certain matters, or you just like to write and take photos in general, then join our club (or add Journalism to your class schedule for next year!)”

Journalism Club is perfect for those who are passionate about sharing your voice and uplifting the voices of the students here at Independence. It is important to stay informed and Journalism Club is the perfect avenue just for that.

“I think being involved in Journalism is not only important but an honor,” says Eric Wang, Journalism Club’s vice-president, “because you can work on certain projects like the newspaper or



By *Vivian Huynh*

As a new semester begins, so does the trek to school as students return from a two-week holiday break. However, instead of expressing excitement when it comes to meeting friends again, some have shown signs of feeling unwell or sick. Students are doing their best to prevent their sickness from spreading by wearing masks or staying home for a day or two, but even that might not be enough for some.

“I can’t speak much for other people on them getting sick,” senior Andy Pham said, “but I can say that almost every school break that is given, I always get sick. No matter if I stay at home or go outside to travel, I always end the break with needing cough medicine.”

Getting sick around this time of year in

New Semester, Same Old Sickness

the cold weather is normal, for students can get sick from the flu or cold. However, it can raise concerns for students who get sick from others who already aren’t feeling well, choosing to attend school rather than staying home and recovering. Some speculate that it’s because of carelessness that leads to more student absences from school.

“I think people not covering their mouth when they sneeze or cough while sick helps spread the germs in the air,” junior Serina Huynh explains, “and especially in places with a lot of people in close areas (like school), a lot of people will breathe in the infected air and therefore get sick too.”

It’s recommended that those who feel really sick or unwell should stay home and

contact the school to receive an excused absence. If the symptoms aren’t as bad and students still have the strength to attend school, wear a mask to prevent the sickness from spreading any further. Above all, take medicine until the symptoms are gone.

“It doesn't hurt to stay home one day. I don't really understand why people still go outside when they could be contaminating others and spreading sickness,” Andy replied. “One obvious way is wearing a mask, it at least weakens the ability to get others sick, and like I said earlier, staying home is another good option. It’s like a one day distance learning, except you got more healthcare stuff to deal with for a healthier body.”

PowderPuff vs. RowdyRuff: Should We Switch Back?

By *Ethan Mguyen*

Efforts led by ASB to switch back from Rowdyruff to Powderpuff have been blocked due to issues with admin.

BOTC, abbreviated for Battle of the Classes, is one of the biggest events of the school year, taking place during the spring. Similar to other significant events as Homecoming, it is usually preceded by a big football game. However, BOTC is special in that its football game is different: Gender roles are purposefully reversed, where boys will be the cheerleaders and girls will be the football players – this is colloquially referred to as “Powderpuff.”

In recent years, Powderpuff has been halted, and “Rowdyruff” was adopted instead. Rowdyruff essentially makes sign-ups a free-for-all. There are no gender restrictions and both boys and girls have the choice of either cheerleading or playing football. Some argue this approach is more inclusive.

Given the fact that Independence gained its first ever girls football team, there has been a big demand to switch back from Rowdyruff to Powderpuff.

Senior and member of Girls’ Flag Football team, Julissa Rodriguez, emphasizes this point, stating “I support Powderpuff because it’s been a tradition for a long time and it’s usually the one activity I really look forward to in high school, it’s also more hilarious to see the guys cheer and girl play. In a way it’s a good change to see different games and keep tradition.”

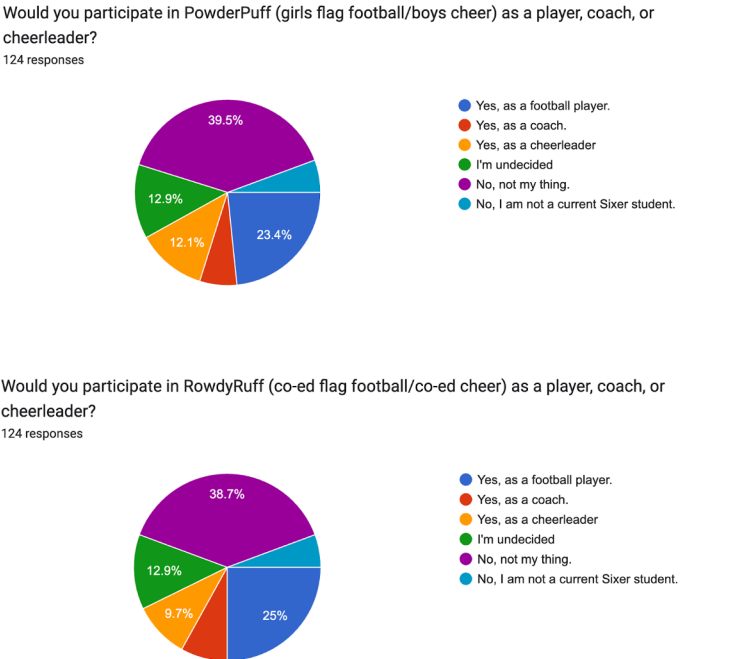
Other members of the student body, such as senior Crystal Nguyen, also support the re-implementation of Powderpuff, saying “I think that Powderpuff should come back since it makes it easier for people to explore different things from the norm.”

To gauge student opinion, the Speech and Debate team hosted a formal debate on this very particular topic, the video being featured on both the ASB-led Instagram account and in the principal’s weekly newsletter, accompanied by an additional survey.

The four debaters involved were: Genesis Arroyo and Juan Moreno arguing for keeping Rowdyruff, while Ojas Gandhi and Cassie Truong were arguing for reinstating Powderpuff.

