

# ORACLE

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## Guys and Dolls

After months of rehearsing and preparing, Warrior Theatre showcases students' talents on a 1940s themed stage in their new musical performance of Guys and Dolls.

Compiled by Samantha Luo, ASSISTANT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, article by Paulina Lee, ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR, cartoons by Hanh Dinh, CARTOONIST

Transforming the stage into New York in the 1940s, Warrior Theatre performed Guys and Dolls at the Thomas Moore Auditorium April 24–26 and May 1–3. Written in the 1930s, the musical follows gambler Sky Masterson who makes a bet with fellow gambler Nathan Detroit to take mission worker Sarah Brown to Havana for \$1,000. The musical follows the unlikely romance between Sky and Sarah as well as the relationship between Nathan and his long-time fiancée Adelaide.

Students were assigned a monologue and song that matched their characters through the auditions. Auditioning was a two-day process, with the third day reserved for call-backs. During call-backs, students sang again and practiced sides, which involved performing dialogues with other characters.

Only

Warriors in the Vocal Program or Troy Theatre were allowed to audition. According to Theatre Director Joe Hufferd, the cast was decided based on their skills in vocals, acting and dancing. The musical required performers to reach high notes during the performance. After deciding the cast mid-March, the Troy Theatre Department began production.

The Troy Technical Theatre class worked on the set design, preparing the lighting, backgrounds and sound. While the technical class built the set, the cast began rehearsing, choreographing and positioning actors during each scene. Theatre students rehearsed Act 1 for two days and Act 2 for two days every week leading up to opening night.

According to cast member Laura Lo, who plays Sarah Brown, the play required dedication and commitment. Each student had their own role and responsibilities to stay on top of, Lo said.

“For people in the cast, like for actors, you have to know your lines, you have to know your music, you have to know your cues and you have to know your blocking,” Lo said. “Those are the preparations that we have to do before we go into a rehearsal.”

Troy Theatre’s adaptation made edits to the original Guys and Dolls script, such as omitting the song “If I Were a Bell” due to lyrics that were deemed inappropriate for a high school production. Certain lines were also adjusted to make the script more relatable to the audience.

Portraying Sarah Brown in Guys and Dolls was Lo’s first major role, marking a significant change from her previous ensemble performances. According to

Lo, the biggest challenge was stepping outside her comfort zone to meet the acting demands of the role.

“Acting is a very new thing for me, and that is the most challenging part,” Lo said. “I am definitely a singer first.”

According to Lo, despite the challenges, one of the highlights

of the production was performing a duet early in the show. The number combined skills in both vocal strengths and acting on stage, Lo said.

“My favorite part is singing ‘I’ll Know,’” Lo said. “It is the second song I sing in the show, and it is a duet with Sky, played by Archer Hufferd. I really like performing that song. I think she has a moment at the end of the reprise, which I really like performing and singing, because it shows a lot of emotion.”

In preparation for opening night, cast and crew members spent weeks rehearsing after school to ensure a smooth performance. Hufferd said he hoped that the audience would not only recognize the dedication behind the scenes, but also respect and admire the students for the bravery, talent, intellect and energy they put into the process.

“I am excited about them getting a public response to their work,” Hufferd said. “You know, when you work in this building [Thomas Moore Auditorium] in private for eight weeks, you do not really get that feedback, that rush that comes from having an audience applaud, cheer, get excited, laugh at your jokes and be genuinely entertained by your work.”



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# Helen Fang premieres documentary project “STEM of our Humanities”

The documentary project included interviews from students, alumni and faculty, and was the culmination of four months’ worth of work.

By Anastasia Efremova  
STAFF WRITER

The student-produced documentary “STEM of our Humanity” premiered in the Thomas Moore Auditorium during lunch in an effort to uncover the stigma surrounding the humanities April 16. The video project about the

importance of the humanities was shown to Warriors during lunch. Writer Helen Fang originally planned the documentary as her passion project but later applied it to her International Baccalaureate project as well. The IB project is required for students pursuing the IB diploma, and can be about anything students choose as long as they can later reflect on the process. The film was divided into different segments, with each focusing on a different subtopic.

According to Fang, the project aimed to show Troy students, who attend a science, technology, engineering

and math-oriented school, that the humanities play a significant role in society regardless of the field they are in. The main argument when creating “STEM of our Humanity” was that there is no STEM without the humanities.

“The whole purpose of STEM is to advance in the sciences, to achieve these scientific discoveries for the purpose of helping people,” Fang said. “[However], if you are not aware of the problems of society or the constituency you are representing, how are you able to effectively come about your goal?”

The team began production on the project in January and continued working on it until a couple days before the premiere. Since Fang came up with the idea, she took the lead in writing the script, finding interviewees, conducting interviews and overall developing the project. Video editor Amy Pham was in charge of filming and editing, while publicist Gia Desai played a creative and publicity role in the process.

In total, the “STEM of our Humanities” showcase brought in about 200 Warriors. According to Fang, the project is unique because of its appeal to a wide variety of people. The team is currently furthering its influence outside of Troy.

“We did not anticipate it to be so big, but as we kept going, we realized [that] if we really want to do this well, there is a lot more work we [need to] put into it,” Fang said. “We are currently working on a website that reveals more of the behind the scenes process.”

Throughout the process, Fang, Pham and Desai collaborated for two hours

a week discussing ideas and spent weekends working on this project, aiming to showcase it before the testing season. Overall, Fang spent over 125 hours on the project, including writing and filming. After two months of recording footage, Pham spent two weeks editing the final video. Desai coordinated publicity, made the trailer and helped with the script and film shots.

The team experienced challenges in communicating with interviewees and managing time commitment. Fang reached out to potential interviewees through personal connections and emails, but there were several times when recipients did not respond or declined to participate. According to Pham, the time commitment for the project required numerous sleepless nights and working long weeks.

“It was very tedious and thought out, and that [was] on everyone’s behalf,” Pham said. “The planning was good, but I think that [it] took the most time, and then [during] editing, I felt a bit rushed.”

According to Fang, despite the challenges, the entire process felt worth it in the end. After witnessing the impact of the documentary on so many people, the team felt they accomplished their goal, Fang said.

“I was so happy, I almost cried tears of joy,” Fang said. “I think somewhere in the beginning it stopped being a passion project and [became] an extension of who I am. I was really changing people’s minds and hopefully changing their hearts on a topic that is near and dear to me.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF HELEN FANG

**TERRIFIC TEAM:** (left to right) Project collaborators Helen Fang, Gia Desai and Amy Pham at the premiere of their documentary.

# Warrior Finance Club participates in Northwestern Economics Tournament

Troy Finance Club focuses on educating Warriors in financial literacy and basic principles surrounding budgeting and finance.

