

Beyond The Nest

ICE Raids in Schools - Unnecssary Trauma

"They can come again to school and this time they will be able to enter and they will take us."

● The Forgotten Hero
Behind the Curtain:
A Deep Dive on
Technical Theater

● Engineering the
Success Behind the
IHS Robotics Team



CONTENTS

ICE Should Not Be
Allowed to Raid Schools | 01
-Op-ed

The Art of Doing Nothing:
Why We Should All
Embrace a Little Idleness | 02
- Op-ed

College Athletes Need to
be Reimbursed - Op-ed | 03

Why is Mental Health
Awareness a Much More
Prevalent Topic? - Feature | 04

Missing School to Travel | 05
- Feature

The Forgotten Hero
Behind the Curtain: A
Deep Dive on Technical
Theater - Feature | 06

Student Spotlight:
Nyssa Balagopalan | 07

Student Spotlight:
Kelsi Lo | 08

Fast Track to the Future:
Allison Choi’s Early
College Triumph | 09

Engineering the
Success Behind the
IHS Robotics Team -
School highlights | 10

Beyond the Nest

Editor in Cheif	Max Cauchi
Copy Editor	Andrew Kim Zinna Park
The Rising Voice - Op-eds	Sophia Romero Riya Dasgupta Shaelyn Erickson
Eagle’s View - Features	Alexis Berg Julia Dickey Kelsi Lo
Eagle’s Eye - Student or Staff Spotlight	Ava Wine Zinna Park
Soaring Moments - School Achievements & Highlights	Alexandra Bauer
Graphic Design	Raine Zhang Rares Rus
Adviser	Jordan Havlin Swartz

Andrew Kim, Copy Editor



Max Cauchi, Editor in Chief

Letter

Joining journalism in our sophomore year, we could not imagine being at the tail end of a dynasty. Mrs. Jarvinen, the current teacher at the time, had headed the newsroom for longer than we were alive, and mentored us and many others. Entering our senior year, we expected a familiar newsroom, just now with the title of Editors. Yet, one well-deserved retirement later, we faced a whirlwind of change: a new class of journalists, a new advisor, a completely new curriculum. We found ourselves with more responsibility than any years prior, and it was scary. We did not know what the year would hold. Would we fail to even publish? What are due dates like? What would grading be? This uncertainty was overwhelming, but within it, we found excitement: a chance to leave behind our own legacy, establishing a more prominent newspaper within our community.

What created this magazine, and will continue to make it, is ambition: to strive for a stronger voice, a unified newsroom, and to build our community around truth. Feeling the pressure and fear of uncertainty can be paralyzing; however, uncertainty brings change, and this magazine stands as the rebirth of the IHS newsroom — a collection of something bigger than just articles. As journalists, it is our job to persevere, to adapt, to entertain perspectives others would not. And to do as such, we must be and all are... ambition.

Magazines are tools, something with clear detailed information, and a way people discover new things about our world. We at Issaquah High Times would like to present our contribution to the world of magazines.

As Editors, we have seen these journalists grow from learning about journalism to the importance of a reliable source. The topics encapsulated span from a variety of societal issues to student spotlights to helpful random pieces of advice.

We hope you enjoy this magazine.

Max Cauchi, Editor in Chief
Andrew Kim, Copy Editor

The Rising Voice – Op-eds



By Raine Zhang

ICE Should Not Be Allowed to Raid Schools

By Sophia Romero

Under the current presidential administration, the United States of America is dealing with a massive influx of deportation efforts. The trauma which occurs from these raids has a significant effect on students. According to the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), it was a typical day at school for nine-year-old Nicholle. She was most likely excited for the early release which was supposed to occur. Instead, ICE raided nearby apartments and took her mother. Parents in the apartment buildings who were not taken called the principal of the school and begged for her to keep all the kids from getting on a bus, as they feared what they might witness or the danger they would be in. Despite Nicholle's mother being released, the trauma has stayed with her, causing her to cry nightly, terrified. NBC asked Nicholle what she thinks about while she is attending school. Nicholle says

that she constantly worries that ICE will come and take her.

The Trump Administration has called upon the Immigrants and Customs Enforcement to forcefully expell people who illegally reside in America. One of the areas which ICE raids affect the most is schools, a place that should be inclusive and safe for all students.

According to USA Today, the US Constitution ensures free education to every and all children regardless of their immigration status. Since every student has a right to education, ICE does not have the authority to disturb or take away anyone's education. On top of that, ICE is not just disturbing immigrants' education but also US citizens' education. The AP News reported that in Fresno, California, attendance has dropped from 1,000 to as low as 700 students since the current President took his position in office. The possibility of one's school being raided with such terrifying

force is enough to keep kids out of school. These feelings are not restricted to just immigrants but also to American citizens. US citizens also are suffering from decreased attendance, demonstrating that everyone is affected by the fear of ICE.

Nicholle is not the only one worried. In fact, the counselor of the school Nicholle attends, Lizyuri Gallardo reports that 300 out of 900 students has sought out counseling, most of which spoke about their fear of ICE raids. Since ICE raids give

300 out of 900 students has sought out counseling, most of which spoke about their fear of ICE raids.



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement / Wikimedia Commons

many children lasting trauma when they occur near the school, imagine the impact of the raids if they were to occur in a school. These kids should not have to worry about being taken when they are at a place which is supposedly safe.

All of these negative impacts of ICE raids have already been recognized. In fact, according to PBS, before the Trump administration schools were protected from ICE raids. Before the current administration, ICE officers were required to get special approval to operate at locations like schools. The only time they would be exempt from this is if there was a

threat to national security. Those in favor of ICE raids often claim that raids are vital because immigrants are taking people's jobs and are criminals. This is not true because, according to The Center of Migration Studies of New York, undocumented workers only take up about 5% of the US workforce. Of this 5%, the majority are doing laborious and dangerous but crucial jobs which others do not want to participate in due to the lack of pay and intense conditions. On top of this, according to the American Immigration Council, undocumented people are actually less likely to commit crimes than US citizens.

