

# ORACLE

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## Palettes of Promise

The talented student artists of Open Lid Collective are back at it again with their second annual art exhibition at the Aquarium of the Pacific. Find out about how these creative warriors spread environmental activism through their artworks!

Compiled by Zoey Bahng, LIFESTYLE EDITOR, article by Bianca Naranjo, STAFF WRITER, photos courtesy of Open Lid Collective and Canva

In the midst of a complicated climate change phenomenon, there is one language that everyone can communicate with: art. Voicing their artistic adaptation of environmental activism, the student artists of Open Lid Collective organized their second annual art gallery at the Aquarium of the Pacific. OLC is an art collective founded by junior Zoey Bahng with the mission of creating collaborative spaces where young artists can empower their craft through workshops, social events and art galleries. Not only does OLC support the goals of countless youth artists, but it also strengthens the professional skills of the student directors working within the collective to bring the gallery into fruition.

Recently, the collective hosted their biggest art opportunity of the year as a part of the Earth Day Teen Climate Festival at the Aquarium of the Pacific. From April 27-28, over 6000 visitors admired OLC's gallery consisting of 33 student artworks of varying mediums. The theme of this year's exhibition was "Sustainable Art" in honor of Earth Day, as reflected by the environmentally-conscious concepts depicted in many of the exhibition's works of art. In order to prepare for the gallery, OLC board members carefully collaborated to bring the impactful art pieces into the spotlight. One part of their several months of preparation included a pre-gallery workshop at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center to collect the artworks for

exhibition and create personalized art plaques. The collective's social media committee also took on an essential role in publicizing this gallery by designing graphics, securing sponsorships from brands like Zebra Pen and advertising the event to various schools and art studios all across the Orange, Long Beach and Los Angeles counties. The editorial team furthered this outreach by promoting the gallery in OLC's carefully curated monthly newsletter, helping to accentuate the detailed artwork recruitment, collection and exhibition processes. Junior Anh Nguyen, OLC's Director of Social Media, shared her pivotal role in facilitating these events. "I have been communicating with the artists and sending acceptance emails. I helped organize and create flyers, posts, and more to attract participation and artists," Nguyen said. As the OLC illustrator, junior Kamran Maghzi also shared the impact of the many connections made through the gallery's preparations. "The planning also produced a connection between artists, OLC as a collective, and larger organizations like the Aquarium of the Pacific," Maghzi said. OLC's large-scale events allow students like Nguyen and Maghzi to learn from an impressively wide scope of professional endeavors, expanding their leadership and strengthening their organization skills.

Along with the first-hand planning and execution of the exhibit, this gallery also left a lasting legacy by empowering youth artists and activists. Allowing artists an opportunity to showcase their

work at a young age builds the vital support, confidence and recognition that a prosperous future in art necessitates. "It is beautiful and meaningful to see people dedicate their time and efforts into creating art," Nguyen said. Being a part of a high school art exhibition gives artists the rare opportunity to display their passions to the world, while also serving as an impactful experience to highlight in college resumes. In addition, the artists get to play a primary role in opening the eyes of the public to environmental efforts, which is essential in the critical state of our current world. Conveying this vital message via paint, charcoal or clay is inarguably one of the most effective ways to evoke emotion and activism. With large-scale, student-led art exhibitions like that of OLC, artists can spread their talents and messages and coordinators can step up to new levels of professionalism in order to spread a creatively refreshing, impactful sense of inspiration to the world. The extensive lengths of collaboration, ambition and dedication that the OLC gallery demanded from its board members and artists proved to not only be immediately gratifying with the impressive success of the event, but also rewarding in the long run as students gained confidence in their professionalism and a sense of appreciation for the intricacies of learning leadership.



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# Warrior Math Club hosts first Integration Bee for students interested in calculus

Math Club held the competition for Warriors to test their understanding of integrals and explore their passion for problem solving.

By Jenny Huang  
STAFF WRITER

Aiming to strengthen mathematical understanding, Warrior Math Club hosted their first integration bee in Room 305 April 24.

Like spelling bees, contestants in an integration bee compete to evaluate integrals, a calculus operation. Math Club Co-President Tanav Changal devised the idea to host one at Troy after watching an integration bee during a math meet at the California Institute of Technology in January.

“Everyone was solving integrals together, [and] it created a sense of community,” Changal said. “Troy has been wanting to do an integration bee for a few years now, but this math meet [made] us think it would be cool to actually host one.”

During a typical meeting, the Math Club board lectures on topics present in mathematical competitions such as the American Mathematics Competition. The club introduces competitive problem solving to those unfamiliar with it, Changal said.

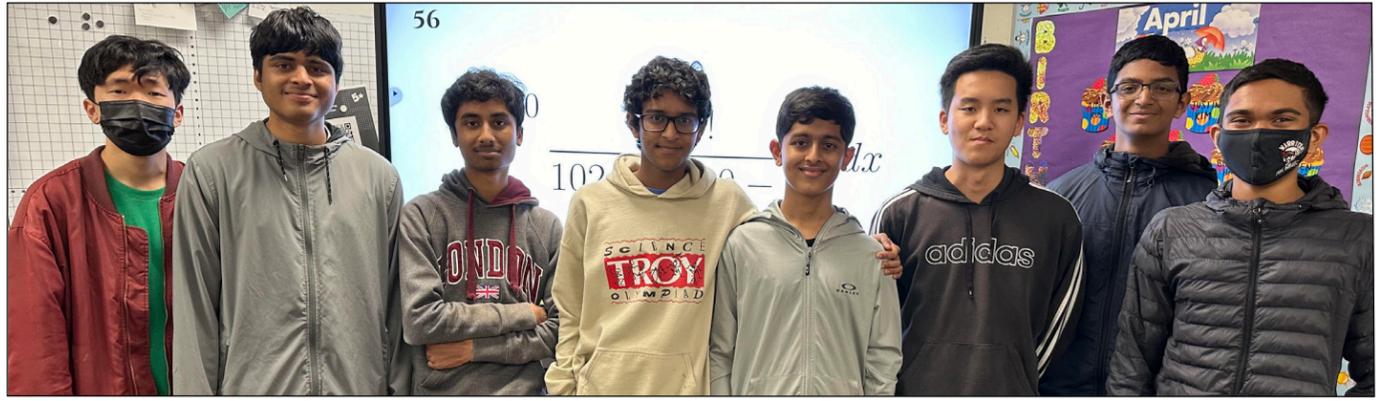


PHOTO COURTESY OF TANAV CHANGAL

**INCREDIBLE INTEGRALS:** (Left to right) Integration Bee participants Min Seong Park, Srikar Papineni and Aarav Bhatnagar with board members Aditya Peddi and Tanav Changal as well as club members Daniel Jiang, Mugilan Nambi and Mateus Noronha.

“I think it is especially fun to expose [freshmen] to competition math,” Changal said. “Oftentimes in middle school they are not used to doing competitive math problems.”

The Math Club held a qualification round at lunch, and participants who scored above the qualifying mark competed in the final round. Originally scheduled for after school on April 19, the club moved the integration bee to April 24 after scheduling conflicts. Ten people qualified for the final round.

The competition operated on a bracket system, with two students of similar skill level going

up at a time to see who evaluates an integral faster. According to Changal, this method allows everyone to have a fair chance of advancing in the competition.

