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TALISMAN

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Mission Statement

The Ballard Talisman is an open public forum for student expression, and exists to give a student perspective on issues relating to the Ballard student body and community. Please send signed letters with author's name, class or position (e.g. parent, student, teacher, etc.) to the editor.

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Letters submitted must be signed. Though, in some cases, the author's name may not have to be printed. Letter will appear on the editorial page or in the opinions section.

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Unsigned editorials represent the majority view of the staff editorial board.

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Land

Acknowledgement

The Ballard Talisman acknowledges that we are on the traditional land of the Coast Salish people. We respect Indigenous sovereignty and honor their right to self-determination. In our coverage, we commit to uplifting Native voices and the experiences of the Indigenous community.

Cover photo by Annie Welman

Corrections:

In the article "Band takes on Disneyland," Orchestra also attended.

The gold standard of American education

A brief history

Standardized testing traces its roots back to ancient China during the Han Dynasty. The earliest evidence of this form of assessment can be found in the imperial examinations, which encompassed an evaluation of knowledge and skills across various disciplines known as the Six Arts. These included music, archery, horsemanship, arithmetic, writing and proficiency in the rituals and ceremonies of the time.

Fast forward to the year 1900, we see standardized tests become a cornerstone in the American education system. The College Entrance Examination Board was established by 12 colleges, led by the presidents of Harvard University and Columbia University. This board pioneered the concept of standardized entrance tests, which incorporated the evaluation of students' knowledge and skills across multiple subjects, including essay writing.

Over two decades later, the first Scholastic Aptitude Tests, or SATs, were introduced in 1926. The 90-minute exams had more than 300 questions on vocabulary and math. Then, in 1952, the pilot program for Advanced Placement (AP) exams was established, assessing high school students in 11 different subjects. By 1954, approximately 530 students from various high schools participated in AP exams. These students were required to pay a fee of \$10 to take the test, and their performance was evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5. The following year, the College Board assumed responsibility for administering the exams and established the AP program in its current form.

As we know it

The modern day student knows the process of standardized testing like the back of their hand – the crazed bubbling of a scantron under fluorescent gym lights is all too familiar. From SATs to ACTs and AP tests, teenagers understand that these exams play a vital role in their education and the college admissions process. Although many schools have moved towards test-optional policies, a high score can only bolster an application. A 1600 may not be the key to college acceptances, but it certainly gets a foot in the door – it adds a name to the conversation for admissions teams.

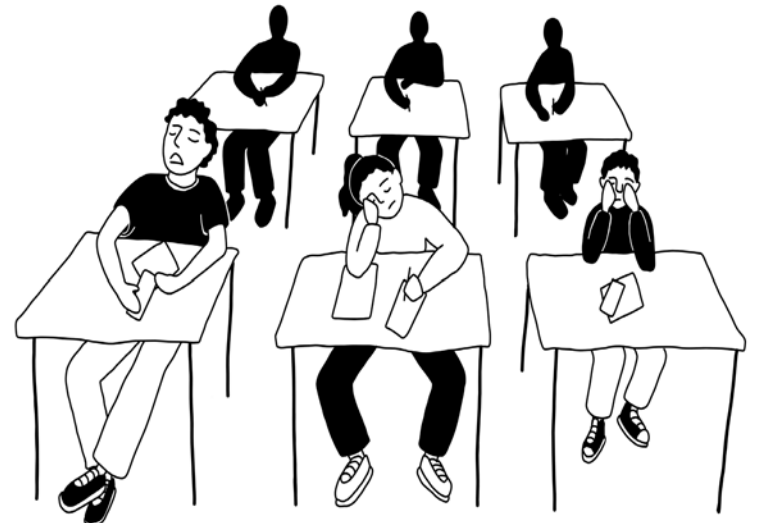
A perceived benefit of standardized testing is that it provides an objective measure of student performance. By assessing students using the same criteria and scoring rubrics, it can ensure uniform evaluation across different schools, districts and even countries. This allows educators and policymakers to make data-driven decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies and resource allocation. For example, in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act mandated that states administer regular assessments in reading and math, disclose the outcomes and guarantee that students attain proficiency levels. Schools faced the potential consequence of

forfeiting federal education funding if they failed to comply. Evidently, standardized testing can be a useful resource within the education system. However, these types of exams have evolved into a painful rite of passage that fail to actually support learning.

Despite what has been drilled into students' minds since elementary school, performance in a standardized test is far from being an indicator of intelligence. A major criticism of this type of exam is its focus on rote memorization and regurgitation of information. These tests prioritize the ability to recall the volume of a cone, or the year the Stamp Act was passed, over critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving, which are arguably more important life skills. As AP season descended on high schoolers these past few weeks, this problem became more poignant. To prepare for the exams, students crammed thousands of years of history, or a college-level chemistry course, into just a few weeks of studying. Additionally, much of AP testing is about knowing how to answer AP-style questions and conform to the rubric. Students' preparedness is also highly dependent on their teacher's experience and knowledge of the College Board. This results in a style of learning that is unproductive as most of the content will be forgotten soon after the test.

High-stakes testing places immense pressure on young learners. When children are taught that a single test can alter the course of their educational career, they begin to place their value as an individual on a number. Students will take the SAT and ACT time and time again to break a 1500, or a 33, because scores lower than this are perceived to be worthless in the college admissions process. Opening a disappointing test score has become a gut-wrenching moment rather than a small setback.

Furthermore, standardized testing perpetuates educational inequities. Research conducted by the University of



(Daphne Knox)

the University of Southern California found that standardized tests like the SAT favor wealthy white students (ironic right?). Students from low-income families, non-native English speakers or those with learning differences face significant disadvantages in these tests because they often lack the resources to access proper test preparation materials, receive specialized support or receive accommodations that could level the playing field.

As we emerge from an era of unprecedented change in our education system, should standardized tests remain, well, the standard? While they can be used as a tool to improve education in the United States, it is critical that we acknowledge their flaws and inherent unfairness. If we choose to prioritize learning and equitable opportunities for all students, then standardizing testing need not remain the standard in our schools.

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Changing the narrative of Cinco de Mayo

The Latinx Student Union calls out misinformation and appropriation

Xander Howarth Staff Reporter

On May 3, the Latinx Student Union (LSU) released a series of Powerpoint slides revealing the truth about “Cinco de Mayo,” or the fifth of May.

These slides detailed the true history of the day and how it “marks the anniversary of the Battle of Puebla in 1862, when Mexicans warded off the French during an attempted intervention,” according to the Powerpoint.

The slides also made sure to emphasize the fact that Cinco de Mayo is not Mexican Independence Day, which YouGov reported that 41% of adults in America believe is true.

Anya Souza-Ponce, a junior and president of LSU, brought up how the day began to be celebrated in the US and the negative effects these celebrations have on Mexican culture.

“Cinco de Mayo, as it is currently celebrated in the United States, came from grotesque marketing and appropriation of the day,” Souza-Ponce said.

Many different alcohol-producing companies use the day to market alcohol, especially tequila. According to a recent report done by Flaviar, 126 million liters of tequila are consumed on Cinco de Mayo.

In addition to the large amount of alcohol consumed, the day has been used to perpetuate cultural appropriation, a practice that Souza-Ponce brought attention to.

“Cinco de Mayo has been held up as the Mexican day,” Souza-Ponce said. “It’s just used as an excuse to dress up as a caricature or drink margaritas.”

Many Americans use the day to dress in sombreros and gorge themselves on Mexican food, actively ignoring real history and instead opting for the Americanized version.

These stereotypes have been used to erase Mexican experience and history, perpetuating the whitewashed practices that still continue.

“It’s important to recognize Mexican culture every day,” Souza-Ponce said. “Otherwise, it erases our actual stories and traditions, and it creates a false narrative.”

LSU sent these slides to the library after Assistant Librarian Alina Gaulin reached out to them.

“Ms. Chambers and I are trying to do our best to make sure we reach out to all the student organizations,” Gaulin said. “Since we know the fifth of May has ... been culturally appropriated, we thought we’d reach out to the Latinx Student Union.”

Souza-Ponce wants people to be more aware and conscious of Mexican history and culture, and there are many ways that do not include celebrating the fifth of May.

“Even just following the LSU Instagram is huge,” Souza-Ponce said. “We post about many different topics and a lot of misconceptions.”

Of these misconceptions, LSU specifically has talked about Dia De Los Muertos, Hispanic Heritage Month and different pieces of Latinx heritage.

“We just really try to teach and use our position to amplify Latino voices,” Souza-Ponce said.

126 million liters of tequila is consumed

41% of American adults believe Cinco de Mayo is Mexican Independence Day

Cinco de Mayo celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of Puebla in 1862

The Battle of Puebla was when French soldiers stormed Puebla in which the French lost

Cinco de Mayo isn’t Mexican Independence Day, nor is it particularly celebrated in Mexico. (Courtesy of @Ballard_LSU)

Annual Golden Beaver awards

Seniors reflect and offer advice from their experience in winning this year’s scholarships

Matea Hart Staff Reporter

Golden Beaver scholarships are awarded each year to a select number of students for their achievements in grades, work experience, community activities, honors and other

awards. According to their website, the scholarship recipients from 1988 to 2019 received 326 Golden Beavers Scholarships for a total of \$695,973.

This year 21 seniors received scholarships between \$500 and \$5,000. Of those students, senior Lina McRoberts, senior Lulu Montenegro and senior Bella Neireiter were asked to reflect on their process in applying for the Golden Beaver Awards, and how this money will help them in their future endeavors.

Montenegro, planning to major in architecture at University of Washington in the fall, recalled the process in applying for the scholarship.

“They asked you two questions [in the application], one of them asking what your plans are

for college, and the other asking why you need the money,” Montenegro said. “I talked about the major I’m interested in, which is architecture, how I can apply what I’ve learned so far in classes to that and that the scholarship money would help me achieve it.”

McRoberts, attending Pomona College in the fall, reflected on her participation in clubs at Ballard, which she believes played a role in helping her win the scholarship.

“I was a president of Feminist Club my junior and senior year, and president and founder of the Adoptee and Foster club and the co-captain of the Model UN team,” McRoberts said. “I also worked with the superintendent on policies for SPS and [the interviewers] liked that because it connects to my interest in political science.”

Neireiter, attending Dartmouth College in the fall with a major in political science, advised all future seniors at Ballard to apply for the scholarship.

