

## Student Reporter

## A Once In A Lifetime Concert



Aspen Lee

Grade 8  
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Blackpink's Legendary Entry to Ddu-du-Ddu-du as the crowd goes wild. [Source: Author, Aspen Lee]

Korean culture has rapidly been spreading across the globe, including in North America, and American Pop was one of the major influences. Quickly adapting to the rising K-pop, by groups such as BTS, Blackpink, and Seventeen, Americans brought fame to the peninsula's music, helping the newly debuted trainees gain popularity and great awards. The number of streams and awards continued rising over the past decade in K-pop, with groups holding world tours, releasing albums, and promoting in the US. Unfortunately,

when COVID-19 hit, these bands were unable to perform, so they had to return home, not knowing that they wouldn't be able to come back to America for two years.

One girl group, Blackpink, gained fame ever after their debut in 2016, and released singles, albums, and collaborations every year until 2020. Popular hit songs like On the Ground, Money, and Lalisa kept the group's popularity consistent through the pandemic, as well as partnerships with large clothing brands and starring in

Korean/American dramas. Although their hiatus went on longer than fans, also known as Blinks, expected, it built up more excitement and expectations for the world tour that would take place after the release of the newest album, Born Pink. Making stops in cities like Hamilton, Chicago, Newark, and Los Angeles, many of the fans were brought together at the sight of seeing their favorite K-pop idols perform again on stage.

LA was the final city in North America, and the show was packed from the top seats to every individual floor seat. Ranging from a couple hundred dollars to thousands of dollars, the tickets were extremely hard to obtain, and every fan had to go through a series of waiting rooms and selling before achieving the perfect seat to watch the 2-hour concert. From songs like Playing with Fire to their newest release, Shut Down, there was screaming

and cheering for the girls all night. Blackpink's lightstick, the "byong-byong hammer," was confidently held high by the Blinks and shook throughout every song. The entrance where smoke blew and the silhouettes of the famous stars appeared caused for the wave of fans to repeat the lyrics of How You Like That for all to hear. It rang through the stadium in California and sent chills down everyone's backs as the first beat dropped.

Having seats in the VIP floor section allows for a spot during the soundcheck, where Blackpink comes out to rehearse and bond with the few hundred fans waiting for them. Other than the soundcheck, VIP fans are also given the chance to say farewell to the group after the concert face to face. Even just being on the "floor" of the stadium is a close enough seat to view all of the dances and beautiful faces of the members.

## Student Reporter

## Fast Fashion is Hot, and It's Making the Earth Even Hotter



Catherine Han

Grade 12  
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Fast fashion first took off during the 1990s when retailers began to advertise trendy, low-priced, and low-quality clothes every week in order to keep up with the rapid pace at which fashion trends came and went. When fast fashion made clothing cheap, convenient, and consumable, it encouraged consumers to indulge in instant-gratification desires. Especially during the pandemic, consumers looked towards e-commerce social media giants such as Shein and Asos. These new stores gained massive attention due to their online-only presence. Shipping directly to their consumers from the warehouses allowed for a lack of supply chain snags that would have slowed down the distribution process. In addition to that, the benefits of cheap overseas labor and synthetic material maintained their low prices.

Back in middle school, I started noticing how other students around me dressed.



Fast fashion online is virtually always marketed alongside tempting deals and sales to persuade consumers to buy their products. [Source: Author, Catherine Han]

Whether it was an all-black ensemble or oversized cardigans paired with leg warmers, I started wanting to individualize my own style. When I shared this thought with a friend, she pulled out her phone and beckoned me over. I was greeted with endless grids of clothing, not one over \$20. My friend had animatedly chatted about how cute and cheap the clothes were, and I listened in awe and captivation. After bothering my parents for days to buy me a hoodie

from that same website, I waited for the day the package would arrive would leave me highly disappointed. For one, the actual product was nothing like what was shown online; the size was more tight-fitted, and the hood barely covered my head. But what horrified me the most was the quality of the fabric. Feeling the soft synthetic fiber of polyester under my fingers, I drew myself away from the convenience of fast fashion.

