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The Mammoth Tribune

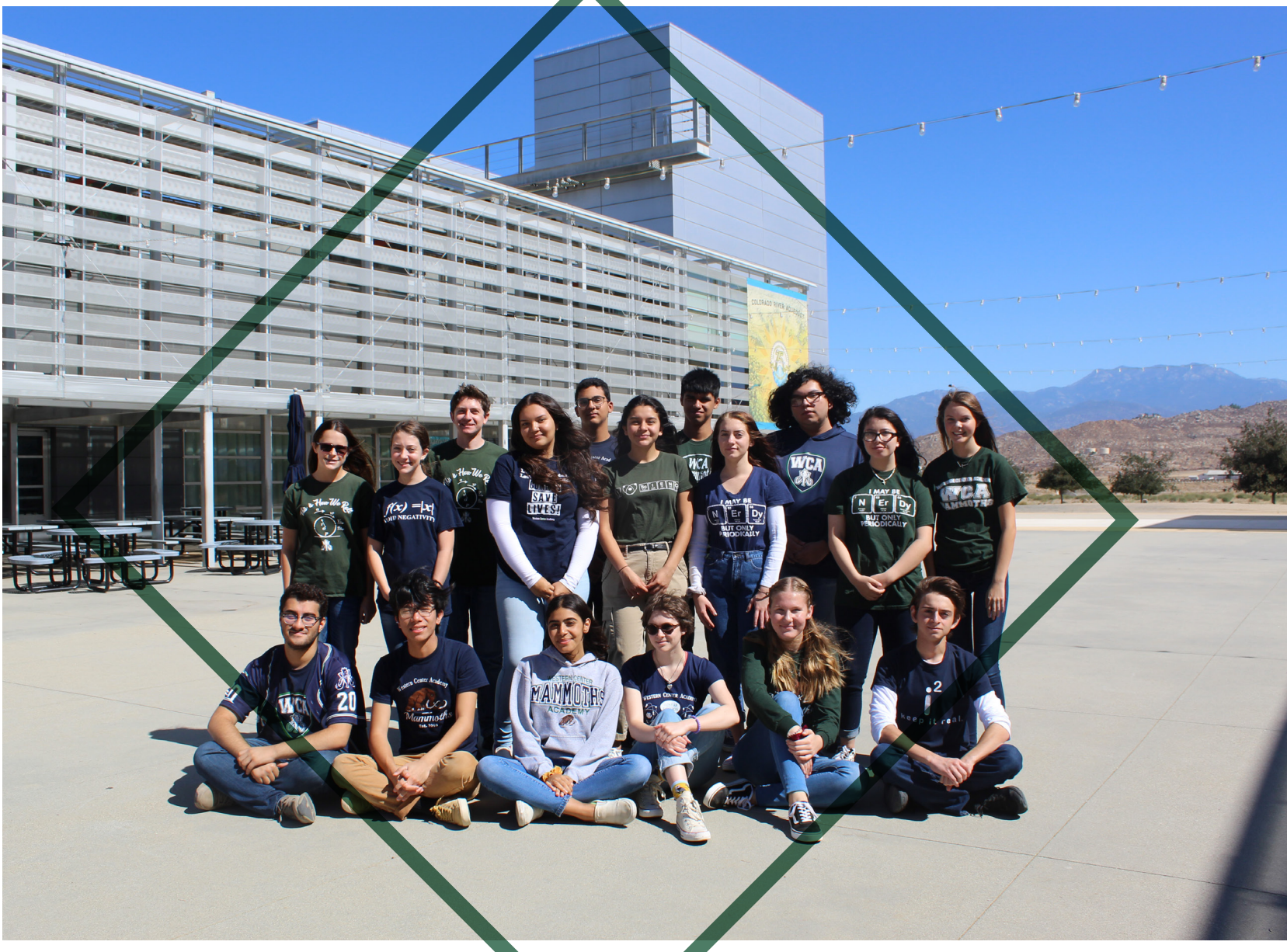


Jan - Feb 2020

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Front Row: EDITORS: Victor Keroles, Matthew Sy, Mariam Bagdady, Bobbi Bernhardt, Nina Webb, and Daniel Eskin. **Second Row:** Trinity Cash, Aveley Hoover, Victoria Ugarte, Jasmine Torres, Skylar Eastman, Melaina Mullen, and Brooke Cronin. **Last Row:** Dillon Sutton, Rapheal Younan, Brandon Gonzalez, and D'Artagnan Avina (editor). *Not pictured: Elliot Galletta and Dominic Poulin

Editor's Words

Mammoths,

Welcome back to our first issue of the 2020 year! With articles reviewing the Iran situation, Australia fire's, and this month's awards shows, the Tribune team has a lot in store for you. Enjoy the January issue, mammoths, and have a wonderful Presidents' Break!

—Mariam Bagdady, Editor-in-Chief

Christmas Giving

By Daniel Eskin

During the month of December, to celebrate the wonderful gift of Christmas giving, the Bradys started a school-wide donation to the Domestic Violence Shelter in Menifee. The shelter houses women and children who have escaped from abuse, leaving everything they had behind in order to be safe. The shelter asked that their families create a wishlist for Christmas, and then each class from the campus chose a family to "adopt." Each family member had written their own unique list so students could plan what to bring in. The presents were wrapped at the school and sent to the shelter. When Mr. and Mrs. Brady arrived at the shelter with a U-Haul full of toys, Mrs. Brady said, "The people at the shelter were floored! People from the office came to help out and once they saw how many presents there were, they said 'We are gonna need more people!'" Eleven families were given their gifts "from Santa Claus" on Christmas day.

I interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Brady to see what their thoughts were on this charity. Both were extremely appreciative of the school's efforts. Mr. Brady commented that, "The Western Center amazed the shelter with their level of generosity. They did not expect us to help these families the way that we did." His goal with most charities is to collect money that would reach out to anyone, but he believes, "We generally give and forget. When we give locally, we directly touch and impact lives. After raising hundreds for the shelter at the school play, somebody working with the shelter told us that plans to get Christmas presents for them had fallen through. My wonderful wife [Mrs. Brady] then had the idea to mobilize the homerooms to help these families out . . . In this case, we donated to give kids a special day; we gave moms a chance to get going again. Pure giving feels great."

Mrs. Brady was ecstatic about the effort that went into giving gifts and said, "I thought it was fantastic and I hope we can do it again. Competitions are fun — and I'm always down for a good competition — but there was something really powerful with no one getting first place or a prize or pizza . . . we just came together." When asked if she plans for this to be an annual charity, she said, "[It] could be. It was pretty easy to do. It doesn't have to be this charity, but we should do something together as a school."