By Salman Waheed  
STAFF WRITER

Troy Finance Club virtually attended the annual Northwestern Economics Tournament March 31 and April 6.

Founded during the 2024-25 school year, Warrior Finance Club aims to help students gain foundational knowledge and interest in basic finance principles. The club hosts weekly meetings, where board members lead lectures and seminars on topics such as banking, budgeting and investing.

The Northwestern Economics Tournament is an annual competition in which high school student teams compete to demonstrate their proficiency in economics and its applications. Students are tested on material from AP Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, as well as economic history, current events and research.

Comprised of two team-based events, the Northwestern Economics Tournament includes a Power Round and the Economics Bowl. During the Power Round, teams have 120 minutes to answer six AP Macroeconomics

or Microeconomics graph, math or judgement-based free response questions. Responses are graded by Northwestern University undergraduate and postgraduate students, who may award partial or full credit at their discretion.

The Power Round was held virtually, with teams submitting their entries independently between March 31 and April 3. The Economics Bowl was held in person on April 5, but teams unable to travel could compete virtually on April 6.

In the Economics Bowl, teams are matched against others who performed similarly in the Power Round and must answer 20 economics questions. Teams can receive two points for answering a question correctly within five seconds and one point for answering within five to ten seconds. If a team answers incorrectly or runs out of time, the opposing team can steal the question. Teams that place first in their matchups advance to the next round.

Warrior Finance Club placed second in their first matchup and did not advance to the following rounds. The club was also several points off from reaching a top three spot in the Power Round. According to Co-Founder and President of Warrior Finance Club Jiahao Cheng, the club is looking forward to competing again and performing better in next year’s Northwestern Economics Tournament.

“We are eagerly looking to attend more competitions this school year and



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIAHAO CHENG

**FANTASTIC FINANCES:** (left to right) Warrior Finance Club competitors Ryan Zhou, Matthew Lim, Jiahao Cheng and Hanyu Huang pose for a photo after participating in the tournament.

gain as much expertise in the field of economics as we possibly can,” Cheng said. “I think we might actually even attend the World Cup of Economics Competition, because we are already extremely prepared from our experience at the Northwestern competition.”

According to Cheng, events like the Northwestern Economics Competition are crucial for club members to adapt to intense environments and learn to collaborate well with others. Students also learn to use all their prior knowledge in a meaningful way

as they go into competitions, which is something that can be applied to their school academics as well, Cheng said.

“From the experience, I really hope and feel that students will become engaged and interested in at least some of the many various topics of economics they can explore,” Cheng said. “Just in terms of attending a competition, I think this event really helped them get comfortable with being in a competitive environment and learn to stay strong under pressure, which is definitely a great asset they will need as they go on in their future lives.”

# Troy Preparedness Club Hosts Weekly Disaster Readiness Classes

Troy Preparedness Club partners with local emergency teams to teach first aid, CPR and more.

By Kylie Tien  
STAFF WRITER

Troy Preparedness Club hosts Disaster Readiness Classes every Wednesday for the public at the Fullerton Public Library April 2 to May 28 to equip participants with emergency readiness skills.

Founded in fall 2023 by President Allen Hsieh, the club educates members and raises awareness about the importance of disaster readiness as well as first aid response. During meetings, the board hosts small informative classes about different aspects of disaster preparation.

For these classes, Troy Preparedness Club partnered with the Community Emergency Response Team, Fullerton Fire Department and the Fullerton Police Department to administer lessons at the Fullerton Public Library. The lessons are single-day trainings where guest speakers, medical professionals and club volunteers teach different topics.

Various introductory courses are taught every session, such as what to do in active shooter situations and how to administer first aid. The aim of these lessons is to provide students and their families with the knowledge of what to do in specific emergency situations. By learning this

knowledge, students are able to transform from potential victims to first responders in critical situations, Hsieh said.

“We have a lot of people who initially participate in CERT training [and they] come back for our new first aid and CPR training because people who go through training realize the importance and [will] therefore want to further their own readiness,” Hsieh said. “After participating in the [introductory] activities, [participants] can see that there are other events they can participate in to further their knowledge and learn more technical skills about what exactly they should do,”

The student volunteers and guest speakers conduct both hands-on and lesson-based sessions. According to Vice President Eddie Chien, families and students have responded well to the hands-on activities that are paired with lessons.

“I remember when I did my training we had one exercise where the idea was [that] you are in an emergency situation and trying to clear the room [so] you organize into a team with walkie-talkies,” Chien said. “I think students really enjoy that and from what we found from responses, people tend to really enjoy the practical side of things and less the classroom side of things.”

For trainings, the club communicates with CERT to coordinate classes. Currently, Troy Preparedness Club is working towards garnering more



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDDIE CHIEN

**PERFECTLY PREPARED:** *Troy Preparedness Club members held Disaster Readiness Classes to teach students what to do in emergencies.*

students and families to participate. An upcoming topic they hope to employ is a “Stop the Bleed” training, where students will cover advanced first aid techniques.

Families and participants have given positive feedback regarding these training sessions, encouraging the club to organize longer trainings and courses over summer and winter breaks. The club members have enjoyed collaborating with CERT to introduce disaster readiness concepts to a younger audience, especially since CERT is more aimed

towards an adult population, Chien said.

“[Trainings] have been impactful and being able to have that opportunity to not only spend time with my friends, but also know that if an emergency situation happens, I can help my friends to be in a safer [situation], so we are able to really expand our outreach to the entire school,” Chien said. “[We] encourage having [an] open mind and a positive attitude because we really want [participants] to be able to not only learn a lot, but also have fun doing it.”

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# Celebrities and billionaires are literally shooting for the stars—to nobody's benefit

By Ethan Ferrer  
STAFF WRITER



Katy Perry has rocketed off her last fragment of monetary awareness.

On April 14, 2025, Blue Origin—an American space technology company owned by Jeff Bezos—launched famous singer and songwriter Perry into space. She did so with several others, including television personality Gayle King and Jeff Bezos's fiancé, Lauren Sánchez. Yet, observers have a question on their minds: what's the point? The eleven-minute joyride is estimated to have cost millions of dollars; a frivolous cost, especially considering the current economic climate. The passengers seem to have a single excuse—that they made history, participating in the first all-female spaceflight in over 60 years, giving hope to young minds. But does this really benefit anyone? In a time in which there are significant problems on the ground, those with privilege should use their wealth to help, not rocket off their money on some escapist journey. Overall, the extravagant actions of some celebrities are pointless and wasteful—their money should be spent elsewhere.