“I felt very honoured to be given the task to debate about such an impactful and meaningful event for our student body,” stated Cassie Truong, who’s had nearly a year worth of Public Forum debate experience. “I hope that my arguments had helped in the decision between powderpuff and rowdyruff.”

In addition, results from the survey showcased that out of all the respondents, 34.7% of students would be willing to participate in a Rowdyruff event,



meanwhile 35.5% of students would be willing to participate in a Rowdyruff event. Given the results, a switch back is the clear option as it satisfies more members of the student body. Having a free-for-all option seems like a bright idea, but given the physical differences between men and women, there comes a higher potential for danger and injuries, as well as a breeding ground for hostility between participants, risks that are eliminated if Independence switches back to Powderpuff football.

Lights, Camera, Action:

By Carden Dang

Senior Portraits and Quotes

Senior portraits serve as a timeless reminder that encapsulates the spirit and individuality of each student. These portraits become more than just photographs – they become a visual narrative of a pivotal moment in our lives as we transition from teenagers to young adults. In each senior portrait, unique personalities and aspirations shine through, accompanied by quotes that encapsulate our wisdom, sarcasm, interests, and etc.

“I think my photo is pretty good, I don't really look like myself, but other than that it looks good. I am still deciding on my quote but I am trying to find something that represents me,” said by Lance Lin.

Lance is content with his senior portrait and is still deciding on his senior quote but is specifically looking for something that represents himself. With the high quality cameras and lighting from Now & Forever Studios, it's no surprise that Lance remarked that he didn't really look like “himself.”

Derek Doan expressed his feelings about his senior portraits and quotes, “I appreciate my senior portrait and I think it's nice, but I wish that I could've got better angels. I looked uncomfortable and a little too oily. Overall, I think the senior portraits I got like the gown ones holding the diploma and license plate without class year was nice. I just wish I got better angles. For my senior quote, I put it because I thought it was a good conclusion for a small amount of words. It's a song title and the song was about how you overcome a lot of struggles in life. It represents the high school



career I had and how I got to where I am today. It's not funny nor serious, but I think it is very memorable because it is two words and those two words have so much meaning. It is very symbolic to me.”

It seems like it's a common thing for people not to be fully on board with their senior photos because it's a huge step up in quality from regular iPhone cameras. However, senior photos act as a landmark and an achievement of how far we've all come and are very important especially in the yearbook. As well as our senior quotes, they tell a lot about us and who we are as people and how we want to be remembered when people look back years later at the 2024 yearbook.



An increasing number of students riding motorcycles have shown up this year, riding their motorcycles to commute to school daily.

Motorcycles are fast, nimble, and small, they're a lot of fun to ride and take technique and the proper knowledge to do so, that combined with the cool aesthetic and the loud engine, it's no wonder why it appeals to so many students. Although it is very cool and fun to ride, what about the dangers and the risks? Knowing them, are motorcycles still worth riding?

Matthew Lim is a senior that rides his Honda CBR 250 to commute to school daily, and when asked about the dangers and joys of riding a motorcycle, he said this, “I ride a motorcycle for the adrenaline it gives me when going at high speeds and to clear my mind because whenever I'm riding, my mind is just entirely focused on riding instead of any personal matters. I think the dangers of riding one are nothing to joke about since you have very little protection as compared to a 4 wheeled vehicle, but I still believe that the benefits of riding one far outweigh the dangers.”

Motorcycles are a kind of comfort for Matthew and something

Motorcycles: Fun or Dangerous?

By Carden Dang

for him to indulge in to take his mind off the stressful things in life. Junlloyd Solicar is also a senior that rides a Kawasaki Ninja 400, faster than Matthew's bike with a 400cc engine size.

“Motorcycles are fun and cool, I love my motorcycle and love riding them and have the most fun when I'm riding one. I've had some close calls and know about the crash stories and all, but the experience makes it worth it to me,” stated by Junlloyd Solicar.

Motorcycles are definitely very fun, cool, and appealing to all people alike which is why it is so popular. Senior Leon Nguyen rides a Yamaha R6, the fastest bike out of the three bikes with a 600cc engine size.

He stated in an interview, “I ride a motorcycle because I like not having to wait in traffic, I like being exposed to the elements, and I prefer 2 wheels over 4. Riding a motorcycle is indeed dangerous because you do not have a metal cage around you, however as long as you are aware of your surroundings and always prepared, you will be fine.”

Leon is well aware of the inherent risks associated with riding a Yamaha R6, equipped with a powerful engine capable of reaching speeds well beyond 100 but is very prepared beforehand to prevent accidents from occurring. Things such as experience and gear can save you from bad injuries or even death. Despite the heightened danger, his passion for motorcycles overrides any concerns. Admittedly, motorcycles pose significant risks, as riders lack the protective enclosure of a car, are more prone to being overlooked in blind spots, and require advanced skills and knowledge. However, the general consensus is that the exhilaration and feeling of riding makes it all worthwhile.

Trolls Band Together Review

By Davian Opilas

We do it better, yeah. Trolls Band Together, also known as the third movie of the Trolls film series, explores different animation styles and shares a lighter concept we haven't yet seen. The first Trolls movie was released in 2016, followed four years later with their second movie, Trolls World Tour in 2020.

When the first two Trolls movies were released, TikTok wasn't a prominent social media to promote new media in film. I found that Trolls Band Together was rather successful considering the trends set on TikTok, the big names as voice actors, the original soundtrack, as well as the songs that were covered.