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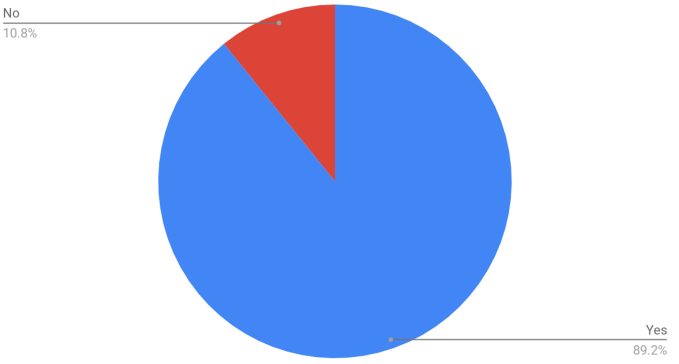




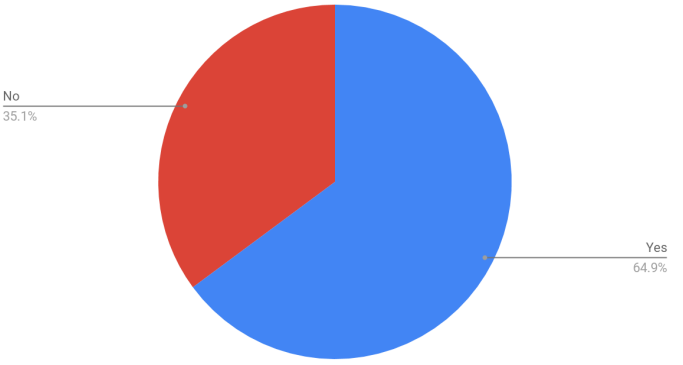
New Year's Resolutions and Traditions

By Aveley Hoover and Melaina Mullen

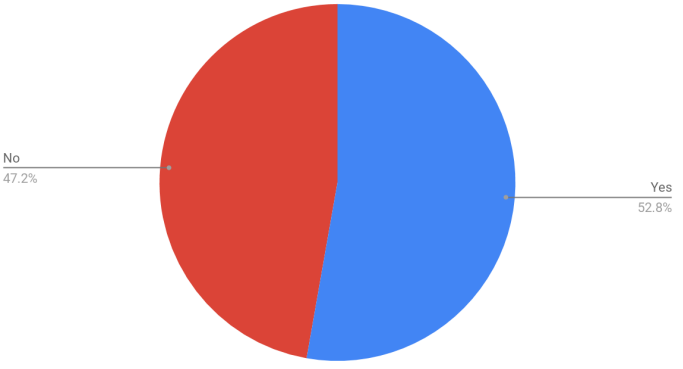
Do you have any New Year's resolutions?



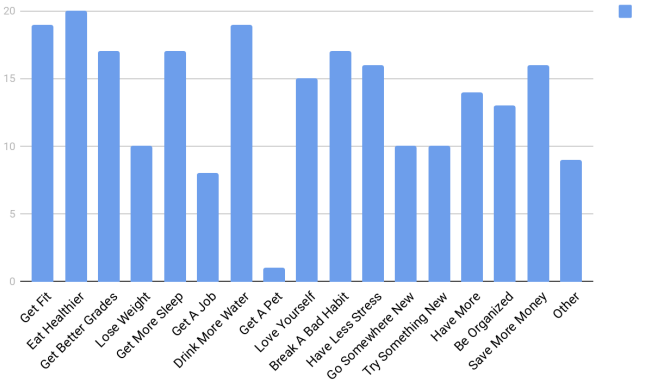
Do you have any New Year's traditions



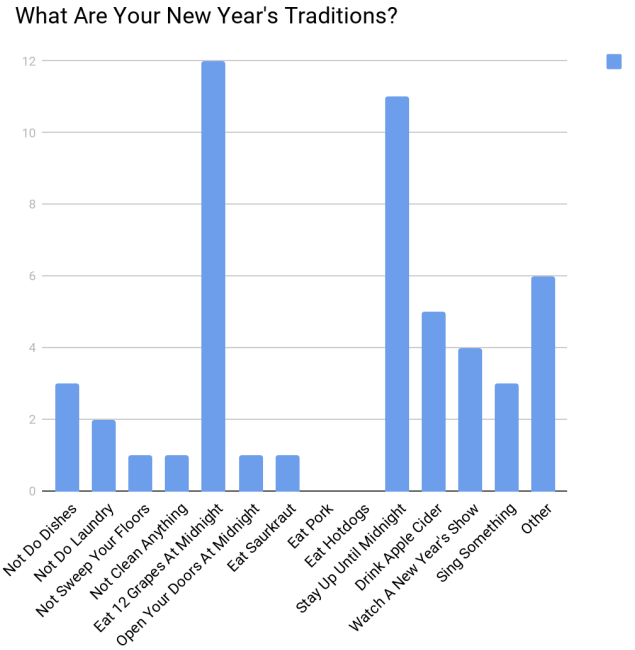
Are you good at keeping New Year's resolutions?



What Are Your New Year's Resolutions?



What Are Your New Year's Traditions?





Winter Break Polls

by Brooke Cronin and Trinity Cash

Questions, Answers, Percentages

The newspaper wanted to see how everyone's winter break went. We sent out polls to gather the information. Here are the results!

How Was Your Winter Break?

:) - 63.8%

:| - 30.4 %

:(- 5.04%

Travel Anywhere?

Out of state - 14.5%

Out of country - 2.9%

Nope - 82.6%

Binge Shows?

Yes - 71%

No - 29%

Most Binged Show: *You* from Netflix

Holiday Parties?

Yes - 84%

No - 16%

Ready for School?

Yes - 32%

No - 68%

Short Answers

- Most people surveyed said they celebrated Christmas and the New Year.
- Sleeping was the biggest hit over break. A close second was reconnecting and spending time with friends and family.
- Ernest Spiller (2021) went to New York and San Francisco stating, "Even though I've been to San Francisco a million times, each trip there is always a new experience, getting new pictures and making new memories with my family."



Student Motivation

By Jasmine Torres and Nina Webb



PHOTO CREDIT: Jasmine Torres

The Mammoth Tribune hopes the second semester is treating you well! We asked the student body and faculty of Western Center Academy High School to give some words of encouragement to students.

What do you do to keep yourself motivated throughout the semester?

"I try and remind myself that my future will be brighter if I work hard enough and that it will all be worth it in the end." **—Katy Crow (2023)**

"I imagine myself accomplishing the goals I set out for myself."
—Christopher Huerta (2022)

"To keep my motivation, I countdown the days until school is out! It makes me realize that I am so close to finishing, so why quit now! Wooohooo."
—Juliana Leyland (2020)

"Each and every day, I try to think of the best way to convey a lesson to my students. It is always a challenge, but I love this process within me. Teaching is a performance and I want to have my students enjoy and remember my 'perfor-

mance' each and every day. For 42 years, it has worked pretty well for me!" —**Mr.Rossi**

Any motivation/advice for other students?