The indulgence of celebrities doesn't help anyone. Yet in responding to criticism regarding the Blue Origin flight, King emphasized how the flight was

meant to “[inspire] women and young girls.” But if she and the other passengers wanted to inspire a new generation, why not contribute the millions of dollars spent on the spaceflight towards an education fund, or college research? According to the National College Attainment Network, women graduate with an average of \$7,000 more in student debt, and are more likely than men to be burdened by student loans. Helping could mean closing this financial gap, not uselessly projecting inspiration. The frivolity of Perry's spaceflight does not deserve public attention. Furthermore, it should be noted that some celebrity purchases serve almost no purpose. Cosmopolitan lists a few such purchases, such as Lady Gaga's \$50,000 ghost detector and Ben Affleck's \$105,000 toilet seat—along with these, the aforementioned spaceflight can be considered purposeless too. Celebrities have money, yet some easily squander it. Those with more should help those with less. Celebrities shouldn't burn money on useless conveniences—or throw it aimlessly into space.

Furthermore, Perry's spaceflight, among other celebrity flights, isn't really progress. The singer's journey into space isn't the only one that Blue Origin has sponsored. Other celebrities that have traveled into space include former NFL star Micheal Strahan and “Star Trek” actor William Shatner. According to Jeff

Bezos, Blue Origin's goal is “to build a road to space, so that future generations can unleash their creativity.” But this statement masks what the company is really doing: commercializing space. Sending rich folk on joyrides is not progress. Rather, it is merely a way to make money, for the even richer people that benefit. As celebrities and billionaire aristocrats rocket off to space, the middle and lower class will be left behind. Statistics from USA Facts state that the top 20% of Americans held 71% of the national wealth in 2022, whereas the

middle class held only 26%. Should space become a capitalist tool, this gap will only grow exponentially. Space is future's frontier—a place to study and research. It isn't a place for the rich to colonize.

Overall, the habits of celebrities need to change. And while excuses for inspiration and progress can be made, both of these are superficial to the general public. This does deserve significant public recognition. Multi-millionaires like celebrities have the means to help people. They should act to support others, and do more than just be idolized pop figures.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF BLUE ORIGIN

# Money can't buy happiness—but it can buy Trader Joe's tote bags

By Jayden Beaumont  
STAFF WRITER



There is a darker side to the pastel colors of Trader Joe's mini totes.

In spring 2024, Trader Joe's created a nationwide frenzy by releasing their limited pastel mini tote bags, and as of April 7th, they're back in new pastel colors. The seemingly innocuous bags have attracted long lines of customers, willing to wait hours before the store opens to purchase one before they run out. Even more shockingly, some entrepreneurial individuals are now reselling these items, which were originally \$3, for over \$400—and people are buying them. The

Trader Joe's mini tote



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRADER JOE'S

craze is just one example of America's pervasive consumerism. Every day, people buy products they do not need simply because they are popular or on-trend. This casual spending may appear harmless but has serious implications for the environment, mental health and social wellbeing.

Constantly shifting trends—and the rampant consumerism that results from them—can worsen pollution and deplete resources. Fast fashion, for example, contributes 10% of global carbon emissions and pollutes water reserves. Not only is clothing production damaging to the environment, but so is what happens post-production. Oftentimes, people throw away clothing because it is made cheaply or goes out of style. According to Business Insider, 85% of textiles end up in

landfills every year, rather than in more beneficial places like thrift stores or donation baskets. How many pairs of white Crocs will sit in landfills for the rest of time after being replaced by Uggs and Birkenstocks? But it's not just clothing crowding landfills; it's everything that people buy and love—at least until the next trend comes around. As companies mass-produce goods to keep up with the insatiable appetite of consumers, they destroy the planet's resources. There are an infinite amount of trends

and treasures, but there is only one Earth. The Trader Joe's bags might be a fun collectable right now, but soon they will be just another forgotten factor in the planet's degradation.

America's emphasis on consumerism has adverse effects on mental health. People's eagerness to line up at four in the morning to buy a shopping bag shows materialism's strong roots in society. One way it has infiltrated daily lives is in its strong connection to social media. When influencers use their platforms to promote lifestyle and fashion trends, they bait viewers with products by emphasizing the various reasons they should want them. It may appear harmless on a phone screen, but its impacts are worrisome. According to award-winning psychologist Tim Kasser, “the more highly people [endorse] materialistic values, the more they

[experience] unpleasant emotions, depression and anxiety.” As people center their lives around the consumption of store-bought goods, they may lose sight of what truly makes them happy.

Furthermore, consumerism places greater pressure on the lower and middle class than it does on the wealthy. Not everyone

can afford to buy the new iPhone model or Lululemon leggings—nor should they be expected to. Consumerism widens the gap between the wealthy and

“The Trader Joe's bags might be a fun collectable right now, but soon they will be just another forgotten factor in the planet's degradation.”

average citizen, as it places importance on monetary wealth rather than on more valuable attributes like generosity or empathy. According to the University of Manchester, the lower class is more likely to experience feelings of “relative deprivation” due to the constant barrage of materialistic advertisements and media. People with lower incomes are less likely to be able to participate in social trends, such as buying frivolous products, and become more isolated from the wealthy. In this way, consumerism perpetuates the stigma surrounding poverty.

Ultimately, consumerism is damaging to the planet and the individual. The satisfaction that consumerism brings is fleeting. Shoppers will be disappointed to find that a tote bag does not hold as much happiness or satisfaction as they once hoped.

# Americans should ask experts about the state of the economy, not biased politicians

By Scarlett Clark  
STAFF WRITER



Americans don't understand our financial system, and reactions to Trump's economy prove it.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has enacted a slew of sweeping tariffs on the world. On April 2, Mr. Trump started his tariff tirade with a blanket 10% rate on imports across the globe, and continued with incredibly high new tariffs. Trump

has paused some of these motions due to negative reactions from the public and other countries, but the tariffs are already causing consequences in the United States economy. Trump's import taxes have set off a stock market plunge and economic chaos. But it seems as if American citizens do not understand what tariffs will mean for our financial system. A great deal of confusion exists even amongst those who oppose the policies. Economic illiteracy is prevalent in the midst of this issue, and it is imperative that Americans gain a deeper understanding of how their economy works.

The tariffs are already wreaking financial chaos. Historically, these staggering tariffs have triggered recession or negative economic consequences. This is evidenced by the Hawley-Smoot tariff, which was a key catalyst for the Great Depression. Financial analysts and experts at credit agency Fitch Ratings believe a recession is likely, if not probable, should Trump maintain these tariffs. Consumers and citizens will be worse off, according to estimates by economists who spoke to the New York Times, who stated that "American households could see thousands of dollars of additional costs annually." Additionally, these tariffs don't make sense in our current globalized economy. Not only are tariffs almost certain to severely harm the American public, they lack functionality in the web of globalization that the U.S. economy operates within. But citizens of the U.S. are struggling to understand and recognize how these tariffs fit into their economy, particularly due to a crisis of economic misunderstanding.