“Everyone should apply for the Golden Beaver scholarship, even if you don’t think you’re going to get it,” Neireiter said. “There is a great alumni scholarship here at Ballard and chances are you’ll probably win some money if you’re willing to put in the work for it. College is really expensive so anything helps.”

The Golden Beaver scholarships offer great opportunities for students hoping to save a little money for themselves or their parents on University and other plans beyond high school.



Golden Beavers and BHS Foundation scholarship recipients pose with Principal Abby Hunt after the annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon. (Courtesy of Kate Macneale)

‘University of Washington in the High Schools’ becomes free

College classes taught in classrooms will have no financial barrier for next year

Hazel Engstrom Copy Editor

This year marks 41 years of University of Washington in the High Schools (UWHS), an affiliate program of the University of Washington (UW), that has presented high school students across Washington state the opportunity to take UW classes on their high school campuses.

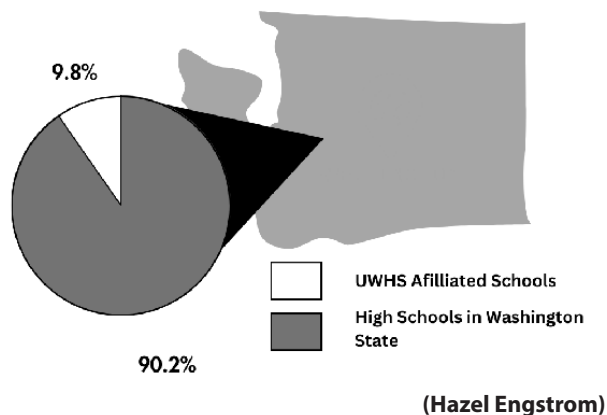
Through the program, students can receive college credits, a greater variety of challenging courses and even the opportunity to graduate early based on the amount of credits they amass.

While UWHS courses have been offered at a discounted rate, historically students have still been charged both a registration fee and a course fee per credit they take.

These financial barriers may have discouraged some students from signing up for more advanced courses, explained Kristina Katrel, UWHS and language arts teacher.

“We’ve never denied a student the course because they couldn’t pay,” Katrel said. “However, I’m sure there are kids who don’t sign up because they’re worried about the pay but they just don’t tell anybody.”

Annaick Sturgeon, a UWHS and French teacher, explained that paying for a course you are not



guaranteed success in can be a major deterrent.

“For some students it is not necessarily the financial barrier,” Sturgeon said. “It’s more about having the confidence to take [a] risk and spend money on a course they could potentially do poorly in.”

Senate Bill 5048, which was signed into law on May 4, eliminates the fees from “College in the High School” programs like UWHS starting during the 2023-2024 school year. For teachers like Sturgeon and Katrel, this change is welcome in its continuation of student access to rigorous academic programs.

“I’m so excited because there has also been another huge change in the legislature,” Katrel said. “Essentially [Washington State] wants to require all graduating students to take one college course in English and math.”

Katrel explained that by making UWHS courses free, students will be able to better meet these new graduation requirements and get their now required college credits through UW as opposed to a community college. Talisman has contacted the Executive Director of College and Career Readiness

at Seattle Public Schools and has not received a response prior to the printing of this issue.

Alex Bullock, a junior in Sturgeon’s French 103/French 3 (a UWHS class) explained that taking French through the program has been invaluable, and worth the fee she paid.

“We’re getting graded by our teacher here,” Bullock said. “So it’s just way less stress, a calm environment that allows us to get the credit that we need for a much lower cost than at the actual college.”

Hadley Redmond, another junior in the class, shared a similar sentiment as Bullock.

“Considering the cost of it, a normal college class can cost over \$1,000 or something like that,” Redmond said. “So cost-wise, I think it’s really good.”

While both Redmond and Bullock were enthusiastic about the prospect of the course becoming free, they still agreed that they found the course to be worth what they paid.

“It’s just been really nice, if I had to take it again, and it wasn’t free, I think I would still pay for it,” Redmond said.

Sturgeon explained that another benefit of UWHS is that unlike other advanced courses offered at BHS, the UWHS French program integrates students taking the course for college credit and those taking the course regularly, effectively giving students until October to determine if they want to sign up to take the final test to receive college credit or not.

“I teach the UW in the High School curriculum to all my students so I don’t have to differentiate so much, and everybody gets the benefit,” Sturgeon said.

Katrel also praised the UWHS courses in their ability to help foster student success in a more comprehensive way, allowing those taking a course leeway to score poorly in the beginning of the year, yet still receive college credit if they are able to grow and improve their scores throughout it.

“It’s not that college credit does not rely on passing a test,” Katrel said. “However, it is built into the teachers framework so that you work with your teacher to build up to the stage where you can receive college credit. It’s a lot of teacher management to make sure that student ultimately passes.”

Solenne Daout, a freshman in Sturgeon’s UWHS French 103, explained that for students, the extra work done by UWHS teachers makes the opportunity to take more advanced classes much more inviting.

“You have a longer amount of time to learn this stuff,” Daout said. “To learn the material, you do it all throughout the whole year, but in college, it’s like you do it for one quarter or one semester.”

Daout explained that she and her peers in UWHS French 103 French 3 are currently preparing to take the final exam for the class.

“At times it’s been kind of hard,” Doubt said. “But I think that overall it’s totally been worth it.”

Abortion pill revisited by courts

The distribution of the abortion pill, mifepristone, has been debated by a federal appeals court in New Orleans. The F.D.A. approved mifepristone in 2000, over 20 years ago, and millions of women in the U.S. have used the drug to terminate pregnancies. Judge Matthew J. Kacsmaryk from Texas issued a preliminary ruling against the F.D.A.’s approval. The appellate court upheld major aspects of the ruling, barring access to drug via significant restriction. The decision may affect abortion access in states where it’s currently legal.

Jacksonville swings democratic

Jacksonville, Fla., previously the largest city in the U.S. with a Republican mayor, elected Donna Deegan, a Democrat, on May 16. Deegan defeated Daniel Davis, the Republican candidate who was widely favored in the election. Davis was endorsed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, Republican and likely presidential contender, and ran on politically conservative views, such as being “tough on crime.” Deegan will also be the city’s first female mayor.

News-in-Brief

Sadie Clark News Editor

CEO of the company behind ChapGPT required to testify

Sam Altman, C.E.O. of OpenAI, has been called to testify before Congress on OpenAI’s ChatGPT. Altman feels cautious about A.I. and the ways it may affect economy, tech and law, but he hopes to help guide regulatory processes for a growing technology. While A.I.s like ChatGPT could revolutionize many aspects of current technology, the risks of disinformation, job loss and loss of control caused by the prolific new systems are a concern for many legislators.

Lawmakers in Texas try to slow growth of renewable energy

Local politicians in Texas are attempting to change the Texas power grid to use less renewable energy. Texas is currently a leader for the U.S. in renewable energy, both wind and solar, and much of the country is affected by the production of Texan renewables. Clean energy sources have been winning market share over coal and natural gas for years, but new bills may limit renewable growth by making it more expensive and limiting the amount of new renewable energy projects.

Black Celebration Series panel highlights Black excellence

Matthew Law's experience with finding his voice and pursuing his career as a filmmaker

Marley Helfer Copy Editor



Filmmaker and actor Matthew Law gives students a visit for the first panel discussion in the Black Celebration Series, hosted by the Black Student Union. (Josie Fitzpatrick)

The school's Black Student Union (BSU) put on the first event of this spring's Black Celebration Series with a presentation from Matthew Law, a former BHS student that now works in the film industry, on May 17 in the PAC.

In addition to Law's presentation, the series will feature two other events throughout the month with a film showing of "The Hate U Give" after school on May 26 and a panel in the library on May 31.

Carrying over the theme of last year's series, BSU Co-Presidents Semai Hagos, who is also the Talisman Features Editor, and Shea Deskins organized these events with the goal of raising awareness about the Black experience through education.

"The goal was to teach students on black excellence and the Black experience," Hagos said. "That's the [main] goal of BSU, but we wanted it to be more open to the school and more publicized."

The presentation discussed Law's experiences with following his intuition and pursuing a career in film. Now an owner of a film and TV production business in Los Angeles, Law works as a writer, producer, director and actor.



BSU co-presidents Shea Deskins (12, left) and Semai Hagos (11, right) interview Matthew Law in the Performing Arts Center about his journey in the film industry. (Josie Fitzpatrick)

Growing up in Seattle, Law initially discovered his interest in film at BHS when a classmate created and starred in a film that was shown as part of the school's film program.

"Seeing the response from everybody, how it moved people... I wanted to move people," Law said. "So through that, I [saw] the potential of filmmaking."

As a student-athlete as well, Law described how he "went out on a limb" pursuing filmmaking. However, he ultimately found himself drawn towards storytelling.

"Everybody told me that film was crazy. You can make money, and film it just for yourself, it's not a



Matthew Law encourages students to find their voice and to pursue a career that makes them happy. (Josie Fitzpatrick)

real job," Law said. "But [my] whispering intuition was what I trusted over anything... [I had a] silent confidence."

For Law, it took time to find the right path. After initially attending Temple University in Philadelphia, Law changed his course and moved to LA.

"This is a life that is not linear," Law said. "That through line through the chaos of the ups and downs of what comes in the future has got to be your ownership of self authority."

While Law's path to where he is today took several turns, he ultimately has found his voice as a filmmaker and actor, creating and acting in various films and TV shows. Law is acting in an upcoming Star Wars show, and also directed a film that will be featured at the Seattle International Film Festival on May 18.

"Whatever it is that you choose to do... you just need to do it," Law said. "It's not about the resources. It's not about the time. It's finding your voice."



India Carlson's student, Eva Bifone (12), plants various flowers in the greenhouse garden. (Arden Rathkopf)

April showers to May flowers

A teacher's favorite spring sprouts

Piper Sorensen Staff Reporter

Botany teacher India Carlson has seen her fair share of new spring flowers in the school's garden throughout her years as a Botany and Horticulture teacher. But she hasn't always had the position.

Currently in her sixteenth year of teaching at the school, Carlson started out as a Botany substitute, then taught ninth grade integrated science. The following year, she taught Genetics. After that, the greenhouse program stood empty because a teacher was unable to return, and the position was offered to Carlson.

