

## Student Reporter



Minjoo Kim

Grade 10  
Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology

## Suwanee Citizens in a Festival Full of Smiles and Cheers



People are enjoying the Suwanee Festival while watching entertainers. [Source: Author, Minjoo Kim]

The Suwanee Festival is one of the largest festivals. It is held every year in Suwanee Town Center Park, Georgia. This year, it was held on September 16th and 17th. Countless people came to enjoy the festival with their closest families and friends. I was fortunate enough to be able to volunteer at such a large event. So, if you haven't already, you must check out this unforgettable experience for next year!

The festival featured various activities and events that families could participate in. There were numerous games, including those where you

had to spin a wheel and those where you tried to land a horseshoe on a stick. Prizes featured goodie bags that contained colored pencils, pens, and candy. The best part? All of the games and rewards were free! The family zone was a personal favorite! This section contained many activities, such as a real-life maze, sandbox, and mechanical bull. Furthermore, young children went jumping and sliding on the large airbags that were available for everyone.

You can also enjoy some of the shopping opportunities while at

the festival. At a charming boutique called Bae N Bunnie, you could purchase plushies made with yarn. My favorites were the colorful turtle plushies! Also, many shops offered candles, dolls, bracelets, and various homemade decorations for sale. Some shops even sold desserts! A fan favorite was Port A Bakes. Here you could find delicious pound cakes and cupcakes!

The parade holds significant importance at the Suwanee Festival, being the largest and most anticipated event of the celebration. There were cheerleading groups, sports cars, old-fashioned cars, bands, and orchestras from many high schools and middle schools, among other things. Many high school-level marching bands, orchestras, and dance teams practiced songs for the parade. As a student who participated in a parade in middle school, it was fun to watch everybody's hard work and hear many of the sweet symphonies that filled the air. The

one that I was impressed with in the Suwanee Festival parade of 2023 was the military marching by Collins Hill High School.

I interviewed a person who attended the Suwanee Festival 2023 and also Suwanee Festival 2021. Kim Mi Kyung (incognito), a current resident of Suwanee, said, "The Suwanee Festival never depresses me. I had so much fun with my family, and I never saw this kind of festival in Korea. The unique thing about the Suwanee parade is that students give free candies while they are marching." She added that she was so glad to see all the beautiful pieces come together and create a beautiful festival.

I strongly recommend you come to Suwanee, Georgia, next year! They promise to hold various events that will surely pique your interest. The next festival will be held from September 21 through September 22, 2024, so be sure to jot it down on your calendar!

## Student Reporter

## The Upcoming NBA Season



Eunice Minji Choi

Grade 11  
North Hollywood High School

The NBA (National Basketball Association) regular season is starting soon, on October 24, 2023. The NBA is a professional basketball league of the US formed in 1946. It is one of the major professional leagues in the US and is also one of the most popular basketball leagues in the world. NBA players are also some of the best-paid athletes in the world, so you know how popular it is. Even if you are new to basketball, you have probably heard the names Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, and Stephen Curry - all are considered the top players in NBA history.

You may ask, "How does the NBA work?" It's simple. There are 30 teams in the league. The teams are divided into conferences - Western and Eastern, each containing 15 teams. Within each conference, there are 3 divisions. The Western Conference consists of the Pacific, Northwest, and Southwest divisions, while the Eastern Conference consists of the Atlantic, Central, and Southeast divisions. Each team plays a total of 82 games in a regular season - 41 home and 41 away. They include 1 home

and 1 away game with each opponent from the other conference, 2 home and 2 away games with each opponent from the same division, and 3-4 games with each opponent from the same conference. The top 8 teams from each conference move up to the playoffs, which begin in April. Playoffs are organized into 4 rounds, each round consisting of a best-of-seven series. The winning team of each conference then heads to the finals, which takes place in June. In between the seasons, there are special events like NBA drafts, All-Star games, and 3-point contests.

As an avid basketball fan, I am very excited for the 2023-24 season.