“We assigned pairs based on skill level and how well they qualified,” Changal said. “Qualifying was not a really high score. Depending on what [score] you actually got, we [made] it so everyone has the opportunity to have a fair shot and did not immediately get out on the first round.”

According to Changal, the board wanted to focus on education and having fun rather than purely winning or losing. Prior to the event, Changal posted

resources for learning about integrals in the club Discord server.

“I hope [participants] left with a love for doing integrals,” Changal said. “It does not matter if you win or you lose. It is just fun to do the integrals in the first place, which is why we are hosting them, and why we are accepting any experience that you have.”

Rather than a monetary prize, the first-place winner will receive a math book. Math Club plans on hosting more integration bees in years to come.

“It is a really fun community event,” Changal said. “We are hoping future presidents of Math Club can help carry this forward.”

# Warriors place second at UC Berkeley BioEngineering High School Competition

Warriors scored and placed highly at the annual UC Berkeley event following many weeks of project research and development.

By Salman Waheed  
STAFF WRITER

Working together to discover medical innovation, four Warriors were awarded second place at the UC Berkeley BioEngineering High School Competition (BioEHSC) April 6.

At the competition, sophomore Anisha Kumaarevelu, senior Puru Jain and juniors Bhavna Malladi and Sophia Liu presented theoretical research and solutions for combating atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis, caused by deposits of plaque in the inner walls of the arteries, is one of the most common diseases in the world.

The Troy Berkeley team researched high-intensity ultrasound devices to flatten artery plaque. Using imaging techniques from the ultrasound, their conceptual device would shoot focused ultrasonic waves at plaque material to break down and loosen it.

Contestants conducted independent research on their topic. Every week, the team discussed project plans and received suggestions from their undergraduate UC Berkeley student mentor

Katie Sie. Teams had eight weeks to complete research and devise solutions for their medical or biological-oriented projects.

Starting in late February, the Warriors devoted their time to learning about atherosclerosis by reading research papers and studying scientific articles. The students also sought suggestions from relatives with expertise in medicine and engineering.

On the day of the competition, the team presented an academic pitch to a panel of judges consisting of professors and undergraduate students. In order to prove the product’s desirability, Warriors also gave a marketing presentation to show their device could provide a less-invasive and more affordable solution to plaque build-up as opposed to medical surgery.

According to team member Puru Jain, the team had trouble finding proper studies and research on atherosclerosis treatments via ultrasound. Since the Warriors conceptualized a very specific technique to target the disease, the project had limited clinical and evidence-based analysis aiding it, Jain said.

“Our project involved a relatively new technique with ultrasound rather than shockwaves, so we had to do deep research into the biomedical field since there

was not much prior research on this method,” Jain said. “We also had to figure out how to efficiently make our transducer and ended up having to use 256 elements to theoretically construct it.”

According to team member Sophia Liu, the group had to effectively organize project plans while avoiding schedule conflicts. Having parts of the group focus on specific project components helped the presentation move forward, Liu said.

“A lot of our members were

all either busy studying or doing homework amongst hectic school schedules,” Liu said. “What

helped us really make the project go smoothly was to have a part of the group devote more of their time to creating the video pitch while the others worked on the poster and presentation more. In the end, we were able to complete the project and got the rare opportunity to come up with a solution for a real-world problem in society, which is something that not many teenagers our age get to do.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOPHIA LIU

**EMPOWERING STUDENT ENGINEERS:** (Left to right) Junior Bhavna Malladi, senior Puru Jain, junior Sophia Liu and sophomore Anisha Kumaarevelu pose for a picture with Professor Dorian Liepmann, the faculty advisor for the UC Berkeley Bioengineering Honors Society.

# Warrior NJROTC earns national recognition and places first overall at Nationals

Warriors competed over two days to achieve their goal of becoming the first west coast team to win the National Championship.

By Samantha Luo  
STAFF WRITER

Troy NJROTC placed first overall at the NJROTC Nationals Academic, Athletic and Drill Championship at Pensacola, Florida April 5 to 6.

Warriors competed against 23 other schools to become the first west coast team to win Nationals. NJROTC Nationals is a test of the overall training and performance of JROTC students, with schools selected to attend based on placements at local competitions. There are a total of nine events at Nationals, including personal inspection, physical training, academics, color guard and a variety of drill events.

Warrior NJROTC qualified for Nationals 2024 last year and began preparing over the summer. The Academic Sub team studied three textbooks and two manuals on the NJROTC official curriculum in preparation for the academics competition, which focuses on knowledge about the Navy and its history. During the Nationals competition, students are tested on 100 questions in 50 minutes based on the content in the materials.

Unarmed and armed exhibition practiced over spring break and on weekends for up to four hours a day.

Troy placed second in the nation in academics. Individually, academics and Brain Brawl team commander senior Bennie Zhu placed first while fellow academics and Brain Brawl commander Caden Salazar and sophomore Noah Domingo Fisher placed 4th and 10th respectively. Troy NJROTC also placed first overall in drill and second in unarmed exhibition.

On the day of the Nationals competition, cadets woke up at around 3 a.m. to prepare for personal inspection at 7:15 a.m. Afterward, students attended their respective events and supported teammates. Zhu and his assistant team commander reviewed important information for the test with their Academic Sub team before the academics event.

Before Nationals, cadets competed at the State Championship. During the State Championship, the team's performance did not meet their expectations, Zhu said.

"In [the] State Championships, we [placed] third, which sounds pretty good, but for our team it is not up to our standards," Zhu said. "That was a big roadblock because it was almost demoralizing to not get first or even second at States [when] trying to win Nationals. But ultimately, we were able to persevere through that and recover for Nationals."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICIA YOON

**WINNING WARRIORS:** Warrior NJROTC poses with their trophies and awards in the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida after a landslide overall victory. Their triumph marks the first national win of a west coast team.

At Nationals, the team faced roadblocks during the armed exhibition event. According to commanding officer senior David Park, a miscommunication in rules took the team by surprise.

"My rifle broke midway through the event," Park said. "According to the rules, you can get disqualified for spinning with a broken rifle, so knowing that I asked to step out to get a new rifle. [However], the judge did not know that was part of the rules so he docked us off for it."

Last year, Troy NJROTC placed second overall. The team strived to improve and accomplished their goal this year, Zhu said.

"NJROTC has given me opportunities to compete at statewide and national levels, and it is really an opportunity that I otherwise never would have been able to get," Zhu said. "Those opportunities are not something that I would exchange for anything else. Being first place in the nation, both as a team and as an individual, it almost feels like we are on top of the world."

# Troy alumnus and Social Distortion frontman Mike Ness receives Key to the City

The city of Fullerton honored punk rock band Social Distortion's leader Mike Ness with a key to the city, naming the day after him.

By Paulina Lee  
STAFF WRITER

The City of Fullerton honored Mike Ness, Troy High School alumnus and punk rock band Social

Distortion frontman, by presenting him with the Key to the City at Fullerton Downtown Plaza April 3.

In an effort to celebrate his legacy, April 3 was officially declared Mike Ness Day. With a recent diagnosis of stage one tonsil cancer and a history of battling addiction behind him, the singer, songwriter and guitarist celebrated his 62nd birthday by accepting his new honors with the city council and

hundreds of Social Distortion fans.