Since starting it back up, one of her long-term projects has spanned years: students planting flowers in and around the garden. Carlson emphasizes how the project is student-led, with minimal teacher interference.

"Everything that's been planted out here has been planted by students," Carlson said, looking over the newly sprung tulips. "We plant more every year."

Brightly colored flowers line the sidewalk outside the school, a welcome pop of color against the drab gray. Purple and red stand out as the prominent colors. Next to the tulips sits a leafy green plant, devoid of blossoms.

"This is a biennial flower, a Hollyhock," Carlson said. "The first year, [students] just grow the plant. The second year, [the plants] make a flower."

It doesn't seem like any flowers are nigh for the understated green plant, but Carlson knows better.

"They didn't flower last year, but they're gonna flower this year," Carlson said. "They're gonna be about four feet tall. And probably purple."

It's not only small plants in the garden. In the corner, a small apple tree is in full bloom.

"It's a Liberty Apple," Carlson said.

Liberty Apples, or *Malus Domestica*, are hybrid apples originally developed by the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station to be immune to *Malus Floribunda* disease. And now, one has found a home here at the school.

The plants aren't just there to look pretty, either. Edible plants like carrots and lettuce flourish in the wooden flower beds on the ground.

"We plant all of these out here so that there's food," Carlson said. "We can eat it before the end of the school year."

Balancing act: a gymnast's story

A junior's journey through dedication and injury as a competitive athlete

Marley Helfer Copy Editor

As the crowd quiets, she steps with chalked hands onto the floor, ready for the music to queue her start. It's the detail and technique that keeps her landing flips, and her focus that keeps her going back to the podium.

Naomi Kildal has been doing competitive gymnastics since the age of seven, performing at both club and high school levels for 10 years.

Now a junior, Kildal is a metro champion and state finalist in gymnastics for the school. She won metros on beam the past two years, second at districts this season and third on beam at the state competition this year. However, this accomplishment and success has taken many years of dedication and determination to achieve.

After initially trying ballet in kindergarten and first grade, Kildal found herself moving towards a different sport: gymnastics.

"I really enjoy the dance aspect [of gymnastics] and how every routine is different," Kildal said. "No two routines are the same. I like the customization and you get to pick what you're good at and don't do what you're not good at."

Joining a gymnastics team in second grade, Kildal worked and progressed with her team up to higher competition levels. With a total of 10 levels in club gymnastics, Kildal's team worked their way up from level three to level eight by eighth grade. Reaching level 10 – and surpassing this level – is the equivalent of pursuing a path towards professional gymnastics.

"I was a level eight competitive gymnast, traveling two to three times a year to compete," she said.

However, the physically demanding nature of the sport has led to some longer-term challenges for Kildal. Kildal has been dealing with back pain since eighth grade, she shared, in addition to other injuries. Furthermore, Kildal broke her ankle in the spring of 2020, which proved to be a turning point in her path through gymnastics and athletics more broadly.

"I took 10 or 11 months off," Kildal said.



Junior Naomi Kildal is a metro champion and state finalist in gymnastics for the school, winning third on beam at the state competition this year. (Courtesy of Moana Buche)

"Honestly, it was kind of a relief because I was done, I couldn't do it anymore. I think that it was my body's way of telling me to sit down."

Five days after her injury, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. By the time she made her way to BHS, her ankle was fully recovered and she began working her way to becoming a state finalist for the high school team.

In addition to physical challenges, there have also proven to be systemic issues within club gymnastics for Kildal. Moving through the competitive atmosphere of the sport, she's noticed abusive patterns in the unhealthy demands set for athletes.

"It's really sad, because those girls have worked their entire lives and then they go there to be underfed and abused," she said. "It definitely has gotten better, but there's still a lot more to be done."

While gymnastics has been at the center of Kildal's world for years, she more recently began pursuing another interest: track.

"Coming into high school I had the opportunity to explore other interests," she said. "I also started doing track because I kind of got bored."

As a freshman and sophomore, Kildal competed in pole vault and triple jump, and is currently doing triple jump, long jump and hurdles.

"I did pole vault to start because I knew that pole vault would transition well into gymnastics," Kildal said. "I think it's kind of cool because not everyone really knows about [field events]."

Similar to gymnastics, Kildal finds the details to be both the most challenging and interesting pieces of the track events she competes in.

"For jumping, it really has a lot of nitty gritty techniques on takeoff like landing," she said. "And then hurdles is a whole other sport on its own."

While Kildal isn't planning on competing in college athletics, her dedication and bright personality will continue beyond her high school years. A member of the Spanish Club, Biotech Academy and an avid athlete, Kildal inspires both her peers and coaches.



Kildal expresses her love for the dancing part of gymnastics, as each routine is different and is based off what gymnasts are good at. (Courtesy of Moana Buche)

"She actively wants to get better at anything that she does, which makes me want to do better at anything I do," track teammate Maddy Skinner said. "And she pushes me and other teammates just to do the best we can [and] achieve what we want to achieve."



Junior Naomi Kildal joined gymnastics in second grade and has worked hard since then to get to level 10 in club gymnastics. (Courtesy of Moana Buche)



Kildal is a metro champion and state finalist in gymnastics for the school, winning metros on beam the past two years, second at districts this season and third on beam at the state competition this year. (Courtesy of Moana Buche)

Celebrating culture through presentations and dance

From dancing at assemblies to giving presentations, she values the importance of expressing herself through her culture

Penelope Neireiter Staff Reporter



Violet Vargas (11) performed Mexican folklore (folklorico) to "Palomita" at the Multicultural Assembly on Mar. 31 in the gym. (Emma Steinburg)

Violet Vargas is a sophomore who is driven by her passion for her culture and her desire to share it with others. Through her presentations, dance performances and interactions with others, Violet inspires and educates those around her about her family's story and the traditions that have been passed down through generations.

Vargas is a member of the Latinx Student Union (LSU) which was recently featured along with other student unions at an event called Unions Unite, where students gave presentations on their culture, through music and dance. Sharing her culture through presentations like this one is a way to educate others and to promote cultural awareness and understanding.

Vargas shared that her father's side is from Puerto Rico, and her grandfather's generation was the first to come to America.

"Since I'm half Mexican and half Puerto Rican I thought I might as well just do a Puerto Rican presentation because there were already LSU presentations about Latinos and Mexico," Vargas said.

Violet's passion for her culture also extends to dance, as she is a member of a Folklorico dance group called Bunny Adore, that dances every Sunday from 10 to 12 p.m.

"I wanted to do something that was connected to

my culture, and just do something that was active," Vargas said.

A little while ago, Vargas got the opportunity to dance at the Multicultural Assembly, where she performed a dance called Folklorico to the song "Palomita". She said that she had learned this dance in her dance group and she was still getting familiar with it. Nonetheless, she still went out in front of the whole school, and performed something that connected her to her culture.

Through her dance performances, Vargas can express her cultural identity, sharing it with others in an engaging and dynamic way.

In a predominantly white school, Vargas shares the importance of sharing her culture with others. For her, being able to educate others is a way to promote cultural understanding and to break down barriers between different communities.

"It makes me really happy when people try to ask questions," Vargas said.

While reflecting on her motivation for exploring her cultural heritage, Vargas expresses how understanding her family's history and traditions have created a way for her to connect with her roots and to feel a sense of belonging. Vargas has always felt a deep connection to her Puerto Rican heritage, and is proud to share it with others.

"Everybody has a story about their ancestry and their family," Vargas said.

A recent addition to mental health support

From Michigan to Seattle, the new social worker has spread her wings

Alina Zahn Staff Reporter

Mental health is often a common concern for teenagers at BHS. Students need support, which is exactly why Mackenzie Fee, a new social worker, has been added to staff.

Back in September of 2022, the strike that delayed the start of schools had a lot to do with the need for more mental health support in the Seattle Public Schools District.

"Traditionally at Seattle Public Schools there have never been social workers," Fee said. "Part of the strike agreement was adding a part time social worker in Seattle Public Schools high schools and middle schools."

Fee came to be a part of the staff freshly after her graduation in December of 2022 with a masters in social work from the University of Michigan.

"I was born and raised in Michigan, so I really stuck it out," she said.

Her passion for working in a school environment began in Michigan and has always been a part of who she is.

"I was always immersed in the school settings; my mom was a principal," Fee said.

The transition from Michigan to Seattle was one that was quite natural and sought out by Fee.

"I grew up visiting Washington state a lot," she said. "So when I applied for jobs, I really loved the idea of living here."

This love also came from not just her career in mental health support but also some of her favorite hobbies.

"I am a big skier and am looking forward to combining the fun of living in a city and my excitement of skiing," Fee said.

Fee has enjoyed living in Seattle the past few months and has really gotten to spread her wings by working at two different schools in the Ballard area, including Whitman Middle School.

Originally, Fee was more interested in working with middle schoolers, but she has been captivated by high school more than she expected.

"To be honest I was scared to work in a high school at first but have enjoyed it so much," she said.

However, adapting to a new school environment has had its challenges.

"Getting to know everybody here and the student body has been the most challenging just because it's so big and therefore hard for me to really get my name out there that I am here for all students," Fee said.

Fee truly values her position as a mental health provider to her students.

"Being able to build community and form one-on-one connections with students is my favorite part of my job," she said.

Because social workers are relatively new to the district, Fee gets asked a lot about what she does.

"I am here to offer mental health support and intervention for students," she said.

Fee is the first of what will most likely be more mental health supports in school, and she

wants to always be able to support students.

"I want students to always know they can email and contact me about anything," Fee said. "I am here to offer the support I can."



Mackenzie Fee joins the staff this year as a social worker. (Courtesy of Mackenzie Fee)

Students advocate for thrifting as a fast fashion alternative

Maisy Clunies-Ross *Opinions Editor*

According to studies by Business Insider, “fashion production comprises 10% of total global carbon emissions, as much as the European Union.” Intimidating statistics like these are nothing new for students, who are often well aware of the ways fast fashion contributes to climate change.

Though these concerns are not unfamiliar, clothing production has continued to increase in recent years. Students make up a prominent portion of fast fashion consumers, contributing to the growing carbon footprint and environmental impact of the industry.

Research from the UN International Panel on Climate Change 2023 report describes “over the first decade and a half of this millennium, clothing production continued to increase (doubling between 2000 and 2015), but the number of times an item of clothing is worn before it is thrown away decreased by as much as 36%.”