Western Conference			Eastern Conference		
Pacific	Northwest	Southwest	Atlantic	Central	Southeast
Golden State Warriors (7)	Denver Nuggets (1)	Dallas Mavericks (1)	Boston Celtics (17)	Milwaukee Bucks (2)	Atlanta Hawks (1)
Los Angeles Lakers (17)	Minnesota Timberwolves	Houston Rockets (2)	New Jersey Nets	Cleveland Cavaliers (1)	Orlando Magic
Los Angeles Clippers	Oklahoma City Thunder (1)	Memphis Grizzlies	New York Knicks (2)	Detroit Pistons (3)	Charlotte Hornets
Sacramento Kings (1)	Portland Trail Blazers (1)	New Orleans Pelicans	Philadelphia 76ers (3)	Indiana Pacers	Washington Wizards (1)
Phoenix Suns	Utah Jazz	San Antonio Spurs (6)	Toronto Raptors (1)	Chicago Bulls (6)	Miami Heat (3)
36 total			40 total		

This chart shows the number of championships each team of the NBA has. [Source: Author, Eunice Minji Choi]

Though I have been watching the WNBA, it doesn't hit like the NBA. The first games of the season will be a doubleheader: Los Angeles Lakers vs. Denver Nuggets and Golden State Warriors vs. Phoenix Suns. The Lakers were champions in 2020, the Suns in 2021, the Warriors in 2022, and our most recent champion, the Nuggets in 2023. People are starting to put out their predictions for the win-loss of each team. The Nuggets, Warriors, Lakers, Suns, Boston Celtics, and Milwaukee Bucks are the top contenders for the championship this season. Personally, I'm hoping for another Warriors or Lakers championship.

Born and raised in Los Angeles,

I grew up as a Lakers fan, and although I still am, I root for the Warriors as well. Why? Because I love Stephen Curry, and over the past season, the Warriors were amazing. During the Western Conference Semifinals of last season, I was torn because I didn't know who to root for - Lakers or Warriors? When the Lakers won, I was happy, but disappointed at the same time. Hopefully, that won't happen this season.

I believe that the NBA is an all-year thing. With non-league and preseason games and special off-season events, the NBA is able to maintain its fandom. Basketball fans have been showing their fandom already through responses to NBA drafts and preseason discussions, expectations, and predictions. With the NBA regular season starting soon, many people will spend lots of money to buy game tickets, and others will watch through their television or phone. Through whichever method, I know that millions will be watching games and root for their favorite teams, myself included.

## Student Reporter

## A Budding Journalist's Ideal Destination: The Princeton Summer Journalism



Wonjun (Junny) Jung

Grade 12  
Grover Cleveland Charter High School

Every summer, the Princeton Summer Journalism Program selects 40 high school juniors from limited-income backgrounds across the country to attend their all-expenses-paid summer residential, virtual, and year-long college preparation program. Last year, I had the privilege of being one of the forty students after multiple interviews and written application-based processes.

The Princeton Summer Journalism Program (PSJP) is a subset program of the Emma Bloomberg Center for Access and Opportunity at Princeton University. Their mission is to, "diversify the fields that impact our democracy through the exploration of the important connection between journalism and critical social and political events." PSJP was founded back in 2002 by Princeton Alumni Richard Just, Michael Koike, Gregory Mancini, and Rich Tucker, with the goal of diversifying the professional media landscape, where minorities and individuals of lower-

income backgrounds have been historically underrepresented. The founders intended for the program to extend beyond the typical summer camp experience and to create a lasting environment for critical thought, intellectual development, and a supportive community.

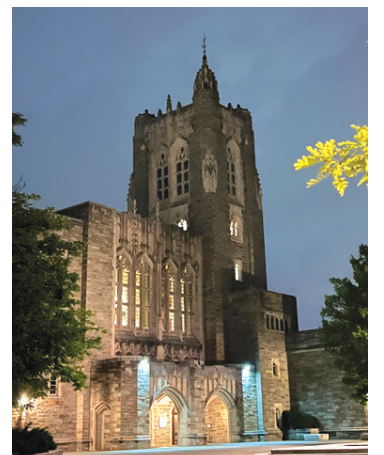
As this was the first year back since the pandemic, the itinerary of the program was split into two distinct parts: a 3-week virtual segment and a 10-day residential stay at Princeton University's dorms.