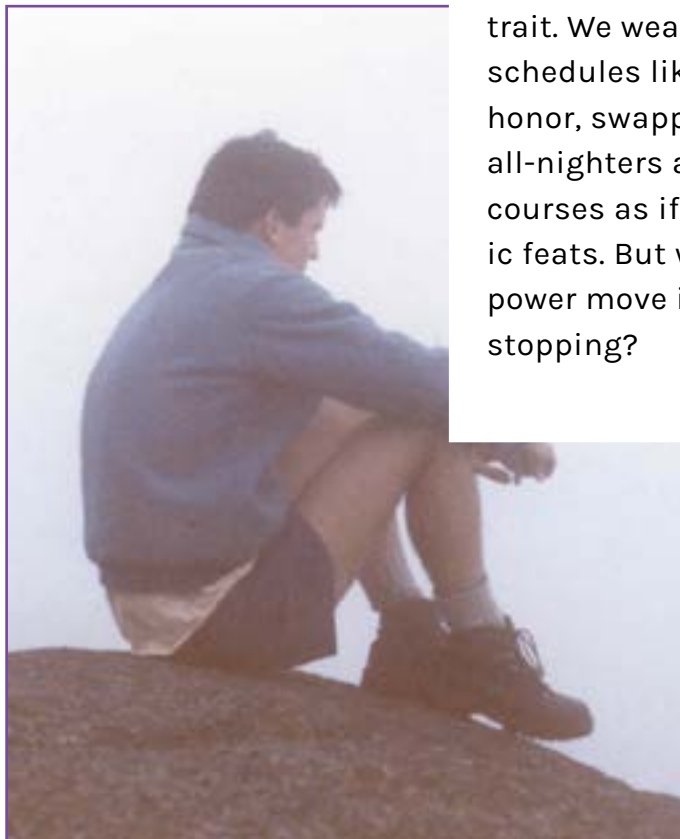
Since the majority of people ICE are targeting are doing important work and are not criminals, there does not seem to be a reason why ICE should be committing such violent raids. The results of these raids are families broken apart and people traumatized. All of these results can be avoided if ICE raids were banned from schools.

If ICE raids were banned in schools, it would prevent unnecessary trauma and protect people's constitutional rights while putting children like Nicholle at ease, as they no longer would have to fear being taken away at school. Instead, these kids could focus on their education and on living a cheerful life.

The Art of Doing Nothing: Why We Should All Embrace a Little Idleness

By Riya Dasgupta

In a world obsessed with productivity hacks, side hustles, and waking up at 5 AM to “seize the day,” I would like to make a case for the underrated art of doing absolutely nothing. Yes, nothing — the sweet, guilt-free, blissful state of idleness. It seems we have collectively decided that being busy is a personality trait. We wear our packed schedules like badges of honor, swapping tales of our all-nighters and AP loaded courses as if they are heroic feats. But what if the real power move is, well, just stopping?



Picture this: you are sprawled on the couch, staring at the ceiling, no phone in hand, no music playing in the background, and no half-hearted attempt to “relax” by simultaneously scrolling through Instagram. Just you and your thoughts. Scary, right? We have become so accustomed to filling every micro-moment with something — anything — that the very concept of doing nothing feels like a radical act. James Black, a sophomore at IHS, agrees. “Everyone is always talking about being productive, but sometimes I just want to lie in bed and stare at the wall for a bit. Honestly, that is when I come up with the weirdest but best ideas,” Black says. Lily Narkunas, a junior at IHS, feels the same way. “I used to plan out every second of my day, but it got exhausting. Now, I let myself just chill sometimes — no phone, no homework — just me sitting there,” she says. “Weirdly enough, that is when I get my best writing ideas, like when I am just staring at the ceiling thinking about nothing.” But idleness is not just an act of rebellion against the grind culture — it is a necessity. Studies show that

downtime boosts creativity, improves problem-solving, and enhances mental health. Ever notice how your best ideas often strike when you are in the shower or taking a leisurely walk? That is your brain, freed from the shackles of constant task-switching, finally making magic. Even great thinkers throughout history have championed the art of idleness. Oscar Wilde famously declared, “To do nothing at all is the most difficult thing in the world, the most difficult and the most intellectual.” And let us not forget the Italians’ cher-

To do nothing at all is the most difficult thing in the world, the most difficult and the most intellectual.

ished concept of “dolce far niente” — the sweetness of doing nothing — immortalized in every romantic movie set in a sun-dappled Tuscan village.

Of course, there is a balance to strike. I am not advocating for a full retreat into permanent couch-potato status. The key is to reframe idleness not as laziness, but as a vital component of a well-rounded life. It is about giving yourself permission to be unproductive once in a while — not as a reward for burning out, but simply because your brain deserves a break.

College Athletes Need to be Reimbursed

By Shaelyn Erickson

The question of whether collegiate athletes should be paid has been debated for years. It is time to give a clear answer for the reimbursement of athletes because yes, they should be paid. The National Collegiate

Athletic Association (NCAA) earns billions of dollars every year from college sports, yet the athletes who make that money possible see little of it. They still have to fight even for a scholarship. These young athletes dedicate countless hours, put their bodies at risk of injury, and draw in millions of fans, yet they do not get a fair share of the profits they help generate.

College and the NCAA benefit enormously from the labor of student-athletes. It truly is a full-time job to play a sport on top of balancing school-work and other academics. From ticket sales and merchandise to media deals and sponsorships you see plastered everywhere, college sports generate tremendous amounts of revenue. Football and men's basketball alone make up a huge percentage of the proceeds. For example, the NCAA earned \$1.38 billion from the 2024 March Madness tournament alone. According to Investopedia,

the NCAA brought in \$1.15 billion in 2021, primarily from broadcasting rights, sponsorships, and championships. None of this would be possible without the athletes.

Despite their contributions, student-athletes receive no direct financial compensation. Their schedules are as demanding as a full-time job, often exceeding 40 hours per week of practices, games, travel, and other team obligations. As the Aspen Institute points out, the modern college sports industry closely resembles professional sports in both structure and intensity. These student-athletes have little time for part-time jobs or internships, and many face extensive expenses not covered by scholarships, like meals, travel, and housing. Even with recent changes allowing athletes to earn money through name, image, and likeness (NIL) deals, the system still remains unfair. A NCAA based college recruit-

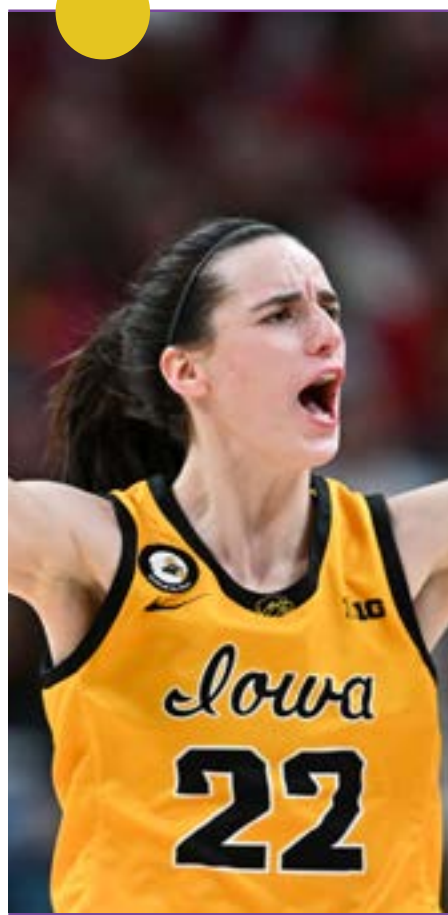
the Supreme Court ruled that the NCAA could not limit the education related benefits for student athletes.

ing platform, NCSA, reported that in 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that the NCAA could not limit the education related benefits for student athletes. This ruling helped to dismantle the NCAA's outdated defense of 'amateurism' and allowed the door to be opened to NIL deals. While yes, the NIL is a step forward, it only benefits a select few of high-profile athletes. Most student athletes still earn nothing. Investopedia notes that only a small percentage of athletes secure lucrative NIL deals, leaving the majority of athletes without any meaningful financial gain. Some people still argue that scholarships are enough compensation. However, this still heavily overlooks the immense wealth being created and the expenses they still have. Scholarships can cover admission, but they do not account for the

physical toll, risk of injury, or the missed opportunities to earn other incomes outside of campus. While these student-athletes have little, college coaches and administrators often earn multi-million-dollar salaries as reported by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA). This shows how college athletics act as a hierarchy of power. While the people at the top are making fortunes, the athletes who drive the business get nothing.