Many students worry about the impending crisis, but are unsure how to help as they are faced with these overwhelming concerns. Senior Eden Gabbert offers thrifting as an enjoyable activity and climate solution, one that makes up a large part of her life.

“I thrift probably 95% of my clothes,” Gabbert said. Though Gabbert’s wardrobe is now almost entirely second hand, the shift did not happen overnight. Instead, she gradually moved towards this form of shopping, for a variety of reasons. Thrifting provides a more environmentally conscious way of shopping, but this aspect wasn’t the only reason for her switch. She also appreciates how inexpensive it is, but that’s not her favorite part.

“I think thrifting is just more fun because it’s the thrill of the hunt,” she said.

Gabbert isn’t the only one who has started buying secondhand; more people are thrifting now than ever. A 2022 report by OfferUp says, “Recommerce [second hand shopping] grew nearly 15% in 2021 — twice as fast as the broader retail market and notching the highest rate of growth in history for the industry.”

Although second-hand shopping is often viewed as a beneficial alternative to overconsumption in the fashion industry, the rise in thrifting raises concerns of its own. Gentrification and rising prices in thrift stores are one problem in sustainable fashion. Additionally, “thrift hauls” may continue to feed into the same overconsumption created by fast fashion.

Gabbert attributes this change to the fact that thrifting is no longer stigmatized.

“It’s not taboo anymore to thrift and I think that most people know that,” she said. “But my parent’s generation definitely kind of looked down on people that thrifted.”

Gabbert recommends thrifting to everyone.

“More people should get into it because it’s a really fun thing to do with friends too,” she said. “It’s like a good social event.”

She also believes it can improve one’s fashion and encourage individuality.

“It’s really easy to dress in an interesting way when you thrift because you can find such a variety of fashion senses in one place for really cheap,” she said. “It kind of encourages people to experiment a lot more.”

Whether it be for fun, fashion or to offset one’s carbon footprint, Gabbert and many

environmentally conscious organizations hope that more people participate in second hand shopping.



Zooming in: Local aspects of environmentalism

Earth Service Corps works to bring Washington’s natural beauty to campus

Zoe Isett *Editor-in-Chief*

Just off the car-trafficked corner of 15th Ave. lies the beginnings of a native plant garden, cultivated by the student environmental organization Earth Service Corps (ESC).

ESC President Sadie Clark, who is also a member of Talisman staff, described how ESC will bring the garden, which was first established in 2019, back to life.

“We had a garden a few years ago and then over COVID it withered away because no one was taking care of it,” Clark said. “It’s not a new thing — we’re revitalizing the garden.”

Members of ESC are hopeful that the garden will not only bring nature to the school’s surrounding environment, but help educate the student body on local ecology.

“We’re hoping that people will be more informed about what a native plant in Seattle is,” junior ESC Secretary and Treasurer Sydney Marion said.

Native plants are species that have evolved and occur naturally in a particular region. The garden will feature six different types of native plants.

“We’re planting sword ferns ... and a few other types of shrubs,” Clark said. Clark explained how the garden will be

more sustainable because native plants are well-suited to their natural surroundings.

“[Native plants] are easy to maintain because they’re fit perfectly for the environment,” Clark said.

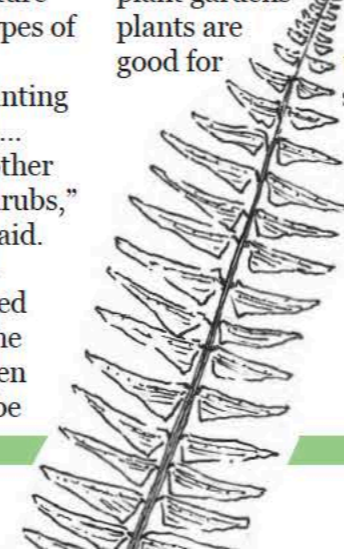
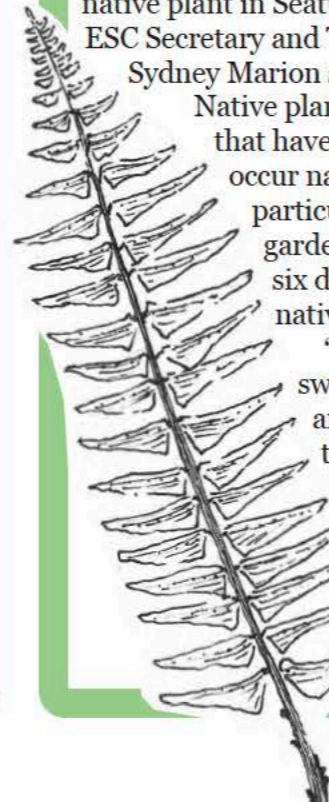
In addition to requiring fewer resources to thrive, the native plant garden will help combat the spread of invasive species.

“We’re doing native plants because they’re better for the animals that live in the environment and we want to promote native plants over invasive species,” Marion said.

Invasive plant species that are highly competitive over native species are termed “noxious weeds,” and according to the King County Natural Resources & Parks Department, there are over 100 noxious weeds that have been identified within the greater Seattle area.

ESC hopes that their efforts to promote native plants over invasive species will help support a healthy ecosystem and bring biodiversity to the community.

“We need to promote native plant gardens because native plants are good for the ecology of the school,” Clark said.



SWORD FERN

Funding science education with plant sale

Matea Hart *Staff Reporter*

Each spring, the greenhouse in the NW pod opens its doors to the BHS community for a plant sale, featuring a variety of flora grown by horticulture students. This marks the fourteenth sale hosted by science teacher India Carlson, with all the proceeds flowing back into her science programs.

“This year we have lots of tomatoes,” Carlson said. “We have some houseplants, the Coleus plants that students cloned, and regular flowers for the garden. We also have edible flowers, veggies, succulents and terrariums. It’s a whole mishmash of plants.”

For Carlson, the profits from the plant sale are vital. They contribute to the core of her science curriculums, which she believes are severely underfunded by the

nowhere near to what it takes to run this class.”

She gave a glimpse into just how much it takes to pay for a single unit she teaches each year in Botany.

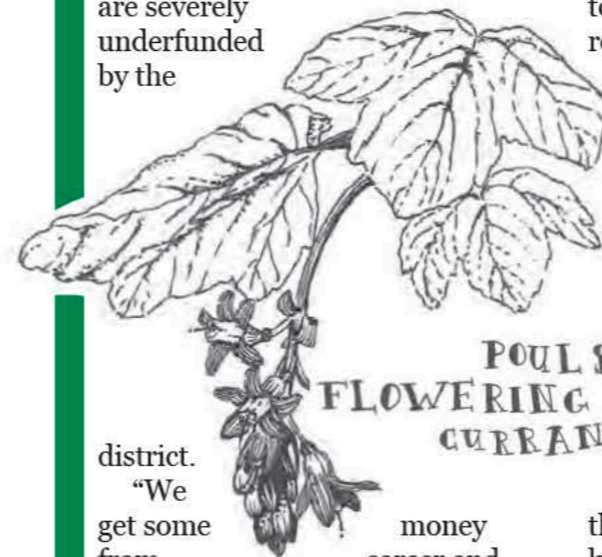
“Just the cosmetics unit alone is \$600... which is what, two weeks?” she said. “I have to order it again each year, because the district doesn’t give any money for materials. All the equipment I have in here is funded through us writing grants or fundraisers. We are lucky to be able to get money through the community.”

For improvement in future years, she hopes to find a way to accept payments beyond just checks and cash, which would greatly increase sales.

“I need a way to be able to take cards,” she said. “Right now I have to take checks and cash, and it really hampers everything we do... That is something I have reached out to tech ed about — to get an electronic sales system. It would help the sales so much.”

Carlson also reflected on the importance of her Horticulture class’s participation in this tradition, and her favorite part is watching their proficiencies in the plant world come to light.

“I love watching students interacting with the public and sort of flexing their knowledge,” Carlson said. “I often feel like students don’t recognize how much they have learned, but at this point in the year they have a lot of knowledge and for them to be able to talk about what the plant is and how to take care of it when you take it home. I love that part of it.”



POULSBORO FLOWERING CURRANT

district. “We get some from tech ed Horticulture, not Botany, so some of the funds that come out of the greenhouse go to support the botany classes,” Carlson said. “The small science fee that students pay at the beginning of the year comes

Marketing students learn to avoid ‘greenwashing’

Sadie Clark *News Editor*

The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of greenwashing is “the act of making a product, policy, activity, etc. appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is.” Greenwashing is one strategy many companies employ in efforts to sell products in an age of climate activism.

Mary Jereczek, marketing and entrepreneurship teacher, teaches students interested in the marketing and business field

how to effectively market and analyze marketing strategies. One of the core tenets of marketing she teaches is called the “marketing concept.”

“The marketing concept is that you as a company should make a profit,” Jereczek said. “But the other piece, which is not something that all businesses do or believe, is that you do it by satisfying the customers and by giving them the right thing.”

The right thing, according to Jereczek, constitutes honest marketing that isn’t designed to be deceptive. Part of this deception is virtue signaling, or displaying awareness of a social or political issue without taking effective action, such as a company placing a pride flag on a product while having policies that harm LGBTQ+ employees.

Another example of virtue signaling is greenwashing: using false labeling to indicate a product is more environmentally friendly. One of the exercises Jereczek does to improve student media literacy for virtue signaling is looking at labels on various egg cartons.

“I got all these egg cartons and then [worked on] really understanding ‘what do these words mean?’ [If a company is] trying to market a product, [they’ll be] thinking about using filler words like natural. Natural means really nothing,” Jereczek said. “[The label] talks about cage-free, but what does cage-free actually

mean? It doesn’t mean the same thing as pasture raised.”

Labeling words like “natural,” “cage-free” and “conscious” are signals of using green language, but there are other methods of virtue signaling, like labeling food products that are highly processed as “healthy.” Senior Class President Connor Chapman, who’s interested in studying finance and business, commented on his perspective on deceptive marketing.