Born in Massachusetts and raised in Fullerton, Ness attended Troy High School alongside close friend and bandmate Dennis Danell, Social Distortion's guitarist in 1979. The band achieved mainstream success after signing with record company Epic Records in 1989 and releasing their third album "Social Distortion" featuring singles such as "Story of My Life" and "Ball and Chain." Their songs have garnered 40 million views on YouTube, and "Story of My Life" has received over 60 million streams on Spotify.

Social Distortion's music blends British and American punk music styles and aims to impact both the local community and the broader punk rock genre. Their contributions to punk music and Fullerton's music history awarded them the Key to the City, an honor reserved for those who have made remarkable impacts on the Fullerton community.

Fullerton Mayor Nick Dunlap told the LA Times, Ness left a significant mark on the city and the world with his songs filled with stories of struggle, resilience and what it means to be a Fullerton native.

"Beyond our love for music is our love for our community," Dunlap said. "That is what brings us here today because we are able to celebrate a living legend who is among our greatest exports to the world."

In honor of Social Distortion, musical group Greg Antista & The Lonely Streets and guitarist Kid Ramos performed for Ness. Los Angeles and Orange County-based painter Jaime Zacarias presented Ness with a custom painting at the event, which encapsulated Ness's influence on punk rock and the community.

Ness reminisced about growing up in Fullerton after his parents moved to Orange County in the early 1960s during his acceptance speech. He shared memories from his time in Fullerton and Troy High School, where he and Danell met and eventually formed Social Distortion, launching their career.

"Dennis and I would walk down the railroad tracks from his house to Harbor Boulevard and Commonwealth [Avenue]," Ness said. "There was a little studio where a band called the Mechanics used to practice every night. That was like a hub of this early punk scene."

Despite his success, Ness faced struggles during his path to fame. He shared that the Key to the City symbolizes both his musical accomplishments and his personal victory over battling with addiction and overcoming the challenges he has faced throughout his life.

"Forty years ago, they might have wanted to lock me up and throw away the key," Ness said. "But things change, and now I have a key."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOS ANGELES TIMES

**FULLERTON FRONTMAN:** Warrior alumnus Mike Ness received his key to the city on stage at a ceremony held in Fullerton Downtown Plaza. He was honored for his musical contributions to Fullerton's legacy.

# Bouquets of Beauty

What in-carnation? Junior Joshua Ta's bouquet business, Shua Flowers, is blooming! Read below to learn about Ta's journey and determination in crafting beautiful floral arrangements.

Compiled by Eileen Um, **FEATURE EDITOR**, article by Helen Fang, **STAFF WRITER**, photos courtesy of Joshua Ta, graphics courtesy of Canva

Leaves with veins of jade and wildflowers in whimsical white entwine majestic roses in an ethereal dance. Junior Joshua Ta picks and prunes each delicate blossom, orchestrating petals of poignant scarlets and soft pastels into bouquets of floral harmony.

Ta's vibrant arrangements are more than just bunches of flowers; they are symbols of opportunity. Like dandelion parasols riding the breezes of the unknown,

Ta's bouquet business, Shua Flowers, is the blooming result of committing to a passion and taking a chance.

Ta's growth from flower enthusiast to business owner did not sprout overnight but stems from his deep-rooted creativity. Since seventh grade, Ta enjoyed making other people's days by personalizing charcuterie boards. The same artistic freedom he found in cheeses and meats transcended hobbies into his newfound interest in flower arrangements. Ta's friend taught him how to make his first bouquet, guiding him through the basics and introducing Ta to more visually appealing arrangements. With the steadfast support of his mother, Ta learned about the fundamentals of color theory and complementary flower types. Drawing upon her past experience arranging flowers for her friends, Ta's mother passed on her knowledge of flower preserving tips to her son. Having only recently obtained his driver's license, Ta's mother would drive him to Trader Joe's and various flower wholesalers to find the right flowers for his floral compositions. After successfully arranging flowers for a

day-long junior high retreat hosted by his church, Ta took a leap of faith and began to nurture the seeds of his vision into reality. Taking the last four letters of his name, Ta publicized Shua Flowers on Instagram, just in time for the prom season. Leading up to such a highly-anticipated school event, Ta found fulfillment delivering bundles of joy for special someone's everywhere.

"I like doing things for other people," Ta said. "That inspired my flowers. The whole idea of putting them together to give to another person to make their day is really sweet."

With budding experience, Ta began honing his flower arrangement skills. Based on the order he receives, Ta buys specific hues or types of flowers and trims them to perfection. Each flower is kept fresh in water until the day of arrangement, when Ta takes his time to bring each creation to life. In order to make his bouquets more presentable and photogenic, Ta experimented with different structural styles, adding more folds and frills as well as designating support and display flowers to create the visual effects of volume and depth. In addition to exploring different colored wrapping designs and ribbons, Ta hopes to showcase his growth as a florist through his thoughtful arrangements. Ta learned to use uniform dome-shaped designs to complement roses and carnations while tulips in winding staircase tiers to spotlight each flower's

beauty. Ta laces show-stopping blossoms with whimsical buds like baby's breath or chamomile, filling empty spaces with what he dubs "filler flowers." Ta realized that these petite yet graceful flowers can truly elevate a bouquet, just like how the small actions of gift-giving can make someone's day.

"If there's somebody special and you want to make their day, just go all the way," Ta said. "Like custom flower arrangements, it doesn't have to be the best or super glamorous. But taking the time to do something yourself for another person adds so much more depth."

Amidst homework and piano, Ta finds comfort and artistic freedom in crafting his bouquets. Although preparing and wrapping the completed arrangements can take up to an hour, time becomes nonexistent when Ta is in his element: smelling the flowers, browsing Trader Joe's and envisioning his final designs. Like flowers reaching for the sun, Ta looks to the future in a positive, hopeful light and plans to continue his bouquet business into college. Ta encourages other potential business owners to cast aside their hesitancy and sow their seeds.

"If you want to start your own business, go for it," Ta said. "It's a really fun experience. As high schoolers, we have a lot more margin for error. It's fun to take that risk and put yourself out there because at the end of the day, there's no major consequence when things go wrong. It's a live and learn situation where you're getting something out of it either way, whether you fail or succeed."



# Tasteful or Tragic?

Taylor Swift illustrates her sadness with her lyricism in her latest album "THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT." Read more to see Oracle's take on her blue perspective.

Compiled by Kaitlyn Zhang, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, article by Kate Berger, STAFF WRITER, images courtesy of Beth Garranbrant

"THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT?" More like the The Tortured Listeners Department. Released on April 19, the eleventh studio album by Taylor Swift is mediocre at best. With a whopping thirty-one songs, the album was written over the course of Swift's two year long Eras Tour, and the amount of repetition in the album makes that glaringly obvious. With features ranging from Post Malone to Florence and the Machine, the album is a clear outlier in the midst of Swift's other hits. Despite some scattered hits, Swift's latest album falls flat, and after almost two years of silence, she certainly has not come back stronger than a '90s trend.

While the album falls flat for the most part, it is scattered with undeniable hits that shine through its mediocrity. Enchanting instrumentals haunt listeners as Swift's voice exudes passion and fluid

harmonies in songs like "So Long London," "Who's Afraid of Little Old Me?" and "The Albatross," which reminds listeners of the incredible singer-songwriter Swift is. She also explores various themes, such as fame, love and hatred through lyrics like "I was tame, I was gentle 'til the circus life made me mean / 'Don't you worry, folks, we took out all her teeth," illustrating Swift's use of metaphors to convey the struggles that come along with fame. The metaphor of a circus life is used to describe Swift's life under the spotlight, and how fame has made her "mean." Despite such thoughtful lyricism in "Who's Afraid of Little Old Me," this is rare throughout the album, and when paired with a generally monotonous production, "THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT" is inferior to Swift's past hits.