Critics worry that paying college athletes would ruin the spirit of amateur sports and make them too like a professional environment, potentially causing strain on school budgets. However, most do not realize that most large Division one programs, the highest level of collegiate athletics, already operate like businesses.

They have marketing teams, sponsorship availability, and national TV contracts. Many of these schools can afford to compensate their athletes fairly, especially with the amount of money that gets generated every year. At the center of it all, the issue is not just about money, it is about fairness. The refusal to pay college athletes is a form of exploitation, particularly impacting young athletes that have the least power in the system. They are generating wealth for institutions while being denied the opportunity to share in that success. The current system is outdated and unjust. Paying college athletes is not just possible, it is the right thing to do. It is time to move beyond the idea of amateurism being lost and start treating student-athletes with the respect and compensation they have long deserved.



Balasaygun, Kaitlin. "In the College Sports Pay Era, Female Athletes Are Emerging as Big Winners." CNBC, 15 Oct. 2022

Eagle's View Feature



Why is Mental Health Awareness a Much More Prevalent Topic?



I think now I'm at the place where I wear it proudly, and I'm not ashamed.



In recent years, mental health awareness has become a more prevalent topic of conversation throughout the world. Many believe this is solely because of social media, which is definitely a contributing factor. But lots of people discount the number of brands and celebrities who use their platform to create and promote mental health campaigns, which play just as much of a part in mental health awareness. It's time we acknowledge some of the biggest reasons that the silence surrounding mental health has been broken. As mentioned, social media is one of the big reasons why mental health awareness has spread. Over a decade ago in 2014, there was a very popular challenge online to bring awareness to ALS, called the Ice Bucket Challenge. If you have not already seen the videos of people dumping water on their heads, there has recently

By Alexis Berg

been a trend called The USC #SpeakYourMIND challenge, which closely resembles the Ice Bucket Challenge. Except this time, the challenge was to raise awareness for mental health. Those nominated for the challenge must post a video on their Instagram or TikTok story, getting a bucket of ice water dumped on their heads. They then must also nominate three of their friends to participate in the challenge. The goal of this challenge is to raise awareness of mental health and collect funds for the #SpeakYourMIND campaign, which has already raised over \$300,000, according to Active Minds. This is one of the most successful and widespread mental health campaigns in recent years on social media, bringing awareness to mental health everywhere. Countless celebrities have used their voices to bring awareness to the subject, especially as the silence



regarding mental wellness has broken down. For example, the famous actress and singer Selena Gomez has brought a lot of attention to mental health. As Style states, "Gomez suffers from bipolar disorder and made a documentary about it called My Mind & Me for Apple TV+ in 2022. In the same year, the pop star and her mum launched online platform Wonder mind to help people care for their mental health." Gomez's use of this documentary and platform was to provide a stepping stone for others to open up about their own mental health, and this is how media should be used. "I think now I'm at the place where I wear it proudly, and I'm not ashamed, and I wanna continue to be honest with my journey, because I feel like I don't have anything to hide," Gomez tells

Los Angeles Times. Gomez also decided to take a break from the spotlight in 2018, where she focused on learning and understanding mental health. Social media campaigns and celebrities are not the only ones who have used their platforms to talk about mental health. Numerous brands, such as Spotify or McDonalds, have created mental health campaigns to bring awareness. Spotify's "Take a Beat" campaign helps encourage people to use music as an outlet to improve mental wellness. As GWI states, "Spotify's initiative encourages users to take mindful pauses with curated playlists, designed to uplift and calm. By integrating music into daily routines, listeners find a source of comfort and resilience. It's a simple yet powerful way to help

individuals hit pause and reconnect with themselves." This campaign was particularly successful with Gen Z audiences, and proved to be an overall success. Spotify gained tons of positive media coverage by creating this campaign, proving to be a benefit to the brand as well as the consumers. Spotify is one of the many brands who benefited from supporting mental wellness. Overall, mental wellness is much more spoken about today, versus 10 or even 15 years ago. The world has finally realized that not talking about the issue only helps it grow. Thanks to the brands, celebrities, and social media campaigns that helped break the silence, people are much more conscious about their mental health, as well as their friends and families. If you want to help raise awareness, you can donate to the USC #SpeakYourMIND challenge, by visiting Active Minds.

Missing School to Travel

By Julia Dickey

Traveling around the world or relaxing on vacation appeals to many people, teenagers included. Whether students want to travel for the experience, educational value, or just to get a break, teens will say yes to a vacation. However, leaving town for an extended amount of time is not always as simple as heading to an airport with your suitcase. For students, traveling often involves missing school, something most students desperately try to avoid. In this era of AP-filled schedules, many students feel as though missing school will only lead to anxiety and an overwhelming amount of make-up work. Traveling is known to have many beneficial effects on people, teenagers especially. According to Go Abroad, traveling builds confidence, adaptability, and prob-

By seeing different cultures and people up close, students can clearly see how people from other places live, without the hundreds of opinions and stereotypes found on social media.

lem-solving skills. When traveling, things often do not go as planned. When this happens, teenagers must be flexible and problem-solve to fix the situation. This can be especially important for

development and allowing teenagers to become more independent. In addition, some say travel, especially abroad, can abolish harmful stereotypes of others and help teens gain a deeper perspective of the world. Kelsey Early, a teacher at IHS, says, "Traveling internationally helps you understand that your 'normal' is not everyone else's normal. It also helps you recognize that there are other ways to live, and neither is right or wrong, they just are." By seeing different cultures and people up close, students can clearly see how people from other places live, without the hundreds of opinions and stereotypes found on social media. Maris Menenburg, a sophomore student at IHS, traveled to England over the summer. Reflecting on her experience, she says, "I found I became very open to people, and I



think that I saw more value in international travel and global culture."