The breakneck rate at which we consume fast fashion means that nearly 92 million tons of textile waste are counted yearly. Buying into fast fashion hurts the Earth because many of these brands depend on international shipping to transport their products to the consumers, which inflates the billion tons of greenhouse gases released annually when shipping. Furthermore, the material used in virtually all fast fashion likely contains petroleum-based, resource-intensive synthetic fibers such as polyester and nylon. These low-cost fibers make up 35 percent of the microplastics polluting our oceans and also take several centuries to break down in landfills. It's no wonder fashion production comprises 10% of total global carbon emissions. Although it is understandable why it is extremely attractive to many, with its great deals and style options, knowing our purchases are irreversibly hurting the environment makes it difficult to quantify the actual cost of our clothing by mere price tags.

## Student Reporter

## Get Cozy This Winter with These Books!



Alexis Choi

Grade 10  
South High School

The holiday season has arrived; the weather has become colder, and it is finally socially acceptable to turn on Christmas carols. Winter break is an opportunity to spend time with family and give and receive gifts, but it's also the perfect chance to get caught up on some reading! Nothing is cozier than a good wintery book during the holidays. So whether it's a snowy fantasy, a chilling mystery, or a sweet winter romance, here are some books that can help you enjoy this December and get in the festive mood!

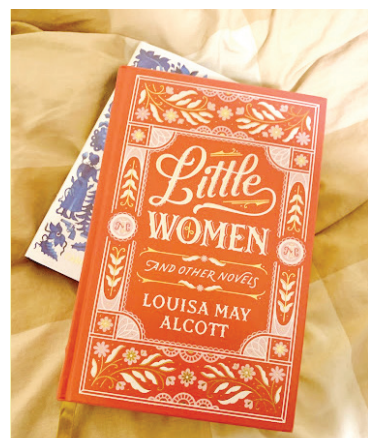
It's hard to go wrong with holiday romances. The sappiness and unrealisticness that are often the biggest caveats of most romances are cured by the unique coziness of Christmastime. The novel *Let it Snow* combines three short stories into a quirky and slightly ridiculous (in a good way) narrative of the highs and lows of love set in a massive snowstorm. In this case, we have not one or two, but three winter romances writ-

ten by YA veterans John Green, Lauren Myracle, and Maureen Johnson. The best part is that all three stories are connected! Although they are written by different people, the stories are all set on Christmas Eve, and the plots occur simultaneously, interconnecting here and there. These three fluffy holiday stories are sure to make you smile and warm your heart this season.

Not in the mood for romance? *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, by Waubgeshig Rice, is a thought-provoking post-apocalyptic novel about a small northern Anishinaabe community in Canada that goes dark, leaving people panicking in the face of a looming winter. Although this is a tale about catastrophes and disasters, it is also a story of how communities and individuals are strengthened by their culture and traditions. Rice approaches the traditional apocalyptic tale with a different view, showing how non-white perspec-

tives can add character and an additional layer to a story. Those of the Anishinaabe community have lost their homeland and homes, leaving them already cut off from traditional society, which causes them to react differently to the situation than what would typically be expected. *Moon of the Crusted Snow* is a suspenseful, scarily realistic dystopian story with beautiful winter elements that will make you think (and feel grateful for having functional heaters) during your winter this year!

The final book is a classic. *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott, is an iconic coming-of-age story about four sisters, Meg, Jo, Amy, and Beth, and their adventures as they navigate through journeys of family, love, and finding their own paths in life. The story takes place in the winter season during the 19th century. Containing heart-warming, sweet, humorous, and thought-provoking parts, it is the perfect



Little Women is the perfect cozy read for a cozy winter afternoon! [Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

holiday classic to curl up with this Christmas!

Though this list is far from complete, these books will undoubtedly get you ready for winter this year. Whether you are someone who enjoys cute short stories, suspenseful adventures, or charming classics, you may want to check out these novels, or perhaps, add them to your Christmas wish list!