“Having Trolls be a kid's movie was a good break, instead of feeling like I had to think too hard about the ‘deeper meaning’”. It was just fun to watch, and all the songs are stuck in my head so it's sick. Anything that can transcend its own plane is fire, and I

think it's a great movie despite being for younger audiences.” Senior Rylee Castro states.

Considering that all the Trolls movies cater to younger audiences, I find that it doesn't make them any less appealing. It was nice for once to feel nothing but unadulterated happiness and discover a film genuinely enjoyable. While Trolls Band Together isn't the most outstanding movie of 2023, I find that all audiences can share a laugh or two, let go, and simply enjoy old and new music together.

“I liked the music in this movie because instead of just doing covers for songs, they made a bunch of original music. It made the overall experience watching it so awesome since I wasn't focused on the song's familiarity, but actually enjoying the music for how it furthers the storyline.” Rylee adds.

Band Together being so not intuitive makes it that much more enjoyable. It explores topics that are truly valuable for younger audiences and even older folks—simple themes like brotherhood, family, and finding love in all aspects of life. BroZone is the group formed with Branch, alongside his brothers, who never truly understood the importance of family and sticking together. Who knows what happens later?

“Trolls 3 made me feel nostalgic since it reminded me of when I first watched the first movie as a kid.” Senior Khannah Pham says.

Even as high schoolers, embracing your inner child is never too late. The simplicity of this movie truly makes you realize that not everything needs to be so complicated. So go watch Trolls Band Together and you won't regret it!

Lunar New Year Celebrations

By *Justin Reyes*



Photo By *Justin Reyes*

In the spirit of the Lunar New Year, Independence High School celebrated its diverse cultures, and everyone felt united. Students were able to express their heritage through clothing, music, and performances. Students took an active role in organizing various activities, displaying their skills, and honoring their cultural background. It wasn't only just students who participated, but teachers as well! Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or Chinese New Year, is a traditional festival celebrated by many East Asian cultures. It marks the beginning of the lunar calendar and usually falls between January 21 and February 20. The celebration lasts for about 15 days, with festivities including family reunions, feasts, dragon and lion dances, fireworks, and the giving of red envelopes with money for good luck. The school's lunch time activities had performances by their multicultural club, VSA, and lion dance.

Interviewing students randomly at the school, Senior, Ethan Nguyen, shared his thoughts, saying, "LNY is a time where I get together with my loved one and celebrate the new year by lighting fireworks to scare away the evil spirits, dressing up in cultural clothing known as áo dài, and following local traditions by playing games like Bầu cua cá cược." Alongside this, he wants to mention, "A good place to go to during LNY is Grand Century because they have free fireworks and crackers, followed by lion dancing and entertainment that will keep you wanting more."

This annual celebration not only marks the beginning of a new lunar cycle but also symbolizes the shared embrace of diversity within our community. Let the joy of Lunar New Year keep brightening our journey and bringing people together in kindness and friendship for the rest of the year!

By *Jade Simpson*

"Mean Girls" Update

As the next semester has started, the "Mean Girls" musical is finally getting to its play dates. The cast of the musical has already shared a piece of their performance as 8th graders from a nearby school came during 4th period on the 25th of January. The small part that was shown has made many members excited to perform the whole musical due to the good feedback that was given to them.

While there have been some difficulties with the band, it has been confirmed that our school's band will be playing in the musical so thankfully we are still smooth sailing for a full on performance.

As confirmed by multiple cast members of the musical an anonymous student has said "Well it's January right now, so we only have around two and a half months to practice after school, cause the actual play is around mid-march." As of now, the dates have been set to be on March 15th, 16th, 21st, 22nd, and the 23rd of March, starting at 7:00 pm with the exception of the 21st, which will start at 5:00 pm. An online website has also been created with this information as well as ticket sales for reserved seating. So everything is already sailing along well.

There are currently around 30 students part of the musical so it will be interesting to see if anyone decides to flunk out or leave later on towards the final date. As the musical is coming up there are a lot of practice dates that are appearing, because of this,

students are only just leaving school at 5:30 due to the long hours of learning vocals, lines, and dance routines. it will be hard to handle the pressure of classes along with the practice, but the musical seems to be coming along very well.

Make sure to buy your reserved seating as they'll sell out soon the closer it gets to the dates!



Behind the Scenes of
"Mean Girls" Photo By
Amaya Gomez

Homelessness Is a Real Issue

By *Carden Dang*

Homelessness is a big problem in San Jose, whether you're talking about the people loitering around various places that are in need of money and food or the masses of tents of homeless people, especially in the East Side. I was once biking to Target a month or so ago when the GPS took me on a path only for people to bike on or to walk on, no cars, and it was a path that led into a kind of forest area. When I was on the path, I began to notice a town of homeless people and tents that were hidden by the trees, they were all just living there together. I was surprised by the amount of them, it also smelled kind of bad there so their living conditions were not ideal at all, it was dirty, but a spot that they had to live in which I understand. There is an estimated amount of 10,028 homeless people in San Jose, with hundreds of those numbers being people of youth according to the News Channel, Kron 4. NBC Bay Area explains

the high rate of homelessness in San Jose is due to the cost of living, especially the Silicon Valley, so expensive! A family of four needs an average of \$120,000 a year just to make ends meet. We all know that homelessness is a big problem, but why should we even care? We're not homeless. We should care because it is a big issue in San Jose and we are residents of San Jose. This is an issue that surrounds us and concerns us. We may know people that are homeless, we have surely seen and have definitely encountered or at least interacted with a homeless person. According to Kron 4, there are also hundreds of youth homeless people, people the same or similar age as me and you. Homelessness is also connected to several other issues, inflation, economy, housing, and etc. There's a bigger picture, it's not black and white, homeless or not homeless.

