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Wrapping up the Year This Year's Wrap It Up Rally



By Lani Chau, Neveah Garcia, and Darian Domingo

The school year is coming to an end and it has been celebrated with a Wrap it up Rally. Clubs like Korean Club, IDANCE, cheerleading, Club, and LSU performed in Independence's final rally for the 2022-2023 school year. Not only clubs were in the rally but students and staff had games of tug or war, dodgeball, and musical chairs which was a fun way to close off the school year with fun interactive events.

Seniors experienced their final rally of their high school career and looked forward to the activities and performances planned. We asked students about their thoughts on the rally.

Senior Nicole Lagazo shared, "I was looking forward to experiencing the senior

class cheer for the final time. And I liked watching the Club, K-Club, and IDance performances."

Junior Lesly Rosas also shared, "I was most excited for LSU's performance because I like their representation of the Latin culture."

At the end of the rally seniors were awarded with the independence honors awards ranging from sports, academics, and most involved at Independence.

Senior Nuha Khan, a nominee said, "It's a great honor to be recognized by my teachers."

Once the rally was finished all

seniors were gathered in order to take the panorama photo. They sat gathered on the gym seats and posed for the photo that they could later buy for memories of their senior classmates and senior year.

Senior Bryanna Cabana who participated in the panorama said, "It's nice that the panorama will let me have memories of some of my friends."

As this was the last rally of the 2022-2023 school year, seniors cherished their last high school rally and students were more spirited and cheered louder as the school year was nearly over. With the rally, school spirit was doubled and shared for the end of the school year.

What Were Class of 2023's Most Memorable Moments? Seniors Reminiscing Their High School Years

By Jacqueline Do, Michelle Huynh, and Jayda Sarabia

Graduation day is coming for IHS seniors and almost all are counting down the days until they can walk across the stage and be done with high school. Although it's almost time for the seniors to move onto their next chapter, reminiscing the past four years of high school and thinking about what made the four years most memorable is something that is fun and interesting to do. A number of seniors were asked to look back on their four years of high school and share what their most memorable moments were at Independence. The following responses were shared:

"Throughout high school I've always had memorable moments that I really wish I could talk about, however the ones that I cherish the most are the multicultural rallies that are held every year. Even though I've only been in the audience I was always ecstatic to see my friends and fellow classmates perform with such big smiles on their faces. It's shown me that even though our school reputation makes others perceive us as "bad" or "ghetto", we prove them wrong and show that we're a strong community that's able to uplift others and celebrate our diversity and achievements," says

Caitlynn Troung.

"In my senior year, I had 3 performances in the Multicultural Rally 2023 and the performances were: Korean Club's traditional Korean Dance, LSU's Folklórico, and the Parade of Nations, the last and best performance overall in Multicultural Rally 2023," Sean Tsang comments.

Paulo Jimenez adds, "My most memorable moment is probably messing up during the ukulele part of the multicultural rally. Stupid amplifier." (Cont. on page 12)

Confusion Over Counseling

Complaints swirl, but students have misconceptions about counselors' jobs

By Puneet Kaur Johal

Counselors at Independence have received some criticism over the years from frustrated students, but at the same time, counselors have to deal with multiple factors when helping students with their schedules that few, if any, students really understand or know about.

Students have complained about not getting the class they want, not being allowed to drop out of a class that is affecting their mental health, or not being able to change the time they start their classes.

Senior Nandine Vasudeva said, “In my freshman year, I wanted to have art class but I got put into drama instead, even when I never requested that class. When I tried to switch, my counselor refused and said it was better for me to take the class in my senior year. Basically, I had to deal with this class and wait a few years to actually take the class I wanted.”

Senior Jericho Reyes said, “My bad experience was when I tried to change my schedule from a late schedule to early schedule. We had a one-on-one which she [the counselor] stated that I couldn’t change my schedule and that it was too late (September). I explained to her that I would have no one to drop me off to school and she stated that it was too late to change my schedule. Now I am struggling just going to school because she cared more about there being no room then someone who is being very transparent and telling her my struggle.”

And while those complaints and

opinions are valid, there are external circumstances and hard work that goes behind the counseling process that prevents students from getting what they want.

Ms. Huynh says, “There are factors students do not consider, in which a School Counselor must consider; for example, for every new student added to a class more unnecessary work and stress is added onto a teacher to help the student play catch up. A class could have extra desks, but doesn’t mean there is availability as each class is capped at a maximum number. What students also don’t think about is that if there is availability, we need to save space for the 200 students who on average enroll throughout the school year.”

“It is more than just giving students the classes that they want. As counselors, we of course want to give students the classes that they want and will enjoy taking. Sometimes room just doesn’t permit during a specific year and sometimes high school graduation requirements haven’t been met; therefore, other necessary classes need to be taken....As counselors, a big part of our job is being the students #1 advocate at school. We do our very best to set up every student for success! But recognize we won’t always be able to please everyone.” adds Ms. Marquez.

Additionally, Mr. Ly states, “When it comes to mental health, our school counselors are committed to supporting

students in a caring and mindful way. We understand that sometimes the underlying issues affecting a student's academic performance are beyond school and may require additional support beyond schedule changes...While grades are an important part of the academic experience, I want our students to see themselves as more than a score but as human beings. Grades aren't the gold-plates indicator of success. Success is more than just grades or test scores.”

Lastly, it’s important to remember that each counselor has between 400 and 500 students. The counseling team manages a lot of students and effectively addresses the global teacher and staff shortage. If your needs aren’t met, it’s because there are several other factors involved. We should learn to appreciate our counselors as they have multiple responsibilities. It’s not an easy job after all.

However, even if our counselors can’t fulfill our requests due to external circumstances, they should at least try to make an effort to listen and offer support rather than rushing to move on to another student. I believe that I can speak for the majority of students when I say that we want to feel that our counselors hear and understand our struggles and concerns. Many students say they don’t feel heard when expressing their issues, but maybe now we know what counselors’ job responsibilities are, and we can understand while asking counselors to be more aware of student frustrations at the same time.

"All Decked Out"

By Arwin Flores

Hey Sixers! The yearbook will be releasing soon and it’s packed full of wonderful photos and memories! I’ll be talking about the creation of the yearbook, but I’ll give you some general information first. The 2022-2023 Independence yearbook is titled, “All Decked Out.” The name was given due to the theme of cards. The title and theme connect with last year’s title of “After The Rain.” We wanted to make it a fresh start from the past couple of years and show that we have full confidence in our school’s ability to achieve higher than certain expectations. If you want to order the yearbook now, go to the A-06 bank to purchase a copy!

To start, the yearbook making process was very stressful. It first begins with the brainstorming process. We began

in January, giving us a short window of time to create the entire yearbook. As a class, we started throwing out ideas about the theme and creating a meaning behind the title. After coming up with that, it was time to start making decisions about what topics to cover on each page and lay out what goes on each page. The journalism class is filled with many talented and passionate students who wanted to help design the yearbook. To get a cohesive plan and structure going, we split the teams into two. The first team were the yearbook editors, who worked on designing artwork, laying out the pages, and making executive decisions about the contents of the yearbook. The editors included: Arwin Flores, Tanya Desai, Michelle Huynh, Jayda Sarabia, and

Jacqueline Do. Next up, the yearbook photographers! These people were the ones who took the pictures of classes, clubs, sporting events, and school activities!. The photographers included: Jasmine Mok, Jorge Hernandez, Keyra Aguilera, Lyric Sauao, Jordan Delos Reyes, and Alex Le. So in total, the editors and photographers combined to make up this year’s yearbook staff!