The online portion consisted of tri-weekly lectures from various, accomplished staff members of the program and esteemed professionals of the field, including reporters and communists from publications such as the New York Times, ProPublica, and The Atlantic. After each lecture, students were given an opportunity to ask guest speakers questions regarding their jobs, the contents of their lectures, or even

their beliefs on numerous journalistic topics. Additionally, to prepare for the rigorous activities of the residential stay, reporting and reading assignments were assigned.

The residential stay began with a paid flight to the Princeton University campus. During the ten days, each was packed with activities. Every day, a mix of lectures from reporters and Princeton University professors, as well as cooperative writing activities, were planned out. Specialists from the field, such as Brian Rokus from CNN and documentary director Dave Meyers from Vice, taught workshops relating to their specialties. Experiences at the university campus were integrated with field trips to the Bloomberg, New York Times, and NBC offices.

From my experience, I can describe the program as an intellectually stimulating, unique experience that all aspiring journalists and critical-thinking enthusiasts should ap-



One of many historic buildings on Princeton's campus, which were a common sight during the night walks. [Source: Author, Junny Jung]

ply to. Being constantly surrounded by like-minded peers, along with esteemed counselors who are highly educated, only elevated the program as it pushed the students to think outside the box for solutions that can help our democracy. The conversations and lectures challenged my pre-existing notions of how the world worked and journalism's place in society.

Student Reporter

## My Experience As A Part Of Athletics Social Media Team



**Isleen Lee**  
Grade 10  
Harvard-Westlake School



Members meet in the Taper Conference Room every Thursday from 11:00-11:30 AM. [Source: Jason Kelly]

Calling all teens! What sounds more fun, being able to attend all games while posting live score updates to your school's athletics social media page or, well, not doing so? I would say that the first choice sounds more appealing. So, that's exactly what I did this year during my first year at the Upper campus at Harvard-Westlake School (HW).

Harvard-Westlake is renowned for its superb athletics teams and athletes. Many HW student-athletes who play various sports are offered to play at top schools annu-

ally, such as the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Columbia, and UCLA. Our school's athletics social media presence, which is used to post live score updates, commitments, and events, stretches far from Facebook to Instagram Threads. However, this comes with the responsibility of having to manage and post graphics promptly. Previously, Mr. Kelly, the athletics director, had worked by himself to manage, create, and post on all of the @hwathletics accounts. Thus, the HW athletics social media team was created this school year

for HW students passionate about using social media to help grow the school's athletics presence.

An addition to the school's athletics department was Dr. Heyward, another athletics director. Dr. Heyward and Mr. Kelly are the main heads who lead the team, while fifteen students take charge of specific sports to focus on. The sport that I manage is girl's field hockey, which usually has at least one home game every week during the fall season. Every student's job entails making and posting the graphics for their sport on days they have games and attending at least one home game per week.

So far, my experience as a part of the social media team has been great! As someone who loves learning about sports, using social media with a purpose, and contributing to their community, the social media team was the perfect group to join. I originally didn't know much about field hockey, as I had only been a regular watcher of ice

hockey. Ever since joining the crew, I learned more about how field hockey works and was able to see up close the intense action of the team.

My first hands-on experience was during the first home football game of the year, which is a big part of our community, as students gather to cheer on the HW team. My first time on-site felt slightly hectic, as I had to make and upload live score graphics, but I quickly got the hang of it within the first two quarters of the game.

The most recent home game I attended was on September 29, for the girl's field hockey game, which was also Senior Night. Being a part of the social media team allows me to capture the teamwork and close-knit bonds of the field hockey team. Joining the HW athletics social media team was by far one of the best decisions I made, and I am learning something new with every game I attend. To all Harvard-Westlake Upper School students: join the HW athletics social media team!

Student Reporter

## Hidden Gems in the Culinary World



**Audrey Park**  
Grade 10  
Northwood High School

In the past few years, one rule in the culinary world has resurfaced on several social media platforms: if the restaurant looks unadorned, the food is good.

To define "unadorned," one may find a simple restaurant wedged between a few miscellaneous shops, bound to go undetected under many people's culinary radars. However, the restaurant may become of interest when it remains in the location while not looking like the ideal place to get food. A question may arise: "How has it not gone out of business?" You would be surprised to find out that underrated restaurants, especially ones focused on a specific cuisine or food, may provide opportunities for cultural exploration and prioritization of quality over image.

These are not to be confused with restaurants that already have a relatively large chain of locations.