"It's really hard not procrastinating, trust me I get it, and then we all regret it once we do. But if you just do very small pieces of it each day, you'll get it done before you even know it. Push yourself, and be like, 'hey, if I finish a bit of this homework I can watch this show after for 30 minutes' and just give yourself a small reward every day that you finish something."
—**Angelina Parisi (2021)**

"Always know that your best doesn't have to be the best. Whatever you do, however you do it, that's where your impact can be made. Keep your head high and be proud of what you have accomplished at all times."
—**Mr. Wolny**

"Honestly I'd just tell all my fellow students to enjoy their first semester in the new decade. Yeah, school is important, but I don't know one Western Center Student who doesn't work hard on academics. So, to all the mammoths, you guys are doing great, work hard at school, but keep vibin' on the weekends. This year is going to be awesome!"
—**Malia Keliihoomalu (2020)**

"Completing your homework by order of importance helps you not to forget an assignment! Oh, and delete tiktok."
—**Juliana Leyland (2020)**



PHOTO CREDIT: Jasmine Torres

College Acceptances

By Elliot Galletta

As 2020 begins, so does the college acceptance season. A time so many students look forward to, is filled with a combination of excitement and anxiety. The anticipation of ripping open that long-awaited letter is almost painful. However, it is extremely rewarding to see the hard work of WCA students pay off.
Although most colleges don't notify potential students about their admission status until March, some students have already received the good news. Here is what a couple of seniors have had to say about their acceptances.





Chyleah Thompson

"Initially, Grand Canyon University wasn't my first choice for college. I was in Arizona visiting Arizona State and I decided I might as well check out GCU. Little did I know that the campus was going to fit me perfectly. The campus is gorgeous and it instantly felt like home. When I came back to school, I told my close friends Sydney, Malia, Destiney, and Megan about how much I loved the campus, and they just applied for fun. GCU then sent us on an all-paid "Discover GCU" trip where all of us got to stay in a dorm on campus overnight. We all fit in so well. Going to school with my best friends brings me so much comfort. College can be very scary, so I'm glad to be bringing a little piece of home with me."

Crystal Chen

I opened the Stanford portal during the AP Art History field trip at UCLA Fowler Museum, surrounded by my best friends, and joking, "Here goes my first rejection!" Holding my breath, I clicked. It was a blur, but I barely made out the words "Stanford. Congratulations. 2024." My friends screeched "Oh my God!" I was shocked, speechless. I didn't cry. I didn't freak out. I hugged my friends and calmly called my mom, who started sobbing uncontrollably. I celebrated with Mrs. Noizumi and Mr. Bailey, overwhelmed with gratitude for their support. I called my piano teacher, my sister, my dad. To be honest, getting into my dream school didn't magically change my life. Being accepted only reinforced my passion for learning, for medicine, and for new opportunities. It allowed me to thank the wonderful people in my life that have gotten me this far, and nudged me to start learning how to ride a bike and wearing cardinal red.



Burger Bash!

On Friday, January 24, WCA hosted a Burger Bash for the seniors to celebrate completing college applications. Seniors were provided with hamburgers, chips, dessert, and drinks. Mrs. Arave and the WCA staff helped to coordinate this event to reward the seniors for all of their hard work.

To Stand With Women

By Mariam Bagdady

For the past four years, men, women, children, and those of all genders, ages, and races have joined in on the streets to support human rights and protest a set array of global issues. The Women's March is a national march in big cities that was initially meant to show support for gender equality, civil rights, and many other issues as well as protest Donald Trump's presidency. This march has become a symbol of solidarity and resistance in America, and with that symbol comes the recognition of women and their power of influence. Set in January, the Women's March has highlighted many principles that have impacted its audience for years to come. What was once a march on Washington, has become a nationwide event intended to defend the masses. The first Women's March, held January 21, 2017, the day after President Trump's inauguration, saw marches held in cities across the country and the world with participants estimated to be in the millions. It is believed to have been the largest single-day protest in U.S. history.

A Summary of the Unity Principles*:
Women's Rights: Highlighting issues ranging from intersectional feminism to reproductive rights to the importance of inclusivity of women in all aspects.

LGBTQIA+ Rights: The acceptance of all genders in the workspace, community, and school atmospheres.

Human Rights: Focusing on individual, disability, worker, and youth rights.

Immigrant Rights: Highlighting the violence and corruption occurring at our borders.

Environmental and Climate Change Justice: Bringing awareness and warning to society in accordance with the climate dilemma at hand

Bringing equity to all genders, races, sexes, and ages

*A full list of the stated Unity Principles can be found on womensmarch.com

What happened:
Thousands of marchers showed up in Los Angeles alone to protest what they believe to be the tyranny within the system. Although there have been conflicts among the organizers due to anti-semitism allegations, this didn't stop the march from continuing its fighting journey. With key areas such as immigration, reproduction, and climate change rights highlighting the marching path for thousands of protesters, January 18 became a day of change and hope. Although the march on Washington, D.C. was larger than those in other cities, the impact people left on cities nationwide was both integral and influential for the essential cause.



Hundreds of thousands turn out for the first Women's March in Washington, D.C. on March 21, 2017. PHOTO CREDIT: Mobilus In Mobili



A marcher holds a sign that says, "Fight like RBG" at the Women's March in Manhattan, N.Y. on January 18, 2020. PHOTO CREDIT: Getty Images



Thousands march through downtown L.A. on January 18, 2020. PHOTO CREDIT: ABC News

The ongoing battle between the U.S. and Iran can be traced as far back as the 50s, igniting a feud that continues to burn until this day. That conflict was further inflamed when U.S. drone targeted and killed Iranian major general Qasem Suleimani on January 3, 2020. While America has recently been divided, this attack has only added to the damage with Americans torn on whether the president took the right course of action. Some have predicted that the results will be devastating, as not only was Soleimani, one of Iran's most powerful heads, killed, but nine other officials were as well, causing many to fear an impending war.



While many seem to believe that this move was reckless and immature, there is more that lies beneath the surface. In a statement released after the attack, the Pentagon accused Soleimani of planning attacks on American diplomats and service members which included an American contractor killed back in December. There were also accusations that Soleimani had approved plans to attack the US Embassy in Baghdad the same week of his death. He has also been blamed for being the mastermind behind the destabilization of Iranian activities throughout the area and is responsible for killing hundreds of Americans by providing Iraqi insurgents with weapons and training.

What does this mean for America in the future? Memes have now surfaced joking about a third world war, but that doesn't seem to be the case. Although Americans have been encouraged to leave Iran, Trump believes that the world is now safer. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has called out for an act of forceful revenge along with three days of mourning. On January 8, Iran launched ballistic missiles at an Iraqi air base where U.S. troops are stationed. Although President Trump said the day after the attack that there were no U.S. soldiers killed or injured, the Pentagon has recently released information that around 50 soldiers suffered traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

As for how America reacted to the assassination, it is to no one's surprise that the left is largely against President Trump while those on the right mostly support his actions. Now let's take it to the streets of WCA to see what our fellow classmates think.

Iran, Iran, and I Didn't Look Back

By Brandon Gonzalez



Do you think President Trump did the right thing by killing the Iranian general Qasem Soleimani?