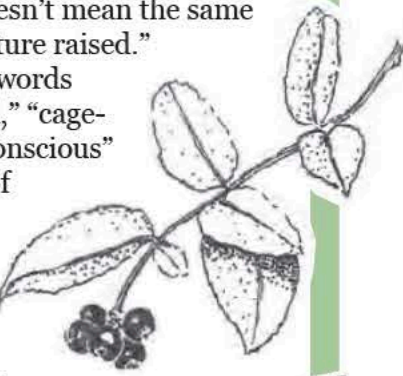
“I can read the label on [health food products], and I think that someone’s got to approve all these labels, and until then [marketing] people are going to keep on doing this,” Chapman said.

Chapman’s hope is that more regulation on how products are advertised can help prevent deceptive marketing from harming consumers.

“The government needs to intervene more to make sure... people don’t fall for [other] people’s advertising,” Chapman said.

Governmental regulation is one potential solution to greenwashing, but part of the responsibility of ethical marketing is held by those who enter the field. Because of the necessity of profit for people in business, ethical marketing is not always prioritized, but teachers like Jereczek teach students how to maintain their values as they enter their jobs of choice.

“If you’re very clear on what your mission and what your belief system is, there [are] many companies that have proven you can still make a profit and be very successful,” Jereczek said.



EVERGREEN HUCKLEBERRY



SALAL

Spring sports season in review

James Liska Sports Editor

Baseball

This season, the young baseball team had a slow start, but managed to turn the season around into a winning one, finishing with an 8-7 record in league play and a 12-12 overall record. The Beavers fought hard in the playoffs, winning a lightning delayed thriller against Chief Sealth but ultimately fell to strong West Seattle and Eastside Catholic teams.

Senior captain and shortstop Max Finkelstein had this to say about the team's turnaround.

"We started off pretty week, we were 1-5 to start," said Finkelstein. "Not enough people were taking it seriously, but a lot of guys stepped up and started working a lot harder in practice and we started performing well in games."

Finkelstein's teammate of over a decade, senior first baseman Ike McMillen, agreed with his sentiment about disciplined practices.

"After our slow start, we really cleaned up a lot of the small mistakes and miscues," McMillen said. "The little things add up in baseball, so we started winning by one instead of losing by one."

The Beavers baseball team also had the



Max Finkelstein (12, left) finishing a swing and Kaden Larsen (12, right) mid-delivery at T-Mobile park. (Courtesy of Quinton Brewster)



opportunity to play in the annual High School Baseball Classic at T-Mobile park. Wearing shirts that said "Thanks Bob," in honor of the late Bob Hellinger, a Mariners executive who advocated for the event, the Beavers beat Kentridge 4-1. Junior outfielder Chase Edwards said that playing

at T-Mobile park was one of the most memorable experiences from the season.

"It's a really cool experience," Edwards said. "The field is so high-quality, and the stadium atmosphere makes you feel like one of the big leaguers."

Tennis

The boys' and girls' tennis team is characterized by its close-knit community and fun team atmosphere. The boys ended the regular season with an overall record of 8-5, while the girls went 3-10. 12 players participated in the Metro tournament, and senior Silas Healy qualified for the state competition.

According to senior Lauren Oboy, the team has improved greatly throughout the season.

"One thing that has worked well for the team is that we support each other throughout the matches and we work together to really be unified throughout



Silas Healy (12) serving in a match against O'Dea. (Courtesy of Quinton Brewster)

the season," Oboy said.

Junior John O'Neill explained how the team dynamic progressed over the season.

"The team had a lot of good times. I think that we as a team have become a lot closer and I think that our relationship with the coach helped a lot. We all love to just kind of goof off but also can take it seriously when necessary," O'Neill said.

In addition to losing 16 seniors, the team will face the additional challenge of losing their coach next year.

"Next year is going to be a bit rough because we're losing our coach," O'Neill said. "But I expect us to work through it and keep our heads high."

Oboy summarized her experience on the tennis team as follows: "The tennis team is a great place to not only meet people but also work together as a team and develop skills such as leadership, teamwork and perseverance. The Ballard tennis team is just very special and fun."

Fastpitch Softball

The Beavers' fastpitch softball team put up an impressive regular season, ending with a 17-4 overall record.

Junior captain and utility player Addy Wynkoop credits the team's success to a strong sense of community within the team.

"We've been really supportive of each other, and were always energized and loud in the dugout," Wynkoop said. "Having energy consistently throughout the games has helped us win."

According to Wynkoop, one of the most memorable moments from the season happened in an early season game against Monroe, the team that knocked them out of the state tournament last year.

"The lead had been fluctuating all game, but we were down by three runs in the bottom of the seventh," Wynkoop said. "I hit in two RBIs, and then Katie came up and hit a walkoff and everybody stormed the field. That was really exciting."

Wynkoop has high expectations of the team for the upcoming seasons.

"We have a lot of strong underclassman talent that is going to really help us, and we only have two seniors this year," Wynkoop said. "Although our seniors are important players, our younger players are going to step up, so it's going to be a really exciting next couple of years."

Freshman catcher Katie Davis, the same Katie who hit the walkoff, said that the team's success has been a product of good in-game teamwork.



Addy Wynkoop (11) finishing her swing in an 11-10 win over Kentlake. (Courtesy of Ed Tanaka)

Boys Soccer

The boys soccer team has had a strong season, finishing the regular season with a 9-5-4 overall record. Led by senior captains Jacob Watson and Gray Levasseur, the team made their first state playoff berth since 2014.

Levasseur said that the season was successful overall.

“We definitely should’ve won some games that we lost, but it’s been a good season,” Levasseur said. “And we’re on a roll right now, we’ve won four straight heading into state.”

Watson agreed that the season was an overall success, but contained some adversity.

“Once we started losing, it was hard to get back on track,” Watson said. “It was like we all were blaming something or someone. Once we stopped doing that we were a lot more successful, but it definitely took a minute for us to get in the groove.”

The team has a massive senior class of eighteen. Late in the season, Levasseur has noticed an extra intensity among the graduating players.

“This being the last season that a lot of guys on the team will play, there’s been a lot of passion and drive to keep going and get more games,” Levasseur said.

To earn their spot in the state tournament, the Beavers won four games and lost one, including a 7-1 victory over Roosevelt and a redemption win

against Chief Sealth, the only team to beat them in the 3A metro playoffs. The Beavers making a great run in the state tournament with a first round 5-0 win over Kent Meridian, a second round 3-0 win

over Shorewood and a quarterfinal 3-0 upset win over local rival Seattle Prep. They will play in the state semifinals on May 26 at Sparks Stadium in Puyallup, Wash.



Gray Levasseur (12) concentrates on a distributing the ball upfield during a 4-3 win against Nathan Hale. (Finn Keenan)

Lacrosse

The boys’ lacrosse team had an outstanding regular season and won the Metro League public school championship. Led by senior captains Aidan Bernard, Quinton Brewster and Cody Lavin, the team finished the season with a 10-6 record.

According to Bernard, the team’s success stems from a high level of player buy-in into the team’s philosophy.

“Everyone shows up to practice ready to work, and everyone shows up to games ready to play,” Bernard said.

Bernard said that the team’s frequent conditioning heavy practices have resulted in overall improvement in the team, and ultimately helped them win.

“Later in the season we were working better as a team, and playing better as a cohesive unit,” Bernard said. “Everyone’s individual skills have improved and we’re a lot more conditioned.”

Junior Luke Berard has high expectations for the team in the future.

“We’re going to get better; we have a solid pipeline from the props, which is basically little league

lacrosse, and solid underclassman talent,” said Berard.

The girl’s lacrosse team struggled in the regular season, but managed to pull off big wins against Ingraham and Nathan Hale.

Senior captain Louise Whitman said that despite losing most of their games, the team remained in high spirits.

“The team was closer than it had been in a really long time, and people were just really happy to be together,” Whitman said.

Whitman said that time spent together outside of practice have helped to develop team connection.

“We spend a lot of time together outside of practice doing things like team dinners and lunches, so we’ve gotten really close mostly through shared experiences,” Whitman said. “We’re just a group of people that enjoy each other.”

The girl’s lacrosse team fought hard against many strong opponents.

“We played against a lot of really good teams, and when we played well against those teams it felt rewarding even when we lost,” Whitman said.

Track and field

With a combined roster of over 150 participants, the boys’ and girls’ track and field team is the largest sport in Ballard athletics.

According to senior captain David Payne, the track season was one of consistent week by week improvement and time drops.

“We’ve improved immensely with our times,” Payne said. “One great thing about track is that you can see your improvement with each time and each meet, and everyone has done a great job with setting personal records and season records.”

Payne attributes the team’s improvements to their hard work in practice.

“Practices usually start at around four in the commons where our head coach gives announcements and sets the day’s workout, then the two teams, sprinters and distance, break off for warmups and run the main workout,” Payne said. “It can be difficult to organize such a large team through practice, but as the season progressed practices became more efficient and we got better.”

Payne described the motivation he felt as a freshman starting out four years ago.

“I started track just three weeks before COVID hit, and that senior group back then had a big impact on me even though I only worked with them for three weeks before everything shut down.”

That group included some of the fastest runners in Ballard history, who set goals for themselves and were dedicated to the sport, which motivated Payne to do the same.

“This wasn’t just some sport I was doing to have another sport, this was my main focus and they made me appreciate it,” Payne said.

Now, as one of the leaders on the team, Payne says that he hopes he’s made a similar impact on some of his younger teammates.

“I’m looking forward to coming back here for some meets to show my Ballard pride,” Payne said. “I think the team has a bright future.”



Defender Luke Berrard (11) launching the ball upfield under pressure. (Courtesy of Calvin Ganyard)



Louise Whitman (12) guarding the goal. (Courtesy of Ed Tanaka)



(IMDB)

What we know about new 'The Little Mermaid' remake

33 years after the original, Disney finally brings us back under the sea

Piper Sorenson Staff Reporter

Disney's first "The Little Mermaid" adaptation stole hearts in 1989. Now, the beloved Hans Christian Anderson tale returns for a live-action remake.

The story remains the same as the iconic classic – Ariel is one of seven sisters, her mother dies in a tragic boat accident, she saves a prince from drowning one night and immediately falls in love – but now with a new cast.

23-year-old Halle Bailey, who some may know as half of R&B group Chloe X Halle, will star as the titular princess Ariel alongside Jonah Hauer-King as Prince Eric, a position that was allegedly turned down by pop-star Harry Styles.