The typical underrated restaurants usually have a limited selection of available stores. This fact proves all the more how non-chain restaurants can mark the spot for buried, cultural treasures.

A clear-cut focus on integrating culture into their menu is the best marker of how an underrated restaurant maintains a steady flow of customers and navigates through competition. Culture-based cuisine is a business that is niche enough to have dedicated demand but limited competition, resulting in small restaurants in cities being a landmark for certain communities. To put this point into perspective, a city's East Asian community may enjoy Hot Pot, Sweet Pork, and Char Siu under dimlights but think that the experience of Empanadillas, Tamales, and Mole in a similarly decorated, Latin restaurant is foreign, and vice versa. Therefore, the remote popularity of these hidden



A visit to a relatively quaint, Asian restaurant presented diners with a delicious, cultural array of foods. [Source: Author, Audrey Park]

gems often hinges on familiarity.

While this familiarity is one element to keep in mind when viewing these underrated restaurants, so is the quality of food. The focus of outer appearance over quality

has previously been on the exterior of the restaurant, but the element that is assessed when one wants to pick a place to eat is the food's image. Furthermore, Priscilla Lo, a student whose relative ran one of these humble restaurants in a foreign country, reveals that "the owners of many of these restaurants may have previously been home cooks. The trend is that these ordinary people had such good food that they were inspired to make restaurants despite having no business experience!" Coupled with this explanation, it makes sense why replacing exterior or value with culinary quality is so significant for many communities and the owners themselves.

If you see the signs of simple decoration but strong cultural influences and culinary qualities in a humble restaurant near you, don't knock it till you try it!

Student Reporter

## Seattle Young Artist Music Festival: Starring Your Future Musicians



**Hannah Hong**  
Grade 11  
Issaquah High School

Bring your music sheets and your best shoes! The spring 2023 Seattle's Young Artist Music Festival has come together with hundreds of musicians from Seattle and Pacific Northwest regions, ranging from grades K-12, prepared to show off their musical talents and endless hours of practice. The festival was held in the musical hall of the University of Washington. Musical instruments that were welcomed include and were not limited to the piano, violin, cello, and flute.

I remember it was 9:30 AM during a school day as I tediously as I waited for my session to be called in. Each session would be organized into groups of 3-4 participants, according to instrument type and musical genre, and would be judged by at least one university adjudicator.

I can recall tingling sensations vibrating inside my fingertips as the musical notes bounced off the piano keys in the practice room that I confined myself to 10 minutes before the start of my session, perfecting every dynamic and note.

Musical qualifiers and recognitions were awarded and nominated to an exclusive number of individuals after the performance of all the participants of the festival. Qualifiers are top-tier musician participants who performed phenomenal pieces that allowed them to be nominated by an association of adjudicators, qualifying those individuals to perform in a symphony or in an exclusive orchestra. Special recognitions were awarded to individuals who had performances that stood out personally to the adjudicators, indicated by receiving a golden sticker of 'Special Recognition' on their award certificate. Following the finish of a participant's piece, the adjudicator would give one-on-one personal critiques and comments along with the scoring of the performance.

I was called in for the 9:30 AM session for the romantic genre played on the piano. As three others filed into the session room, we were introduced to Rachel McCarthy, an adjudicator from the University of Oregon. I was trembling with crippling anxiety as I prayed that I would

remember the piece that I had finalized memorizing just the day before the festival. Yikes! After my performance, I can attest that those 6 minutes and 30 seconds of playing with pairs of staring eyes and the scribbling of notes were the longest moments of my life.

Remembering the performance I had just finished, I thought about the mistakes in my chromatic scales and various errors I was deeply disappointed about. Had all my hours of practice come down to a disappointing performance? My piano teacher would not be proud of what I had just given, es-

pecially after my midnight lessons!

However, after 2-3 weeks, my teacher received a letter in the mail with a golden sticker that was signed for me. My Korean piano teacher was gleaming with pride after she received the news that I had been awarded the Special Recognition Award. What a surprise!

With the fierce competition of other pianists and strong doubt, receiving an award opens many future pathways I envision for myself in music. My relationship with the piano has always been a struggle, but it's all worth it in the end.



Official program cover of the Seattle Young Artists Music Festival Association. [Source: SYMFA]