"Yes, the other past presidencies overlooked his threat to America and Trump was the only one who actually took action."
—Jesse Goodson (2022)

"No, I don't think so. It was a bit excessive show of force."
—Alexander Rangel (2020)

"No, I don't think that was good because . . . many Iranians were very, very angry and they wanted to declare war on us."
—Ibraheem Muhammad (2023)

"No, I do not think so because it just seems very rash, barbaric, irrational, savage, and just not mature. It's just scary. Positive energy towards everyone in the situation." **—Avery Perez (2020)**

Donald Trump's Impeachment

By Dillon Sutton and Matthew Sy

On December 18, 2019, the House of Representatives voted for President Trump's impeachment on the both articles of impeachment: abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. This historic vote makes Donald Trump only the third president to be impeached in the history of the United States. There was a large amount of debate when the Executive branch denied Congress access to what was hoped to be evidence. Because of this, not only was Trump accused of abuse of power, but obstruction of justice as well. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi released a statement on December 16, 2019 that said, "[Trump's] actions are in defiance of the vision of our founders—and the oath of office that he takes—to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

After the House vote, Pelosi delayed passing the impeachment articles to the Senate for a while. According to Stephanie Armour's article, "[Pelosi] and fellow Democrats have said the delay was aimed at ensuring what they see as a fair trial, specifically calling for the Senate to allow new testimony from witnesses," ("Pelosi Defends Delay in Sending Trump Impeachment Articles to Senate," wsj.com, Jan. 12, 2020). After the Senate received the articles on January 16, 2020, Republican senators rejected multiple requests for witnesses and documents being subpoenaed.

On Wednesday, February 5, the Senate proceeded to vote on the acquittal of Donald Trump on both articles of impeachment. On Article I, abuse of power, 48 senators voted in support of a guilty verdict with 52 voting not guilty. On Article II, obstruction of Congress, 47 senators voted in support of a guilty verdict with 53 voting not guilty. The votes were along party lines with the exception of Republican Senator Mitt Romney voting in support of a guilty verdict on the first article of impeachment. The Senate would have needed 67 votes to have removed Trump from power.

According to our survey of WCA students, 64% believed Trump was guilty of abuse of power and 68 % believed he was guilty of obstruction of Congress. We asked WCA if they thought the findings of the impeachment inquiry were reasonable enough for the president to be removed from office. Here are their responses:

Anonymous

I do not think they are. I believe that trying to find information to leave opposing presidential candidates at a disadvantage is wrong. It is similar to the Watergate scandal in this sense, but in this case no form of espionage seemed to be successfully carried out. It reflects poorly on Trump, but unfortunately I do not think the act was weighty enough from a legal standpoint to remove him from office.

Anonymous

I do believe it is reasonable enough to be removed. He has abused his power and has done more harm than good for our country.

Zain Shazad (2023)

No. The senate doesn't think that either. He didn't commit a crime that is drastic enough to warrant impeachment. If there are those who want to kick him out of office, it would be too late to do so as election season is only a few months from today. So, they could not even impeach him if they wanted to. It would be pointless and a waste of time.

Evan Lamoree (2020)

Yes, because he used his power to threaten another country into interfering with our election that would result in his benefit.

Mr. Brady

No. There are no first-hand accounts. A serious inquiry would need to interview somebody who could identify Trump's state of mind.

Australia Fires

By Bobbi Bernhardt
and Victoria Ugarte



"It wasn't cloudy that day, it was just smoky," said Elliot about the above picture. PHOTO CREDIT: Elliot

Australia is suffering through one of the worst fire seasons in decades. In fact, in December, the air quality in Sydney measured 11 times the hazardous level. We were able to get in touch with a few inside sources who are in the midst of the fires. Kale (13) and Elliot (14) are both residents of Australia; Kale lives in the Newcastle area and Elliot lives on the central coast. Elliot was excited to collaborate with us "because everything else seems to be an outside perspective." Kale opened up about how the fires have affected him personally, explaining, "The smoke is starting to hurt my eyes, like you know [how] after you go swimming for a long time and your eyes start to sting and you feel yucky? That's what the smoke's doing." The people in Australia are devastated and have been fighting it since July. Over thirty people have died from this fire, including three U.S. firefighters, and more than 3,000 homes have been destroyed. These fires are all throughout Australian states, but New South Wales and national parks, like the Blue Mountains, have been hit the hardest. Some of Australia's largest cities, such as Melbourne and Sydney, have been affected. According to Elliot, "There was a town that a fire went through, a big town, but a broke one . . . they had four trucks and very few fires . . ." he trailed off, but the ending of the story wasn't hard to guess. Authorities are having a lot of trouble trying to contain the massive fire, even with the firefighting assistance from other countries including the United States. Elliot says, "I want people to know how frustrating it is from a polit-

ical point of view. The only reason we need people to donate and help out is because [our] prime minister refuses to give us funding or anything . . . he's not helping." Each year, Australia has a fire season during summer due to the hot and dry seasonal climate, which makes it very easy for fires to start. One of the big reasons that the fire is spreading so rapidly are the severe winds common on the coast. A 28-year-old volunteer died after strong winds rolled his truck over.

While natural causes—such as climate change and typical climate patterns—are the main reason these fires started, humans have some direct blame as well. NSW police have charged about 24 people with purposely starting brush fires, and have taken action against about 180 people for fire-related offenses since November. Even though it is very devastating for the people living in Australia, no one has given up. The recent rain storms have revived hope for many—including Elliot, who confided, "We are going to the beach because, for the first time in months, it's raining and not too smoky. I wanna cry I'm so happy. Wow."

Some WCA Middle School lab classes are knitting wildlife pouches to donate to Wildlife Pouches for the Animal Rescue Collective Craft Guild in Australia. These pouches will be used to hold, handle, warm, protect, and comfort animals affected by the fires during their rehabilitation and recovery. If you would like to express your interest in knitting pouches, please contact cparsons@hemetusd.org.



"I took a picture of the grass in my front lawn. It used to be green, but with drought and fire it's dead." PHOTO CREDIT: Elliot

"Once you overcome the one-inch barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films."

— Bong Joon-ho, accepting the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film for *Parasite*



Awards Season is at Hand

By Victoria Ugarte and Jasmine Torres

The Golden Globes are awards that recognize excellence in both film and television. The 77th Annual Golden Globes were held on January 5 and were hosted by Ricky Gervais. 34 Netflix original shows and movies were nominated, including *Marriage Story* and *The Irishman*. Gervais said that, "This show should just be me coming out going, 'Well done, Netflix. You win everything tonight.'" However, Netflix only took two awards home. One of the most noteworthy awards of the night was to Awkwafina, who became the first woman of Asian descent to win Best Actress in a Comedy or Musical. Tom Hanks also received the Cecil B. DeMille award and made an emotional tribute to his family.