Unlike past albums, "THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT" is forgettable and unmemorable. Swift integrates a variety of meanings and ideas into her album, though it is completely hidden behind a gray fog of repetitive production. Each of the thirty-one songs in the album share the same slow, synth-pop track, which fans have described as a "chore" to listen to. Jack Antonoff, the main producer of Swift's latest album demonstrates no creativity and diversity, using the same monotonous beat for the

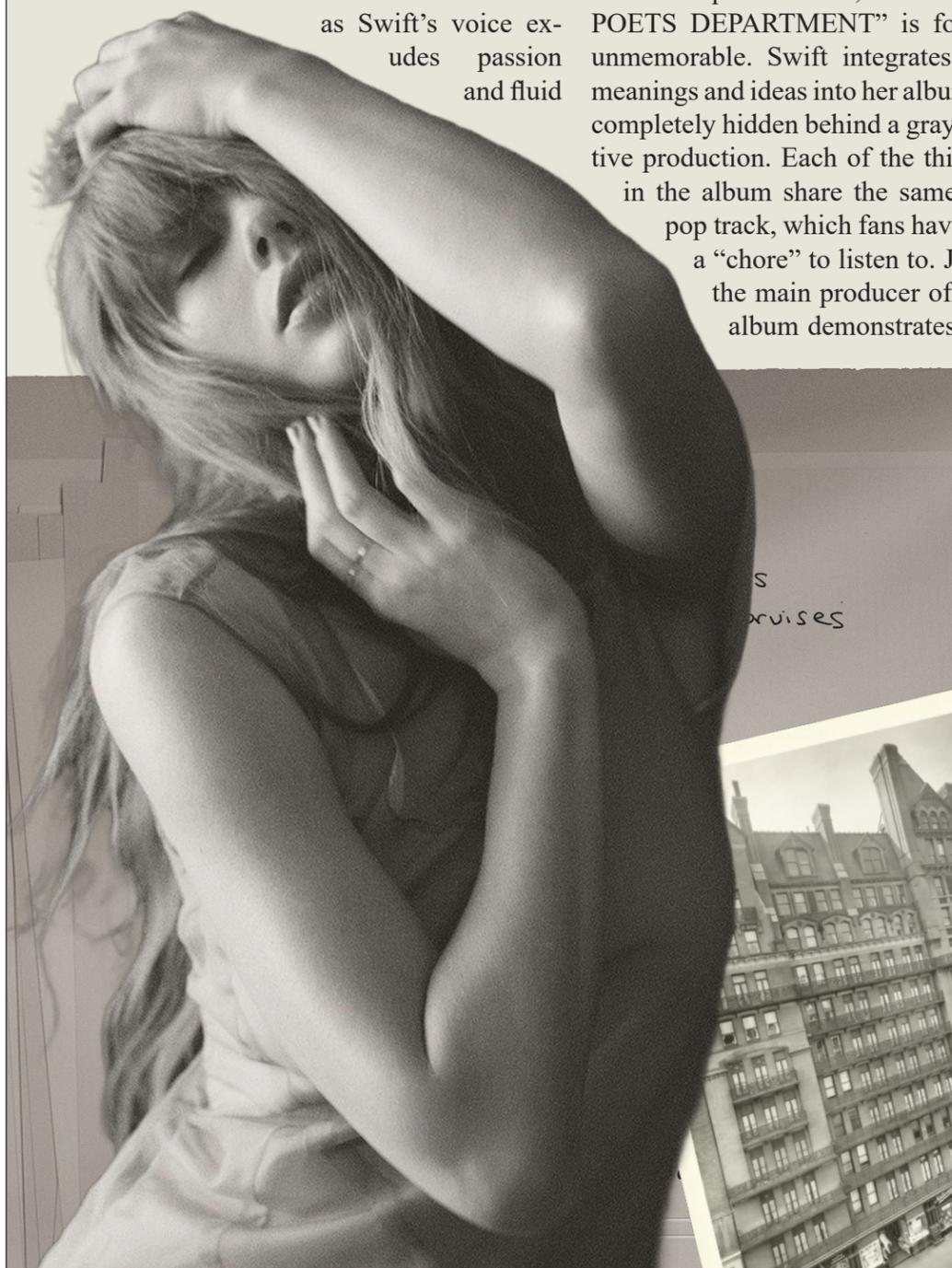
entire album. Instead of releasing thirty-one songs during an international tour, Swift should have released fewer songs that fully demonstrate her potential as a singer-songwriter.

Swift may be tortured, but her poetic prowess seems to have lost its spark. By titling the album "THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT," fans expected poetic and heartfelt lyrics, similar to the praised lyricism of her eighth and ninth albums, "Folklore" and "Evermore," respectively. However, the immense praise from those past albums must have gotten to Swift, because the lyrics of her latest album either seem like she is trying too hard, or completely forgot to meet the ambitious title of her album. Lyrics like "I scratch your head, you fall asleep / like a tattooed Golden Retriever" do not deserve to be apart of an album with "poets" in the title. Swift is also receiving backlash from "I Hate It Here" lyrics: "I'd say the 1830s but without all the racists," which fans have said reflects Swift's privileged point of view. From beginning to end, the lyricism of "THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT" is anything but poetic.

Individually, each song of her latest album provides listeners with an earnest glimpse into Swift's inner thoughts and relationship struggles. Though as a whole, the album is a far cry from what fans were initially promised: a poetic anthology seeping with heartfelt melodies and dramatic acoustics. Taylor Swift's latest release fails to express tortured poetics and instead, tortures listeners with its dull, repetitive insipidity.

## The Chelsea Hotel

"You're not Dylan Thomas, I'm not Patti Smith/ This ain't the Chelsea Hotel, we're modern idiots." Taylor Swift makes it clear who she thinks belongs in The Tortured Poets Department. A haven to "tortured" minds like her own, the Chelsea Hotel of West 23rd Street in Manhattan becomes a tangible representation of Swift's feelings in her latest album. She recognizes her feelings have lasted across historical eras, and if she had been born just one generation earlier, she might have resided at this hallowed hotel. The hotel's rooms may literally be a literary hall of fame, having housed writers from the Beat Generation, Arthur Miller, Madonna, Patti Smith and so many more.



# MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU

Explore both the history and future of the Star Wars universe as May the Fourth approaches.

Compiled by Kaitlyn Zhang, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, Kate Berger, ASSISTANT ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, Written by Celeste Hollingsworth, ENTERTAINMENT WRITER, Brian Woo, ENTERTAINMENT WRITER GRAPHICS courtesy of Disney



## ANDOR

“Andor” journeys to a galaxy even farther away, following Cassian Andor five years prior to the events of “Rogue One.” Andor collides the beauty of Star Wars with political commentary not only on the horrors of fascism, but also on the struggle of living under an authoritarian regime. In a grim-dark twist to the otherwise fantastical world of Star Wars, Andor rebels against the Imperial order through espionage, exposing the lesser known corners of Star Wars. The gritty realism of Andor paints the true picture of rebellion in Star Wars and is a must-watch for any film or TV show enthusiast.