Financial illiteracy is a danger to our nation which has resulted in a disproportionate and inaccurate reaction to the chaos of Trump's second-term economic legislation.

Nearly all economists agree that the tariffs are a negative thing for the U.S., and yet, a poll by the New York Post taken in mid-April revealed that 91% of Republicans support them despite the devastating consequences they have.

This makes it evident that Americans must educate themselves further than their party lines to combat economic misunderstandings. The James Madison Institute reported studies showing that "very few Americans truly understand basic economic concepts, much less the complex working of the financial system." In the modern day, it is more important than ever that Americans understand the policies being implemented by federal leaders. It is often tempting, when the news becomes a confusing flurry of buzzwords and frustrating policies, to bury one's head in the sand. But it is incredibly necessary that Americans stay up-to-date on what is truly going on in the economy. Especially since Trump's economic legislation is so chaotic and unprecedented, citizens must have a grasp of such policies' implications to understand their financial situation within a disorderly economy. In times like these, the public needs to listen and learn from real experts and analysts, rather than confining themselves to the perspectives of sensationalist figureheads.

Citizens must gain a better understanding of our present-day economy. During a time of economic instability and public confusion, Trump's tariffs are the wrong solution to a very real problem. The American public's knowledge gap damages the ability of citizens to recognize how incompatible Trump's economic policies are with the eroding globalized financial system of the United States.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

# The government should not try to inhibit the rights and freedoms of private universities

By Chelsea Engelhardt  
STAFF WRITER



Trump strikes again with yet another rejection of civil liberties.

Harvard University finally stood up for their rights as a private university but is now facing the consequences. On April 14, President Trump demanded that private universities like Harvard and Columbia concede to his orders to curb student speech and diversity efforts. Unlike Columbia University, which remained complacent to Trump's initiatives to stop pro-Palestine movements and diversity, equity and inclusion practices, Harvard refused to follow in its footsteps. As a result, Trump froze federal grants totaling \$2.3 billion to go to Harvard. The government should not step in trying to regulate private universities' decisions on student liberties or admission practices regarding diversity and inclusion.

The policies in the letter to Harvard are unreasonable. The letter sent April 12 by the Administration to Alan Garber, the president of Harvard University, listed multiple contingencies for the "continuation of the relationship" between the government and Harvard, including the receiving of federal funds. Among these contingencies are the complete end to DEI hiring and admissions, the publication of any foreign grants sent to Harvard, an all-encompassing mask ban, restrictions on student clubs and the halting of admissions of any students "hostile to the American values and institutions inscribed in the U.S. Constitution and Declaration

of Independence." This proposes a near complete government regulation of Harvard University's private affairs. This is unrealistic and irrational.

Trump and his administration should not have tried to take away the rights of private universities. The Republican party believes that the government should limit regulations imposed on businesses and individuals. The New Conservatism movement of the 1980s created this policy of deregulation for businesses to stimulate the economy and allow capitalism to thrive. Trump is directly going against his party's policies, trying to regulate speech, liberties and privileges students receive by going to a private school. Free speech should not be contingent on the approval of the administration. It is unconstitutional for the government to assert its power over the education system, especially at a private school, because it interferes with freedoms. If this were to pass like it did in Columbia, censorship and a forced sense of penalty on speaking for what one believes would take a turn for the worst.

The Trump administration's reaction to President Garber's refusal will have serious side effects for the rest of the world. Along with the freezing of federal grant money, Trump also threatened to forcibly remove the tax-

exempt status that Harvard currently upholds. The precedence behind this is that Harvard should be "taxed as a political entity if it keeps

**"Free speech should not be contingent on the approval of the administration. It is unconstitutional for the government to assert its power over the education system, especially at a private school, because it interferes with freedoms."**

pushing political, ideological, and terrorist inspired supporting "sickness." It is completely irrational to deem an institution as political for not conforming to a biased agenda. This status is contingent on Harvard working

in the public interest which Trump claims is no longer true. However, refusing these terms is not against the public interest, it is just against

the interest of the leading party. It would be an overreach of the government to take away the status based on the values the university chooses to align with. The government's threats are nearly impossible to implement, so Harvard should not be penalized for rejecting them.

The sparring exchanges between Harvard University and the Trump administration is a reminder to the daunting reality of negative changes to society. Harvard believes in a censorship-free student campus—Trump's administration is threatening that. Not only were their initial demands unreasonable, the federal government is being too extreme in their reactions to Harvard's refusals of compliance. As a result, Harvard is not suing the Trump administration for the violation of Harvard's rights to federal grants. The administration should not go against its party's values in order to regulate a company that is already privatized.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MINT

# SIGNING STORIES

Read about 2024-2025 Warrior athletes decisions on their college commitments and embracing a new chapter in their journey! See more below about where the Warriors are going to go to!

Compiled by Kusuma Kothamasu, SPORTS EDITOR, Seungwoo Lee, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR, photos by Aiden Chong, ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR, graphics courtesy of Canva



Beneath the scorching sun and worn cleats, senior Ava De Leest's journey began in her own backyard, following the footsteps of her older brothers as a five-year-old with big dreams. Now, her commitment to play Division I soccer for Boise State University is a showcase a her growth and resilience. For her, soccer started as a fun activity that later evolved into a focused pursuit of excellence. "I think it has taught me how to be like a leader on the field and also a leader off the field, especially with my position—it is all about communicating and stepping up," De Leest said. A major shift in her journey was during her freshman year of high school, when she made the difficult decision to switch clubs and join Legends FC. The move took her out of her comfort zone, but it gave her the exposure she needed to compete at a higher level of soccer. "It was uncomfortable at first, but I knew it was the right step if I wanted a future in soccer," De Leest said. She eventually visited Boise State and immediately felt a sense of belonging and a need to go there. The coaches, the program and the academic opportunities all aligned with her goals of wanting to push her gameplay to another level. Now, De Leest is preparing for the challenges of life out of state and the intensity of college play. "There is a lot of work behind the scenes," De Leest said. "But if you are willing to sacrifice and stay hungry, anyone can make it happen."