Gathering photos was a fun, but tiring process. Photographers had to attend certain events and even go to different classrooms to take pictures. Yearbook editor, Tanya Desai (12) talked about the process saying, “We didn’t have a lot of photos, so we had to reach out to many people for different photos.” It was honestly something that we are so grateful for and I would like to thank everyone who’s helped us out. Even though we got photos, that was only the first step. With each picture, we needed to caption the photo, which brought a myriad of challenges along with it. We had to include information such as: the people in focus, their grade level, and a description of the action depicted in each photo. Yearbook photographer Jorge Hernandez (12), commented, “Taking photos of the different classrooms was wild. You didn’t know what to expect!” It was a tough task, but we eventually pulled through and were able to include it all!

With all the hardships, I’m very proud of the whole yearbook staff for completing the whole project. “Working on the yearbook was kinda stressful, but it was kinda rewarding when I gotta see it all laid out on the page,” Tanya Desai (12) mentioned. Being able to see the finished product in our hands will be an extremely emotional moment for the whole class. The yearbook is almost out, so stay tuned for more news about receiving your yearbook soon!



Taking a Trip to the Cabaret

By Jordan Delos Reyes

The Drama department presented its spring musical *Cabaret*.

Shows dates were 3/17, 3/18, 3/24, and 3/25 starting at 7 PM with a 5 PM Matinee on 3/23.

When asked what the play is about, Director of the Drama Department Robin Edwards explained “It is taken from John Vender’s *I am a Camera*, a story of an American Investigating 1930s Germany as the Nazis come into power. He Observes Germany going from a thriving democracy to what will lead to WW2.”

Cabaret features multiple plot lines: A young writer gets into a relationship with an English Cabaret Singer; At the same time an older German woman and a Jewish man begin their own romance; All the while several Cabaret Members reflect what had happened.

This play is intended for older teens and adults (with a PG13 advisory); the story is set in a nightclub and Edwards mentioned that it pressed the boundaries of what teenagers could do in a performance.

Edwards said, “[It has some] risque bits to it. Takes place in a nightclub. This is a darker musical, makes you think about the world.”

Despite the spring musicals typically being more lighthearted, there were a few reasons as to why this musical was selected:

The biggest reason for this choice would be what has been going on in Ukraine. Edwards said that Putin’s escalating actions had reminded her of this musical that she did back when she was in high school. In addition, Edwards cites modern America as a reason for why she chose this play.

“We [people don’t] want to make other[s] uncomfortable,” Edwards said. “[But] sometimes you need to speak up even if it is in an uncomfortable situation.”

Other reasons were requests by the performers and other members of the musical. One example would be for a call for more musicians getting involved, as modern pits only included 5 or so members. Another example would be a desire for more

dancing.

This change in tone does not come without difficulties. Not only for presenting the musical to an audience, but for the actors to get in it as well.

Junior Anthony Beltram, who played Herr Schultz, commented “[My Biggest Challenge was] trying to get into it. It seems okay, it was hard for me to grasp my attention, dealing with some of the topics at hand.”

“The hard part for me was the darker topics in this. A lot of times, we as people want to suppress what happens. And bringing this to light can be sensitive to a lot of people. I didn’t want to do something that may hurt other people,” said Sophomore Jayda Reyes, who played one of the Kitkat Dancers Lulu.

Regardless of how the play was perceived, it did succeed in leaving an important question “what happens to these characters?”

“Last Saturday, I went to see the Cabaret productions with my friends. Going in, we were expecting a lighthearted story with pretty lights and red sparkly dresses...but instead we left the theater thinking over the events of the show,” said Sophomore Brianna Choy. “[A] part I enjoyed was the second time “Willkommen” was performed. It was almost like propaganda trying to will us into believing the cabaret and life was perfect but it was interrupted by the disappearing orchestra. The ending felt a bit sudden and it was subtle.”



Graduation Season

By J.S Mok



It’s finally time for the seniors to leave Independence High School. After 4 years of countless tests, homework, and finding our way around the 103 acres of the campus, the seniors are graduating on the last day of May. There have been different responses to how the seniors have been feeling due to the upcoming event, from nervousness to excitement, it truly is a big step towards the future of the seniors.

Senior Andy Soukaseum states his current emotions towards the next couple weeks leading up to it, “I am excited for graduation but a little nervous for it because of the new responsibilities I will be taking LOL.”

The seniors have their finals a week in advance, giving them a week off to possibly spend stress free. The day before graduation, the student governing board has set up a day at the pool for the graduating class to relax and spend one last time together before the school year ends.

With their gowns ready, grades earned by hours of work, and a sense of accomplishment for finally being able to graduate from Independence High School. Indy Insider wishes all graduates well, and we hope for the best to our newest alumni.



Aquatic Adventures

By Jordan Delos Reyes

The Water Walk, an event where students load water on their backs and learn about water conservation, was held for the second year in a row by Solar Suitcase and Mr. Stone.

When asked why water walk was conceived, Mr. Stone said “In 2017, I visited Kenya, Africa with 2 solar suitcase members. One of the activities we did was visit a nearby village and we carried water in buckets in a stream...The ladies do it 4-5 times a way. Here where you can get as much water as you want, it made an impression on us what people had to do...we wanted to show that experience back to Independence.”

Along the track there were panels showing information about water consumption and conservation, students would then be quizzed on said

information after they completed the course. Winners of the track will be decided by two metrics: (1) How fast one completes the track (2) How well one does on the quizzes; the latter will be weighed more.

When asked about how cheating will be addressed, Mr. Stone said “Instead of any kind of electronic submission we will have paper submissions. We will have proctoring that will disable electronics. We realized that was a problem so we would amend it.”

In addition to the signature trek, the Water Walk also features performances from Mr. Brandt, Desi Club, Cloud 9, VSA, Chinese Club, and Ukulele Club, as well as activities and a burger grill.

The solar suitcase club cites the lack of people running all of these

additional features of the water walk as their biggest challenge. This year, students will have the opportunity to work at different times instead of all of them working on one shift.

Club Historian Darrell Salinas mentioned “The Water Walk’s greatest challenge was our club size. We are such a small group trying to make a school-wide event, and getting more people to help has been the main struggle.”

The money raised by Water Walk will be used to buy Solar Suitcases for next year.

“[It is] a portable ruggedized solar system that is meant to be deployed in developing countries...” said Mr. Stone “...such as Kenya, Uganda, and the Philippines. 2 in Inde as an emergency, and some in the Native Reservations.”

Is Ryan Gosling Too Old to Play Ken?

By Tanya Desai

Hot pink hues and beachy vibes are the essence of the upcoming Barbie movie: a eulogy to the Barbie doll and her aesthetic. Many are already praising the film as the movie of the summer.

And then, of course, there's Ken.

The opening shot of Ryan Gosling as Ken in this trailer is truly harrowing. His deep spray tan and swept-back bleach blond hair, along with the pastel striped shirt and overall saturated tone of the movie, only exacerbate the wrinkles on his face and display his many, many years of age.

Ryan Gosling is forty-two years old. He looks much older. Next to Margot Robbie, he looks like he belongs in a nursing home.

On the other hand, there is the argument that it is *Ryan Gosling*. He is a renowned actor, and his performance as Ken in the trailer is phenomenal. Some would argue that Gosling is perfect for the role, and that no one else could play Ken.

That being said, Ken is a doll of no substance. He is Barbie's boyfriend, and that is basically all he is. Gosling's only job is to look pretty and have no idea what is going on. This job could be accomplished by an actor who does not look like he could shrivel up and die at any moment.