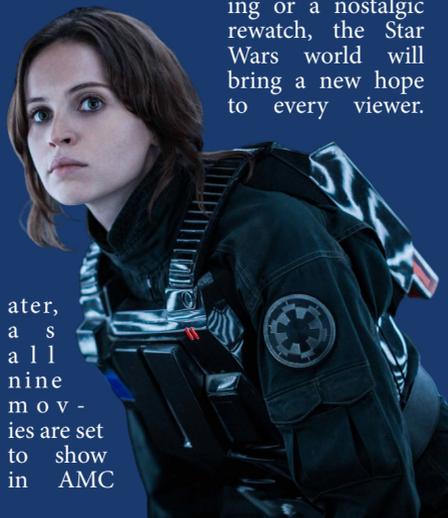
## A NEW HOPE

Going rogue from the romanticized side of Star Wars, “Rogue One” became one of the most beloved films released after the original movies. Where most Star Wars movies draw a distinct line between good and evil, this film explores the gray areas in between. Jyn Erso, the daughter of an Imperial scientist, must try to find the Death Star plans which withhold the secret to its demise. The Death Star has the ability to cause destruction far past the Rebellion can imagine, hence why it is imperative that Jyn and her ally Cassian must retrieve the plans at all costs. More than just portraying the complexities of human character, “Rogue One” encapsulates the reality of war with more than just gore. The strong relationships and losses in these battles are what truly impact the viewers, bringing tears to their eyes whether it’s between a father and daughter or lifelong friends. While the original trilogy holds a romantic nostalgia, the emotional tie between the viewers and characters makes this movie heartbreaking yet engrossing.

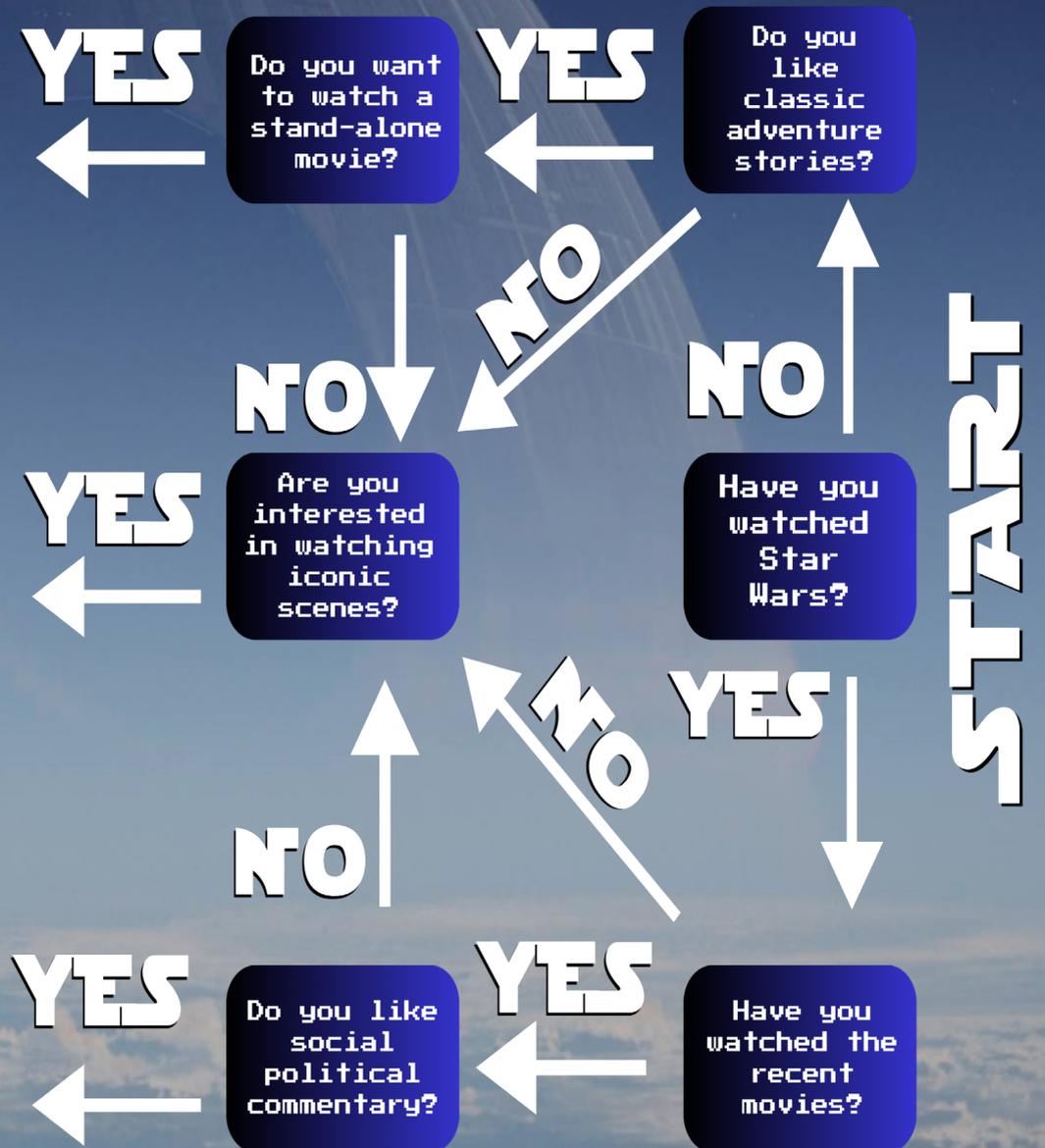
## ROGUE ONE

“A New Hope” launched this franchise into a galaxy of irreplaceable adventures. Regardless of being set in a galaxy far, far away, “A New Hope” was groundbreaking during the time of its release. Due to the impressive visuals, original viewers were blown away with the ability to bring this fictional world to life. Immediately after the events of “Rogue One,” viewers see that imperial forces captured Princess Leia. The vital plans for the future of the rebellion are now in the hands of her two droids who meet the trilogy’s protagonist Luke Skywalker. On his journey to save Leia and the rebellion, Skywalker is assisted on this mission by memorable characters like Obi-Wan Kenobi, Han Solo, and Chewbacca. Despite a less complex storyline as compared to more recent films, the film carries a nostalgic feel from its silly character interactions and benevolent ambiance. “A New Hope” is a great movie for casual viewers who wish to ease into the world of Star Wars, or for those who simply want to watch a fun stand-alone movie.

A long time ago, in a galaxy not so far away, the legendary saga of Star Wars first premiered on the world stage. From the crescendos of the iconic orchestral soundtrack to the bright flashes of intense battle scenes, this phenomenal saga became the pinnacle of cinema. The original trilogy re-shaped the science fiction genre with its massive success, establishing Star Wars as a timeless empire that would revolutionize pop culture for the next 50 years. The impressively long-running production of movies—from 1977 to 2019—creates a series that transcends generational barriers. Recently, this franchise has expanded its reign from movies to multi-episode series; their most recent project is a show called Acolyte, scheduled to release on Disney Plus on June 4. Leaning into the dark side of Star Wars history, Acolyte rewinds to a setting preceding the current Star Wars timeline by 100 years, telling the story of Sol, a Jedi master researching crimes trying to reveal “sinister forces.” But, if you cannot wait until this series’ release in June, you are in luck: the ‘Skywalker Saga’ is going to be available in movie theaters starting May 4, in honor of “May the Fourth.” This annual celebration features all of the prequel, original, and sequel trilogies. Indulge in the fantastical universe with the magic of a movie theater. One of these films, “A New Hope,” is the perfect film for casual audiences looking to start their much-anticipated Star Wars journey. To make more sense of the events in “A New Hope,” the acclaimed TV series, “Andor,” and film, “Rogue One,” establish a backstory to the original film. For those who prefer the safety of their own bed, a comfy at-home watch party with friends or family is also a perfect cozy alternative. Whether May 4 consists of an exciting first time viewing or a nostalgic rewatch, the Star Wars world will bring a new hope to every viewer.



ater, a s all nine movies are set to show in AMC



# Artificial exclusivity branded as unique features: Apple must stop its monopoly

By Victoria Yang  
STAFF WRITER



Apple has violated the original aim of technological advancement.