In addition to gaining a deeper connection to different cultures and people, some say that travel can also benefit a student's studies in school. Niko Cornell, a senior student at IHS, says, "Traveling could be good for understanding different perspectives surrounding science and history." He also mentions that it could be useful for music studies: "I think a lot of high school music is focused just on classical Western music, and I think there are many interesting forms of traditional music and modern music that aren't explored." Real-life experience can allow students to gain deeper

connections with their studies at school. According to Michigan State University, experimental learning theory often occurs during travel, which is what allows travel to provide educational value to a student's life. This means that the knowledge and skills acquired during travel can be applied to future experiences. Though there are many obvious positive effects of 'educational' travel, such as trips centered around experiencing of new places and cultures, teenagers wonder whether leisurely trips are still worth the trouble. Vacations like Disneyland and all-inclusive resorts in Hawaii may not seem ben-

eficial to some, but others believe these trips can still have a positive impact on a student's life. Kurtis Evans, a teacher at IHS, says, "I could see a more relaxing vacation, like a trip to Disneyland, being for mental health. It could be an opportunity for students to reengage at school by rebuilding stamina and recharging." Teenagers often have high levels of stress caused by school, social lives, and sports. So, it can be very important for students to take time off and relax. Furthermore, Lee Health states that traveling can lessen the risk of depression in teens. Traveling brings a daily change of scenery and activities, which



Teachers are providing schedules and easy ways for students to access content, even when they're not at school, is a tremendous resource that empowers students to be able to access their education.



has been shown to enhance happiness.

Unfortunately, when weighing the pros and cons of traveling as a teenager, school often comes into play. Missing school is viewed as a big deal, especially for high school students. Both Menenberg and Cornell said that they have felt overwhelmed by the amount of schoolwork accumulated after missing a day of school. However, some teachers believe that the age of technology we live in can make missing school for travel easier. Mr. Evans says, "I think that the fact that teachers are providing schedules and easy ways

for students to access content, even when they're not at school, is a tremendous resource that empowers students to be able to access their education, even if they're missing school." So, with schoolwork being more accessible online, teenagers can travel without the heavy restrictions of missing school. However, many studies show that academic success and attendance are highly correlated. According to Murray City School District, students with an attendance rate of 95% or greater had a higher chance of scoring A or B grades, while students with a lower attendance rate had lower

grades. This comes back to students' perspectives, who believe that even missing school for one day can cause one to fall way behind in classes.

On the other hand, some believe you can counteract lower attendance with communication and study strategies. When asked about how to deal with make-up work, Menenberg says, "I try to minimize transition breaks. For example, if I'm going home from school, I make sure I do work in the car. I will also work during meals and stuff." Teachers at IHS emphasize the need to communicate with teachers when missing school. Early says, "My only advice is to communicate with your teachers as much as possible. Some teachers are very organized and will be able to give you everything that you need before you leave. Other teachers, like myself, probably can't tell you what you missed until you come back." Building off this, Menenberg says, "I try to get the work done on the plane." By obtaining school assignments in advance and completing them before the trip, a student can avoid falling behind in their studies. This makes traveling more realistic

for many students. When presented with the opportunity to travel, many encourage students to take it, as there are many ways for students to keep up with their schoolwork today. With tools like online calendars and the ability to communicate with teachers about missing work, students can manage their coursework in advance while enjoying the extremely beneficial experiences that travel offers. So, by staying on top of school responsibilities, students may be able to create unforgettable memories and experiences that will last a lifetime.



With tools like online calendars and the ability to communicate with teachers about missing work, students can manage their coursework in advance while enjoying the extremely beneficial experiences that travel offers.



By Kelsi Lo

As the final curtain drops and the audience erupts in a standing ovation, all eyes are on the stellar actors and actresses taking their bows. While the cast enjoys the admiration and applause, the crew is still hard at work moving props and working spotlight. The program shows the audience a glimpse of the multiple moving parts needed to make the musical possible: run crew, stage manager, lighting, green room lead, etc. The multiple titles paint the big picture of the complex intricacies and teamwork needed to accomplish a production like Little Shop of Horrors. While the cast spends late nights memorizing lines and rehearsing blocking, the crew is just as busy constructing sets, designing lights, marking cues, acquiring props, putting together costumes, etc. “It takes a village and not many people realize how big that village is— it’s hard for

The Forgotten Hero Behind the Curtain: A Deep Dive on Technical Theater

most people to grasp how many people they never see, that never bow that are so involved,” said Lyla Cohen, a senior and stage manager for this year’s musical. There were 25 members of tech part of every show each night and around 10 other people that helped build the wooden set over midwinter break. Cohen, along with her team of stage assistants, is the person who needed to have every detail of the production memorized. They led the production by calling cues, handling communication between crew and cast, addressing any concerns or questions peers may have, and they timed every performance to ensure that every audience received the same high quality performance night in and night out. Sanika Ramachandran and Mateo Romeyer, both seniors and run crew leads, coordinated the backstage crew



and communicated with actors to make sure that props and sets were on and off the stage when needed. Senior Elliot Stevens designed the lighting for the production and ensured its execution on the lighting board during the show. Junior Ruby Stojanoff, green room lead, helped



They led the production by calling cues, handling communication between crew and cast, addressing any concerns or questions peers may have, and they timed every performance to ensure that every audience received the same high quality performance night in and night out.

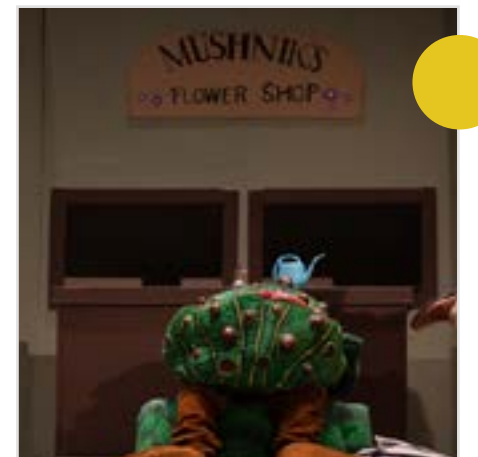


cast with hair, makeup, and costumes, ensuring the prep that happens in the green room before the show runs smoothly so every actor is prepped and polished before stepping on stage. The sheer amount of people that are in charge of diverse aspects of the show already makes the cooperation and cohesiveness of Little Shop of Horrors astounding. It is a testament to the amazing leadership, organizational skills, cooperation, and persistent rehearsal that every member of the crew needs to adhere to. Romeyer ex-

pressed, “every single transition no matter how small requires a lot of practice.” Rehearsal times are lengthy as spacing and blocking takes about a week, meeting everyday afterschool from four to eight and on Saturdays from ten in the morning to three in the afternoon. Leading up to opening night, the cast and crew gather about six hours everyday after school and on Saturdays to practice, rehearse, find mistakes and make it so that they can bring audiences the best experience possible. Lastly on show week they

met at five in the afternoon and went home at ten on Monday and Wednesday then stayed from eleven in the morning to ten at night on Saturday.