While Gosling is not my ideal fit for the Barbie movie, I am still excited to watch the film this summer. Margot Robbie looks promising in her role of Barbie and the movie's general atmosphere seems like a lot of fun. Gosling's performance, while physically disturbing, will hopefully not have too much of an overall impact on the movie.

After all, she's Barbie. He's just Ken.



Ryan Gosling in his role as Ken

Sadie's Dance

By Rebecca Duran



Photo Credit: Alex Le

Sadie Hawkins is a well celebrated dance in which the girls ask the guys to the dance. It was inspired from a comic strip made by Al Capp, published in November of 1937 but it wasn't until 1952 that Sadie's was celebrated by thousands of people across the country.

Earlier this month on March 3rd, 2023. IHS held its very own yearly Sadie's dance.

This year's theme was Old Hollywood. It started at 7pm and ended at 10. Students were allowed to purchase snacks and beverages as well as take pictures in front of the decorated backdrop. A DJ was hired, who played artists like Ice Spice, Justin Bieber, Nicki Minaj and Mac Dre.

To ensure the safety of everyone and be precautious, no one was allowed in without a ticket and their student ID, photos were taken before entering the dance to keep track of all who were there and bags were searched before walking in line to get approved to go in. Ticket purchases were done with the IHS cheer team and the money raised from tickets was put towards new cheer uniforms.

Though very few people went to the dance, it was still very lively. Most students there made the most of their time by dancing, singing our hearts out the nostalgic songs, taking pictures and hyping up the crowd. We hope to see you at next year's Sadie's dance!

Buzzing Around The Numbers

By Jordan Delos Reyes

Independence has hosted its first ever Calc Bee, a competition inspired by the MIT Integration Bee. 32 participants faced off to see who is the quickest at solving calculus problems.

The creator of the Calc Bee, Senior Nicholas Bui said "The calculus bee is a school-wide calculus tournament incorporating students from AP Calculus AB and BC. It's designed to

prepare students for the types of integration and differentiation questions that could be found on the AP exam."

The formatting follows the MIT Integration Bee, the 32 participants face each other in 1-vs-1 against a problem, both people are given the same problem and whoever solves it the fastest is the winner and moves up the bracket.

When asked why he created the Calc Bee, Nick responded "My motivation for the calc bee started during quarantine. I was watching the 2006 MIT Integration Bee and was inspired to bring it to IHS. Although I was unable to bring the bee to IHS during my junior year, I decided to do it this year."

The winner was Ian Ramin and the runner up was Tony Dang.

Should you Take Summer Courses?

By J. Julian

As the school year of 2023, comes to a close, we have different opportunities and paths we like to achieve. The summer of '23, leaves room for many differences such as resting, working, and many more, but because of this we see that students may want to consider summer classes, in order to incorporate them into their summer to get ahead and further their life and career goals, but that just leaves us asking the question, should you take summer courses?

First and foremost, what are summer classes and where are they offered? Better known as dual enrollment, students have the opportunity to take courses within a summer term in order to gain knowledge and

get a jumpstart on college credit. Usually, these classes are offered in a wide variety, with classes such as general biology, and chem 101, and students are able to make these college credits within a 6-7 week period. This also helps students who plan to take the path of college, lessen their time within college.

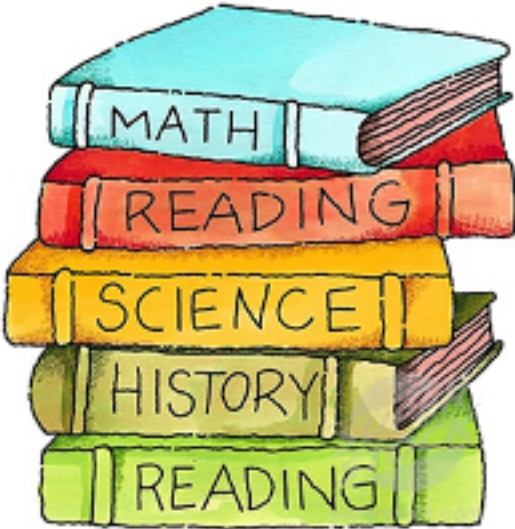
With this, there comes advantages and disadvantages to taking dual enrollment over the summer. Some of the advantages are that you'd lessen your time in college as well as shaving off a class or two off your college plan. Another advantage is that because it's dual enrollment, you'd get the college credit right away rather than waiting

about a year for it.

"It's a good way to get ahead", (Senior, Dustin Truong) says.

With these advantages, we also have disadvantages. Some advantages are that you'll never be fully rested into the next school year or that you'd be extremely busy because of the high workload.

But because there are different factors in one's life, and as much as I advise you to take advantage of summer classes and courses, some people may not have the time



for summer courses, thus concluding that people should outweigh the benefits as well as the cost for such classes

Is This Who We Are?

Is This Who We Want to Be?

By Jordan Stone, Social Studies teacher

Are we the school where student performances start with blatant disrespect to the assembled students and staff at a rally? Are we the school where student organizations begin their presentations with fighting words? Are we the school where we allow sexual harassment to be broadcast to the students and staff who are required to attend?

Maybe it is, but I hope we can be better.

At the Wrap It Up Rally, one of the student clubs that performed began their dance performance with a voice-over stating loudly: "If you don't like this you can suck my -----". The four-letter word that concludes this phrase was omitted, however I believe that everyone who heard it knew what the missing word was. To be clear, this was not a passing lyric in a song but spoken statement that preceded the beginning of the dance and set the tone for the rest of the performance.

I believe this was completely inappropriate and unacceptable. While I think that the use of the implied profanity was inappropriate, that is not at the heart of my complaint.

This phrase is in several ways not OK for most if not all presentations, and certainly not at a High School Rally, especially one supposedly celebrating the "Sixer Values" of Spirited, Innovative, eXtraordinary, Engaged and Respectful.

Words matter. This phrase is an extremely hostile and provocative statement intended, in almost any context, to demean and humiliate the recipient. Used interpersonally, it is likely to precipitate highly aggressive reactions. Someone who says this to another person should reasonably expect at best a verbally offensive, or a physically violent reaction. These are fighting words. It is also sexually explicit comment that creates a hostile environment. This is one of the textbook definitions of sexual harassment.

If we allow student groups to present this kind of message at a school wide event, without accountability, we are admitting that this type of speech and behavior is acceptable on our campus.

Is this who we are? Is this who we want to be?

Respectfully,
Jordan Stone
Independence High School

C.L.U.B. Wrap it Up Rally Incident

Students and Staff Express Their Opinions

By Lyric Sauao and Keyra Aguilera

As many may see during rallies, there are usually performances from clubs such as Mabuhay, Korean Club, Cloud 9 and C.L.U.B. Many may be familiar with C.L.U.B.'s unique open style and their tendencies to push boundaries with their moves and even their mixes.

During the Wrap It Up rally, the C.L.U.B. set began with a segment of Cardi B saying, "I would like to tell the people out there, that thank you for supporting me and if you don't suck my ___" with the intended word cut off and replaced with the beginning of the song "Up" by Cardi B.

Now as some may have enjoyed the controversial introduction or not even mind it, many others seem to have been offended and surprised by the introduction.

Regarding the decision made, C.L.U.B. president Kevin Le says, "Having contributed to the mix, we needed a clever and eye-catching way to start our performance. We went back and forth until one of my cabinet members suggested that controversial idea. I loved it and thought that it was appropriate enough for the rules set in place."

Kevin also suggests that this type of choreography is normal for C.L.U.B, "Absolutely, the shock value definitely the

caught the eyes of both students AND some faculty members. It's commonly known that club is controversial in our school."