In March, the Department of Justice sued Apple for violating an antitrust law aimed to ensure fair competition and prevent harmful business practices.

Apple was accused of artificially imposing restrictions to favor their own products and exclude competitors. Rather than simply improving their

own software and hardware, Apple has restricted features of competitors such as Samsung and Google to make them seem worse. Apple has gained significant popularity - and that's not for nothing. They have made impressive improvements and technological advances, establishing their status in the eyes of consumers. However, this does not justify their stifling of competitors through unfair and exclusive measures. It is in the best interest of consumers that Apple remove their restrictions, following the original goal of the internet of inclusivity and innovation.

The walled garden exclusivity of Apple components must be discontinued. Tech-

nological standards and rules exist so that all components can function seamlessly together even if they come from different companies. This standardization of connecting components fosters innovation. However, Apple's ecosystem that only allows for full functionality within their products has attempted to disrupt the connection between components across different brands. For example, texting across

“Through refusing to work with other brands and companies, Apple has decreased quality of service for the worldwide community.”

Samsung and Apple smartphones have limited functionalities. “Apple has made the quality of cross-platform messaging worse, less innovative, and less secure,” the Department of Justice said

in a press release. Texts from Android phones are presented in a different color than texts from Apple devices, and transfer of media files have reduced quality. Texting is no new feature and has established rules that can allow for cross-platform compatibility. Yet, Apple continues to alienate other companies in their creation of a monopoly, hurting the interconnectedness of our community. “Apple strives to bring the best personal computing experience to... consumers around the world,” Apple's Product Feedback page said. However, Apple has purposely disrupted compatibility. In favor of profiting themselves, they have worsened the experience of not only

their consumers. Through refusing to work with other brands and companies, Apple has decreased quality of service for the worldwide community. They have violated their own mission statement, hindering the growth of technological advancement.

Furthermore, Apple needs to make it easier for companies to enter their now exclusive ecosystem. Apple has created their own bubble and have absolute control on what applications are available on their application store. Developers and companies have to undergo strict inspections, a measure meant to ensure security. However, Apple has abused this process to unfairly restrict the availability

of many applications. For instance, Apple has tried to stifle applications that allow for cloud gaming. Cloud streaming services can allow users to play games

run on remote

servers, eliminating the need for superior hardware. This would allow consumers to play high quality games on older models, rather than buying new ones for better hardware. “Even today, none [of the cloud gaming platforms] are currently available on the iPhone,” the Department of Justice lawsuit said. Instead of embracing the new technology that can improve user experience, Apple has purposely tried to stifle it for their own personal profits, disregarding the positive impacts they have the potential to make.

Ultimately, technology companies should always strive for advances and better experiences for their users. This process requires the presence of fair and healthy competition. Instead, Apple has gone against this basic principle. Their artificial

hindering of compatibility and purposeful difficulty for developers to improve user experience needs to be stopped.



CARTOON BY EDYN MAI

# Lower income families are now even more limited on access to affordable necessities

By Chelsea Engelhardt  
STAFF WRITER



Lower income areas are now in greater danger of hunger and lack of basic needs.

The company 99 Cents Only Stores has officially filed for bankruptcy and consequently, all 371 stores are going to close. Mike Simoncic, current CEO of 99 Cents Only Stores, announced the closures on April 7 after attributing the bankruptcy to economic strain and the change in economy because of COVID-19. The closing down of these stores, however, is going to cause a much larger and significant strain on its

lower income consumers, who make up a large amount of their customers. Lower income families often rely on these kinds of stores and will now have to turn somewhere else. Overall, this closure is going to be harmful for the most disadvantaged in society and will cause economic difficulties for many families who depend on these stores.

Management needs to take responsibility for the failure to keep their company afloat. These rather massive venues were significantly costly to manage and operate. The average size of a 99 Cent Store was 20,000 square feet, while competitors like Dollar General and Family Dollar had stores around the size of 7,500 square feet. These massive stores required higher rents and

more employees compared to other similar stores, in turn further plummeting the corporation. Also, these economic strains were increased with the leaders of the company failing to invest and therefore grow the company wealth.

Overall, the closing of these stores, although disappointing, was not completely surprising and could have been avoided with better management.

In recent years, 99 Cents Only Stores have been consistently falling behind their more successful competitors. Additionally, with Dollar Tree acquiring Family Dollar in 2016, other dollar stores were growing while 99 Cents was shrinking. Rivals like Walmart and Costco were increasing in revenue, causing the 99 stores to lose lots of business over the last few years. However, many of these stores were exclusively on the east coast of the United States so they hurt 99 Cents Only Stores economically but were unable to provide for 99 Cents Only Stores' customers on the west coast following their closing. In order to stay afloat, 99 Cents Only Stores needed to change its investments and prospects but failed to do so, so now society takes the fall. 99 Cents Only Stores failed to keep up with the ever growing budget economy and now is suffering the consequences.

Lower income families are once again the ones that take the brunt impact of these closings. Many families have relied on companies like 99 Cent Only Stores in order to buy their basic necessities like groceries, household supplies, personal care items

and utensils. Without this store containing more affordable items, lower income families are forced to spend more when it shouldn't be necessary. According to The Press-Enterprise, in the Inland Empire over

400,000 people are facing food insecurity. With the closing down of these stores, it makes their lives so much more difficult and their

access to affordable food, a basic necessity for survival, much more limited. However, these families aren't the only ones greatly affected. In addition to hurting lower income families, over a thousand employees country-wide will lose their jobs and be forced back into uncertainty. The closing of these stores is going to cause a complete shift in the retail scheme, especially in California where the majority of 99 Cents Stores were located. Both low income families and might cause a scary reaction.

The most disadvantaged in society will now suffer even more at the hands of poor business decisions made by the managers and leaders of 99 Cents Only Stores. The communities that already work harder than anyone to just put food on the table will now have a harder time getting affordable, quality food whether it be for themselves or their families. Not only that, but so many others are losing their jobs and very likely their steady incomes for no moral reason. Something needs to be done in lower income areas in order to make food and other necessities more affordable with this absence of budget stores.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY COMPOSITE

# Political partisanship should not be the reason that students continue to lead their lives in debt

By Shailey Patel  
STAFF WRITER



The Biden administration must persevere in its goals to forgive student loans.

The Biden administration launched the Saving on a Valuable Education plan to offer a faster route to student loan forgiveness in August 2023. On April 12, the U.S. Education Department shared an update on the progress of the SAVE plan, announcing that the department has approved cancellation for about 360,000 borrowers, costing a total of \$4.8 billion. However, this plan has faced lots of resistance from the Republican states, with two lawsuits challenging the legality of this plan, claiming that the Biden administration overstepped its authority in creating the repayment option. Although opposed, the plan is crucial to reforming America and allowing students who live with the burden of debt to establish themselves.