The Academy Awards took place on February 9 and did not have a host for the second year in a row. *Joker* went in with eleven nominations, the most of any film this year, including nominations for Best Picture, Actor in a Leading Role, and Directing. Other nominees with multiple nominations include *The Irishman*, *1917*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, and *Parasite*. Joaquin Phoenix took home the Best Actor Oscar, as well as the Golden Globe, for his role in *Joker* while Renée Zellweger also took home the Best Actress Oscar and Golden Globe for her role in *Judy*. The big winner of the Oscars though, was Bong Joon-ho, who won four Oscars for *Parasite*, including Best Picture. This is the first time in the history of the Academy Awards that a foreign-language film has won for Best Picture.



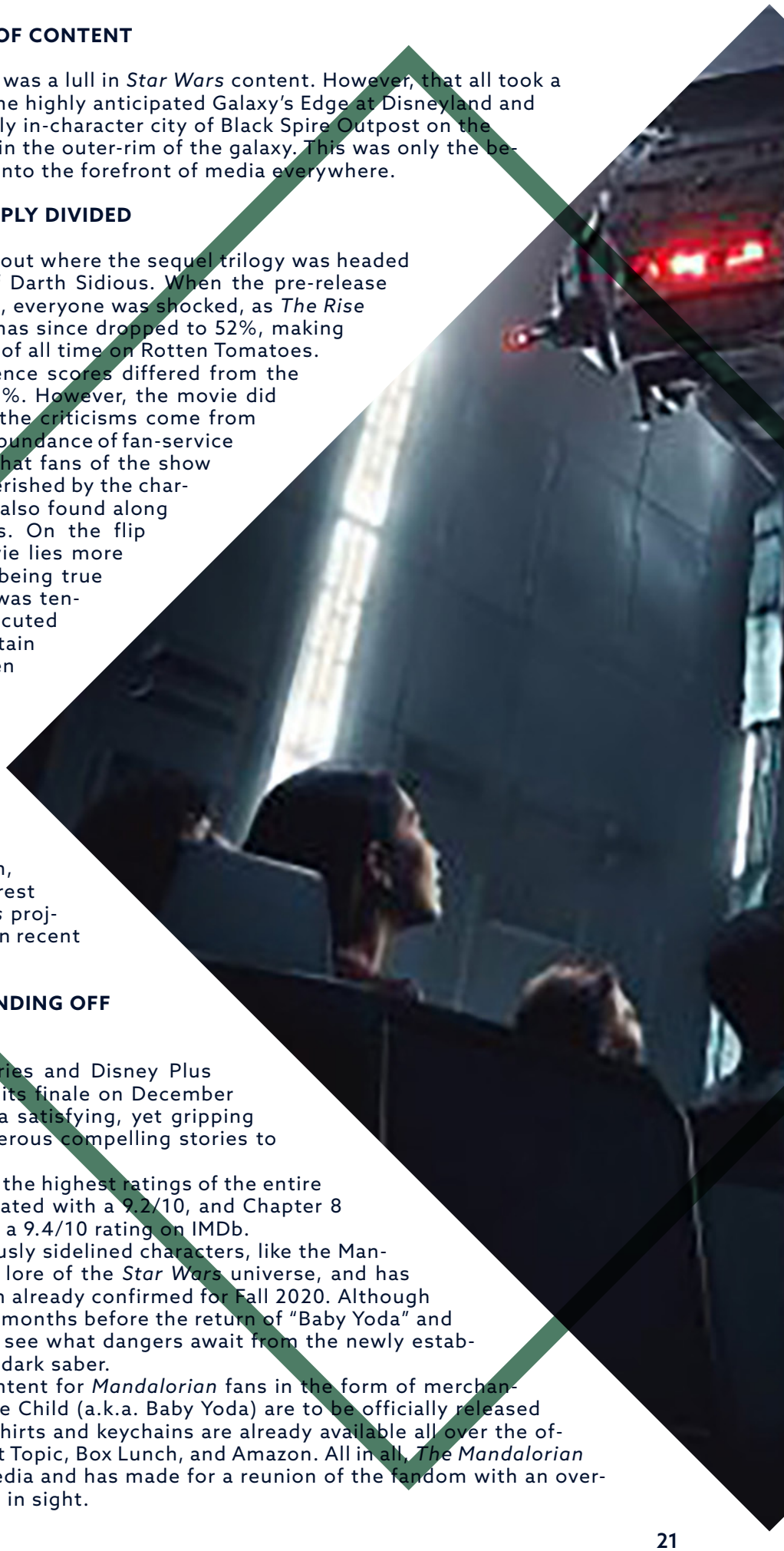
PHOTO CREDIT: Robert Deutsch-USA TODAY

STAR WARS 2019/2020 - A SUPERNOVA OF CONTENT

For a time in mid-2018 to mid-2019, there was a lull in *Star Wars* content. However, that all took a change in mid-2019 with the opening of the highly anticipated Galaxy's Edge at Disneyland and Disney World, where visitors enter the fully in-character city of Black Spire Outpost on the planet of Batuu, a scrappy planet located in the outer-rim of the galaxy. This was only the beginning of the reintegration of *Star Wars* into the forefront of media everywhere.

THE RISE OF SKYWALKER - FANDOM DEEPLY DIVIDED

The Rise of Skywalker had fans curious about where the sequel trilogy was headed in the end, especially with the return of Darth Sidious. When the pre-release critic scores on Rotten Tomatoes rolled in, everyone was shocked, as *The Rise of Skywalker* held a score of 57%, which has since dropped to 52%, making it the lowest critic-rated *Star Wars* movie of all time on Rotten Tomatoes. Upon the wide-release of the film, audience scores differed from the critical reception and currently sits at 86%. However, the movie did not escape criticism from fans. Much of the criticisms come from saying the movie felt hollow, with an overabundance of fan-service that seemed like it was more based on what fans of the show cherished than what would actually be cherished by the characters in the story. Many plot holes were also found along with seemingly nonsensical plot-devices. On the flip side, positive reception towards the movie lies more in the atmosphere and tone of the film, being true to the tone of the original trilogy. There was tension where it was needed, and it was executed brilliantly. Settings were used to drive certain scenes and convey information, done even more cleverly when utilizing the force bond between Rey and Kylo Ren. The movie also handled Carrie Fisher's final role in a *Star Wars* movie with heartfelt emotion and respect, and devoted itself to pay homage to fans in concluding the *Star Wars* saga.
It's clear that the sequel trilogy has caused a lot of divide within the fandom, with many fans just wanting to put it to rest so Disney can move onto other *Star Wars* projects, which has been doing well for them in recent times.



THE MANDALORIAN SEASON FINALE - ENDING OFF STRONG

On a much higher note, Disney's hit series and Disney Plus original show *The Mandalorian*, debuted its finale on December 27 and capped off the first season with a satisfying, yet gripping ending that opens the possibility of numerous compelling stories to soon follow.
The show's final two episodes ended with the highest ratings of the entire season. Chapter 7 "The Reckoning" was rated with a 9.2/10, and Chapter 8 "Redemption" capped off the season with a 9.4/10 rating on IMDb.
The show's creative exploration of previously sidelined characters, like the Mandalorians, draws in more of the obscure lore of the *Star Wars* universe, and has proved successful with the second season already confirmed for Fall 2020. Although fans are sad they will have to wait several months before the return of "Baby Yoda" and the rest of the cast, they're also ready to see what dangers await from the newly established villain: Moff Gideon, wielder of the dark saber.
Beyond this, Disney has also released content for *Mandalorian* fans in the form of merchandise. The official toy and pop figure of The Child (a.k.a. Baby Yoda) are to be officially released in the coming months, but *Mandalorian* shirts and keychains are already available all over the official Disney store and other shops like Hot Topic, Box Lunch, and Amazon. All in all, *The Mandalorian* served as a saving grace for *Star Wars* media and has made for a reunion of the fandom with an overwhelmingly positive reception and no end in sight.