Despite the long hours and the enormous time commitment, most of the seniors on crew have done it since their freshman year of highschool. Cohen as someone who has done theater since elementary school reflected, “Theater skills are life skills. So much of who I am is shaped by theater, in so many ways. I have learned so much about myself as a human and a leader.” Stevens described the community as family and has been crucial to supporting his mental health when things are challenging: “It has always been there, a constant in my life that always has something for me to do— a new opportunity.” Ramachandran explained that as a person who is academically inclined, theater



Ms. Early Q&A

What is a fun fact about you, others might not believe?

I've ran a marathon!

If you weren't a teacher, what job would you have? A photographer, or someone who makes changes to system of education on a large scale

How long have you been teaching at IHS? Six years

What is your fondest memory of IHS? Painting mural boards with my Language and Conversation class

What is your favorite unit to teach? The history of bananas and US involvement in Central America

What is your favorite movie and why? Arrival, because of the message about how communication and education is necessary for success

Weirdest food combo? Eggs and ketchup

What is your favorite day of the week and why? Thursday! It is like Friday, but I have more energy

has kept her creative and sane in the last four years as it was an outlet away from academics and the stress of college applications. However, if there are students interested or considering doing technical theater do not be too discouraged by the long hours as Romeyer assures: "You can get a lot of work done backstage if you want to, despite the long hours, you create a strong community where everyone is so passionate about theater. It's a home away from home during the cold months of the year."

A great crew is not only important so that a production has great lighting, props, costuming, and set when needed but also crucial to help actors put on the best show they can. Junior Julia Bishop, who starred as Audrey, in Little Shop of Horrors recalled that run crew supported her by providing water backstage when she felt ill and constantly checking up on her wellbeing. She notes that actors' experience on technical theater can broaden one's understanding of the prep needed for a show: "Tech is really important, the show can only run properly if there is a good connection between cast and crew. The bond we all shared made

the experience and show better."

As the curtain falls and the spotlight shines on the actors, it is important to remember the heartbeat of any production works behind the curtain. The true unsung heroes of every show who pour countless hours into calling cues, moving props, designing lights, costumes, etc. Issaquah High School's Little

Shop of Horrors was not just a musical but a showcase of collaboration, perseverance, and passion. As the audience rises to applaud, let it be known: tech crew deserves a standing ovation too.



We asked a teacher at IHS the following questions: Who do you think it is? What is a fun fact about you others might not believe? My uncle wrote Ice Age 2.

If you weren't a teacher, what job would you have? Photographer

How long have you been teaching at IHS? 1 year

What is your favorite memory of IHS? The fall musical Little Shop of Horrors was a blast!

What is your favorite unit to teach? The comic book unit in my creative writing class.

What is your favorite movie and why? Forrest Gump. No matter where I am or what I'm doing, if it's on I can't look away.

In your opinion what is the weirdest food combo? I will never understand pizza and ranch. Pizza is perfect on its own and is not to be messed with.

What is your favorite day of the week and why? Saturday because I never schedule any adult responsibilities that day and I can do whatever I want! Answer: Mr. Swallow

Eagle's Eye – Student or Staff Spotlight



By Raine Zhang

Student Spotlight: Nyssa Balagopalan

By Ava Wine

HS sophomore Nyssa Balagopalan is a rising leader in a non-profit organization in Seattle. She has been appointed a position as a youth advisor at Amrita Seattle, a woman-owned and Indian-founded nonprofit. 16-year-old Nyssa is focused on addressing the importance around hygiene, menstrual health, safety and mental health around the world specifically in rural India. Balagopalan became connected to Amrita Seattle through her family. Balagopalan mentions that her parents worked with the organization throughout her childhood, and she was always connected with small volunteering jobs. However, it was not until last year

when she was given a leadership opportunity. In her position as youth advisor, she has had

the opportunity to use her passion to create programs that will have a direct impact on young women in rural India. One of the major focuses in her work is improving the access to feminine hygiene

products for women in India. Balagopalan mentions how the original approach was focusing just on menstrual health, but she recognized that the hygiene issues in those communities needed to be viewed in a broader sense. She mentions the way access to clean water can affect feminine hygiene and general health. Through the non-profit and Balagopalan's research and plans for the future, they worked with teams to create baskets that last up to five years of reusable period products and feminine hygiene care. She also mentions the way that she hopes to solve an issue that occurred with these packages. Some cities in India have no access to clean water or are desert land, Balagopalan is currently working with the non-profit to improve com-

postable period products that can be buried and made more sustainable. Amrita Seattle held a non-profit gala earlier this year, Balagopalan shared her proposal and was met with funding between \$8,000 to \$10,000 in funding to create her new projects and programs. Balagopalan says that she is hoping by next September to have her program launched. Along with her mentioning that she hopes to meet her goal of reducing the struggle by 20% of the population by 2026. Balagopalan spoke with confidence as she stated her plans for this and the steps she needs to take to create this hygienic solution. Balagopalan is an inspiring

example of how passion over a specific issue can lead to long term solutions and a new positive approach. Her leadership will help give safety and hygiene to many young women and inspire others to learn more about hygiene products in different countries and how they are supported. When asked what she would want students at IHS to know or any ways to help, she replied with the importance of becoming educated on men-

strual health and reducing the stigma surrounding it.

Through the non-profit and Balagopalan's research and plans for the future, they worked with teams to create baskets that last up to five years of reusable period products and feminine hygiene care.

Student Spotlight: Kelsi Lo

By Ava Wine

Issaquah High School junior Kelsi Lo is making headlines not only in debate but at Disney World. Lo was selected as one of only 100 students nationwide to attend the Disney Dreamers Academy—a leadership experience hosted at Disney World for high schoolers in March. “It is really selective,” Lo states. “They only choose 100 kids, and with being Disney, a lot of kids apply.” While the program was originally introduced with little to no information, with a limited amount of detail on specifics of the program, the experience turned out to be

unforgettable. Lo attended sessions with a variety of speakers, from voice actors to astronauts— all there to help kids improve their networking. She found the exposure helpful and mentions the main thing these speakers promoted, “A lot of it is them telling you to be confident, like 20 times”. At the program, Lo focused on the topic’s media and art, her main interests. The program, however, shared many different programs and career opportunities. Lo had access to some unforgettable opportunities, including meeting “Disney concept artists and seeing what their jobs are like as a career path.” After completing this summer program, she is now leading a team writing a newsletter for Disney about the event and is facing possibilities of being published by Disney as only a high schooler!

Besides Disney, Lo is a competitive debater, having qualified for nationals in Worlds Schools Debate during her sophomore year. When asked about these competitions and the preparation, she notes how she has “competed in virtually every debate event”. When giving advice to those new to

the debate scene, she keeps a warning on hand: “Debate just takes a lot of your time—and your family has to be ready to financially commit, too.”