Student Reporter

## 2022 The Los Angeles Choir Festival



**Rubie Choi**  
Grade 11  
Torrance High School



The audience's view of the orchestra that played at the beginning of the Los Angeles Choir Festival.  
[Source: Yunsuk Choi]

Ever since the outbreak of the Covid-19 Virus, Asian hate crimes in the US have skyrocketed. Because of this, the musical community of Los Angeles gathered together to raise awareness and support for the AAPI community at the Los Angeles Choir Festival, which was hosted at the Ezralow Family Outdoor Pavilion at the Heart of Los Angeles on

Saturday, November 5, 2022. The event featured the Sakura Chorus, the Ewha Chorale, the California Philharmonic Art Chorus, the Vocielesti Children's Choir, the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, the Young Artists Orchestra, the Maqueos Music Banda Filarmonica, the Heart of LA Risner Intergenerational Choir, and the Heart of LA Eisner

Intergenerational Orchestra.

Although the event started at 3:30 P.M., as part of the Young Artists Orchestra, I had to arrive at 2:30 P.M. Rehearsals were brief and happened right before the festival started due to many performers coming late since parking was hard to find. Led by Conductor Daniel Suk, my orchestra and the Heart of Los Angeles Eisner Orchestra started the event with *Intermezzo Sinfonico* by Pietro Mascagni and *Symphony No. 9* by Antonín Dvořák. After, the other performers were able to showcase their productions. One group sang the song, *The Moon Represents My Heart*, from the Hong Kong movie: *Almost a Love Story*. Another sang different variations of the traditional Korean song, *Arirang*. Those who were not performing at the moment were placed into separate Green Rooms. For my orches-

tra, the intermission between our performances was two hours, so we had to wait for a very long time. For the finale at 5:30 P.M., all artists gathered to perform the song "Imagine" by the Beatles. The song was chosen because it highlights peace and a world where everybody is united. The melodious orchestra accompanied by the sweet-toned choir singers was the perfect way to end the festival.

At the end of the performances, cookies from *Insomnia Cookie* and drinks from Starbucks were laid out for the audience and the performers to enjoy. Although the week leading up to the event had been cold and chilly, the weather on the day of the festival was bright and sunny, allowing the audience not to freeze while listening to the great tunes. Music is definitely an instrument that brings everyone together!

Student Reporter

## Model United Nations 101



**Angel Song**  
Grade 8  
Walter Reed Middle School

Speech and debate is a popular extracurricular activity for many aspiring public speakers. Normally, the typical "speech and debate" consists of a speech and maybe some back-and-forth debating. However, a less spotlighted public speaking event is Model United Nations (MUN).

MUN is an activity where competitors, called delegates, participate in debating pressing world issues, as representatives of their respective countries, at conferences. Issues can range from the COVID-19 pandemic to employee rights, such as collective bargaining. These topic areas are all related to a committee or the organization a delegate is a part of. These committees can include well-known ones, such as the World Health Organization and International Labor Organization, or lesser-known ones, like the World Meteorological Organization and the World Tourism Organization. Prior to the conference, delegates receive their role as a certain country's representative and conduct

immense research on their country and stance on the topics. Some conferences have a component called position papers sprinkled in, depending on the committee. They are normally not actively utilized during conferences, but position papers written with poise and research can be considered for a research award.