The SAVE student loan forgiveness plan is more specific and intentional than plans of the past, allowing the government to provide aid directly to those who need it most. This latest proposal focuses on those for whom student debt is a major obstacle, providing relief to an estimated 30 million borrowers. Five categories of borrowers would be eligible for this new student

loan plan—borrowers who have had their debt grow because of unpaid interest, borrowers eligible for other federal programs but haven't applied, borrowers who have been repaying undergraduate loans for 20 years or more, borrowers who attended college programs of "low financial value," and borrowers facing hardships that prevent them from repaying the student loans. With these categories, the Biden administration has a direct outline to effect change to a large group of people who have suffered drastically from the burden of student loans. This plan actively works to help those who have been ignored and oppressed in society, and need the chance to be alleviated of the burden of years of debt.

Those who oppose forgiving of student loan debt must consider the immense burden that millions of Americans feel under the debt that has accumulated over years, especially among those who have been disproportionately impacted by the loan process. Low and middle class borrowers would benefit immensely

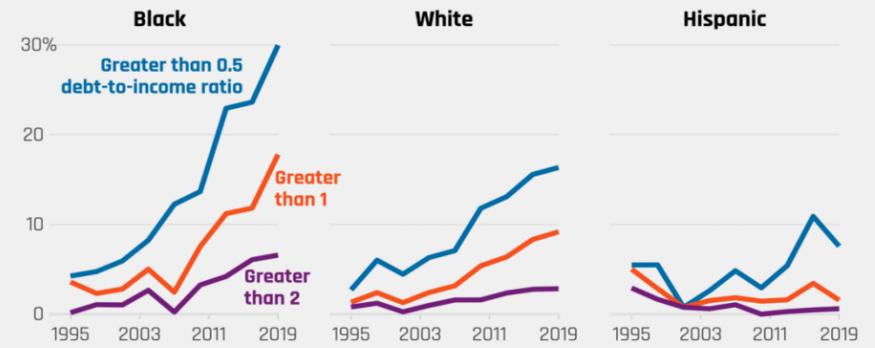
from this debt forgiveness. According to an advocacy group for Black Women called 1000 Women Strong found that on average, black

women hold significantly more debt than white women, with around 57% of black women reporting financial difficulties due to student loans. Minorities like these must work extra hard to be just as successful as their white counterparts with student loans

Minorities like these must work extra hard to be just as successful as their white counterparts with student loans weighing down on their success.

## Young Black Americans are increasingly carrying high student debt relative to their incomes

Percent of Black, White, and Latinx adults ages 25-40 who have student debt-to-income ratios greater than 0.5, 1, and 2



Source: Authors' analysis of the Survey of Consumer Finances.

Equitable Growth

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF WASHINGTON CENTER FOR EQUITABLE GROWTH

weighing down on their success. According to a press release from the White House, these plans would "not only help create more financial stability for millions of working and middle-class families, they would also help address the disproportionate debt burden on communities of color and advance racial equity." After years of living under the oppressive load that is student loans, these people must be given the chance for a fresh start. Racial minorities, however, are not the only group that suffer from immense and unfair student loans. According to a report by the American Association of Retired Persons, by the end of 2020, borrowers 50 or older owed about 22% of the total student loan debt. It is important to consider that young people aren't the only ones affected

by student debt. Once collected, student debt continues to compound and grow for a lifetime, following people through all stages of their lives. A debt so immense should be forgiven. Debt is a problem that unfairly and constantly plagues many Americans, and it must be dealt with immediately.

Biden's new plan must pass through legislation to help forgive the debt of millions. Student loans have unfairly and disproportionately affected many Americans over the last decades and are a problem that all can agree needs to be addressed, regardless of the political party that one is on. Although not perfect, Biden's plan is a step in the right direction towards helping millions of Americans regain independence and no longer be forced to continue living in the shadow of their debt.

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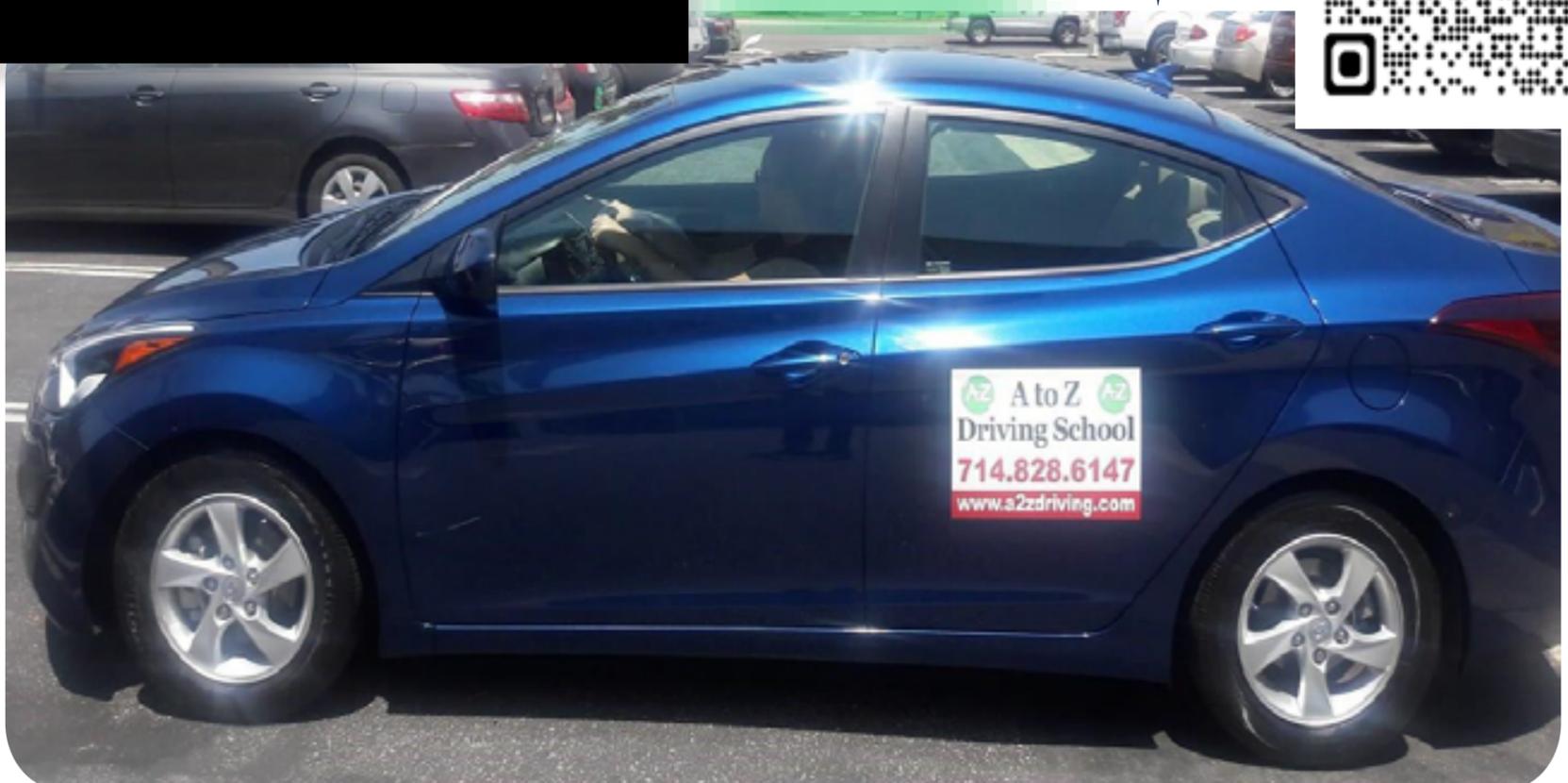
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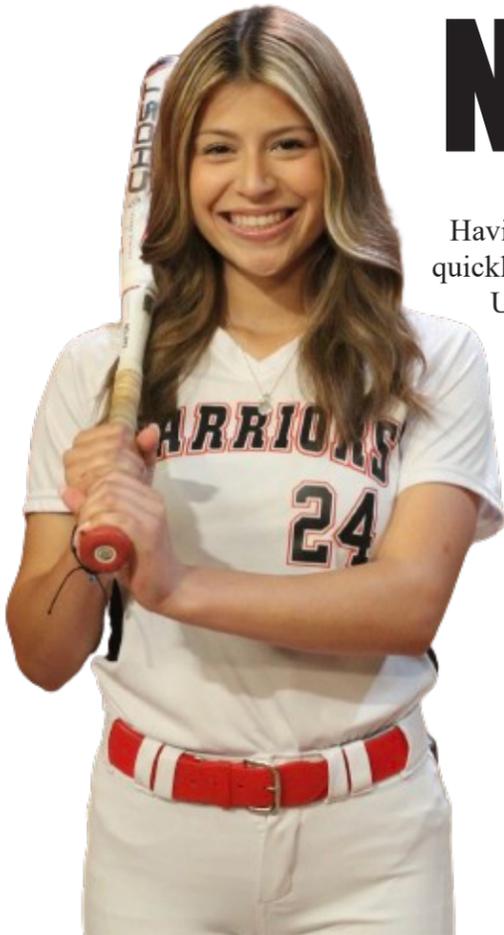
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# Warrior Sports Commits