C.L.U.B. does have a reputation for being quite bold in their dances and that reputation is recognized by many students at this school, almost immediately after seeing C.L.U.B. perform for the first time. The shock was momentary for most, who expect this kind of thing from C.L.U.B. To put it quite simply, C.L.U.B. never fails to put on a show and fellow students applaud them for their boldness in their dancing.

As some know, there is a rehearsal that takes place the day before the rally where the activities director, Mr. Logan, is supposed to review performances to ensure that everything runs smoothly and appropriately during the rally.

We were able to have a conversation with him ourselves and when asked his opinion on the matter he had to say, "I don't think that was the right setting for it. I do think it was inappropriate *but* unfortunately I actually missed it during the rehearsal, so I feel a bit to blame for it. We had some things happen with ASB and ended up kind of scrambling during the rehearsal. So, while I think it's inappropriate and unfortunate, I just wish I would've caught it because there's a lot of

things that do get caught during the rehearsals."

Quite honestly, in the age that we are in, it can be questioned what is appropriate for us and what is not. It would only make sense to push the boundaries of what is supposedly "appropriate and acceptable" if this age in itself is confusing and full of development.

Though adults, more specifically staff, may disagree with this statement, it should be considered that both groups of people, being students and staff, come from different generations meaning that the standards may be different whether we like it or not.

Overall, Kevin has gone on the record to tell us that they stand by the decision as a creative choice. "After our performance we garnered massive support but also some opposing views. I fully respect and see validity in the opinions of those who found our performance uncomfortable. However, art is meant to push the status quo. It's supposed to shock and that's what I think this intro was. I mean it's no secret that the student body uses... no no words, but it was the audacity to have it loud blasted during a rally that pushes buttons. Although nothing was explicitly said, upon reflection I stand with our artistic choices."

The Glory Review

By Darian Domingo

The Glory is a Netflix series that tells the story of a person who experienced school bullying as a child and devises and carries out an elaborate revenge plot against the perpetrators. Some elements of the series are based on real-life events that took place in South Korea. The Glory has had a global impact, reaching the top of Netflix's viewing ranking for non-English TV shows. It has also sparked public conversations and apologies from public figures for past bullying behaviors, such as Pawat Chittsawangdee, a Thai actor.

Senior Bryanna Cabana who watched the series said: "I liked watching 'The Glory' it was interesting and I felt a connection with the show"

The Glory has real life facts and events that happen like how the series

does not let the viewers forget about the horrific physical bullying that the protagonist endured as a child; the bodily scars are repeatedly shown on screen. But for the protagonist, just as painful are the long-lasting emotional scars. Studies have shown that bullied children experience emotional distress that can carry on into adulthood.

Senior Derrick Domingo gives his thoughts about The Glory saying: "I like how the show relates to real life events like bullying and how other people deal with it growing up"

The series ends with Dong-eun and Joo Yeong walking into prison for a day of work and the start of their implied revenge plot. It is a kind of happy ending for Dong-eun, who still gets to do what she has spent her life training herself to do -

take revenge - but also has someone by her side. The show never promised realism, but rather promised catharsis for the pain Dong-eun endured as a child and for the anger that came when no one held her abusers accountable for it. It never promised life for Dong-eun after revenge, but we got that too - as a bonus. Dong-eun writes to the landlord she once saved as a teenager, saying she didn't grow up to be a good person, but one spring, she will fully bloom. It is the promise of healing, in the midst of more revenge.



Plans After High School

By Neveah Garcia

With the school year coming to an end, seniors prepare themselves for what’s to come next. After high school, there are many paths to take and some seniors have begun to plan where they want to go. Though some students plan far ahead for their future after senior year others would rather think about their fun plans for summer vacation like traveling.

Senior Joseph Cheung said, “This summer I’m going to go back to Asia to meet my cousins, aunt, and uncle and when I come back I plan on house-sitting to make money.”

As mentioned before, some students have started to plan further into their future with such things as starting to plan to go to college and getting jobs.

Nandine Vasudeva, a senior said, “After graduation, I plan to work and make money that I can save and start doing summer college programs to prepare myself for college.”

There’s a lot that can come after high school and there are many plans to be made, personally I will be preparing for college and traveling like Joseph and Nandine. I think making plans for after high school is a bit stressful as you have to start thinking about your future and becoming a young adult, so I decided I want to try and take things slow. I plan on having fun this summer by traveling and being with friends yet I still want to prepare for college, which is only a few months away. And so to help prepare I plan on working to make money.

Overall planning after high school can be scary and stressful as there is a lot to think about but I think most seniors including myself are taking it slow and trying not to stress so much about it, which in my opinion, I think we all should be doing.

What Is The Best AP Class To Take?

By Puneet Kaur Johal and Jaden D. Dang

AP Classes are Advanced Placement classes, which are college-level courses created by the College Board and Independence High School offers 21 AP Courses that are free to take by students.

Freshmans are only able to take AP Human Geography, a class aimed to understand how humans have used and changed the surface of Earth and examine patterns of human population, migration, and land use.

There has been a large debate on which AP Class is best to take or most beneficial for highschool students.

Senior Joseph Cheung said, “The best AP class I took was AP Bio. I loved this class because we got to do so many fun labs and projects, and I learned a lot about how things worked around us, including connections that I never thought about. I also enjoyed learning about how to experiment and read data, which I could never do in the past.”

“However, this class was a lot of work and if I took it this year I would have evaporated. You should take it, but you know you need to take a whole lot of notes and memorize things, not just concepts but just things (formulas, chemicals, reactions, names, facts)”, Joseph added.

AP Biology is a popular class among students who are interested in the medical/nursing field. The class offers skills and information that are used in medical settings. It’s a great class to take if you want to work in that field.

Additionally, Senior Darrell Salinas and member of Solar Suitcase recommends that students, “Take AP Calculus and AP Lang, because you would apply most of the skills learned in these classes to the real world.”

AP Calculus and AP Lang are among the most popular choices of AP classes taken here at Independence. Most juniors take AP Lang due to its teachings which improves a student’s

Manual or Automatic Car?

By Jaden Dang

With the rise of students or teenagers at Independence finally getting their license. It would mean that more students are driving to school on their own rather than relying on their parents or using the bus. There has always been an undiscussed topic though, and that being whether students prefer driving manual or automatic.

Benjamin Mai, Senior here at Independence states, “I prefer driving automatic because it is a lot easier than driving a manual. It is much more convenient and I don’t have to worry about changing gears as I drive.”

The comfort, simplicity, and cutting edge technology of automatic vehicles are responsible for their increase in popularity. Particularly in congested areas, automatic vehicles offer a smoother driving experience and demand less driver input. They also have cutting edge safety systems that make driving safer, such as collision warning and lane departure alarms. On the other hand, manual cars provide you more control over the car and a more enjoyable driving experience. Driving enthusiasts who like the challenge of shifting gears and rev-matching appreciate them.

“Driving a manual car always gives me a thrill. I always have fun when driving and it makes me feel so engaged with the car. This is why I prefer it over an automatic. Automatics are simply just not as fun” says Francis Valdez.

Despite the popularity of automatic vehicles growing, certain demographics still favor manual vehicles. Because manual transmissions encourage greater driver involvement and give the driver more control over the vehicle's performance, they are preferred by auto enthusiasts and sports car drivers. It is obvious that the manual versus automatic argument will continue to be a matter of contention as the car industry develops. However, it appears that the trend toward automatic cars will continue given the rising demand for cutting edge safety features and the convenience of automatic vehicles. Independence High School is a vast school with a student count of about 3000. It should be no surprise that opinions will be split about whether or not students prefer manual or automatic cars.

ability to read, analyze, and write.