The stadium lights burned bright as senior Cayleb Quiroz celebrated one of his favorite memories—beating La Habra in a thrilling junior year victory, a moment that captured the heart and spirit of Troy High School football. Now, Quiroz is preparing for his next chapter, committed to continuing his athletic and academic journey at Fullerton College. "I chose Fullerton because I think it's a great culture that they have," Quiroz said. "Being able to go early is really exciting because it allows me to learn more from the team earlier and get better." For Quiroz, the opportunity to be coached by some of the best in the game was too good to pass up. Fullerton College's coaching staff, with decades of experience, offered the perfect environment for growth. "Being able to be coached by a lot of the really, really good players who have been coaching for 30-plus years is really exciting for me," Quiroz said. Reflecting on his time at Troy, Quiroz points to the energy and unity of the team after big wins as unforgettable highlights of his high school career. "Beating La Habra my junior year was one of the best moments for our entire team," Quiroz said. "It was just exciting to see everyone that pumped up after a win." As he looks ahead, Quiroz is ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities waiting for him at the next level.



The buzz of competition and long hours of training have become second nature to Montana Longcrier, a senior soccer player whose love for the game began before she even started elementary school. Now, after years of dedication, she is committed to playing Division I soccer at the University of Hawaii. Longcrier first encountered the sport through playing it alongside her friends. "It was super interesting because you do not really use a ball with your feet normally, and it was fun to play that way," Longcrier said. However, Longcrier's journey was not one without setbacks. She switched between multiple club teams until she found the right fit and a coach who helped guide her through the recruiting process. She recalls one of the most difficult parts of her journey was sending emails to college coaches and not hearing back. "Sometimes they do not respond, and that is the hardest part," Longcrier said. "But you can not take it personally." That persistence paid off. When the University of Hawaii, the school she had dreamed of attending since seventh grade, reached out with interest, Longcrier knew immediately where she wanted to be. Now, she looks forward to joining the Rainbow Wahine soccer family, earning a degree in kinesiology and embracing the next chapter of both academic and athletic growth. For Longcrier, soccer has always been more than a sport—it has been her pathway to purpose and paradise. "Just go for it," Longcrier said. "There is so much to gain



The clock struck zero, and the field exploded with cheers as senior Samantha Neill and her teammates rushed together, celebrating their CIF flag football championship win. After a long, grueling season, victory had never tasted sweeter. Samantha's journey in sports began when she was just four years old, chasing a soccer ball across a field with wide eyes and a determined heart. She later found new passions at Troy, joining the varsity track team her freshman year and stepping onto the flag football field for Troy's inaugural season as a senior. "I love being athletic and trying new things," Neill said. "Every sport taught me something new—physically and mentally—to become a better athlete." Throughout high school, Samantha battled more than just tough opponents. Injuries sidelined her multiple times, forcing her to watch from the sidelines when she wanted nothing more than to be out there competing. "When I couldn't play, I still showed up for my team," Neill said. "And when I came back, I gave it everything I had." Her resilience paid off. After a long recruiting process filled with emails, showcases, and ID camps, Samantha committed to California State University, Monterey Bay, to continue her soccer career. The beautiful campus, strong athletic program, and academic opportunities made it the perfect fit. As she looks ahead to college and beyond, Samantha reflects on everything sports have given her. "I've learned that no matter what happens, you have to keep pushing forward—and trust that it'll all be worth it."



The soccer field has always been a proving ground for Kyla Brakefield, a senior defender who began her journey at three years old. After years of training, setbacks and self-growth, Brakefield is now headed to Seattle University to continue her career at the Division I level. Brakefield was inspired by her father, a former college soccer player, and her early years were filled with sports of all kinds, but soccer captivated her the most. "I wanted to follow in his footsteps and become a college athlete," Brakefield said. After starting her club career at Chelsea, she transitioned to Slammers FC, where she has played for nearly eight years. A major realization for Brakefield and she pushed forward, not giving up on the sport that she dearly loves. "That was tough, but it pushed me to grow and I made the team the next year," Brakefield said. Her persistence during club training and highschool soccer season caught the attention of Seattle University, where she connected with the team's coaching staff and environment right away. She was especially excited about playing for a female head coach, something she had never experienced before and was an extra unique factor that made her choose Seattle. Brakefield is now preparing to balance academics and college-level athletics, and she is motivated by the opportunities ahead. "Train even on the days you don't feel like it," Brakefield said. "Those are the days that really matter."



The splash of the starting gun and the roar of the crowd became familiar sounds for senior Kevin Yum, a distance swimmer whose dedication to the sport has shaped his journey to collegiate competition. Now, Yum is set to continue swimming at Fordham College. Specializing in the 500, 1000, and mile events, Yum has spent countless hours in the water building endurance and strength. "I'm a miler and also swim the thousand and the 500, so the longer distance events," Yum said. "In a typical practice, we'd hit maybe 7000 to 10000 meters." Yum is excited to step into the intense atmosphere of college swimming, where energy and team spirit drive athletes to push their limits. "I'm looking forward to the intense energy that comes with all the meets in college swimming," Yum said. "We're really supporting each other, and all of our teammates, so it's pretty cool." Looking back, one of his most memorable moments came as a sophomore, when he watched older teammates succeed at the CIF State Championships. "Our 2023 CIF State team was memorable," Yum said. "Seeing the seniors and juniors getting to swim in our relays was really awesome."

**SIGNING STORIES CONTINUED...**

# SIGNING STORIES

Read about 2024-2025 Warrior athletes decisions on their college commitments and embracing a new chapter in their journey! See more below about where the Warriors are going to go to!

Compiled by Kusuma Kothamasu, SPORTS EDITOR, Seungwoo Lee, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR, articles by Kusuma Kothamasu, SPORTS EDITOR

The dirt flew, and the crowd roared as senior Raquel Alonzo stood tall on the softball field, closing out another game with her signature focus and drive. After years of hard work and unforgettable memories, she is now preparing to take her talents to El Camino College.

Alonzo's love for softball was built over years of competing, growing, and finding a second family in her teammates. Her experiences at Troy High School helped shape not just her athletic skills but also her resilience and mindset.

"I chose El Camino College because of the coaches and the girls," Alonzo said. "I love the coaching staff. The coaches are very nice, and the girls are also very nice."

Her journey wasn't without its challenges. Like many athletes, Alonzo learned that mistakes are a part of the game, and bouncing back from them is what defines true competitors.

"I've learned that it's okay to make mistakes and just keep trying and bounce back even harder," she said.

Through it all, it was the bonds she formed that stood out the most. Team bonding activities and friendships became some of her most treasured memories, showing her that success is sweeter when shared.

Looking ahead to college, Alonzo is excited for the opportunity to grow as both a player and a person.

"I'm super excited," Alonzo said. "I'm looking forward to challenging myself and seeing what else I'm capable of."