2024 New Year’s Resolutions

By Ethan Lw

New Year's resolutions are a yearly tradition that consists of setting goals to achieve throughout the year. Most people set New Year's resolutions to continue accomplishing a personal goal, change an undesirable trait, continue good practices, or improve their behavior at the beginning of the calendar year. Additionally, it offers a fresh start, similar to hitting a reset button. New Year's resolutions originated 4,000 years ago from the ancient Babylonians whose resolutions primarily focused on repaying their debts and returning borrowed items demonstrating the commitment to starting the year with a clean slate. However, although this concept has changed and evolved over centuries, the core value of the pursuit of achieving one's aspirations, positive change, personal growth, and self-improvement remains the same. This leads me to question. What New Year's resolutions do students set for themselves and what do they think about? When asked, Freshman Linda Lizarraga, said, "My New Year's resolution is to hang out more with friends and travel and explore new places. My opinion about New Year resolutions is that they help you achieve goals you want to set for yourself, however, people often make the mistake of having high expectations when setting their goals."

"My New Year's resolutions are to improve my speed endurance for Track & Field, make new friends, and get outside my comfort zone," Freshman Gabriella Parra said, "I like New Year's resolutions but it shouldn't be at the beginning of the year because most of the time, people are intimidated and don't follow through the whole year."

Sophomore Oni Nguyen said, "My New Year's resolutions is to

maintain good grades, maintain a 4.0 GPA, and be able to balance my school, personal, and sports life."

"My New Year's resolutions are to able to do a backflip, journal more, not procrastinate, and paint a Bob Ross painting." said Sophomore Kayeliegh Aquino.

Junior Michael Huaa said, "I want to run a 4:00 flat mile and go to Nike Cross Nationals and Aquino is going be there with me and you're going to be there with me."

"My goal is not to be hard on myself and enjoy my last year of high school and accept who I am. In the past, I was too critical of myself," Senior Kim Dinh said, "I felt like I was doing too much and feeling like not having enough time."

Freshman Abigail Guereca said, "My New Year's resolution is prioritizing time management. I want to manage my time more wisely and effectively so I don't feel burned out by the end of the day."

Junior Christine Hart said, "I want to go to CSS for Track & Field."

Overall, students agree that New Year's resolutions are a helpful tool for self-improvement, setting personal goals, and striving for positive changes in their lives. However, some note that it's important to be realistic, avoid setting overly high expectations and approach them in a manner that promotes positive mental health while maximizing your chances of sticking with them.

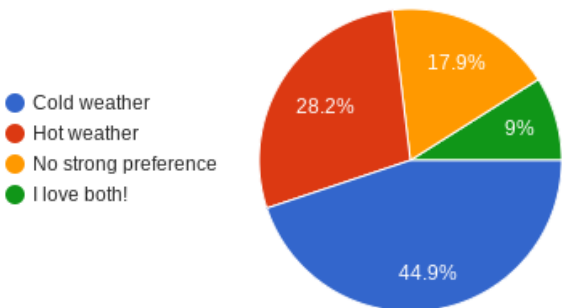
Hot vs. Cold Weather

By Sofia Alviar

We're really starting to feel the chilly season! Most of the highs in weather recently haven't been going above seventy degrees Fahrenheit, and the lows at night can reach just below forty degrees. Not to mention all the recent rain! How does Independence feel about these forecasts? What is the general preference regarding hot or cold weather? As a result of conducting a school wide poll, you can view the results displayed below.

Do you prefer hot weather or cold weather?

78 responses



It appears that there is a bit of a preference towards cold weather. When asked about her preference, a junior named Vivian Ho said, "I prefer cold weather because it's easier, and cheaper, to layer up than to constantly have to find a place with air conditioning." It's true that during this season, you don't need to worry about running the air conditioning all day when you can just bundle up at home. Winter and autumn are the times for hot cocoa, apple cider, apple pie or other warm beverages or meals! But what about the downsides? "A lot of people get sick during the winter," admitted a junior named Tina Vo. "One of my friends has a brother who recently caught a cold, and he spread it to their mom. I think he got it from his middle school because one of *his* friends got sick and ended up spreading it. Because even though he stayed home, his *brother* still went to the school. So, yeah, there's a lot of illness circulating around during this time of year." If you or your family has come into contact with illness, be sure to take your time to get better! The risk of getting sick is certainly one of the worst parts of winter. To contrast, what are the upsides of hot weather? Samuel Pena, a sophomore, said this: "One of the upsides of hot weather is that you can get a lot of sun. In winter, the days are way shorter. There's also summer break, and the days are longer." As with just about every other subject, the weather has its pros and cons, whether it's hot or cold. The preference may lean towards cold weather, but what about the preference towards our fellow students' favorite seasons? Maybe next time, we'll be able to find out!

Wonka: Which is the Best?