Other stars like Melissa McCarthy, Daveed Diggs and Awkwafina will be playing the sea witch Ursula, spunky crab Sebastian and eccentric seagull Scuttle, respectively. The music is set to be great, with scores by Alan Menken, known for his extensive work on films produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios.

His music for "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin" and "Pocahontas" have each won him two Oscars, receiving eight in total. He is also one of 17 people ever to win an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony, also called an EGOT.

Songwriter and actor Lin-Manuel Miranda is also contributing to the music, known for his hit Broadway musicals "In the Heights" and "Hamilton," not to mention his significant work on another oceanic Disney movie, 2016's "Moana."

With its impending release, "The Little Mermaid" will join the ranks of many other live-action Disney remakes such as the countless "Cinderella" spin-offs, the 2014 take on the Sleeping Beauty fable titled "Maleficent" and the 2017 musical romance "Beauty and the Beast."

The film opens in theaters May 26.

Rectify your seventh-eighth grade experience

The linear relevance of Hulu's 'Pen15'

Olivia Schaer Staff Reporter

Do you know how to fluidly depict adolescent female dialogue properly? Few understand the modern nuances of how most uninformed young women converse, especially with their mothers or young boys. "Pen15," a Hulu original spearheaded by Maya Erskine and Anna Konkle, was able to fill in the remaining eighth grade experiences I lost to the Pandemic.

If the title – being representative of how one would spell penis on a calculator – isn't enough to grasp your interest, the two season dramedy has many other pulls. Beyond its bareness in regard to the middle school experiences, the short lived series delves into issues of parental separation, the difficulty of being a mixed race child and the uncontrollable elements of femininity that are repetitively mocked by young men and women during this time in our lives.

The premise of this Hulu original is relatively easy to digest. Following the lives of two seventh graders, Maya Ishii-Peters and Anna Kone who have been best friends since preschool, one would presume that this is simply a tale of mean girls and silly crushes. The twist is that Maya and Anna are two 13-year-old girls played by the 30-year-old writers and actors, Maya Erskine and Anna Konkle.

This television series depicts their middle school experience that has since been in their rear view mirrors. Because the show opens in a Y2K Los Angeles setting, there was a burden of accurately portraying the passing nineties and budding 2000's aesthetic that we see saturated today. Between the sets, outfits, props and general synchronized appearance of the cast, the show would be nostalgic for most my age and older.

The sole reason why I have come back to this show for the fourth, and certainly not final time, is its incredible comedic writing and rhythm. The situation of thirteen-year-olds testing their ability to swear and "talk dirty" is one understood by all and it is executed flawlessly. The heightened emotions between parents and daughters provides further instances of relatability and hilarity.

In a flash Maya and Anna can shift from frivolous young girls, to seventeen year olds, to their thirty year old selves. In episode six of season two, Maya is cast to play the lead in her school's play. Anna feels eclipsed until she is given the role of stage manager.

This contrast of roles does not create too much conflict between the two friends, but rather gages a theatrical segment of the show's audience with mutual moments of grief in regards to both actors and "techies."

During this we see both Maya and Anna move from goofy, to cursing in anger, to sighing and showcasing mannerisms they probably had seen their mothers or other adults do in tense situations. Moments like these add layers of confusion, grotesque pauses and cringe conversations to cement the idea that Maya and Anna truly are retelling their childhoods with fresh, aware eyes.

The concept I found most comforting was the willingness to normalize many elements of girlhood that have continued to be misrepresented. In the



(Hulu)

third episode of season one, Maya starts to understand her sexuality and becomes instantly aware of the implication of exploring her body when her mother reminds her that her "Ojiichan" (Grandfather) is always "watching over her and the family."

The episode opens with Maya's confliction with what is morally "right" and "wrong" for a woman of her age. Luckily, it concludes with her and Anna discussing how both of them have begun to understand their bodies and what they like, removing the majority of the guilt Maya was told she had to feel. The show reflects the reality that both men and women are guilty in the perpetuation of sexist traditions and annoyance with the female existence. There are several other episodes that persistently destigmatize other aspects of female puberty and most importantly vaginas.

Maya is a mixed race child. Her mother, Yuki, played by Mutsuko Erskine, is a Japanese immigrant, married to Maya's father Fred Peters, played by Richard Karn. She is a stay-at-home mom and is seen in many lights outside of the "Asian mother" stereotype.

She and Maya are repeatedly given the space to reflect on their individual struggles and what divides them as an American daughter and Japanese mother. Maya is often indirectly told by her peers and family members that she would be better if she was either "fully white" or "fully Asian." She does not speak Japanese, which frequently alienates her in her own home, as her older half brother has a different father and can speak the language fluently.

This is not ignored and there are multiple episodes blatantly discussing Anna's inability to understand Maya's struggles and Maya's jealousy of her half brother and cousin. Maya Erskine and her mother clearly grew closer when working to understand what one another were experiencing during this time in their lives.

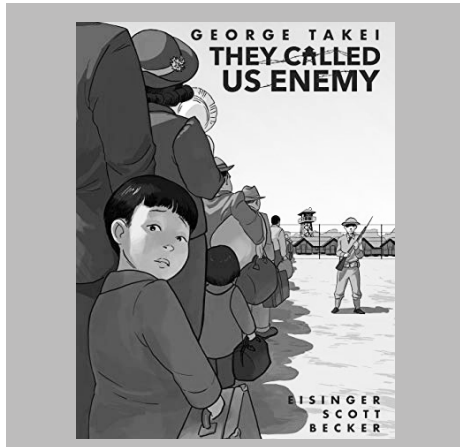
I wish we could see more of Maya and Anna's world, however the creators felt as though they told the story they set out to share and didn't want to push themselves, even for a devoted audience. This has and will remain one of my favorite shows representing adolescence.

It not only has an accurate representation of manipulative parents, the shame of poverty and the lust for vanity, but how young women are able to collaborate and overcome when they love one another deeply. I hope Hulu keeps this series for streaming until the day I die, as I see myself in both Maya and Anna and could not imagine myself without their influence.

Reads for Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Novels that highlight the AAPI experience within the US and abroad

Hazel Engstrom Copy Editor



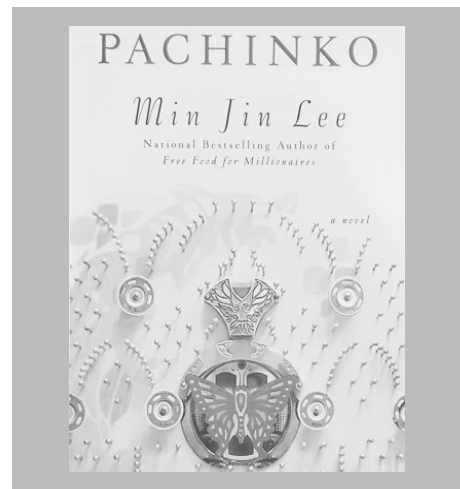
(Amazon)

George Takei's powerful graphic memoir follows his experience as a child in an American concentration camp, as he explores how Japanese internment shaped both himself, and societal ignorance toward xenophobia and racism. The "Star Trek" actor, known and loved for his role as Sulu in the first iteration of films, brings a famous face to a dark period in American history, showing both the grit and perseverance of his family, to survive, along with the humanity and love they fostered, amidst rampant hate, and suffering.

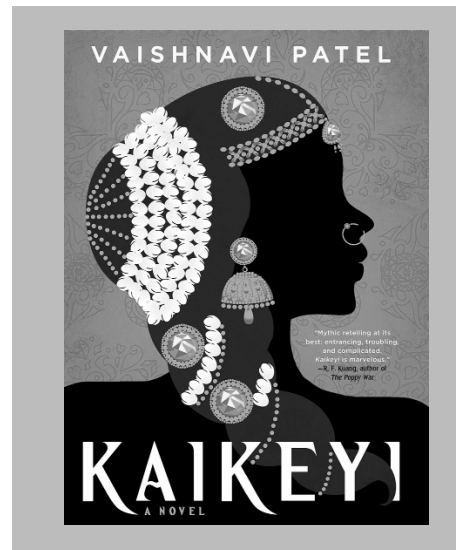
While the memoir's art and story may have been intended for younger audiences, Takei's account doesn't lose any nuance, instead utilizing simple art to convey abstract topics to the reader.

Pachinko, a popular Japanese gambling game, where a player's survival is dependent on chance, is the namesake of Min Jin Lee's novel; a story at its heart about the odds characters face and the fateful choices they make to survive. Spanning four generations of a Korean family in Japan, Lee's epic saga is powerfully written, set to the polarizing background of Japanese colonization, a period of modern history many have cast aside, despite its horrific intergenerational effects on millions of people.

Witty, tragic and hopeful, "Pachinko" is a bittersweet portrait of immigrant experience, told through the lens of one family's journey toward success and belonging, no matter the consequences.



(Amazon)



(Amazon)

Vaishnavi Patel's debut novel "Kaikeyi" takes the story of vilified Queen Kaikeyi, an antagonist in the Indian epic "The Ramayana" and reimagines the story of a woman scorned.

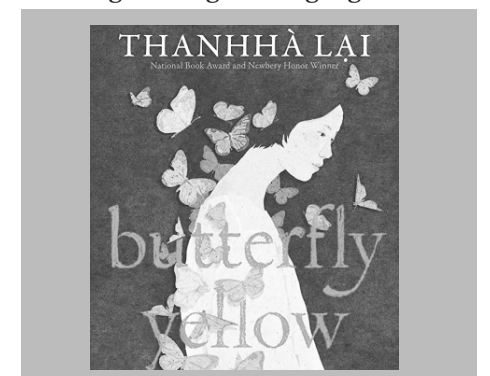
Fresh, vibrant and wholly enthralling, Patel's writing is vivid and colorful, reinventing a cast of classic characters to new dimensions.

The fantastical elements of the novel are executed intriguingly as well, with a unique magic system full of detail yet not bogged down by over-achieving its intricacy.

Patel's debut novel gives Kaikeyi both a voice and story of her own, which is well worth the read.

Thanhà Lai's "Butterfly Yellow" follows Hằng, a Vietnamese girl, separated from her brother at the end of the Vietnam war, by a humanitarian organization focused relocating Vietnamese children to American Homes. When Hằng realizes she is too old to be taken abroad, she sends her brother Lình alone. What follows is a road trip across America, as six years later, Hằng attempts to find her brother, while reckoning with the atrocities she experienced as a result of the war.