Conferences differ from regular speech and debate tournaments to the point that they are divided into completely different extracurricular activities. Delegates refer to themselves as "the delegate (or delegation) of (country)" and use

**International Labor Organization**  
 Sponsors: Belarus, Laos, Kenya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Columbia, Cuba, Qatar, Jordan, New Zealand, Sierra, Maldives, Mozambique, Iran  
 Signatories: Denmark, Turkey, China, Ethiopia, Fiji, Argentina, Chile, Bangladesh, Uruguay, Bahamas, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Japan  
 Topic: Protecting Collective Bargaining Rights and the Rights to Organize

The International Labor Organization,  
 Expecting an International standard of treatments and rights,  
 Considering the possible lack of citizen awareness about labor rights,  
 Understanding the potential internal benefits of labor unions

1. Calling for the formation of an International Union for the purpose of protecting labor union rights through methods such but not limited to:
  - a. Discussing and understanding each country's governmental policies and their economic needs;
  - b. Negotiations among the country's government officials, employers, and workers

A resolution paper, also known as a working paper for a conference, which was used during a MUN conference. [Source: Author, Angel Song]

professional language to debate. After taking attendance and giving opening speeches, a brief speech on the topic's background is made and delegates can motion for moderated or unmoderated caucuses, commonly referred to as mods and unmods. The delegate that motions for a mod provides a topic relevant to the central topic to give speeches upon and is given either the first or last speech of the caucus. The representative motioning designates the length and number of delegates who can speak during a mod. Unmoderated caucuses are the opposite of mods, with delegates being free to move around and form blocs

or groups with other delegations with similar stances. Communication is key to having a productive unmod. This caucus is sprinkled around the entire session, with mods in between. After sufficient discussion during these unmods, delegates from the same bloc join to create a resolution paper that lists the solutions to the problem they are debating. As well as communication, time management is extremely important, as some conferences may be short on time. After submitting the resolution paper to the chair, delegates convene in the main session and vote on the resolution paper that presents the best solution.

By participating in MUN conferences as a delegate, students learn about pressing international conflicts that they may not have known about before and earn public speaking skills through mods and unmods between the representatives. Keeping these benefits in mind, this delegation wishes to see newer delegates jumping into the world of MUN.

Student Reporter

## Adding Inches to your Height with 2022's Shoe Trends



**Audrey Park**  
Grade 9  
Northwood High School

Through social media, this year has demonstrated that there's a line of high-heeled shoes available for any occasion. While customizable features and earthy color palettes have similarly gained demand, who can't say no to a sudden growth spurt? When browsing through the recommendations of online influencers, you'll find that sporty sneakers, retro shoes, and seasonal boots have been essential to any harmonious outfit.

For example, as teenagers have found themselves in casual gatherings more often, sporty brands have gotten into the habit of making shoes with a more casual and comfortable purpose. No other company has been as successful as Nike when it comes to selling clean-kept sneakers. The average student will find that Jordans, Blazers, and Air Forces make a frequent appearance in the school hallways: this year's staple of the

Nike brand is its high platforms on customizable patterns. These variations gained traction after Nike's neutral-colored Air Force series came out. As it has always been with the sneaker community, these designs have circulated with only a few adjustments being made on personal preference. Although the diversity in these variations has accumulated over the months, social media has gone back to Nike's simpler roots in time for winter, with a retro, black/white theme. Throughout the year, however, our younger generation has demonstrated great feats of creative liberty by customizing season-appropriate shoes and keeping Nike's new lines relevant.

Another way that social media has expressed its fondness for customizable features and high platforms has been through Converse's popularity. The retro, multicolored shoes made a comeback last winter

in time for the new year. Although customizable options were mainly limited to color, it was all the internet needed to make it an essential clothing item. Over the years, the brand built on its flat-colored "trademark" and recently became a worthwhile investment for spicing up any outfit.

Other than these year-round features, a line of shoes that has become popular with the start of the season has been Chelsea boots. Similar to the last entries, the popularity of platform shoes has actively given rise to Chelsea boot sales. They have a sleek design and add an inch to your height. Often coming in earthy and neutral palettes, these ankle boots have become notorious for complimenting the cool colors associated with winter.

If the long-lasting popularity of these lines tells us anything about



Racks at local clothing stores display shoes with high soles (the most reappearing brand being Converse). [Source: Author, Audrey Park]

next year's trends, customizable options will be kept, and the direction of seasonal shoes will probably be left to the interpretation of vintage companies. In other words, any upcoming trends that surpass this year's will definitely reach new heights.