By Anamaly Guzman Perez

What started out as a book published in 1964 By Roald Dahl has now become a popular story with three movies, featuring Willy Wonka who has become a popular character. The first movie was released on June 30, 1971, featuring Gene Wilder as Willy Wonka. The second film was produced on July 10, 2005, featuring Johnny Depp as Willy Wonka. The newest film was released on December 15, 2023 starring Timothée Chalamet as Willy Wonka; however the new WONKA film is centered around who Willy Wonka was before his factory and how he became the famous chocolatier, bringing a creatively new twist to the story.

Now, despite these three films being centered around this top hat wearing chocolatier, they're all very different from one another. However, which film do the students at IHS prefer?

While there are three (four if we're counting the original book) Willy Wonka's, they each have their own charm. However, many students preferred Johnny Depp in the 2005 film after being asked who had played Willy Wonka better.

"Johnny Depp played Wonka better because he's less friendly with the kids who visited the factory. It's almost like he acts as if he doesn't care when they do something wrong and acts like, 'that's a you problem,'" Oni Nguyen, a Sophomore said.

Furthermore, we know that CGI and picture quality has severely gotten better throughout the years. This has not only caused a huge difference in the quality of the Wonka films but it has also caused a controversy of which year had produced the better film.

"2005 because it's more modern and the settings, costumes, and casts are so much better," Oni said.

This leads us to the final question: which movie is the most preferred?

"My favorite one was the one with Johnny Depp in it," responded Oni.

Similarly to Oni's response, the vast majority of students who had been interviewed had claimed that they preferred the 2005 film, "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" featuring Johnny Depp as Willy Wonka.



Yay or Nay?

Valentine's Day

By Gavin Tulio

Valentine’s Day is a holiday where people celebrate their love for each other, whether it be their significant other, friends, or anyone. Valentine’s Day should be dedicated to celebrating your love with people you truly care about.

“I enjoy hanging out with my friends like going out to eat or watching movies with them”, said Sophia Merin, when asked about activities to do on Valentine’s Day.

When asked the same question, Kylynne Manganti said, “A picnic, watching a movie, grabbing food”. Valentine’s Day is also a day where people get gifts and receive gifts, usually from their lovers. Usually when receiving a gift, you want it to have some sentimental value. When asked, “What gifts would make your Valentine’s day special?”, Kylynne Manganti said, “Something that is handmade or one of a kind that you can't get anywhere else”. Due to it being such a special occasion, people have certain spots and places that they would like to spend their Valentine’s Day at. Sophia Merin said, “I would like to celebrate at home since it’s more sincere and intimate”, when asked, “What are some spots that would be a good place to go to to celebrate Valentine’s Day?”

Valentine's Day is a great time to celebrate love and affection with your special someone, friends or loved ones. Valentine’s Day can be celebrated in many ways, ranging from a simple gathering to a thoughtful gift exchange, in a variety of favorite ways, with the ultimate emphasis on genuine connection and intimacy to mark the day.

Stanley Cups

Overrated?

By Ashley Limon

Stanley cups are a big thing now all over the United States, they’re in stores like Walmart, Target and even on Amazon or on the official website where they sell them everywhere for overpriced or cheaper value. Everyone loves them, they take them anywhere, to work, at school, at your desk, or even in your car in the cup holder. They are very affordable but the question is, are they overrated?

Sophomore Xitlaly Mendoza says “Stanley cups are overrated. Yeah I think that Stanley’s are overhyped, it’s way too much.” She also says that they are very heavy and it’s a lot to carry. “It's really pricey and hard to find and they do come in very different sizes.”

Sophomore Krystal Chavez even agrees that “they are very hard to find in stores,” and, “very expensive knowing that they come in different sizes.” Overall, Stanley cups are overrated and very pricey and really known to the whole united states in stores and Stanley cups are now a big part of our population in this generation with teenagers and adults buying Stanley cups, making the brand very popular on the social media platform “TikTok” with over 7.2 billion views. It’s a very high quality water bottle with 4.5 stars in nearly every store so if you feel like buying a Stanley, think about it and just make sure you’re checking the prices! Overall, it seems like Stanleys are a great cup for anything.

High School Relationships?

Are They Worth It?

By K. Tran and D. Opilas

Relationships come and go with a whirlwind of emotions and first experiences. On the other hand, high school relationships are often deemed as immature and come with this preconception that the relationship is bound to end.

While these relationships may be thrilling and formative, they are not without their obstacles. The topic of whether high school relationships are worthwhile is still being debated.

Senior Alize Vasquez says “The reason that made me want to date was because I wanted to feel loved by someone and it was a great opportunity for me to learn more about myself...”

Teenagers in their adolescent years don’t seem to be taken seriously, especially in the world of relationships. Our minds are still developing, and adults oftentimes promote this narrative that teenagers aren’t capable of handling these feelings, saying that it takes away from focusing on school and their future. Parents may frequently express how they don’t want their children to date and rather focus on their academics and career path toward their future.

“I think dating someone can affect your academic life especially if it's your first time, as you may struggle to balance your pre-existing responsibilities with your relationship,” says Antoine Bours.

Do teenagers have the mental capability and mindset to maintain their school life and relationships? Although there is no definitive answer, there are still different opinions on the positives and negatives of being in a relationship and how it affects our mental health.

However, from an outside perspective, Junlloyd Solicar, someone who is not in a relationship, says, “It’s a period to find ourselves and grow from being baby-fed to leading a full-blown life. And I just think ushering in another person who could be equally or more immature to love, can do more harm than good.”

With ups and downs, our relationships play an intricate part in high school. They undoubtedly bring experiences that teach teenagers valuable lessons about themselves and others, creating memories to carry forward into the next chapters of life.