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAQUEL ALONZO

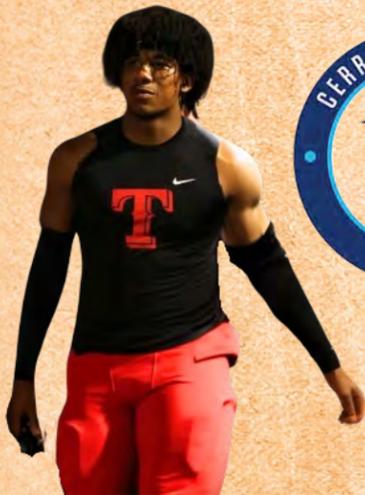


PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLEN WATTS

The roar of the crowd echoed across the field as senior Kellen Watts, his brother, and his cousin celebrated a tackle for loss—a special moment that captured everything he loved about playing football at Troy High School.

Now, Watts is ready for his next chapter, committing to continue his athletic journey at Cerritos College.

"It was definitely on my visit over there," Watts said. "I really felt at home, and I really love what they're doing. It seemed very similar to Troy, and I just loved it."

Watts is especially eager for the new challenges that college football will bring, particularly the jump in competition against older and more experienced players.

"I'm most excited about playing against older guys," Watts said. "There's a big difference between playing high schoolers and playing 20-year-olds and 22-year-olds. It's not just physical—it's mental, too."

Looking back on his time at Troy, that shared tackle for loss with his brother and cousin remains one of his favorite memories, symbolizing the family bonds and teamwork that made his experience so meaningful.

"It was a special moment for us," Watts said.

As he heads to Cerritos, Watts is ready to face the next level with the same passion, toughness, and love for the game that brought him this far.

The final whistle blew and smiles broke across the field as senior Mia Rosa and her teammates celebrated another deep CIF playoff run—a tradition that defined her years at Troy. Now, LaRosa is ready to continue her soccer career at California State University, Fullerton.

For LaRosa, the excitement is about the friendships and new experiences waiting ahead.

"I'm really excited about rooming with Naomi and about going in with friends," LaRosa said. "We know a lot of the girls are really nice, so I'm just excited to meet new people and share this new experience."

One of her most memorable moments at Troy came during CIF playoffs, a stage where the level of competition brought the team closer together.

"CIF has been a great experience," Rosa said. "It's just a different level when you get there, and we kind of have grown together in that way."

Beyond the physical game, Rosa understands the importance of building strong team chemistry—something she plans to carry into her collegiate career.

"On the social aspect, it's important to continue working on teamwork and being collaborative with other people in situations like on a team," she said.

As she prepares for this new chapter, LaRosa is ready to bring her skills, leadership, and team spirit to Cal State Fullerton.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIA LAROSA



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE LEON GUERRERO

The splash of the start and the roar of the crowd have become familiar to senior swimmer Luke Leon Guerrero, who will continue his athletic and academic journey at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

After years of training and competition, Guerrero is excited to take the next step in his career.

"I'm excited to announce my commitment to UNLV," Guerrero said. "I'm so grateful for my coaches, teammates, and family who supported me every step of the way."

From early mornings in the pool to high-stakes meets, the journey was never easy, but it was worth it. As he prepares to join a new team and compete at the collegiate level, Guerrero looks forward to representing the people who helped him get there.

The final whistle echoed across the field as senior Naomi Hochgesang and her teammates celebrated yet another victory—a familiar feeling during her four standout years at Troy. Now, after years of hard work and determination, Hogsang is set to continue her soccer career at California State University, Fullerton.

For Hochgesang, playing Division 1 soccer has been a long-time dream fueled by countless practices, games, and lessons learned both on and off the field.

"I'm just really grateful for the opportunity to get to play," Hochgesang said.

Winning league titles all four years and making deep CIF playoff runs created memories she will never forget.

Beyond the trophies, Hochgesang learned one of the most vital lessons of being a student athlete: balance—an essential skill she will carry into her collegiate career.

Now, she is ready for the next chapter, bringing with her discipline and passion that defined her time as a Warrior.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NAOMI HOCHGESANG

# PICTURE-PERFECT

With the crisp click of NJROTC's colorguard drill shoes or the beeping of busy city cars, zoom in on the picture-perfect perspectives that junior Minjae Jeon cultivates in his event and street photography collections.

Compiled by Eileen Um, **FEATURE EDITOR**, and Emma Gong, **ASSISTANT FEATURE EDITOR**, article by Kathleen Hong, **STAFF WRITER**, photos by Aiden Chong, **ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR**, and photos courtesy of Minjae Jeon

Camera in hand and eyes sharp with focus, junior Minjae Jeon weaves through rows of crisp uniforms and polished boots, capturing each fleeting moment. In every proud stance and synchronized step, Jeon works to preserve the discipline, unity and spirit of his fellow cadets through his photos. Jeon is a passionate photographer and the photography division head for NJROTC. Through his artistic storytelling and passion for capturing reality, Jeon strives to portray the world and the people he meets from new perspectives.

Jeon started his photography journey through inspiration from his uncle, a filmmaker who encouraged Jeon to utilize the camera in his own style. Jeon joined NJROTC's photography division in his sophomore year. While on campus, he uses his skills in event photography to capture various NJROTC events and teams. Outside of school Jeon enjoys street photography, exploring cities, interacting with new people and admiring attractions. Jeon highlights how photography allows him to document the world from unique and unexpected angles through patterns, colors and emotions alongside focusing on framing and compilation in his photos, interweaving

his knowledge of cinematography throughout. While photographing his fellow NJROTC cadets, he works to accentuate elements portraying team spirit and unity, finding sentimental value in capturing his fellow cadets and documenting important moments for years to come.

"[Photography] allows me to capture the world in a different perspective," Jeon said. "It allows me to create memories for our cadets and myself included, to look at them in the future and reflect on who we were and how we've grown."

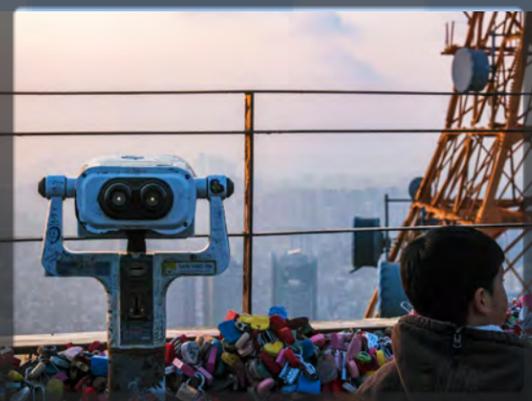
Through the camera lens, Jeon discovered not just a creative outlet, but a path of personal growth. When he first began street photography, Jeon struggled with social anxiety. Despite being a creative who enjoys documenting people's day-to-day life, Jeon struggled to approach his desired subjects in public. However, Jeon's anxieties gradually faded as he gained experience. Through interactions with various strangers from different backgrounds and perspectives, Jeon discovered the value in understanding others' stories behind each photograph. As he talked with these strangers, he learned about their different paths and perspectives, expanding his scope on the world and sparking a desire to

understand others' personal stories. Reflecting on his growth through hardship, Jeon extends his gratitude towards his siblings. As strong supporters of his work and sources of inspiration for Jeon, his siblings taught him to embrace the beauty of imperfections. With his family by his side and his camera in hand, Jeon continues his growth as an artist and a person.