PHOTO CREDIT: Disneyland Parks

The Star Wars Universe

By D'Aartgnan Avina

RISE OF THE RESISTANCE - PHASE TWO BEGINS

Back in the summer of 2019 when Galaxy's Edge officially opened to the public, only one of the two promised rides for the area was available, Smuggler's Run. Park-goers were eager to see what the work-in-progress ride, Rise of the Resistance, had in store. At the time, there was only the vague opening date of "Late 2019/Early 2020" which later changed to December 5 for Disney World, and January 17 for Disneyland.

The opening of this ride marked the beginning of Phase Two in Galaxy's Edge, featuring a new line-up of themed foods as well. With the anticipation of the largest crowds that they would ever have, Disney established a boarding system through their app that would place guests in boarding groups for the ride. During the opening days of this attraction in both parks, all 140+ boarding groups were completely filled within minutes.

D'Artagnan Avina (2021) had the opportunity to ride Rise of the Resistance during its opening weekend, and here's what they had to say:

"It was absolutely amazing. We arrived at around 5:30 am and there were already hundreds of people waiting in line to get into the park, so I knew I was surrounded by enthusiastic *Star Wars* fans. When boarding passes became available, it was surreal hearing everyone celebrate once they got their passes, including us when we got group 26.

The one thing I definitely was not anticipating was just the absolute scale of everything. Everything in Galaxy's Edge is on a macro-scale, including the ride.

You're seriously put onto the set of *Star Wars* when on this multi-format ride. The visual effects are mind-numbing and so convincing. This ride also reinforces the "cast member" label for Disney park employees, as everyone is in full character as actors. They do a phenomenal job at establishing the tone of the situation, helped by the authenticity of the sets on the ride.

Rise of the Resistance is no doubt the most technologically ambitious ride there is, and I cannot wait to go back and ride it many more times this year."

Kobe Bryant

By Matthew Sy and Jasmine Torres



PHOTO CREDIT: Getty Images

At roughly 9:47 am on January 26, a helicopter crashed in the mountains of Calabasas in southern California. Nine people were on board, including NBA star and future Hall of Famer Kobe Bryant (age 41) and his daughter Gianna (age 13). All passengers and individuals of the helicopter perished within seconds of the helicopter's tragic descent from the sky amidst a "milky fog." The last contact from the pilot was 9:45 am with the first 911 call coming in two minutes after. Radar showed the helicopter 2,300 feet above ground before dropping at a rate of 2,000 feet per minute. The helicopter, owned by Kobe himself, was not equipped with a warning system and terrain awareness which explains the numerous calls to action from the pilot in terms of tracking the helicopter on the radar. The other victims included two of Gianna's Black Mamba basketball teammates and their family members as well as the Black Mamba coach.

Kobe Bryant had a celebrated basketball career, but his personal life had been tarnished by alleged infidelities, rumors of divorce, and a sexual assault case. In 2003, Kobe Bryant was accused of raping a 19-year-old woman in his hotel room in Edwards, Colorado. Bryant denied the charges, but told the court that they had engaged in consensual sex. However, the accuser did not want to testify and the case was then dropped. Bryant later settled a civil lawsuit with the woman.

People all over the world, predominantly the sports world, mourned the loss of a legendary icon that reshaped basketball culture. His life outside of basketball included his constant support of the WNBA and involvement in numerous charities. The Lakers-Clippers game, which was scheduled a couple days after the January 26 incident, was postponed to a further date to mourn the death of the Los Angeles icon. Each NBA game that was played shortly after the incident, held a 24-second and 8-second violation prior to the start of the match to commemorate both of Kobe Bryant's numbers. The Lakers-Trail Blazers game that was played on Friday, January 31, held a tribute during the pregame and halftime show.



PHOTO CREDIT: Ringo H.W. Chiu/AP

Thousands and thousands of fans who grew up watching Kobe build a legacy for the Lakers, visited the Staples Center to remember what the legend contributed to the city and the rest of the world. We asked WCA students how Kobe Bryant's death impacted them.

"Kobe Bryant was a large inspiration for me in my basketball career. I played for seven years. I was never one to watch sports, but whenever I saw a Lakers game was on the TV, I switched on to watch the man do what he does best. I wanted to shoot like him. My step-father would try to train me to be better, but I'd insist he teach me to be like Kobe. Sadly, I stopped playing and stopped watching games. But, I will always think back to my #1 sports inspiration."
—Chloe Peterson (2021)

"I haven't personally been greatly affected by this tragedy, however it is still very sad. Kobe Bryant was very influential in our generation and highlighted a lot of our childhood fun. I'll never forget whenever I would throw something in the trash and yell "Kobe" to make it go in. :("
—Nina Webb (2021)

"He brought entertainment to others and made people feel better about themselves. He has done many great things and was a great person." **—Max Gonzalez (2023)**

"No words can describe how sudden it was. Everybody who was not only a Kobe fan but a Lakers fan has lost a part of NBA history. We are all trying to wrap our minds around that this is real." **—Angelina Cornado (2023)**

"His death made me realize that this can happen to anyone and that we need to cherish the moments that we have in this life."
—Deja Carrillo (2020)

"He inspired me to give it my all whenever I'd play on the court for high school and travel ball games. He inspired me to play hard defense and tear the opponent down on offense. He also inspired me to keep pushing and staying positive even when the odds are against you both ON and OFF the court."
—Francisco Garcia (2021)

Nature Photography

By Victor Keroles

In Nature Photography Club, Mammoths learn how to properly use a camera, including form, lighting, and subject guidelines. This provides club members with a chance to advance their photography skills and, if they wish, their own portfolios. Members emphasize the importance of picking up trash and pulling weeds around campus. **Kierynn Cornell (2021)**, Co-President, believes the purpose behind Nature Photography Club "is not only to take pictures of our beautiful campus but to help preserve and clean it so it can continue to stay beautiful."



Club officers meet every Monday during lunch to prepare and establish goals for club meetings, which take place the following day. Meetings consist of lively Kahoots on photography skills (I had fun!), hiking, taking pictures of nearby plants and animals, and cleaning up the flowerbed. Last weekend, the members visited the botanical gardens at UCR to capture the beautiful plants. They are currently planning to invite Mr. Martinez to come in and share his experiences as a professional photographer.

If you would like to join, meetings are held Tuesdays during lunch in Ms. Simpson's room (36).