The Boy and The Heron

Quick Review

By Graham Wubbels

The Boy and the Heron is the final film directed and produced by Hayao Miyazaki. The film unfolds in front of the audience the realization that the movie is about exploring familial relationships and the painful process of growing — leaving memories to disappear for good. With that context given it makes entire sense that Miyazaki would have made a movie focused on personal growth before he would retire from the industry as a whole.

This movie struck an emotional chord with myself and many other audience members forcing introspection on our own pasts and what we have forgotten to advance onwards with life. Its focus being a moody pre-teen who wants nothing more than to be understood by those around him. The kid is conflicted with the fact that he needs to move on from his mother’s death and learn to embrace his new step mother. The kid has a bucket of trauma and the journey that our protagonist Mahiro is brought along is all in order to move on from such a tragic loss and be prepared to start a new life with a changed family.

Senior Kevin Castillo had some of his thoughts to share on the movie, “My response the movie got out of me was more on confusion than understanding. If a messaged existed[,] As the movie progressed, the movie did begin to become more clear with what the message was meant to be: the world is sometimes cruel with its actions and we can't really change things on how they played out, but we can learn to protect those who are still with us.”

The junior Chris Cortez had his own insight to give into the movie saying that “I think the main theme of the movie could be the value of humans and to appreciate their time alive before they pass.”

Finding the meaning of life can be done through many different ways and outlets that all depends on the viewer and their own lens of the world.



School Burnout

By Ethan Le

With the end of the first semester comes a time when many students are experiencing school burnout, especially after returning from winter break. School burnout results from prolonged school-related stress and can primarily happen when students face stress or frustration with no room to relax or recharge. School burnout can result from overwhelming piles of school work, insufficient sleep, poor time management, and familial expectations. Furthermore, common symptoms of school burnout include de-motivation, difficulties focusing, lack of creativity, and reduced academic performance. School burnout is so common within the student body that it leads me to question. How has school burnout personally affected students and how do they fight against it?

I asked Junior Valerie Holguin and she said, “I’m just tired. School burnout makes me hate everything. I feel like I’m burned out because of a lack of sleep and being overwhelmed with all of my classes. I don’t fight against it. I just suffer.”

Junior Ojas Gandhi said, “My perspective is that sometimes the work is overwhelming. Especially when you have lots of pressure. I realized that time management is key. So make sure to use your tools to schedule in and kind of perceive the future for yourself. Always expect the unexpected.”

Junior Lenny Cortez said, “I feel stressed because of classes but not only APs but regular classes too. Some regular class teachers teach like AP and I feel like it’s why some students are failing

and stressing out.”

Junior Jaap Chahal said, “I’m just tired, stressed and a whole mess. However, I found that setting realistic goals and learning how to properly manage time truly makes a wonderful difference.”

Junior Daisy Flores Ayala said, “I’m so sleep-deprived that even my eye bags have eye bags. Also, the rain has been crazy recently, like rain-rain, go away, and come again another day. Some tips I have is to get at least 8 hours of sleep. Sleep is so important that students shouldn’t stay up because of the internet or even because of homework. They should prioritize their mental and physical health and also know their limits.”

Junior Melanie Gutierrez said, “After returning from winter break, I feel like I have everything stuck upright in my throat and that I feel like I’m going to puke. School burnout is a true struggle.”

From everyone interviewed, there is a consensus that school burnout is an apparent issue faced by a majority of students that negatively impacts them in some shape or form. However, many students note solutions to combat the ongoing epidemic of school burnout such as prioritizing mental and physical health, setting realistic goals, knowing your limits, and making time for yourself.

Best Vacation Spots

By Sofia Alviar

Our first winter break has passed, and Independence High School has to hold out just a little longer until our second winter break arrives in February, lasting from the 19th to the 23rd. Seeing how everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves last time begs the question of “What did you do over break?”

A student named Tina Vo replies, “I didn’t do much except, like, sleep in a lot. But a few of my friends went traveling, so that’s cool.”

Traveling is certainly a popular option for vacation activities. It’s ideal for people who just want to get away and sightsee, or maybe just get a change of pace. But which spots are the *best* spots, according to Independence?



Tina Vo, quoted earlier, debated the question for a bit. “I guess tropical places? Like, you know...like Hawaii. Oh, and France is pretty too! Not tropical, but still...”

Both of these are certainly solid answers! According to travel sources like *U.S.*

News Travel those areas, specifically Paris or Honolulu, are ranked as some of the most desirable locations to visit. But how about a more emotional take?

“I think the vacation solely depends on the person you are going with,” said Mr. Lee, an English teacher. “If you are going with someone, finding a spot that aligns with your interests is the best.”

And he has a point! Everyone has different tastes. What could be a dream vacation for one would be a nightmare for someone else. Mr. Lee continued with his own personal experience. “My best vacation spot so far has been Universal Studios in Los Angeles; it was a memorable experience because I loved the movies and the characters from their franchise. I went there with my fiancé for our four-year anniversary during summer and to celebrate my birthday, both in one sitting. My best experience with her was riding all the rides and taking pictures at Super Nintendo World.”

He adds, “I think if it were solo, the best vacation doesn't have to be far. It can be somewhere local; I kind of find vacations to be in my home the best, but that doesn't really answer that question.”

So when school goes out again, what will you be doing? Will you travel to a popular area, or to a more quiet place that you enjoy visiting? Or maybe you’ll just stay at home. Either way, be sure to enjoy yourself no matter what you end up doing. Breaks are meant to help you rest and recharge, after all!