“I suggest people take AP Calculus or AP Statistics because it teaches you a lot of useful skills in math which you do not learn in regular math classes.” States Hans Paquette.

AP Lang, Statistics, and Calculus seem to be the most popular choices of AP classes here at Independence. Most people that take AP Statistics just want an easier route than taking AP Calculus, which is a difficult class. If students are looking for a challenge. It is recommended that they take AP Calculus.

Gilbert Kwa describes AP Calculus as a, “...class for those who want to up their math game and become extremely knowledgeable in the subject.”

Lastly, Kar Mun Chin says, “AP Chinese is the easiest class for me simply because I already knew Chinese.”

“The class was a good way to remember a lot of the language that I forgot after moving to America. The speaking portion of the AP test might be a pain though.”, she adds.

Are AP Exams Worth It?

By J. Julian

From the beginning to the end of the school year, when you sign up and take AP classes, you will continue to learn content catered to the idea of the one-day AP test, or more if you are taking multiple AP classes. These classes are tailored to college-bored content with classes ranging from AP World History to AP Physics. But because there could be a multitude of content within the AP exam, as well as different topics focused on and such, it leads to the question, Are AP exams worth it?

Realistically, AP exams do not determine who you are as a person, but it determines the amount of college credit you qualify for in a college stance. When taking an AP test, you pay about 80-90 dollars (without the lunch reductions), in order to take a test that may determine if you gain the college credit or not. All students who sign up for AP classes are automatically registered, and if choosing not to take the exam, they are able to opt out of the test, paying about 40-50 dollars.

With that information, I believe that you should take the exams, if you are capable and believe that you are prepared to. AP exams are stressful in general, but if you feel confident enough that you’ve learned and mastered the topics at hand, then you should continue to take the AP exam, as it would be worthwhile for you as a student.

But sometimes, life gets in the way, making it harder to study for AP exams, as well as to study for the class itself, which in the end is okay.

I believe that taking the exam is worth it as you may not know your score until July and just because you may like the thrill of not knowing if you passed or not but some may believe that paying 90 dollars for an exam is crazy.

Is Sex Ed Really Necessary For Seniors?

By Abraham Topete Perez

With seniors having taken Sex Ed on April 19-21, reporters got curious about how some students felt after taking it and if they thought it was really necessary or not. First of all, what is Sex Ed? Sex Ed is an online course that consists of issues relating to human sexuality, including human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, safe sex and birth control, sexual health, reproductive health, emotional relations and responsibilities, age of consent, and reproductive rights. Schools offer this quick but informative online course to students in either their Senior or Junior year but many students feel that the course is not of importance so they'd rather "opt-out" and get their few extra hours of sleep in than learn about something they believe they know enough about. With that being said, we'll get into some of the questions we got to ask seniors, Ivan Esquivel and Arnold Mendoza about their opinions on Sex Ed.

First of all, we asked Ivan Esquivel who he thinks should take Sex Ed. Ivan responded with, "I don't think SexEd is necessary for everybody as everyone grew up differently but I would definitely recommend everyone to take it as the things we see online and in the media aren't always so related to "the real world". I think that although you may know the basics of different sexual studies, it is important to always try and better your knowledge sooner than later as there may be some things that you are not too sure of

or you don't mind learning more about. SexEd really opened my eyes to not only the importance of sex itself but identity, what I mean by this is that SexEd taught me of different preferences people may have or even things you may deem to be okay but your partner may not feel so comfortable with. I enjoyed taking SexEd and I will continue to learn more as time progresses but I am satisfied with what I have learned in the course and would recommend anyone who has the ability to take it, to take it." As Ivan stated, "everyone grew up differently", this is more than true. The way we grow up plays a huge role in how much we know about sexual studies as well as how we may respond to certain topics being brought up. Ivan also stated that he learned about different topics which he didn't know the most about which just goes to show that Sex Ed could be useful even if you have the basics down.

Next up, we asked Arnold Mendoza why he thinks that many students don't feel the need to take the Sex Ed course. "I think that many students confuse "real world" sex and relationships with what we see online and what the media puts out. I feel that since many students have built their own ideas for what relationships and sex should look like, they think it isn't important to further their understanding or knowledge on the topics taught in SexEd. I believe that feeling as though you know everything is not only detrimental to you but can push other people away from

you as people will just see you as a "know-it-all", is what Arnold told us. With this in mind, I want you to think about how much you really know about not just sex and Sex Ed but relationships, do you know and understand that there will be arguments, periods where you don't talk, moments where you question whether or not the person still likes you the way they once did. Think but don't overthink, don't complicate things, let life play out and don't force relationships is my advice.

Finally, we asked Ivan once again, when he believes Sex Ed should be taught. He again gave us an excellent response, "I think that since everybody develops differently, SexEd would be best introduced as freshmen and tested on every following school year to not only teach students more but to keep students updated and in line with what Sex Ed is all about." Ivan pointed out that testing students every following school year would be a good idea, something I couldn't agree more with. By no means am I saying that the week-long course isn't enough, I just think it would be more beneficial to test students every year and focus next year's course on what that student failed specifically as opposed to giving everyone a general knowledge course and quiz.

Nevertheless, everyone is going to have their own opinion on Sex Ed and its importance which is completely fine but as peers and I have said, "if you have the opportunity to take it, then take it."

Is Prom "Worth the Hype"?

By N. Tran

As an underclassmen, you all hear buzz about prom, if not from the seniors then from books and movies.

Everyone has their own set standard about their prom night, either really high expectations or really low expectations.

Personally, I've always imagined what *my* prom would be like, ever since I was a freshman. I had upperclassmen friends and cousins that all gave me contradicting opinions on what it was like.

Some say, "it was a night to remember." while others say, "prom is just to sit there and look pretty". Nevertheless, myself along with almost everyone in my senior class went to our prom on April 18th in Santa Cruz at the Cocoanut Grove, and I think it's safe to say that we all thought the same thing: we set our expectations too high.

From what I've heard, the biggest con was the music. Us seniors together created a prom playlist to be played, and when I asked around, I was told the playlist wasn't put to use, which was disappointing.

But without a doubt, the pros definitely outweigh the cons, especially with the venue that we were at.

Senior Marvin Mecano says, "Prom was surreal with the venue and the atmosphere, although not over the top. I definitely enjoyed my time at prom though."

Our prom tickets didn't just promise us a ballroom with food and photos, but also an arcade, which I know was also a highlight for our seniors as well.

Senior Dustin Truong says, "It was fun having access to the arcade, and the venue was very nice. It was also nice to dress up."

Even though it wasn't an experience that most of us thought it would be, it's still a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity getting to go to prom, especially keeping in mind that some seniors from previous years weren't even able to get a prom due to the global pandemic.

"Prom was honestly such an experience. It felt so bittersweet dancing with my friends along with all the seniors as this was one of the last times we would all be together." says Senior Cheyanna Caguiat.



Photo Credits: Alex Le

Everlasting Ball

By N. Tran



Photo Credits: Alex Le

Per tradition, the Class of 2023 Seniors had their prom on April 18th in Santa Cruz at the Cocoanut Grove.

This beautiful venue laid right on the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and two stories of the building were open for the seniors to enjoy their night.

One story was the venue itself featuring a dance floor and two ballrooms with seats and tables accompanied by a view of the beach. The second story was an entire arcade rented out for the seniors, including everyone's favorite: laser tag.

Some say that prom is just an excuse to dress up and sit pretty, but of course, even those moments need to be captured as well. In the ballroom itself were two photo booths: regular collage pictures and a photo flip book. Additionally, there were backdrops around the room and photographers roaming about with cameras and polaroids.