In the future, look for Lo in new and upcoming media and arts programs, as she continues to inspire other IHS students with her passion and leadership. So next time you find yourself in a free moment, resist

Lo is a competitive debater, having qualified for nationals in Worlds Schools Debate during her sophomore year.

the urge to pull out your phone or draft a to-do list. Stare out the window. Let your mind wander. Watch the clouds roll by without mentally calculating your next move. It is not wasted time — it is an investment in your sanity.



Fast Track to the Future: Allison Choi's Early College Triumph

By Zinna Park



While most of us who are not seniors are thinking of homecoming and final exams, one IHS Eagle is preparing for college lectures and campus life. Allison Choi is a current sophomore at IHS and she has achieved something truly spectacular. This fall she will be heading off to the University of Washington as part of their selective early entrance program. The UW Academy Program is a prestigious opportunity for sophomore students of all backgrounds. Every year up to 40 students who are academically and highly motivated are chosen to enroll early into UW as a college freshman. It is a pursuit that takes determination and

hard work and only those who truly excel both in and out of the classroom make it through the rigorous selection.

When talking about her journey and how she first got interested, Choi says she heard about the program from her parents, and how—at first—she did not think much of the opportunity itself. She goes on to add how she underwent research and learned more information and decided to apply. Choi emphasizes the reflection process she went through and how she truly considered the question of whether she was prepared to undertake this new journey. She adds that she eventually reached a conclusion where she believed that, “this pro-



Choi's journey is a great reminder of the incredible outcomes that can happen when you stay curious and never underestimate what you are capable of—even as a sophomore in high school.



gram would really help me reach my goals because I feel as though I am more on the independent side academically.”

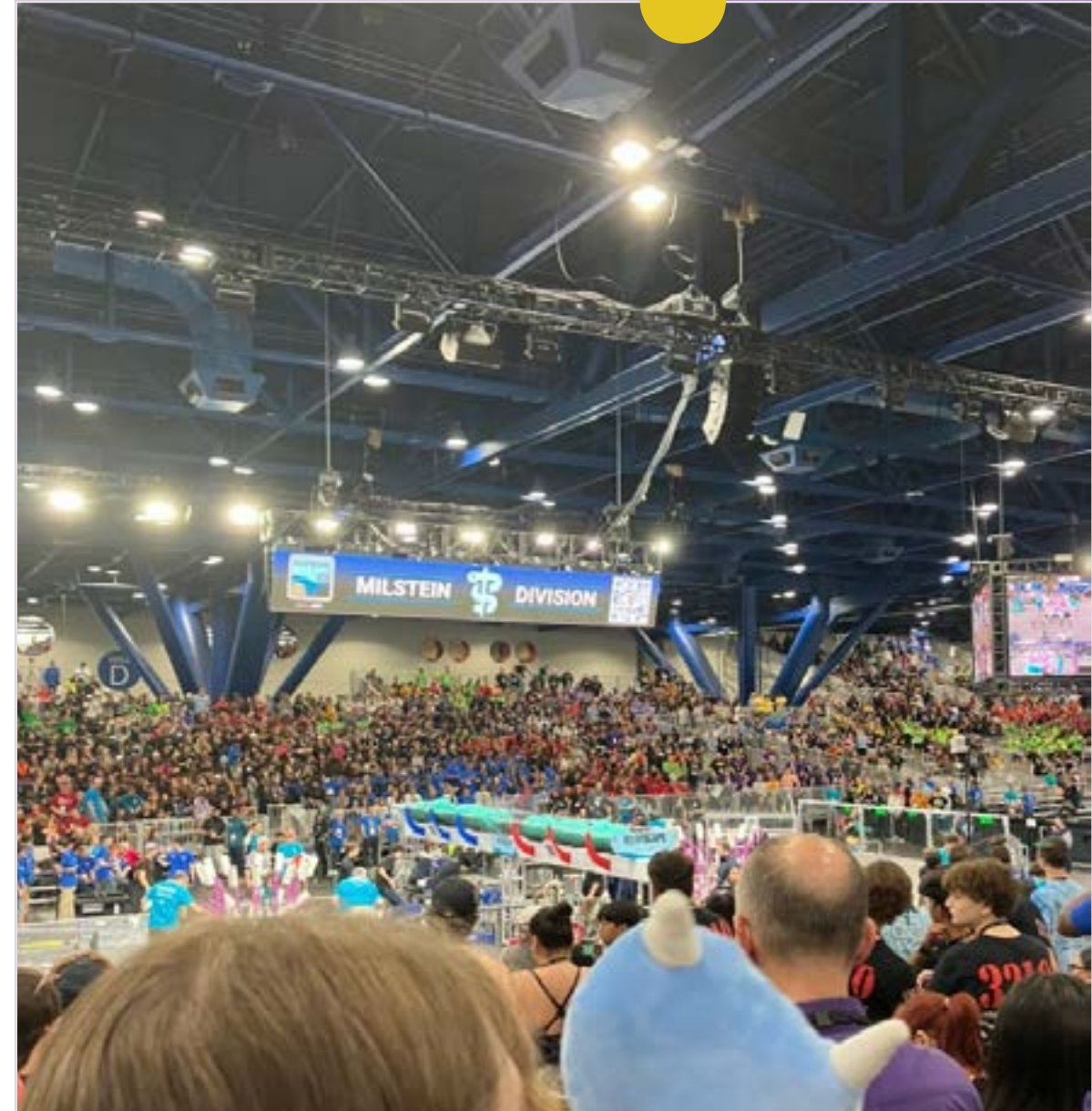
Choi continued on to talk more about her application process, explaining how she educated herself more on how to structure her essays as the application process was still the same as it is for applying to UW as those who are preparing for their college journey in late junior year. She also adds how talking to other people about their experiences helped to ease the whole process. One of the most important things to consider during any application process is your support system and Choi attests to this. She highlights how classes such as Sales and Marketing

helped her feel more prepared and she also gave a shout out to her teacher Mr. Hua for being helpful and encouraging and how it made a big difference.

When asked about how she felt when she got accepted Choi states, “I was really thrilled, and quite emotional because it's such a huge opportunity and just thinking that it would be possible and also just thinking about the opportunities that will come my way is just all so exciting.” She goes on to add how this program will allow her to pursue business and how networking at her age will be incredibly beneficial. She also jokes that “saving two years of my life will be rewarding,” but more importantly she says, “I feel ready

to put myself out there and connect with new people!” Choi's story is incredibly exciting not just because of what she has achieved but because of how she got there. For students who might be considering a similar path, she offers thoughtful advice: “Just go for it. Apply! That's what I did! And I didn't know what would come out of it, but most importantly really consider if you feel ready.” She also stresses on the importance of self-reflection, “If you know deep down that you really want the high school experience or your last two years, and you really want to build your maturity then that can also be a determining factor in your decision.” One thing is for sure, Choi's journey is a great reminder of the incredible outcomes that can happen when you stay curious and never underestimate what you are capable of—even as a sophomore in high school. Allison is a testament to how sometimes the future does not have to be something to dread about, it can be something to strive confidently towards.