"[Photography showed] me that the world is a very large place, and everyone has very diverse stories," Jeon said. "It created a craving for me to learn about those stories and learn about these people, what they do and how their life differs from mine."

As Jeon looks ahead, he plans to continue photography as a lifelong passion. Reflecting on his journey of artistry and self-growth, Jeon encourages the Troy population to remember the world's diversity of people and experiences, and to always be curious and accepting of people's life stories.

"There are really a lot of paths that people have taken, a lot of different stories," Jeon said. "They have gone through very different things as you and I did, so just always consider that we all have different perspectives and be open minded."



# MATCHA MANIA

From local cafes to social media platforms, matcha has taken the world by storm. Read more about this green goodness and the origin of its virality

Compiled by Zoey Bahng, **LIFESTYLE EDITOR**, and Kailey Reichman, **ASSISTANT LIFESTYLE EDITOR**, article by Bianca Naranjo, **STAFF WRITER**, photos courtesy of Canva, Bag of Cakes, Teaspoon, Ashley Alexander and MADE Coffee

The blooming flowers and rising temperatures of spring create the ideal scene to cool off with an earthy, refreshing matcha. Matcha's rise to relevance this season is mainly thanks to social media chatter and viral takes on matcha tea by creators and restaurants. If you want to join in on this trend, you can enjoy matcha from the comfort of your own home through recipes, or visit popular matcha locations near you.

Like many foods that have found a niche in modern trends, matcha has maintained a strong relevance that allowed it to evolve into its new variations. Culturally, matcha originated in China, but its shade-grown tea leaves became much more popular in Japanese tea-making, which is where matcha is mostly associated. In its purest form, matcha is a powdered green tea that is easily recognized for its vivid color and organically savory, grassy taste. Many people enjoy matcha simply as a tea, while some may mix it with sugar and cream to balance the strong flavor in the form of a matcha latte.

While matcha is an incredible flavor on its own, there are

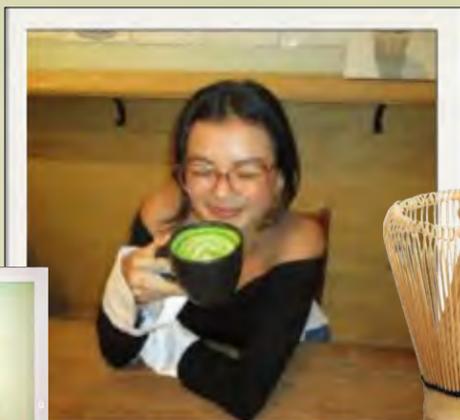
also some great ways to switch it up. Flavors such as ube or mango have had their own spotlight on the social media stage in the past, and matcha has taken a similar turn with its own customizations, like adding trendy flavored syrups and cold foams. One of these viral sensations include Fullerton's own Vivot Craft Café and their matcha flights, which are smaller portions of differently flavored matcha lattes arranged together, offering a matcha sampler experience for anyone interested in trying a variety of flavors. Some lifestyle influencers have decided to use their following to further the recent matcha-mania by creating their own brands, for example YouTuber Ashley Alexander.

Alexander, who records popular lifestyle content for teenagers and young adults under the username "ur mom ashley," has created her own matcha brand, Nami. If you are looking to join the matcha trend without having to make it yourself, just swing by a local café. For many matcha beginners, it is useful to start with the most crowd-friendly, tried-and-true locations so that you start off on a reliable foot in your flavor journey. Paris Baguette is an option local to Troy that features a wide range of delicious matcha-inspired desserts, including iced as well as hot lattes, frappés and, on occasion, matcha flavored tea cakes. Teaspoon in Downtown Brea features a similar take on sweet, matcha variations, featuring

matcha blended with milk and fruit, and even a matcha macaron. Their double matcha latte has also fostered attention as of recent on social media through its flavored cream topping, which amplifies the intensity of the drink's taste.

To step up your matcha game, there are many recipes that may be the perfect way to join this trend. Although matcha tea is easily assembled through powders, hot water or milk and the signature bamboo whisk, you can step up your game by incorporating the green tea powder into non-beverage items like pastries or breakfast foods. This includes mixing matcha powder into your morning parfait or adding some matcha to your overnight oats before you leave them in the fridge for the night. You can also try to add the powder into your smoothies for an extra boost of caffeine. For an even more creative take, the blog Matcha Oishii recommends matcha French toast, which can be achieved by mixing an egg, a tablespoon of matcha powder and a teaspoon of vanilla extract, then dipping six slices of bread in this mixture and frying them. After the bread is done, mix together sugar and matcha powder and use it to coat your bread to your liking, and you are now a successful contributor to this spring's most tasty trend!

Matcha's current rise in fame is thanks to the boost of trendy takes by creators and shops, but the cultural relevance and flavor profile of matcha will remain evergreen, making it a beverage that is sure to return for springs to come.



Ashley Alexander with her Matcha



## Matcha Café Recommendations

### Bag of Cakes

1964 N Placentia Ave, Fullerton

Bag of Cakes does not disappoint with their variety of matcha selections including their popular "Matcha Einspanner," which is topped with creamy foam and matcha powder. Their matcha latte is, "a really good balance of sweetness and matcha flavor," said sophomore Katelyn Pham. This is a great option for a local, high-quality matcha with a whirl of flavor!



### MADE Coffee

107 W Amerige Ave, Fullerton

The vibrant, yellow accents of the seating outside of Made Coffee café pair well with their deliciously-flavored matcha lattes. Their most popular matcha is their regular, ceremonial grade latte. It is also offered in mango, strawberry and blueberry flavors as syrup at the bottom. The next time that matcha craving hits, this spot is definitely worth checking out!



### Vivot Craft Café

115 E Commonwealth Ave, Fullerton

Formally known as "Soejeatea," Vivot Craft Café has been a recent, local sensation, known for their flavorful "Matcha Einspanner" and assortment of differently flavored "matcha flights." The quality of matcha is top-notch, as they source their powders directly from Japan. Check out this amazing, local café that will not disappoint!



# SABLE fABLE

Bon Iver returns to the music scene with their first album after six years of silence. Check out Oracle's review of Bon Iver's experimental new album, "SABLE, fABLE!"