Most importantly, what's a dance without food?

Before dancing the night away, the seniors were catered with a build-your-own taco bar and build-your-own mac and cheese bar, served with drinks.

Senior Emily Nguyen says, "Prom was okay. I like seeing people get all dressed up, it's new. But that was all I went for, just for the pictures and I thought the food could've been better. In addition, there weren't enough chairs or tables, however the arcade was fun. Taking pictures on the beach and in the venue was nice though."

Another senior, Marielle Penoringan says, "It was interesting seeing unexpected couples. The DJ and music however, were not consistent. The music wasn't towards our demographic but I heard we made a playlist as a class which wasn't played."

The Mandalorian Season 3- Pt.2

By Cristina Guizar

As of April 19th the final episode of The Mandalorian Season 3 aired. The last few episodes of the season were jam-packed with action and even some tragedy. Read at your own risk because this article will not be spoiler free! In the last few episodes, we saw Bo Katan Kryze gathering all Mandalorians and getting ready to take their home planet back after years of hiding. Bo Katan's clan and the Mandalorian tribe came together despite their differences, so they could be whole again and live where they were meant to live. Of course, there were conflicts between them, the Mandalorian tribe and Bo Katan's clan had different ideas of what walking the way of the Mandalore meant. Even so, they overcame these differences and went on their way to take back Mandalore, this journey was not easy and came with many difficulties.

The stakes are very high now, compared to the previous seasons this one had me on the edge of my seat a lot more. I'm very excited to see what'll happen next season with the Mandalorians and their return to Mandalore, I'm also hoping that the empire gets destroyed or something. I asked Mr. Chan what he thinks could've been done better and this is what he said, "I was hoping to see Grogu more in touch

with his Force abilities or at least to show off more of his training with Luke. This season kind of felt repetitive in portraying Grogu as helpless." One thing I think could have been done better is not killing off the character with the most character development (in my opinion). Speaking of character development, I once again asked Mr. Chan his thoughts on who had the most character development this season and this was his response, "I don't know if he had the most character development this season, but Paz Vizsla's character was definitely beginning to grow more intriguing until he was unfortunately (and wastefully) killed off. I would have enjoyed seeing Paz and his son together in witnessing the retaking of Mandalore." I very much agree with what he said, Paz and his son would've had some great times together on Mandalore but unfortunately, we will never see that. What are your thoughts on the matter? Did you enjoy Season 3?



MBC: Philippine Culture Night

By Lyric Sauao

With many clubs on this campus, comes a lot of talent as well. One of these clubs would be Independence's very own Mabuhay Bayanihan Club, or better known as MBC, and they are hosting their annual Philippine Culture Night also known as PCN.

"PCN also known as Philippine Culture Night is an annual event hosted by many Filipino clubs across countless colleges and highschools that aim to showcase the Philippine culture through a variety of performances. Mabuhay Bayanihan Club is one of those highschool clubs that hosts PCN." Mabuhay Co-President Mia Ramos says introducing the event.

"Last year, we decided to host PCN once again since 2018. Ever since, we decided to keep this tradition going through passion, hardwork and dedication to showcasing our Filipino culture to our peers, friends, and family." Ramos continues to explain.

At rallies such as Welcome Back and Homecoming we get to see Mabuhay's open style performances and their more traditional dances during rallies like Multicultural, and it is all used for PCN as well.

"From the very beginning of the year, each any every one of our performances are for PCN. Even as far back as Freshman orientation, it's all in preparation for PCN. As our performance gets closer, our cabinet starts to organize more of the behind-the-scenes stuff to get ready for anything." Secretary Lheanna

Maningding expresses.

Maningding continues to comment "However, I personally think the execution of PCN lies on the members, because how could we have a show with no one performing it? I truly thank the members for dedicating their time throughout the year and helping us make this show possible for this year and the years to come"

"In our PCN, we incorporate a variety of different Philippine folk dances ranging from diverse histories and regions along with open-style choreographies, live music & singing, and any groups or solos that want to perform" Ramos adds.

Adding onto the fact that the performances that they put on during school hours are put into PCN, the overall process of making this show is long in itself.

"We begin preparations towards PCN starting the beginning of the year, where we decide how the year schedule is going to roughly look based around rally schedules and what pieces we want to do and what time it would be for us to best teach them" Ramos clarifies.

Mabuhay Bayanihan Club's PCN is a work in progress and a long one at that. These individuals work long and hard to put on this show every year to continue the tradition of many other clubs just like them to spread their culture.



Advice from C.L.U.B's Co-Presidents

By Alleah Borromeo

Despite the cancellation of C.L.U.B Showcase, the dance community has crossed boundaries throughout the year to not just showcase talent but their passion to create freely. To wrap up another year, the Co-Presidents of C.L.U.B have expressed what they want individuals to know about the community. In addition to their final words before they pass their positions to the next pair of Presidents.

As said by the Co-President of C.L.U.B, Senior Mia Ramos, "C.L.U.B is welcome to anyone and everyone and you don't need to worry about not dancing, because the point is we give you that

experience, but it is up to people to come with an open mind."

For her final words, Mia remarked, "C.L.U.B is more than just a club, but as cheesy as it sounds, legit the bonds we make are ones that stay,,, you won't regret performing even just once with us. Biggest thing: come with an open mind."

To add on, Co-President of C.L.U.B, Kevin Le vocalized, "One thing I think is the biggest misconception of C.L.U.B is that we are intimidating and unwelcoming. That is simply not the case, but I understand the fear of putting yourself out

there. Just be assured that we have created in C.L.U.B, a community committed to sharing our passion for dance and by no means ever wish to make others in our community feel unwelcome."

As their parting words, they shared, "I have been in C.L.U.B for all of my highschool career. It has caused me the most amount of stress and anxiety, but at the same time provided me the escape from rigorous academia. I think Debby Ryan worded it the best when she said, 'I sat down with the president of the Disney Channel and I said I wanna make history and that's what this is.'"

Sixer's Earth Day Event

By Alleah Borromeo & Lani Chau

The Sixer's Earth Day was hosted by on campus clubs and organizations such as Key Club, ARK, UNICEF, Student Governing Board, Recycling Club, Mural Club, Greenhouse Club, and Beautification on Saturday, April 22nd. Participants were able to take part in community service events like beautifying the campus, through art, or picking up litter to better the campus environment.

As described by the Student Governing Board, "There was a lot of work that needed to be done to prepare this event! For many weeks leading up to it, there were many extensive after-school meetings for the event planning team. There was a lot of discussion and brainstorming about how to organize the activities, and that resulted in great collaborative efforts among members in the meeting room."

In addition, they mentioned that the purpose of the event was, "created to encourage more members of our school's community to participate in civic engagement activities, such as taking the initiative to clean up and beautify our campus. I hope that these kinds of events will continue to inspire more people to discover what humanitarian work they can accomplish to improve the environment and save our planet."

Recycling Club member Thanh Nguyen added, "As a public event, it was great seeing not just students and staff

from the school collaborating together, but also just about anyone from the community, whether it be family or friends outside of the school cooperating to do what's good for the environment. Families, friends, and staff worked together over the event activities, and it really helped strengthen the bonds in our community. I even saw little children picking up trash with their family members around campus!"

To add on, Greenhouse Club Officer Amanda Vo mentioned, "A lot of us including me find the environment at school depressing in some ways so it is really good that we as students are given the opportunity to change this and create a better environment. Studies have shown that youth who live in areas with more nature are less stressed and envious. Also, it was just a day for us to have fun, and really feel together because it involved so many clubs and organizations."