Technology

Does it Make Us Feel More Alone?

By Natalia Duran

In a world where technology is evolving day by day, one might assume that increased connectivity would lead to stronger social bonds and a greater sense of community. However, there is evidence suggesting that the opposite may be true. Despite living in an era of constant digital interaction, many individuals are experiencing a keen sense of loneliness. This situation creates questions about the impact of technology on our social lives and mental well-being.

One of the main ways technology contributes to loneliness is through the increase of superficial connections. Social media platforms, that were originally designed to bring people together, often creates a culture of comparison and competition. People may find themselves constantly measuring their worth against others, leading to feelings of incompetence and isolation.

Additionally, online interactions lack the

depth and authenticity that face-to-face communication offers. The absence of non-verbal cues and genuine human connection can leave individuals feeling emotionally distant, and could leave individuals longing for actual, in real life interactions.

The constant stimulation on social media platforms can lead to sensory overload, resulting in increased stress and anxiety. With the rise of smartphones, individuals are stuck to their devices constantly, even in social events, therefore, making it challenging to fully disconnect and engage in meaningful in real life interactions. The fear of missing out (FOMO) may drive people to stay connected online, even at the risk of building genuine relationships in the real world.

The convenience of online communication has led to less face-to-face interactions. While text

messages, emails, and video calls are undoubtedly an efficient way to connect, they lack the authentic nuance and intimacy of in-person conversations. Always relying on digital communication may contribute to a sense of isolation, as individuals miss out on the richness of physical experiences and genuine human connection.

Technology driven loneliness is often connected with the damaging effects of social comparison on mental health. Repeated exposure to curated, idealized versions of others' lives on social media can lead to feelings of inadequacy, envy, and low self-esteem. The drive to pursue perfection online may leave individuals feeling isolated, and lost in their struggles, believing that they are the only ones facing challenges. Though please do remember that these influencers online do not always look the way they do in posts.

Pin to Win

Wrestling

By Argyle Angulo, Sinthe Tran

The Wrestling season wrapped up, after many great matches and amazing efforts from our team! Independence High School's wrestling team strived to qualify for the championships during the 2023-2024 season, with their sights set on achieving more than just medals. Guided by their unwavering passion and relentless determination, these athletes gave their all to make the season memorable.

Wrestling is an extremely competitive sport that requires lots of motivation and personal drive to improve at the sport. Placing in CCS is highly impressive considering how tough the sport is and two of our wrestling players, Sophomore Andres Juarez and Senior Brandon Nandi, qualified for CCS. Owen Rosslee, junior, when asked about his hopes for the team said “I hope our team is able to continue to do well at dual meets, the team part of wrestling, and I hope I am able to continue to do well at tournaments and keep placing.”

Team Captains and fellow players are always a big influence to others on any sports team, no matter which sport. It's no different for our wrestling team. For Jorge Vazquez, the influence of team captain Ezequiel Martinez (Ez) stands out primarily as a beacon of hope and positivity. “I believe that team captain “EZ” has had the most positive influence on me, he always pushes the team and is very positive with everyone, and



Junior Owen Rosslee

when he got injured awhile back he still kept coming to practice and still worked out which is really motivating, and made me want to improve myself.” said Junior,

Jorge Vazquez when speaking about who on the team has had an extremely positive influence on his development as a wrestler, and how they have helped him grow.

Another major influence on any sports team is their coaches. Again, it's no different for our wrestling team! The wrestling coaches encourage the players and actually post their amazing achievements on their Instagram. “Two people who have particularly helped me with my wrestling are my coaches, coach Jimmy and coach Garrett,” said Owen Rosslee, a junior, “They give up so much of their time every week to help us with our wrestling and they push ourselves everyday to become the greatest we possibly can.”

Every sports team has their strengths and weaknesses. It varies from person to person what they think it is and what the coaches believe they can work on. Regarding the wrestling team's strengths and weaknesses, Junior, Jorge Vazquez, states, “I believe the team's strengths are that we are able to connect with each other, motivate and support one another like we are family. I don't believe we have any real weaknesses. But I do think that we have a slight ego which can be considered a weakness.”



Senior Brandon Nandi

Goodbye Game

Girl's Basketball

By Justin Reyes



Creds. Julie Tran

Sixers Girl's Basketball held their senior night game against Andrew Hills High School. This would be their last home game of the season. Varsity seniors, Jaimie Manmano, Meliana Regondola, Ashjeet Kaur, Katrina Dinh, Stephanie Bejerano, and Karina Montelongo had their ceremony before tip-off to cherish their final basketball game of their last year in high school.

When asked about their best memories as a team, Katrina Dinh shares, “The best memories we made as a team was carpooling with each other and debriefing about the game. From gossiping about the other team, to jamming to music, we would just go on and on about random stuff. These are the moments I'm gonna miss the most.” The Sixers Girls Varsity Basketball team is currently 4th in league, while Andrew Hill is 5th. On Thursday, February 8th, Sixers Girls Basketball won their Senior Night game against Andrew Hill High School with the final score being 33-32.

With this win over the Falcons, it leads us with the question, “What were your thoughts on the season?”. Senior Ashjeet Kaur



Creds. Julie Tran

says, “The season could have gone a lot better, every game was pretty close, but we were lacking confidence in ourselves and couldn't pull through in the end.” She would also like to add, “We could have put in more work and played more aggressively in both our defense and offense.”