Compiled by Kate Berger, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, article by Celeste Hollingsworth, STAFF WRITER, graphics courtesy of Canva and Vulture

Despite the black box in the album cover, Bon Iver's album "SABLE, fABLE" ventures as far outside the box as possible. Bon Iver, formed in 2006, is an indie folk band that dabbles in many genres such as folktronica, pop and soft rock. Lead vocalist and founder Justin Vernon produces their signature soft falsetto sound, while six other artists focus on the strong instrumental background. Unlike their fluid album "For Emma," the sound of "SABLE, fABLE" is undefinable. "SABLE, fABLE" veers off track with its many differences from previous albums, with its most notable difference being the two contrasting sections composed of songs released in

an earlier EP. Disc One feels like a tribute to the band's iconic, sorrowful sound. On the other end, Disc Two is generally upbeat and experimental, forming a love letter to creative expression.

Regardless of their folk beginnings, Bon Iver explores musical fusion in "SABLE, fABLE." Although this is not their first experimental album, "SABLE, fABLE" is bold, as it combines multiple genres to create a distinct album. For example, track six on Disc Two, "I'll Be There," has a soulful chorus that is gospel adjacent, yet the slow-paced song is accompanied by hypnotic electronic sounds to form a unique sound. This song is unlike any other, intertwining unorthodox elements together just like every other song within "SABLE, fABLE."

Another unforeseen pairing is in "Day One" featuring Dijon & Flock, which combines R&B, techno and a strong piano backtrack.

These styles accompany soft vocals and other acoustic instrumentals, bringing forth an inspiring mood in their natural sound. In some cases, multiple directions can limit a song and make it fall short of its musical potential, but Bon Iver's venture into uncharted territory proves as an exception to this pattern.

The album delivers these genres with excellence thanks to the flawless production. The quality and smoothness of the sound reflect the endless list of musical engineers, composers and

musicians who worked on this album. The third track on Disc One, "AWARD SEASON," features a saxophone solo section that has a certain unreplicated resonance. The saxophone transforms from just a simple feature to a section that cleanses listeners as it washes over them. The producer's choice to introduce a hazy filter over the sound elicits an unshakable sense of nostalgia and peacefulness. The saxophone is unconventional in the mainstream music scene, revealing that Bon Iver create music based on passion, not trends. Clearly, Bon Iver does not abandon their dedication to using classical acoustic instruments in "SABLE, fABLE."

In addition to the album's satisfying sounds, Bon Iver matches this with the unbridled rawness of the storytelling and lyricism. The minimalist track, "AWARD SEASON," deserves even more awards this season for another reason. The lack of any strong backtrack sheds light on the reflective lyrics. While the song is cyclical melodically, the lyrics have an allure that makes listeners stay for each new line. Singing the lines he wrote during a peaceful walk, Vernon reflects, "Oh, how everything can change, In such a small time frame, You can be remade, You can live again." Vernon shares how, after a period of seemingly permanent darkness, love is what gave him a new passion for life and music. In "SABLE, fABLE," Bon Iver bares

themselves in a vulnerable way that makes a mark on today's music scene.

Together, the vividness of the tracks evokes all types of emotions, ranging from love to nostalgia. Despite hating all the attention that comes along with promoting a new album, Vernon shared these songs with the world as a testament to how much he cares about music. Through its undeniable artful expression, "SABLE, fABLE" reminds listeners that music should not be a popularity contest, but an authenticity contest.



# A MINECRAFT MOVIE

Take a look at “A Minecraft Movie”—the movie that opens a portal to a new view of satirical comedy!

Compiled by Kate Berger, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, article by Riddhi Arora, STAFF WRITER, graphics courtesy of Canva and Minecraft

“A Minecraft Movie” enchants viewers with its creative, satirical recreation of the nostalgic game. Released April 4, “A Minecraft Movie” is inspired by Minecraft, the well-known game involving endless exploration of towns and caves. Created by director Jared Hess, comedy icons Jack Black and Jennifer Coolidge take center stage on screen. Upon its release, the movie became the best-selling movie of 2025. Taking an ironic look at the popular childhood game, “A Minecraft Movie’s” blend of witty humor and light-hearted adventures makes watching the movie feel like riding a redstone-powered rollercoaster of emotions.

The blend of realism and CGI adds to the enjoyment of the film by adding a comedic level of absurdity. Rather than settling for a purely cartoon look, CGI producer James Thomas took an approach as unconventional as the movie’s comedy. The hybrid of realism and animation adds to the satirical effect of the film due to the two styles’ diverging features. The comparison of the realistic people to the square-like villagers residing in the realm seems ridiculous because the two figures are never expected to meet, yet they do. From the strand-like textures of llamas to the skin-like features of villagers, “A Minecraft Movie’s” CGI allows the movie to bridge

the gap between two worlds. The film blends CGI and realism seamlessly, making the humorous film engaging from the beginning to The End.

With a near-perfect mix of nostalgic beats and catchy lyrics, “A Minecraft Movie” elevates the experience from bedrock to the height limit. Jack Black’s famous “Steve’s Lava Chicken” has risen in popularity all over social media with its catchy, unforgettable wordplay like rhyming “snack” with “lava attack.” Though it is only played for a short 15 seconds, the song resonates with the audience, and it is remembered for days to come. On the flip side, the somber song “Ode to Dennis” during Steve’s farewell to his loyal dog is not only melancholic, but it is also bittersweet. Black’s loud, echoing howl at the end of the song transforms the heartbreaking scene to one that is appropriate for the comedic yet tender scenes of the film. Through “Steve’s Lava Chicken” and “Ode to Dennis,” the film adds new music in addition to the nostalgic Minecraft song “Minecraft.” The addition of the track to the beginning and end of the film brings the entire movie full circle, making the audience reminisce about their own times playing Minecraft. The variety of music was appropriately placed throughout the film, connecting the movie to the

audience as they watch their favorite childhood game come to life on the big screen.

Actors leave viewers awestruck one moment and exploding with laughter the next with their satirical mannerisms. Black, a famous singer-songwriter, showcases his superior acting and singing talents with his empowering voice. Black’s role as an adult with a childlike dream complements Coolidge’s role as a high school principal with big responsibilities. Where Black brings exaggerated movements and enthusiastic line deliveries, Coolidge gives variety to the characters, acting clueless when most others are dialed in. The blend of both actors in the film elevates the film from serious to satirical. For instance, while Coolidge’s character is on a date and a waiter asks, “Are you finished?” Coolidge replies, “I think he’s Swedish. We are done eating though.” With witty humor mixed throughout the screenplay and humorous lines, “A Minecraft Movie” proves to be a comedy where jokes are boundless.

Exploding like TNT, “A Minecraft Movie’s” humorous rendition of the nostalgic game demonstrates a refreshing shift from serious to playful creativity within the film industry.