We asked students who participated about their thoughts on this event. Junior Davian Opilas said, "Having events like this is important for students and the campus because it provides students with a community to surround themselves with and the campus is able to thrive through the events that have taken place. After the event I felt like I contributed to the



Ms. Hinchey teaching students how to use a water bag for the trees.

Photo Credit: Tony Dang, Junior

campus and accomplished more by helping out with the plants."

Another Junior participant Khannah Pham expressed, "I enjoyed it because I got to spend time with my friends that I hadn't talked to in a while and it was just fun and silly to pull weeds LOL."

Without events such as these and the support of students, Independence High School wouldn't be how it is today. By taking part in these activities, it would improve the environment of our school for everyone.

Spreading Tastes From around the world

By Jordan Delos Reyes, special thanks to Palak Bola

Five Cultural Clubs united together to host Flavors of the World, an event that featured food and drinks associated with the cultures that the clubs represented.

Senior Mason Khan from the German Club said, "Flavors of the World is an event that was started by the IHS cultural clubs in 2015...We brought it back after nearly 10 years in hopes that it could be another way for our school to show off its multicultural richness. IHS has numerous cultural clubs with spectacular performing arts participation, just look at our annual Multicultural Rally. We believe that exploring cuisine is a great way for more people in our community to engage with and support our clubs."

On Wednesday April 26th, students went to the D commons and enjoyed beef rouladen from German club, Lumpia from Mabuhay club, Mango Lassi from the South Asian Student

Association, Arroz con Leche from Latinx Student Union (LSU), and Sticky Rice from Chinese Club.

The clubs found that there were challenges when it came to reviving flavors of the world.

"Coordinating the event and getting all five cultural clubs to unite and work together to host this event took lots of effort and communication," said Palak Bola (12) from the South Asian Student Association "One of the biggest challenge we faced was selling tickets and spreading the word since it was a new event on campus and people weren't sure what to expect."

Regardless, the clubs viewed it as a worthwhile experience.

Senior Andre Fangonilo from Mabuhay commented "Flavors of the world was such a cool experience and I hope that the event grows so much more in the upcoming years. All the food and drinks there were SO good and I wish there was more people to be able to experience it."

Caden Tan (10), president of Chinese Club said "I like how students could get the chance to try food from different cultures. This event promotes the cultural diversity of our school."



Members of MBC posing by the lumpia.

Photo Credit: Palak Bola

Senior Advice for Underclassmen

By Puneet Kaur Johal

The Senior Class of 2023 is graduating soon, and they would like to leave some words of advice for freshman, sophomores and juniors.

Senior Joseph Cheung says, "A piece of advice I wish someone gave was to be involved more. I was always scared of joining clubs or sports because I was worried I wasn't good enough or that I wouldn't be accepted, but in my last year, I tried a sport and attended some club meetings and found out people are really nice and want others to join their groups."

Joining a cultural, a performance, or a volunteering club can benefit your highschool experience as well as joining sports such as swim, soccer, or track and field.

"I would highly recommend joining an extracurricular to meet more people and to further your interests with like-minded people," adds Joseph.

The best way to grow and meet new people in high school is if you put yourself out there. So, don't be afraid to try something new.

Senior Felix Cheung says, "I would say try everything and challenge yourself (to a reasonable level) because this is the best time to experiment. Also try to get some sleep."

Mental and emotional health is something that students tend to lack when focusing on their academic work. Students might neglect their sleep, hygiene or physical care. You should utilize your weekends to catch up on sleep or practice acts of self-care.

Lastly, Senior Sarah Cheung says, "Go to your classes even if they're boring and you want to sleep—just sleep in class. You don't want to watch all your friends graduate while you're stuck another year...or more."

"Your work is important but don't prioritize your work over your literal sanity. If your AP classes are hard, make friends so you can ask them for help." Sarah adds.

Winter Guards Last Show: Two Monarchs

A Memorable Season Comes to an End

By Ashely Pang

With their last show of their season, Independence’s winter guard presented *Two Monarchs*, to wrap up an exciting and eventful season.

So what exactly is winter guard? You’ve seen color guard on the field with the 76th Cavalry Marching Band, but now they have taken their performances inside—showcasing their skills at school rallies, their most recent one at this year’s Battle of the Classes.

"Winter guard is an indoor color guard activity that focuses on the artistic aspects of color guard, rather than the collaboration with the marching band," explains senior and co-captain Abby Tejam, "We have attended numerous competitions including performing at Oak Grove High School, Fremont High School, and James Logan High School. We also performed at the multi-cultural and BOTC rally."

As mentioned, their BOTC performance was complete with choreography featuring flags, rifles, and sabres—all which enhanced and told a story through their performance.

Sophomore audience member Sawyer Shaw notes, "I thought it was pretty cool. I like the way they toss the rifles in the air and all the sabre choreography, and especially how the flags were like, *swoosh* *swoosh*, that was pretty much my favorite part,"

Led by seniors and co-captains Abigail Tejam and Cadence Chiu, winter guard is made up of over twenty members as of their last season with the help of a choreographing instructor.

"These events are the biggest payoff of the season," recalls choreographing instructor and show

of the arts. Not only can students show off their work of the season, but they also get to bond within our personal group and other schools and build such a strong community of amazing performers."

As the season comes to an end, members look forward to future activities—whether it be at Independence or beyond.

"...there’s an outside branch of guard that is kind of a nation-wide level of guard called DCI (Drum Corps International) and I’d be willing to pursue that in the near future," noted Senior Veronica Hong when asked about their future plans, "I will cherish all the memories. I think it’s one of the best seasons we’ve had and although we didn’t particularly win, I still value the guard as a whole group itself."

"Winter guard is such a safe space for me to express myself through the form of dancing with my equipment. I enjoy seeing everyone’s hard work and the months of progression to make this show idea come to life. It’s especially satisfying seeing the improvements everyone makes throughout every rehearsal," expressed co-captain Abby Tejam, "Everyone here is incredibly hard-working and makes coming to the grueling hours of long rehearsals so worth it."



Abigail Tejam and Cadence Chiu taking the crown

Photo Credit: Alex Le

designer Jade Ngyuen, "all we look forward to when rehearsing and practicing the show is being able to showcase it and to perform it to an audience. It’s amazing to see all the communities that do color guard come together to bond over this beloved sport

Set for the Season

A Look at Boys Volleyball

By Aleah Borromeo, Keyra Aguilera, and Lyric Sauao

Independence High School’s boys volleyball is back just in time for the spring season. With no preseason to start them off, their first game was an away game against Branham as their first home and league game was canceled due to campus activities.

"We hope to win and potentially make CCS again. We also want to beat Piedmont if that game ever happens," senior Kyle Carbonell explained when asked what he hopes for in regards to this season.

Carbonell continues to explain how

different this season is from the last, "Our team this year is completely different from last year, last year we had one really good player who carried us when we were in trouble. This year we have to work more as a team and make sure everyone is doing their part to win games." Senior Vikram Bhardwaj expresses his view on the difference between this season and last season, "Losing last year's seniors definitely affected our play style because we had some really great players but now we’re playing at the rhythm that works for us and not last year's team."

"Last season, our team mainly consisted of seniors (CO 2022). We lost some great players like the Anderson Twins who helped get us so far into CCS. This year, varsity is a way smaller team so it'll be tough trying to build ourselves back up to challenge other teams in A League." senior Louie Cabrera added.

When asked what school is the most nerve racking for the team to play, most of them agreed on Branham High School. "It’s probably Branham because of how big they are," sophomore Kyle Nguyen clarified.