Explore the journeys of our Senior Warrior athletes, as they graduate to play collegiate sports.

Compiled by Kusuma Kothamasu, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR, articles by Finley Dalley, ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER, and Kusuma Kothamasu, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR, photos courtesy of Nayeli Inzunza and Troy Warrior Athletics, graphics courtesy of Canva and U.S. News



## Nayeli Inzunza

Having first picked up a bat when she was eight years old, Nayeli Inzunza left behind the sport of soccer and quickly fell in love with the game of softball. After playing competitively for 10 years, she committed to Ottawa University in Arizona. Having grown up with this sport by her side, Inzunza recognizes it to have taught her many great lessons, and to have shaped her into the person she is now, preparing to play collegiate softball.

“[Softball has] definitely taught me how to deal with failure for sure. You learn from your mistakes,” Inzunza said. “Don’t doubt yourself, be confident in everything you do.”

Inzunza regards her favorite memory in playing highschool softball to have been hitting her first home run, which ended up being a walk off. She will carry the exciting energy from that moment with her into the next four years at Ottawa.

Inzunza always knew that she wanted to go out of state for college, so when Ottawa came up as an opportunity, she fell in love with the prospect. Having committed verbally in January of 2024, Inzunza had a very positive commitment experience, allowing her to be very excited for the next four years.

“I’m most excited about meeting new people out in Arizona,” Inzunza said. “And meeting my new teammates.”



## Victoria Ditching

Giggles radiated from the driving range. As she continued to hit the balls into the night, Victoria Ann Ditching knew the sport she would competitively play and learn—golf.

Launching her golf career at age 10, Ditching had played in various on-site tournaments such as the Southern California Professional Golf Association (SCPGA) and the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA).

Coming into Troy as a sophomore, Ditching was chosen to play in the CIF team, while playing at tournaments more often.

“[My CIF experience was] surprisingly memorable to me, because I was able to understand that I’m important, but everybody else is important too.”

However, the need to constantly improve was a tough requirement for the athletes.

“When you’re trying to improve, it’s a lot harder than what you’d expect,” Ditching said.

“I used to try and practice every single day, but sometimes there was no improvement.”

As her junior year began, so did recruitment. As Ditching emailed various coaches, she faced multiple responses that told her she did not meet the expectations of the university. Soon after, she was recruited from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Aspiring to major in software engineering, Ditching fell in love with Embry-Riddle’s engineering program, as they aid in employment after graduation.

Although she does not plan to play pro, Ditching hopes to continue playing golf no matter where she is.

“[Golf is] very fun, and I feel that being in a golf team kind of makes you feel like a family,” Ditching revealed. “You create a special bond with them.”



# Warrior Sports Commits

Take a look at these phenomenal Warrior football players and their commitments to universities!

Compiled by Tyler Cordova, **SPORTS EDITOR**, articles by Kusuma Kothamasu, **ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR**, and Finley Dalley, **ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER**, photos courtesy of Troy Warrior Athletics

## Charles Lin



Charles Lin joined the Warrior's football team his freshman year on a sporadic whim, having no idea where the next four years would take him. He had never played, seen, or even watched football before, and simply thought it would be a fun extracurricular. Fast forward the next four years, Lin is now committed to Carlton College in Minnesota, where he will be preparing for medical school, while also pursuing his passion in playing collegiate football.

"[I would tell my younger self] to work hard," Lin said. "You gotta focus on sleep, you gotta do stuff that's different, uncomfortable, trying new things."

Lin regards his experience playing football at Troy to be one that took a lot of discipline. However, this intense focus was made worth it by the positive environment the team created, really appreciating the coaches, and the time and effort they put into the students on the team.

"[Football] has taught me about hard work, leadership, and how to get over adversity."

Having chosen Carlton College specifically for its academic rigor, Lin is thrilled about the prospect of getting to continue his passion for football while also setting himself up for success in the medical field later in life. Since Carlton will be fulfilling both his academic and athletic needs, he is extremely grateful to the coaches for reaching out, making the commitment experience so seamless and positive, allowing him to have the incredible opportunity to play collegiate football.



## D'Jay Vu

Cheers erupted from the audience as the Warriors made their final touchdown, following a distressing game. The Warriors had won a football game against La Habra for the first time in 18 years, earning Senior D'Jay Vu a valuable moment from his football career.

Starting freshman year as a basketball player, Vu grew interested in football when he attended a game and enjoyed the culture and environment of the team. After playing basketball for years before high school, Vu made the transition to football in his sophomore year. However, his transition to a different sport was not as smooth as he had hoped for.

"My physical size isn't ideal for playing football but I just learned to be able to push through it and put my heart out there, and put in as much effort as I can."

Watching his seniors play in games and talk to the team have inspired Vu to try harder in his games and perform to the best of his ability.

"I made some really good friends along the way at Troy from basketball that introduced me to football," Vu said.

Vu later got recruited by La Verne University. With the university's many opportunities, such as physical assistant (PA) positions, the D3 football school was everything Vu looked for in hopes of a good career and academic success in his major: kinesiology.

In the future, Vu hopes to continue playing football while earning his degrees, and continuously developing his dream career.

"It's not always about yourself... Individual success doesn't define you as a player. When it gets tough... It's all about mindset."