Despite its YA classification, "Butterfly Yellow" does not shy away from the horrors of the Vietnam war, along with touching on topics of assimilation, prejudice and internalized racism. Lai utilizes innovative descriptions, in narration and dialogue, demonstrating both Hằng's frustrations and ingenuity in learning the English language.



(Amazon)

'One Wayne G' leaves fans expecting more

Mac Demarco's collection of 'throwaway sounds' is possibly the album to end his career

Evan Sadler Staff Reporter

Mac DeMarco's newest project 'One Wayne G,' named after the great Wayne Gretzky, is organized by year, month then day, with additional numbers after the date if there was more than one song made that day.

It's not an album as much as a hard drive purge, a 199-track data dump with a calming vibe that's pleasant, but also easy to ignore.

"One Wayne G" features numerous instrumental pieces, with only 18 of the 199 songs having lyrics. As albums go, this is a pretty tough listen, being that it was literally over eight hours long, but it speaks to who Mac DeMarco is and who his fanbase is. They're the type of people to listen to such an album (to which I am no exception), and find the small gems in the giant pile of throwaways.

That being said, with the couple good tracks I took away from this album, there are some parts that sounded like things that could've been thrown together on a loop in 30 seconds in a beat maker.

This is the problem I found with the album, that all the songs seem like a repeat of the same sound with PBS NewsHour, playing a brief snippet and



(Pitchfork)

joking that it was "just garbage, but fun to make." But it's true, it's garbage, it's repetitive, it's loud and just a combination of different noises from Garageband.

With songs like '20190724,' we have the song Mac make." But it's true, it's garbage, it's repetitive, it's loud and just a combination of different noises from Garageband.

Unfortunately, that's how most of the instrumental tracks felt. '20200229 2' was 13 minutes of despair-filled tones, '20191229' was something I felt that sounded like Yves Tumor and '20191215' sounded like Mac had just been tapping his guitar, playing a couple chords and recording it.

However, the album was still solid at times, with songs like '20191009 I Like Her,' '20200820 Turn My Tv On' and '20200817 Proud True Toyota.' Of all 199 songs on 'One Wayne G,' 'Proud True Toyota' is the one that sounds the most like a classic DeMarco song.

Overall, this album was just ok. It was most definitely something that was thrown together, and just Mac DeMarco submitting a folder of some 200 beats, but they're not all that bad. However, with word going around that Mac is retiring, this would be a pretty sad send off, and not one any fan of his would want to see.

The notable concerns with Snapchat's new 'My AI' feature

The social media giant added a chat bot to all accounts and requires users to subscribe to get rid of it

Penelope Neireiter Staff Reporter

On an ordinary Wednesday, the social media platform Snapchat launched its ChatGPT-powered AI chatbot "My AI" to its global user base. Snapchat users all received a message from "My AI" that described itself as an "experimental chatbot." After testing the Chat bot, the first striking element was it formulating responses in less than five seconds, making sure to never leave you waiting.

"My AI" promises to use artificial intelligence to make the app more personalized for individual users. But while the idea of AI-driven personalization may sound appealing, there are several reasons why this new feature immediately signaled a cause for concern.

The first thing that comes to mind are the serious privacy implications associated with "My AI." For the feature to work effectively, it will need to collect and analyze an extensive amount of data on each user's behavior, preferences and interactions within the app. This raises questions about how that data will be stored, who will have access to it and how it will be used in the future.

There's always been a joke about AI one day taking over the world. But now it seems like this

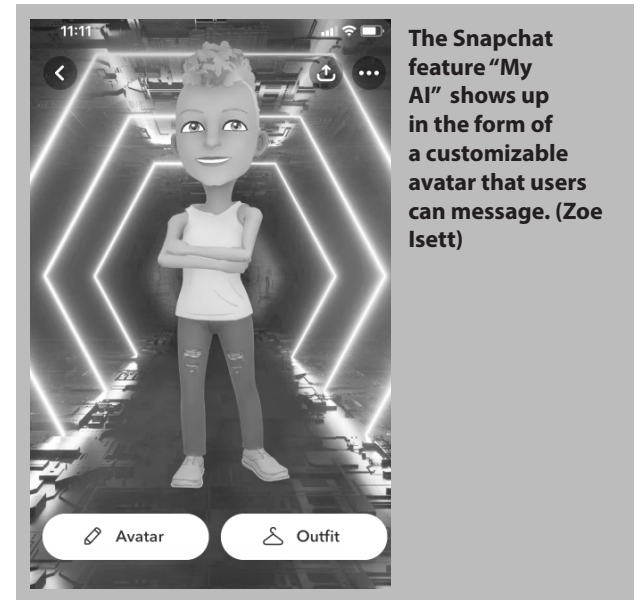
might not be a funny joke for long. There are frightening concerns about what the intent of these new AI features are, and how quickly they can affect a whole population.

The use of AI to drive personalization can also create "echo chambers" in which users are only exposed to content and ideas that reinforce their existing beliefs and biases. This can be damaging to people who use it and can make it harder for individuals to consider alternative viewpoints.

There is also a risk that "My AI" could add to the already troubling issue of addiction to social media. By using AI to create a more individualized experience on the app, Snapchat could make the app even more engaging and addictive, leading to negative impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

Finally, there is a broader concern about the use of AI in general. As seen more recently, algorithms are becoming more and more powerful and more capable of making decisions on behalf of humans. There is also a wonder if they will begin to replace human judgment altogether. This could have far-reaching implications for everything from employment to democracy.

While the concept of AI-driven personalization



The Snapchat feature "My AI" shows up in the form of a customizable avatar that users can message. (Zoe Isett)

may sound appealing, there are significant reasons to be wary of Snapchat's new "My AI" feature. From privacy concerns to the risk of addiction, there are many potential downsides to this new technology.

The desensitization of high school students to violence

Xander Howarth Staff Reporter

In an age where social media and gun violence are on the rise, high schoolers are being less aware of reality in order to shield themselves from the atrocities that are becoming more frequent.

In 2023, there have been 89 gun related incidents at US schools. In the 1990's, this number would have been horrifying. In the 2000's it would have been terrifying and in the 2010's it would have been shocking. However, it is a horrifyingly frequent occurrence in the 2020's.

Generation Z has grown up with increasing incidents of gun violence at schools, all starting in 1999 when two teens killed 13 people and injured 20 others at Columbine High School.

Most people mark Columbine as the start of mass school shootings, and measure the amount following the massacre. The Washington Post reported that there have been 377 school shootings since Columbine, with over 349,000 students experiencing gun violence.

It would make sense that society as a whole has gotten twistedly "used" to them. When they were an oddity, they were tragedies. Now, society sees them as inconveniences.

Not that people don't care; people are still horrified over the atrocities that are occurring. However, the people that should care (i.e. politicians) haven't reacted in ways that are beneficial to students and schools.

Nothing is happening to lessen the violence. If anything, some politicians are loosening gun



Following the deadly shooting at Ingraham High School in November 2022, SPS students walked out to demand gun reform. (Arden Rathkopf)

control. For example, Governor Ron Desantis has passed a law in Florida allowing anyone to own and carry a gun without a permit, training or background checks. Once it takes effect on July 1, it will enable more unqualified people to carry lethal weapons all for the sake of "freedom."

While there are obvious ways this pattern of violence may affect students, there is a more subtle and saddening reality. The reality is that this has become our normal.

So, how do we all cope? We cope by burying those emotions and fears and utter hatred of a system where guns measure the value over lives.

Students are going to a place where they're

supposed to be safe — where the illusion of safety is threaded from childhood, where reality has broken that image like another piece of childhood innocence.

And politicians have become indifferent to shootings because they were in school thirty years ago and left those years behind. The years where they didn't have to worry whether or not the person knocking on their class's door was an assistant principal or a school shooter.

So while students protest and die and bleed because of political agendas, there is a sad possibility that nothing will change while we are students. That this will always be our normal.

We retreat into glossy and aesthetic worlds of media; where everything is curated so it's always perfect. The perfect places, perfect people, perfect food — everything perfect. No one cries, no one expresses their pain over Instagram Lives. Everyone smiles in front of waterfalls, or in Rome or hiking beautiful mountains with ease. It's a perfect little bubble we as a generation have blown to protect us from the darkness of reality. When that bubble popped, what could we do?

A generation of desensitized teens are graduating and being thrown into the real world. Into a world that has never been kind.

This is not a call to action; politicians will do what they want when they want. It is a spotlight on the unspoken experiences of many high school students, and how it is an overcast on this country.

Have an opinion? Want it to be heard?
 Submit itty bitty opinions and hot takes to
1macluniesross@seattleschools.org for a chance to appear in the Talisman!

Satire: Learn how to power-walk: a PSA for slow walkers

Lucas Salm-Rojo *Guest Contributor*

Every passing period a wild herd of underclassmen flood the halls in front of me. Like Roman soldiers they fan out, walking shoulder to shoulder, creating an impenetrable and unpassable garrison of prepubescence. There is no breaking their battalion, they will win this battle, and every battle every passing period after that.

What is this moronic mutiny of students' primary objective? To walk as slowly as possible.

Like sloths but not at all cute, these underclassmen saunter down the halls minding their precious time. Maybe they will stop for tea with their friends or grab a quick bite with their buddies, but don't you dare think they will let you pass by.

For the millions of students across our school who are chronologically inclined, or maybe just have long legs, walking behind these human tortoises is an excruciating game of mental hysteria. When I am unable to power walk and zone out I start to think about the cruel realities of the world. "Oh my, I am failing language arts," one might think and then manically spiral over. It is because of these slow little children clogging our hallways that depression rates are rising, but don't think I will let them get away with hurting my brethren.

I come to you today, the morally sound students of BHS, with a proposal to once and for all rid us of this tyranny. My proposal may be called by some critics "overtly violent and unnecessarily cruel" but as an amateur powerwalker I will not let my freedoms be impinged! Also like we're doing it for like mental health or some noble thing.

My proposal is as follows:

Buy a used snow plow from a local ski slope (always buy locally sourced goods).

Officially name the snow plow "The Slow-Poke Sled".