Shane Dawson and Jeffree Star Collaboration

By Aveley Hoover



PHOTO CREDIT: Jeffree Star Cosmetics

Shane Dawson released a docuseries teaser trailer on his YouTube channel on September 24, 2019, teasing that the reason he has been getting so into makeup and the beauty world in the last year is that he has been working on a secret collaboration beauty line with his friend, the infamous Jeffree Star. Dawson released the docuseries "The Beautiful World of Jeffree Star" to give insight into the beauty world and how things work when creating and releasing a product. It followed the two friends on their journey creating a brand new product line.

The Shane Dawson X Jeffree Star collection was set to release the day after Halloween on November 1. This collection includes 5 total pieces: an 18-shade eyeshadow palette named the Conspiracy Palette, a 9-shade mini palette named Mini-Controversy, a 6-shade velour liquid lipstick set, a clear gloss called "The Gloss: Shane Glossin'", and chapstick/lip balm called Diet Shane, inspired by and scented as his favorite drink, Diet A&W Root Beer. These items come in a complimentary travel bag imprinted with Star's logo and Dawson's new pig logo for $210.00 or can be purchased individually.

When the day finally arrived to release the collection on November 1 at 10:00 am PST, the website jeffreeestarcosmetics.com, hosted by Shopify, instantly crashed and the first 1 million units sold out in under 20 minutes. This was the biggest launch to date for either of the two Youtube creators and beauty gurus. The two then made the executive decision that they would put out another 60 thousand units for pre-order that also sold out in another 20 minutes.

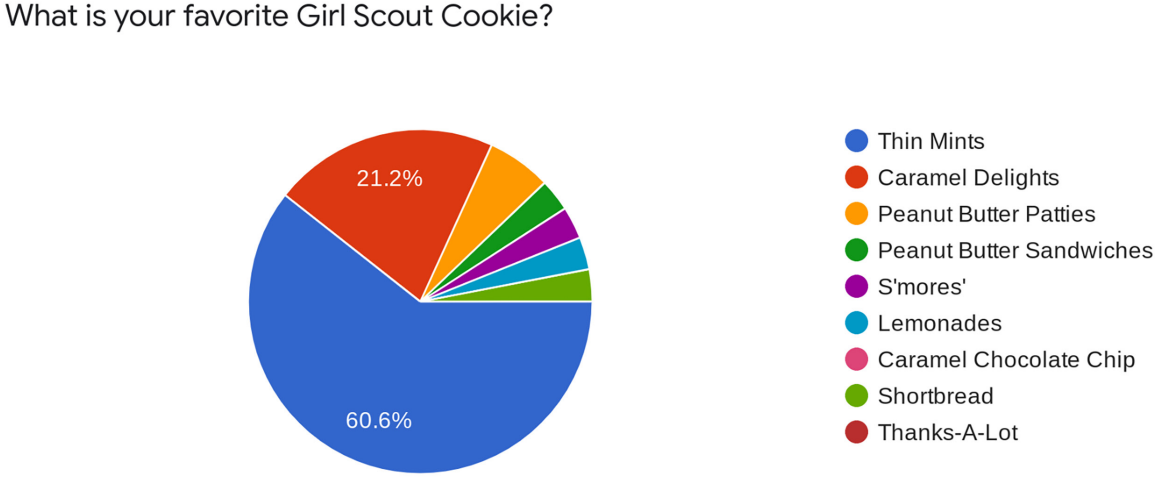
Jeffree Star released a video recently that said the pair have two more episodes coming, including one with Shane Dawson's reaction to when the collection launched.

WCA Girl Scout Cookies

By Nina Webb



From now until March 22 is Girl Scout season! Here at Western Center Academy, we have several Girl Scouts each offering cookies for $5 dollars a box ($6 for gluten free). This got us wondering what the student body's favorite Girl Scout cookies is.



As we can see, many people love Thin Mints!
Fun Fact: Thin Mints—as well as Peanut Butter Patties, Lemonades, S'Mores and Thanks-A-Lots—are vegan!
Did you also know that after this year, Thanks-A-Lot cookies will be retired and will be replaced with a **brand new** Girl Scout Cookie?

Keeping Up With the **Mammoths**

A Letter from Ariana Pefley (Class of 2018)

Hello everyone!

My name is Ari Pefley and I went to Western Center from 2014 to 2018. So far, college has been a whirlwind of opportunities and a stress-fest of trying to manage adult life. Here's some quick tips: start working on your resumes now, get a professional-looking email signature, and make a habit of saying please and thank you to your superiors and customer service folks alike (if you haven't already). You'd be surprised how many people forget that last thing.

Sophomore year is going great. Stanford University, like all universities, has a plethora of diverse opportunities. When you're in college, I would advise that you take part in whatever opportunities fascinate you -- but be cautious about how you spend your time. Nothing's worse than having a million responsibilities and no down time at all to be with your friends and family.

Currently, I am Prop Master for the spring show *Pippin*, as well as a member of the Stanford Shakespeare Company (my experience at Western Center helped a lot with that audition). In addition, I am a student teacher for an arts practicum class called "Defining Zine" in which I teach other students zine-making (one of my new favorite hobbies!). I'm in a few student activism groups, including SQRTL (Students for Queer Resistance and Trans Liberation. Their mascot is a squirtle). A bit further back, I had an internship at the San Francisco LGBT Center last summer and learned a lot about community-building there.

I am in the process of writing a grant proposal for a performance art piece -- which is something I now do, by the way. Performance art. It's crazy and sometimes vaguely pretentious stuff, but I've really found my calling in doing it. If you're curious at all about performance art, look up "Ryan Tacata," he was my professor last year and his work is truly something else. "Doggie Hamlet" is one of my favorites.

I work three different jobs: one as an assistant for a student program, the second as a front desk receptionist, and the last as a general student assistant for a career center. Jobs are wonderful ways to build up your skills and make connections in your job network (which you will need later on), but I have to say that customer service is an absolute nightmare. I've



Here I am with found-object artist Lonnie Holley at a workshop for ITALIC. He's teaching me different ways I might want to work with the material. I'd recommend listening to some of his albums or looking up his art.



I am having a celebratory lunch with my boss.

been insulted by more than one businessman. Definitely try it at one point in your life if you haven't already; it's incredibly humbling and good for your worldview.

Only recently have I declared my major -- Sociology, or as I like to call it, "the performance art of life." Just the other day my SOC1 professor spent ten minutes talking about how furries break cultural norms. That's a $75,000 education for you.

I know that a lot of you are applying for college right now or at the very least have it on your mind, so I thought I might provide whatever wisdom I could on the subject. First things first, never feel badly about yourself for being rejected. I have met lots of people at Stanford who were rejected at Harvard or Yale, and vice versa. For many schools it simply comes down to numbers and sheer random chance. It isn't your fault that your number wasn't pulled.