Soaring Moments – School Achievements & Highlights



Engineering the Success Behind the IHS Robotics Team

Since the beginning of January, the Issaquah High School Robotics Team has worked diligently until the end of April with the wish of winning the 2025 For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) competition season. The team contributed copious amounts of time and effort to their robot and competition effort. After a challenging season, it is time for the team to reflect on their hard work and what they achieved during the competition.

The team had a lot of hopes for the season's outcome. When it comes to competitions, winning is a motivation that many people have. However, it is not the only goal. Freshman Ela Sharma says, "I think our team's goal was obviously to do as well as we could. Myself, personally, I am a freshman, but I really love this team, and I wanted to be as involved as I could." The incredible amount of participation and teamwork that the IHS Robotics Team shows is wonderful, and it explains

the Supreme Court ruled that the NCAA could not limit the education related benefits

why most members are motivated to do their best to help the team and their team members. An example of this is the use of shifts during competitions where team members would have a role during a certain time period to help out their team progress through matches while everyone else could rest. Sometimes, when a person could not show up for their shift, someone else

By Alexandra Bauer

would willingly take their spot to help the team. Electrical Lead and sophomore Circe Allen adds, "The main goal was to build a robust, competitive robot capable of performing well at district and world-level competitions and to improve on past performances by focusing on reliability and teamwork. Personally, a goal of mine was to get electrical rookies to Worlds and have an unbreakable electrical system." Judging from how well the team did this year by making it to the Division Finals at Worlds, it is safe to say that most if not all of these concrete goals were met. Some things that make robotic competitions unique are the atmosphere, the games, and the people. Robotic competitions last hours at a time and can be exhausting and stressful for the competitors. Awards Lead, Assistant Computer Aided Design (CAD) Lead,



and junior Sean Pawelczyk explains, "[Competitions] are very chaotic, there is a lot going on, but a lot of people are bored and had nothing to do. Sometimes [competitions] were boring, sometimes it was chaotic, sometimes it is a mix of both." However, what makes things better is the attitude that most teams have towards competing and their fellow competitors. Allen comments, "The competitions were intense and exciting, with a lot of teamwork and energy. There was

a strong sense of community, and it was inspiring to compete against some of the best teams in the world." With stressful competitions, there are bound to be challenges. Sometimes school conflicts with schedules or people are busy. However, other times, the challenges that the team overcame came from themselves and their team system. Team Advisor Julie Irwin admits that they sometimes struggle with "being able to keep everybody involved and give

everybody opportunities to work on the robot and [...] for mentors to train everybody." Sharma adds that rookie training is one of their biggest problems, saying, "We train our rookies [...] but other rookies don't catch up all the way, and then they are left behind and we do not give them time or attention." It is so important that the team realizes what needs to change for next season, and if they try and improve their problems, even if it is by a little bit, then they will



be more fit to learn and grow into a more powerful team. Now that the competition season is over, the team has a lot to reflect on how they can do better next year. Irwin reflects on the team's performance and says that the team could be more organized "which as the team grows, I never know which direction we need." Pawelczyk agrees and believes that "[they] could have improved on the organization in our CAD documents and just standardizing some practices in CAD." Organization is key to improving in any aspect of life, whether that is school, work, or hobbies. As

long as the team acknowledges where to improve, it is almost definite that they will do even better next year during the next competition season as they will try and improve their training and teamwork.

The Issaquah High School Robotics Team did a wonderful job this year during the FIRST competition season. Although they did not end up as tournament champions, they made it far through the competition. They were able to make it through district matches in Spokane and Yakima and went all the way to the Division Finals of the 2025 FIRST Robotics World



the Supreme Court ruled that the NCAA could not limit the education related benefits for student athletes.

Championship in Houston, Texas.

After everything that the IHS Robotics Team faced this competition season, it is amazing to see them do well in the competition. Congratulations to the IHS Robotics Team for everything that they have accomplished this year! Good luck next year during the next competition season!



Eagle Expression



By Raine Zhang

Eddie the Eagle Responses:

Question: How can I build confidence and stop comparing myself to others?

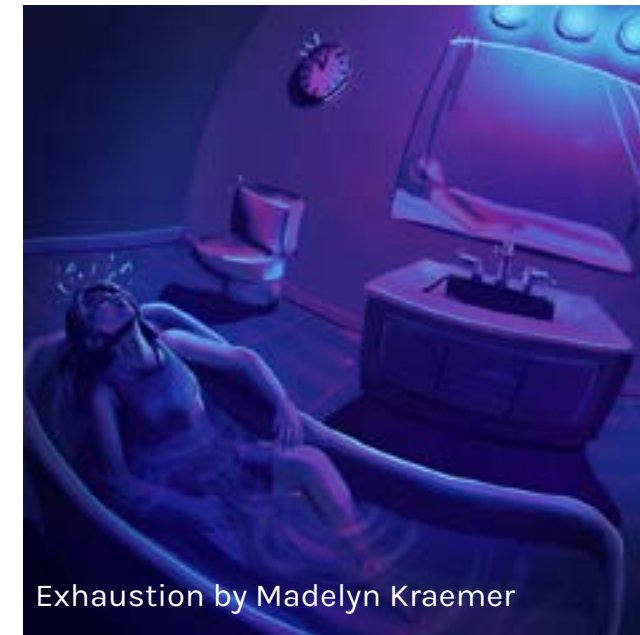
Eddie's Advice: To get your confidence soaring, you must realize that comparison does not measure your self-worth. Someone will always have something you want, but someone else will always wish to have something you have, like your smile. By comparing yourself, you push yourself to unrealistic standards and miss out on loving what you do have. To stop comparing yourself, remember that everyone has a different life which makes things more or less accessible. One student may have the resources to do activities while another student does not. This shows that everyone's life is different and not comparable and that you should be confident in your own feathers.

Question: Hi Eddie! One question I have is how do I balance homework, extracurriculars, friendships, etc. when my sched-

~Showcase – Photos & Art~



lil sweet treats by Claire Lin



Exhaustion by Madelyn Kraemer



Bird the Crane by Ryuya Yonekura



Untitled Hand Study by Cash Hoffman



Contemplation by Audrey

u!e gets so busy?

Eddie's Advice: Great question! Homework can be challenging with extracurriculars, so try to plan out your day to make the most of the time you have, for example, getting work done during lunch. A quick car ride homework or study session can also help reduce the amount of work you need to get done while you are traveling to your extracurriculars. As for friends, birds of a feather stick together even during busy times. To make time with your friends productive consider a fun study session at a library or Starbucks to help kill two birds with one stone!

Question: I accidentally found out a friend was talking about me behind my back in a group chat. I was not supposed to see it. Now I don't know how to act around them, and I can not unsee it. What do I do?