Despite winning their last game, Kaur felt that she had to address these mistakes and that is what makes her a real role model for the team. “It's most definitely Ash. Without her, our team would have been significantly different”, says Katrina Dinh when asked who was the most crucial player on the team. Ashjeet Kaur and Jodi (Meliana) Regondola were the top scorers on the team averaging 14.6 and 9.9 points per game.

That makes us think, “Who pushed the team the most?”.

Kaur responds with, “I would say Katrina is our team's motivator, at every game she is our team's voice and always brings the energy.” In an exciting end to the high school girls' basketball senior night, the players showed how hard work and playing together can lead to success.

Goal Oriented Boys Soccer

By Dominic Todd



Sports are an integral part of school culture in developing your athletic and teamwork skills to help your team succeed. Soccer is a prime example of athleticism and teamwork. 40 minutes of nonstop action is enough to leave the average person winded. The boys soccer team is spearheaded by Coach Fernando Mendez and he has been a coach here at Independence for 2 years. Coach Mendez puts heavy emphasis on his team being respectful not only to their teammates and himself, but also his opponents and referees.

Coach Mendez commented saying, “Soccer is a sport I am extremely passionate about, if you want to learn and you are respectful not just to me

but to your teammates, opponents, referees, and all present at soccer events you will earn a spot on this team regardless of your skill level.”

Grades are also very important to Coach Mendez and he makes sure to put the “student” in Student-Athlete above sports.

“School is a very important part of being a Student-Athlete so I make it clear that school will always come first so making grades and improving in school is very important to me.” said Coach Mendez.

Sports teams thrive when community and teamwork is the main focus of the group. And Coach Mendez has seen his athletes grow tremendously over the course of a single season and their attitude for hard work has made him even more proud to be their coach.

“Our team no longer sees this as just an afterschool sport but more of a place where they can come learn more about the sport they are passionate about. Where at the beginning egos would run

loose now we have a team that fully supports one another and their primary focus is to grow as a team”

The boys soccer team like many teams have had a rocky season, and losing athletes to grades or personal reasons can be a huge dampener on a team's motivation to succeed. Towards the end of the season the Boys team roster dropped down to 11 players, which is just enough to fill in each spot on the field. But that didn't stop the boys' effort and performance. They took this detrimental loss and continued to perform to the best of their abilities.

Coach Mendez commented “ Instead of more boys quitting or them blaming the students that had become academically ineligible they simply said "Coach don't worry we got this" and to me having that attitude meant more than anything else.”

Coach Mendez had seen immense improvement in one of his athletes in particular; Yair De La Cruz.

“He came in with little to no skill overall, but through sheer determination and the want to get better, not only did he improve but earned a starting position on the team. Through his drive for the sport that he loves he makes me proud to be coaching this team. Additionally he inspires other teammates to put in the extra work to improve no matter the difficulties.” stated Coach Mendez.

Game Changers Girls Soccer

By Sarahi Campos

The Girl's Varsity Soccer Team at Independence High School started off the season with a home game against James Lick High School and played their last game against Santa Teresa High.

Overall, they had a successful season. One of the players recalls one of the games that brought them up a league from C to B.

“My most memorable game this season is probably when we tied the first team in the league. Coming up to B league from C league,” said Samantha Sanchez, a senior and midfielder on the team. “We were basically the underdogs and I think that game really made a statement.”

The players worked hard during practice to become the players they are on the field. They practiced at the stadium on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. At these practices, they focused on targeting their weaknesses.

“The coaches use practice to work on things we are struggling with and want to get better at. Techniques, shooting, and

possession drills are the main drills we work on during practices,” said Sanchez.

Aside from practice, players had other reasons why they pushed themselves on the field.

“What motivates me the most are the goals that I have set for myself. I know what I am working towards and now it's all about discipline. My parents are also part of my motivation as they have sacrificed so much for me,” said Sanchez.

Towards the end of the season, the girls had their senior night against Willow Glen High School. This game featured Brianna Molina, Samantha Sanchez, Leslie Amaya, Mia Batres, and Anahi Villa Vera.

Wendy Soria, a junior who attended the event, recalled “Soccer Senior Night was so fun to watch even though the season is sadly over, I really enjoyed watching the girls give it their all on the field,”

Meet the Oakland B's Oakland's Baseball

By Bryant Sumano

The drama in Oakland continues with rumors that the A's are still headed to Vegas despite John Fisher not wanting to sell the team. But a new team arises, behold, the Oakland Ballers, or known as the Oakland B's.

Indy City has heard about the Oakland Ballers, but some have mixed reactions to the new baseball club. Seniors Gael Lopez and Abel Sanchez both said “Is Oakland gonna go through the alphabet now? What's next, the Oakland C's?” Some find this funny as it looks like Oakland Baseball is going through the alphabet trying to get the team's name.

“The Oakland B's? What?” said Senior Jose Alonso, “I'm guessing they'll try to be better than the Giants.” While the Oakland B's say that they are “stealing baseball from Oakland,” the Independent League ballclub wants to make baseball enjoyable for everyone in Oakland with the A's headed for Las Vegas.

“Hopefully they'll get more fans than the Oakland Athletics,” said a student who wishes to be anonymous, “It's gonna be



Oakland and see where the future of the Oakland A's and Oakland B's goes.

awkward if the Oakland B's won't get as many fans as the A's.”

We shall await more on what new things come from

Indy Insider Word Search

Y	N	R	T	B	A	E	U	C	N	R	I	G	A
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