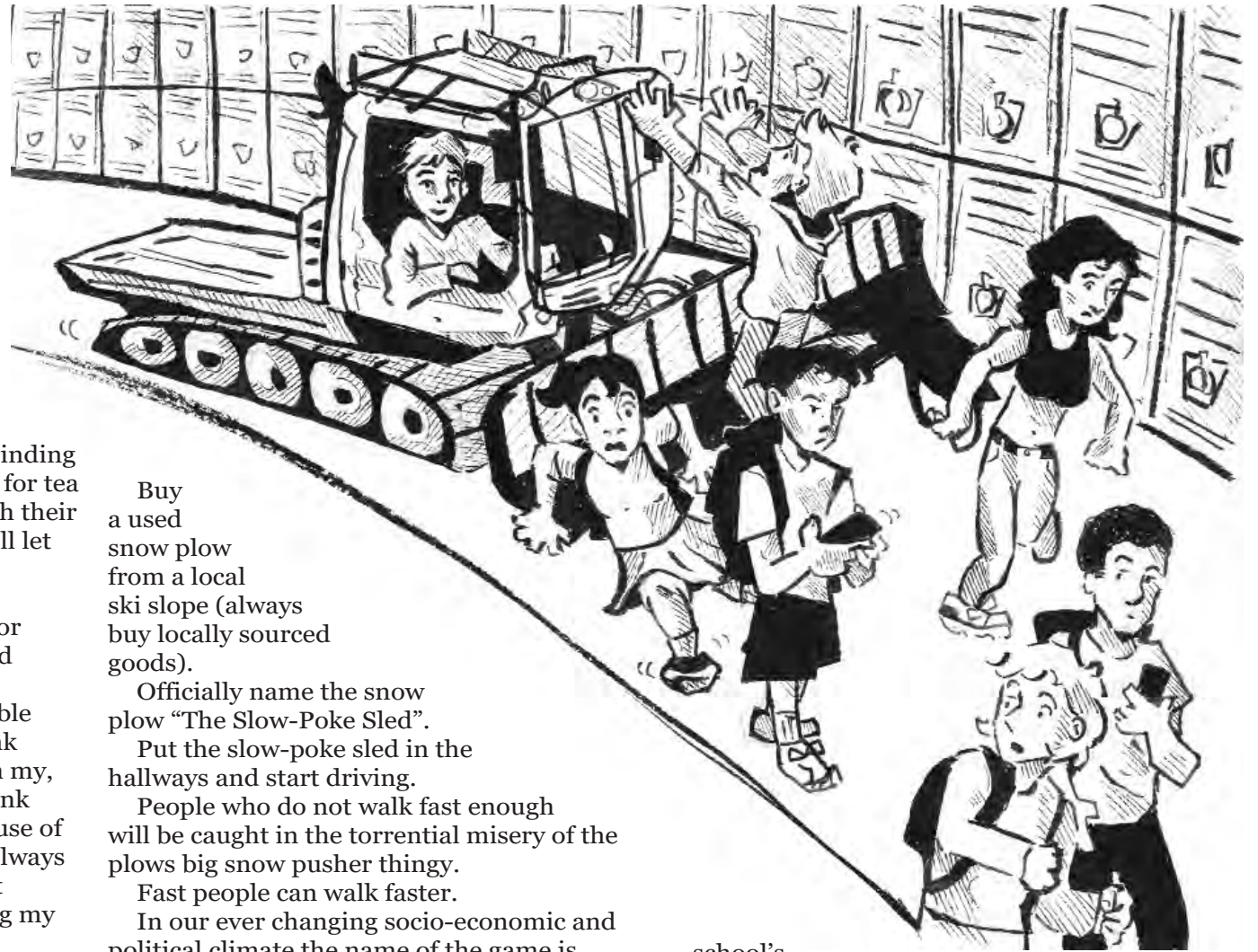
Put the slow-poke sled in the hallways and start driving.

People who do not walk fast enough will be caught in the torrential misery of the plows big snow pusher thingy.

Fast people can walk faster.

In our ever changing socio-economic and political climate the name of the game is efficiency.

Why our schools are getting complacent in fostering this ideal is abysmally un-understandable. We should not be teaching our youth that it is ok to slowly meander down the halls - that only leads to complacency and laziness. And yeah, maybe a \$50,000 snow plow (I think we should spring for the heated seats) is not the most efficient use of our



(Courtesy of Lake Neil)

school's

money,

but I think

it is the best

step in weeding

out these bad influences from our halls. If they wanted to be slow they should have been born in Europe!

Worst to best: ranking Metro League team mascots

Josie Fitzpatrick *Staff Reporter*

To start us off strong, or not so much, we have the Franklin Quakers. I'm sorry but everytime I hear about the Quakers, I immediately think of the oats. I'm just not sure that's what you want people picturing when talking about the school they're about to compete against.

Next, Roosevelt Rough Riders. Actually, that doesn't sound so bad, but I feel like there's more potential there for maybe the Ravens or even the Rhinos. Overall, it could be so much worse but could also use some improvement.

Third to last, we have our wonderful Ballard Beavers. I know, I know. I should be more supportive of my home team, however, beavers just don't seem like a very strong mascot. Yes, Bucky is wonderful and has immense spirit, but a beaver just doesn't have that mascot umph that I'm looking for.

Coming in at fourth place, the Seahawks. I'm not really sure what Chief Sealth had in mind here, but we all know it's not very original. Granted, they do

have a very good role model to follow and a pleasant connotation with the name, but seriously, where's the creativity?

Just to stir the pot a little bit, I'd like to give the very average spot of fifth place to BOTH the Wildcats and the Bulldogs. Nothing against these schools, but these mascots could have been pulled out of any number of coming of age sitcoms, books or movies.

Subsequently, I present to you the Lincoln Lynx. Personally, I love lynx as I'm sure any sane person does. However, it's still not really a strong mascot in my book. Not to mention it's kind of like a subcategory to the wildcats, which are too similar for my taste.

Surprise! Another tie: the Cleveland Eagles and Rainier Beach Vikings. I think that these are equally decent mascots and give a good enough image for the school. Both strong subjects and there's not anything wrong with either. Sure, they aren't super

exciting, and they aren't the best of the best, but overall, not too shabby.

The moment we've all been waiting for... runner up. Congratulations to our rival, the Ingraham Rams. I'd like to offer my formal apology for this, it's not my fault that our closest nemesis happens to have one of the best mascots in our league.

And this brings us to the best mascot (in my opinion). Let's not forget the Nathan Hale Raiders. I'm not sure what it is about the raiders but I like that it's pretty original for school representation, and it's not just a random animal with alliteration to the name of the school.

I'd like to remind you all that these are simply my opinions and have absolutely nothing to do with each school themselves, just who's representing them. I'd love to hear others opinions on such a subject and am curious what my peers would have to say.

BEAVESDROPPING

HEARD IN THE HALLWAYS: WANT IT TO BE FUNNIER? SAY FUNNIER THINGS

“He’s just crawling around on the freeway like a blind caterpillar”

“I fought that Plan B with my little ovum fists”

“Walk faster.”

“Hot take: Pants with drawstrings don’t deserve to be worn outside”

“Pray for John Mayer”

“I’m so mad. They won’t take my tonsils.”



Satire: In defense of sandals – going toe to toe with the opposition

Maisy Clunies-Ross *Opinions Editor*

For generations, sandals were a part of people’s lives. The Mesopotamians wore sandals as they built the first recorded civilization. The ancient Egyptians wore sandals as they built the pyramids. The ancient Greeks wore their sandals both into battle and while forming the basis of Western philosophy. Sandals have been a part of human history just as long as love and war. The path to greatness was carved by people with visible toes. They’re a part of our history and a part of who we are. And yet, in recent years, that attitude has changed. Now, when one dons a sandal they face the possibility of ridicule. Supposedly accepting and evolved people jeer and screech at the sight of a meager toe. But why?

To me, there appear two possible culprits: foot freaks and nasty toes. The prevalence of foot fetishists on the internet have led many to view feet as a taboo, something that is desired but shameful. In that light, feet are a thing to be hidden, thus making the revealing of one’s toes akin to the flaunting of buttocks. The monetary gain associated with photographs of feet have also led another sentiment to arise: ‘I’m not showing that for free.’ In combination, these mindsets have led to the objectification and subsequent demonization of feet, which discourages people from showing their feet in any way, including in sandals.

The next reason I believe toes have become so

stigmatized is simpler. Many of the people most comfortable sharing their feet are also those who are comfortable going weeks without showering or cutting their nails. We’ve all seen the old men with long gnarled nails, yellowing and hard like pieces of corn sticking out between the straps. Other people’s feet are riddled with blisters and warts, with red bulges and misshapen toes. Some people ... most people ... their feet are just dirty. I’m not trying to body shame, I think it’s wrong to make fun of people for things they can’t control. However, unlike toe length or foot size, your hygiene is something you most certainly can control.

It makes sense that no one wants to see crusty, gnarled, dirt covered, toes. Some people’s feet border on public indecency. However, while toes are often the most derided for their unseemly state, they are not the only culprit. I’ve seen just as many people who have disgustingly long fingernails with visible grime caked beneath them. That’s just as disgusting, if not more, than seeing someone with unkempt toes, because you will probably not be shaking hands with someone’s feet! I believe the rules of polite society should be upheld, but if one’s toes are clean and well kept, they have just as much of a right to be out in the open as a finger.

Whether or not one wears sandals is up to them and I do not seek to force my lifestyle upon others. I am merely advocating for the acceptance of sandals

and peep toe heels, for those who wear them to feel safe, for the restless souls who need to wiggle their toes not to be ostracized from their community. All I want is for people to be able to get ready for a school dance without worrying that the tips of their toes peeking out from their heels will be the talk of the night. All I want is for those who once felt afraid to show their true selves in public to dawn their sandals and feel the joy of a warm summer breeze against their bare toes once more. All I want is for a sandal to be a simple fashion choice instead of a mark of difference or a declaration of war.

Now, I must harken back to my first point: the longevity and historical significance of the sandal. History is cyclical, there have been times of progressive growth followed by times of puritanical stagnance and vice versa. There were times when the flash of an ankle could have a woman scorned or set a crowd into a frenzy, yet they are now an unexamined aspect of our everyday lives. I believe the toe will follow a trajectory similar to that of the ankle: accepted to scandalized to supported once more. And so, I conclude. The era of sandals is upon us once more.

It is with that, I finally pronounce the answer to the universal question: Who let the dogs out? Who? Who? The answer is you. The answer is your friends. The answer is all of us.