Secondly, it isn't about being exceptional, or a genius, or anything like that. Believe me, I have met a lot of folks here that are neither of those things. From what I have heard and seen, universities are looking for people that are unique and capable of individual thought. I had the honor of actually meeting the admissions officer that chose to accept my application (and may even look at yours too if you're applying), and received specific feedback from her. In essence, she told me that she really appreciated the originality of my answers, and accepted me for that reason.

So be unique, but be unique pointedly -- be unique in a way that is genuine and meaningful to who you are. Don't be dishonest. In other words, be yourself. Have heartfelt beliefs, and express them.

All in all, I've found that college is a great place to start fresh in any way you see fit. New self expression, new pronouns, new way to dress or wear your hair, whatever you like.

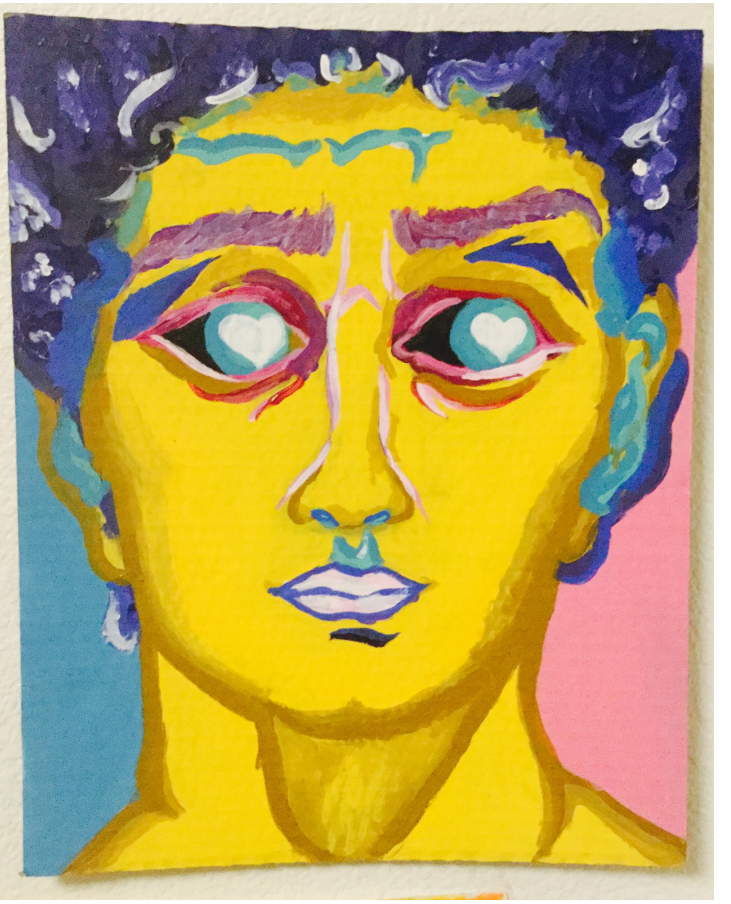
If you have any questions about Stanford University or performance art or whatever else, you can DM me on your preferred social media platform or email me at ari.pefley@gmail.com.

Wishing you all the best of luck applying for college and surviving high school,

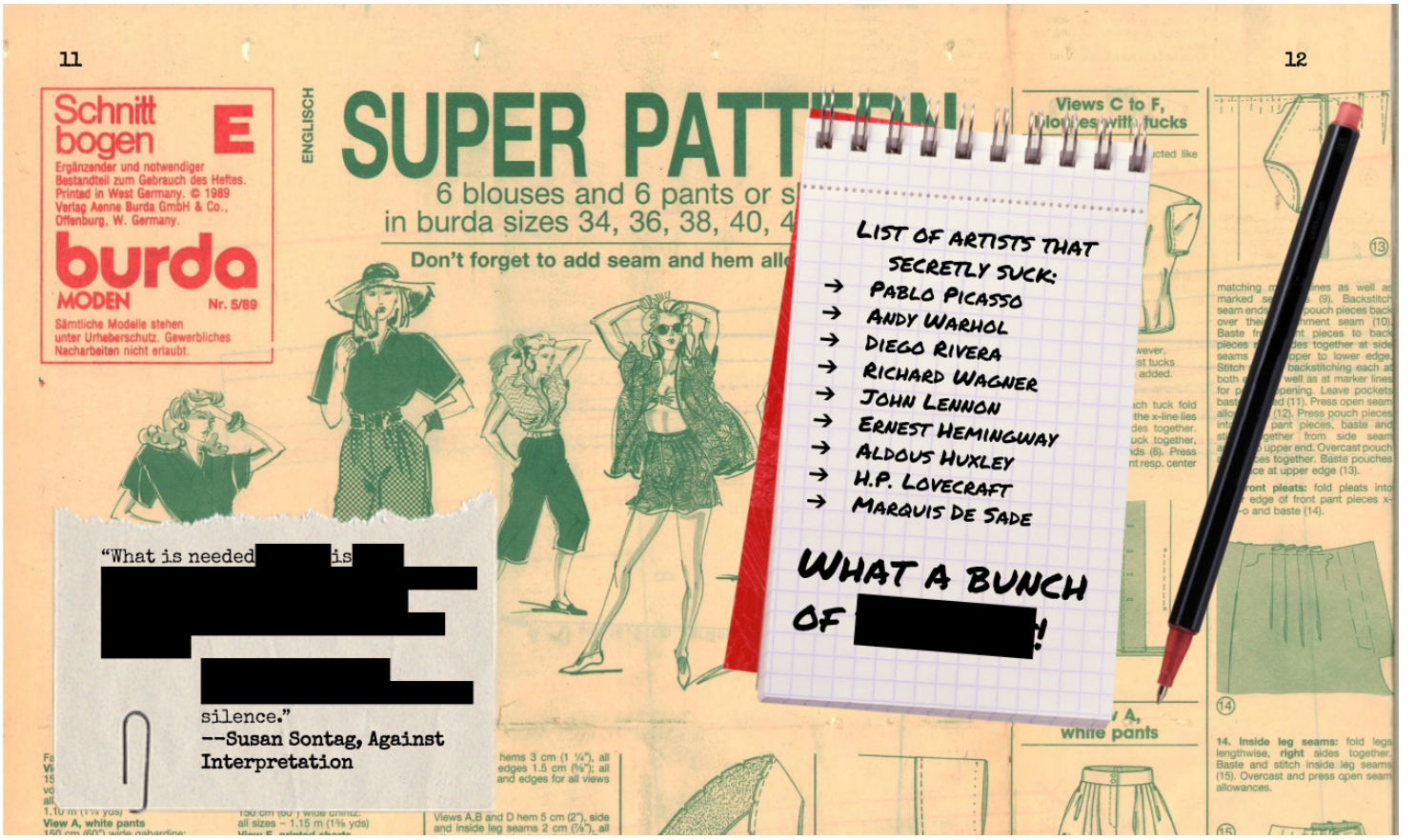
Ari



This is a self-portrait I did last year -- all in pink, my favorite color.



This is my most recent painting -- my attempt at a pop art version of Michelangelo's David.



This is a page spread from one of my zines.



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