Eddie's Advice: Sometimes with these situations you have to wing it, but never fear Eddie is here! I believe that if you are comfortable with it, you should confront your friends and ask them why they said what they said. If you are not comfortable with that, consider spending time with another group of friends or branching out to make new friends

while you think about whether you're ready to soar on with or without them.

Question: How can I prevent myself from using my phone when I wake up in the morning?

Eddie's Advice: It can be hard to fly into the day early in the morning, especially when all there is to look forward to is school. Sometimes all we need is something fun to look forward to early in the morning to prevent us from being consumed by emotion-dulling doom scrolling. If you have a fun hobby you enjoy, such as reading, painting, or something else, try allowing yourself to do that the second you wake up in the morning, even if it is only for five minutes. You can also prevent scrolling early in the morning by prepping a yummy breakfast the night before, such as overnight oats or a smoothie. This can give you the motivation you need to get out of bed instantly. Clipping the wings of your social media apps by putting time restrictions on them can help you stay on track as well.

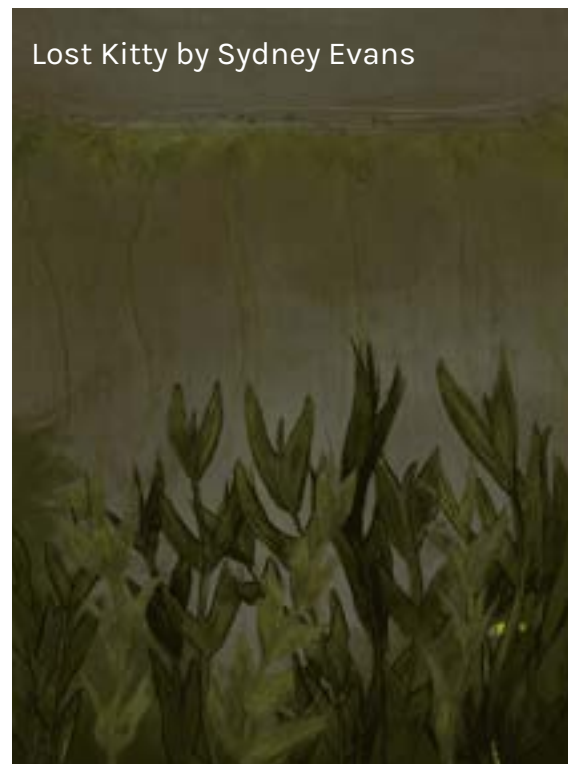
Question: I tripped going up the stairs, spilled my iced coffee, and accidentally kicked someone's backpack all in 30 seconds. How do I recover my



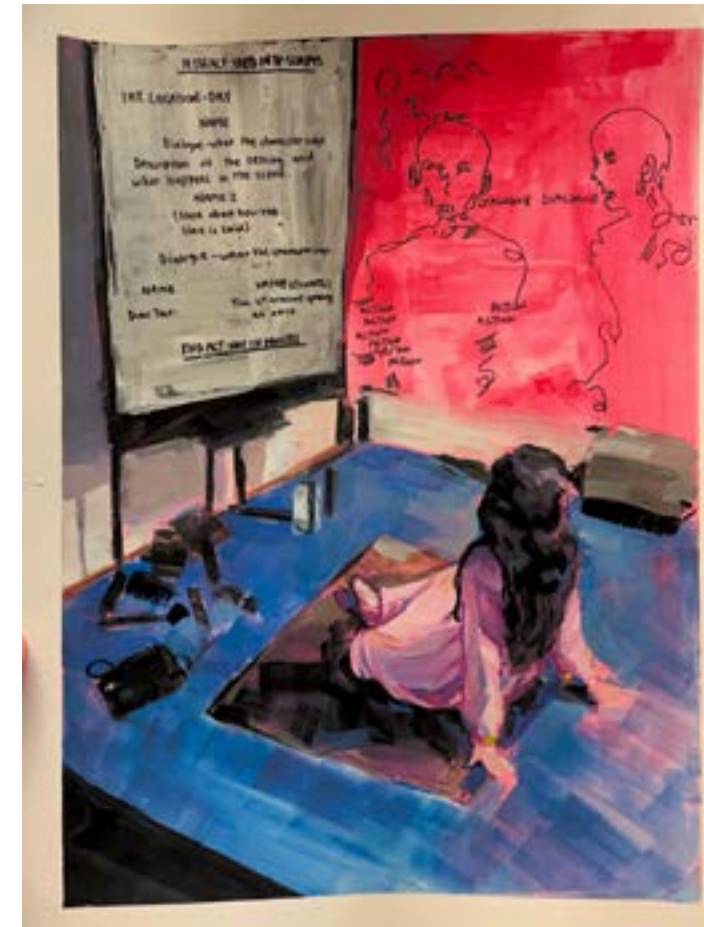
Venus by Faith Paris



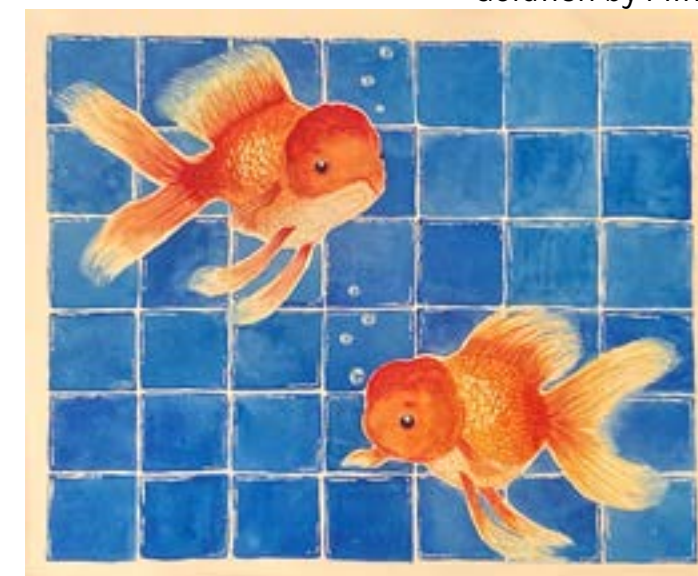
Odin by Aubrey Stubbs



Lost Kitty by Sydney Evans



Script by Cathrine Mao



Goldfish by Mina

dignity and possibly my will to live?

Eddie's Advice: Oh no! Embarrassment can be one of the worst feelings, but luckily it is temporary. Time can be the simplest way to glide out embarrassment. In a few years, or even months or weeks, there is a chance you will not even remember this happening! If you don't want to have to wait that long, or you feel like your dignity could use a boost, try looking at the situation from another person's perspective. If you had watched someone trip and made a bit of a fool of themselves, you probably wouldn't think much of it. Don't forget to treat yourself with kindness and remember that everybody makes mistakes! Disclaimer: Please take all of my advice with a grain of salt and remember that the counselors are here to help with more complex matters!