Others also agreed on Piedmont Hills High School. Junior Patrick Hoang simply stated, "Piedmont. I don’t wanna see my friends."

Finishing up the season, the boys volleyball team has a 4-8 record, having played 6 away league games and 6 home league games. This year’s boys volleyball team is coached by Coach Kenneth Nguyen who hopes to "rebuild, grow and attack new obstacles with full confidence and aggression and overall become the best version we can become" during this season.

When asked what he tries to emphasize to his players the most, Coach Kenneth simply stated, "I try to emphasize sportsmanship and integrity while being able to be confident and aggressive in the way they play and carry themselves to pass all possible obstacles with no hesitation."

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("What Were Class of 2023's..." cont. from page 1)

“My most memorable moment in my senior year was getting a prom date during the week of prom,” Angelo Aspiras responds.

Kelly Vo mentions, “Trying to get back into the prom venue after making an honest mistake only for the security guard to say “sorry no in and outs” and locking the entrance in front of our faces. much joy!”

Gabrielle Garrido says, “When Ashton and I won prom king and queen because it was a very sentimental moment especially with the song that played for us. Everything felt so amazing!”

Laura Son adds, “Prom was the most memorable moment in high school. I loved the adrenaline feeling of getting ready and feeling put together. Seeing everyone look freaking AMAZING. The venue being at Santa Cruz too!! Goodness, it was my first time driving there with friends (I didn’t drive tho) BUT YA we reserved at Makais and we gained many compliments and then left to meet our friends that took the bus. THE SUNSET SCENERY OMGG, it was just sooo pretty. I didn’t take any photos with anyone else tho :(but I still took good pictures with my friends!! Food was good too!! 10/10 :D”

Chi Le notes, “Napping in class and galloping to lunch.”

Moirah Gascon says, “Bubbles.”

“Probably when I practice with my teammates in my track and field team,” responds Ben Tsang.

“Literally drowning in water polo, but what’s living without almost dying? #livinglikelarry,” mentions Jasmine Aquinde

Kirstei Aquino comments, “The most memorable moment in my four years of high school was my volleyball senior night because I have been playing for all my years so that night was special for me.”

Rya Madrid adds, “My most memorable moment in my whole four years of highschool was my last volleyball season because we went undefeated in league and went to the first round at CCS.”

Rafael Medina says, “The most memorable moments are hanging out and making friends.”

“When I joined Mabuhay for the first time and met my awesome friends,” mentions Aaron Gutierrez.

Alvaro Cuellar responds, “The most memorable moment in my 4 years of high school is having my best friends Derek, Jahir, and John. They always stayed by my side no matter what even on bad times they still stuck with me and never betrayed me or left my side.”

“When I heard 2023 won the BOTC this year,” mentions Thi Nguyen.

Lyric Sauao comments, “Performing four times during BOTC.”

Kaitlyn Phan responds, “One of my most memorable moments throughout my 4 years at Indy is definitely BOTC this year. The energy from our senior class was a feeling I can’t describe and being able to take pictures with friends at the end is something I’ll remember forever. My advice to the underclassmen is go to all the school events and have fun, you will never get to experience high school ever again.”

Jenny Liu says, “BOTC last year and first year back from covid. It was insane.”

“That one time when everyone was protesting because it was very shocking,” Amy Okuma mentions.

“The walk on water is my most memorable moment,” Ethan Ho notes.

Theresa Kodenkandeth says, “My most memorable moment would be not having school in the middle of the week during distance learning, giving us a break in between to recharge.”

Kenet Palacios comments, “My most memorable moment here was when I saw all the art in the gallery.”

“My most memorable moment was probably Solar Suitcase Club's Waterwalk. Since virtual learning, it was Solar Suitcase's dream to bring back the Waterwalk to campus, which we did this year and last year. It's a difficult event to put together, considering our low membership, but through hard work, we were able to bring it back. I'm glad that I got to be a part of Solar Suitcase's message and I hope that the club can continue to bring the Waterwalk to Independence,” notes Matthew Guardiano.

“Going to greenhouse club meetings after school,” comments Lani Chau.

Jasmine Mok mentions, “Almost

dying at school because I decided that I wanted to eat a dumpling whole and almost choking to death in Mr. Haworth’s class during junior year.”

“My most memorable moment was signing off everyone’s last minute RPOs ;)” responds Josella de Guzman, ASB Vice President of Finance and Records.

“I guess my memorable high school moment was making the senior posters for some of the volleyball people for the past 3 years LMAO.. idk if that counts but thats all i can think of. I made 4 in total two this year, one last year, and one last last year, and i guess it was memorable because of their reactions and watching their faces light up when they see their posters hung up on the gym,” mentions Queenie Tran.

Valeria Gomez responds, “Probably the last week... I feel like it’s all crashing because everything is coming all at once, field trips and finals. It’s stressful and exciting.”

“March 13th, 2020. I remember being in my Spanish class when the announcement came to tell us we had two weeks off so it was super exciting at first. Then we didn’t come back for more than a year,” says Hope Livengood.

Paris Martinez mentions, “Leaving for covid. I was in Ms. Kimball’s class and everyone was very excited to have no school. I remember Ms. Kimball trying to calm everyone, saying “it’s only two weeks.” We all know how that ended up.”

Jaden Dang comments, “All of the fun events of my senior year were my most memorable moments. Homecoming, Toga Day, Halloween day, Prom. Enjoying all of these moments with my friends made it such a fun year which unfortunately comes to an end.”

“Wherever you go, your memories from the place you grew up in always remain special,” says Guru Randhawa.

Sadly our four years are coming to an end, it has been an amazing journey full of memories and experiences we’ll never forget. We’ve all grown and changed so much since we first started together, and now it’s finally for us to say goodbye. We’ll never forget all the times we’ve spent together, and we’ll always cherish the memories we’ve shared. Thank you for everything, seniors. You’ve been an amazing group of people to be around, and we’ll never forget all the memories we’ve shared. Goodbye Class of 2023!

What Are The Seniors' Favorite Cars?

By Jaden Dang

With a student population of around 3000, Independence is home to all types of cars driven here by students. Having a car as a student is always the first key to being free and independent. Having a favorite car in mind is always something fun to think about. Whether it is a super expensive sports car or a cheap and reliable daily car.

Benjamin Mai mentions that, “My favorite car is the MK5 Supra. I just love the design and body of the car. It is such a cool car with lots of performance capabilities.”

A survey done found

that 21% of high students found a liking to the Honda Civic. The Civic's reputation for reliability, fuel efficiency, and customizable options made it a hit among the student population. It is also concluded that students placed a high value on safety and practicality when choosing a car. Many cited features such as backup cameras, blind spot monitoring, and spacious interiors as important factors in their decision making process.

“I drive a 2017 Jaguar XE and it is currently my favorite car. I love the interior

of the car and how comfortable it is. The car is overall very reliable and easy to maintain and I find it great for daily driving” says Francis Valdez.

The Subaru WRX is another popular choice, because of its sporty handling and all wheel drive capability. All cars have their own purposes and unique traits. Some students go for reliability and comfort, while others might go for sporty and good handling which might sacrifice comfort.

Hans Paquette states, “My dream car would be an RX-7 FD. I just love Japanese

sports cars and how they look. I also love the Japanese car culture and think it is very interesting.”

Having a favorite car in mind is always a fun thing to think about. It is important to remember not to ignore the high cost of owning a car though. Insurance and maintenance is always something to think about. Overall, Independence students have a wide range of preferences when it comes to cars. At the end of the day we all share a desire for vehicles that are stylish, affordable, and practical.