

Student Reporter



Rianne Paek
Grade 8
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A Hushed Learning Experience

From providing a quiet studying environment to being a crucial resource for researching students, public libraries have long been regarded as invaluable places for communities. Though information can be accessed today through digital platforms at our fingertips, there is no denying the unique atmosphere and benefits a library can provide for you.

One of the most significant qualities of public libraries for studying students is the peaceful and focused environment they offer. People are often distracted and interrupted by their environment at home and school. However, at their local library, they can always be sure to be provided with a place of refuge and rest from the annoyances of the outside world. Although it may seem ironic, libraries are sometimes associated with the image of exasperated librarians who constantly nag you to be quieter. Emma, a

regular at the library, says, “Yeah, I do often get told by the librarians to hush at times when I’m with my friend, but at the end of the day, I kind of agree that it is in the best interest for not just us but also everyone else there with us that we maintain a hushed atmosphere.” It has been shown in the research paper: The Economics of Attention: Maximizing User Value in Information-Rich Environments, written by Bernando Huberman and Fang Wu, that through the absence of noisy disruptions and technology (such as phones), students are much more likely to immerse themselves in their studies, meaning their capability to retain more knowledge in a faster amount of time is also greatly improved.

Another advantage you are provided with when going to your public library is the privilege to borrow any book in the archive free of charge, in most cases. Sup-



For most middle school students, it is almost like a reflex to visit the Young Adult (YA) section before any others. For teens, the YA genre is one of the most popular, aside from graphic novels.
[Source: Author, Rianne Paek]

pose you do not currently have a library card. In that case, I highly recommend that you check out the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) website to register for one, free of charge, under the qualification that you are a Cali-

fornia resident. Not only will these libraries have an extremely wide range of books to consider, but they also offer access to modern technology and the internet. For many students, these resources are essential for conducting research, accessing online educational platforms, and communicating with peers and teachers. As digital literacy is starting to become a larger aspect of our lives, public libraries bridge the financial divide by providing free access to computers and Wi-Fi.

Public libraries are an indispensable resource for studying students, offering access to a wealth of resources and a focused environment, with the positive outlook of also having helpful staff. In an age where information is abundant but focus can be hard to maintain, public libraries remain a cornerstone of the learning experience, always helping students further maximize their potential.

Student Reporter



Hannah Lee
Grade 11
West Ranch High School

Thanksgiving: A Holiday of Good Spirit

Surrounded by the comforting aroma of turkey and mashed potatoes amidst the autumn breeze with a loving family, Thanksgiving is a holiday full of good memories and gratitude. As the fall season finally rolls around, it is important to take a step back to appreciate and look forward to the significance of Thanksgiving in our lives.



Happy Thanksgiving to all who celebrate! [Source: Author, Hannah Lee]

Thanksgiving occurs on the fourth Thursday of every November and is based on the Pilgrims’ harvest meal of 1621. The feast carried on for three days and was attended by 90 Native Americans and 53 survivors of the Mayflower. It is remembered as the “First Thanksgiving,” although “Thanksgiving” wasn’t a term coined until 1789 when President George Washington declared the day an official holiday. In fact, the famous harvest meal of 1621 actually took place to celebrate a successful harvest during that season.

Given the nature of its origins, Thanksgiving’s traditional foods largely center around dishes that are indigenous to the Americas, such as turkey, potatoes, corn, green beans, cranberries, and pumpkins. These foods are integrated into delicious meals in multiple fashions. For example, potatoes are typically served mashed or sweet, cranberries in their sauce form, and pumpkins are usually

baked into a pie. It is suggested that many of the original dishes were probably prepared with the use of traditional Native spices and cooking methods, as there was no access to either ovens or sugar; the meal did not feature pies, cakes, or other sweet desserts — hallmarks of modern celebrations. A common drink you will most likely see at a Thanksgiving meal is apple cider. Originally, it represented the drink of the pilgrims, colonists, farmers, homesteaders, and pioneers of America. Introduced to the Americas by the pilgrims on the Mayflower, cider quickly became more consumed than any other beverage in North America for the first couple hundred Thanksgiving celebrations.

In addition to the savory food that comes around with this holiday season, another important aspect of Thanksgiving is the act of showing

gratitude and conducting charitable acts for those around us. Many people in the United States take this holiday as a chance to spend time with their loved ones. Oftentimes, families will reunite on this holiday and get together to enjoy a large, home-cooked Thanksgiving feast. Others may take the day to volunteer their time at organizations such as soup kitchens or charities donating meals for the poor and homeless. No matter what actions people take on this special holiday, it is surely performed with gratitude from everybody involved.

This year, as Thanksgiving approaches closer, make sure to take a moment to appreciate the roots of this holiday. Additionally, you may consider spending some of your time this year at a charity or other organization, spreading your appreciation throughout the community.

Editors Column

Harucake: Taste Korea in a Cake



Alexis Choi
Grade 11
South High School



Visit Harucake in Los Angeles to taste Korean-style cakes with unique flavors!
[Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

At first glance, it may be easy to miss the little yellow shop in Koreatown, sandwiched between restaurants and a hair salon. But with the long line of people snaking around the storefronts, everyone waiting to enter the little dessert shop, Harucake is impossible to overlook.

Harucake is a cake shop based in Los Angeles that is known for its Korean-style milk cream cakes. Made with 100% organic fresh milk cream and seasonal ingredients, Harucake offers a variety of flavors, including Pure Milk Cream and Matcha

Strawberry, as well as more unconventional tastes such as Mugwort Injeolmi, Green Grape Yogurt, and Chocolate Earl Grey.

Korean desserts and pastries use less sugar and butter, making them lighter, fluffier, and less sweet than American ones. Harucake also offers a spongy, moist, Korean cake style; rather than buttercream and fondant, Harucake uses milk cream and natural ingredients, which is why the cake selections are constantly rotated based on the season.

The store itself is part of the experience; it is like entering a trendy café in Seoul. With a clean, minimalist aesthetic, the shop has soft yellow walls and simple wooden furniture, as well as cute lamps and light fixtures that add a warm touch to the little shop. There are no tables, so most visitors sit on the wooden benches to eat and drink. Harucake also has a mascot, an adorable white dog named OOU, who adorns the Harucake merchandise that is displayed on a wooden shelf. There are charming tumblers, enamel pins, eco-bags, hats, and even washi-tape.

The clean, pale interior of the store makes the cakes stand out even more. Displayed under a clear glass by the register, as well as in a tall refrigerator at the side of the store, Harucake cakes have vivid colors of pastel pinks and yellows, as well as designs that range from simple swirls to intricate piping.

One of Harucake’s signature menus is the Mugwort Injeolmi cake, which combines unconventional Korean flavors with a mugwort genoise, injeolmi (or roasted soybean) cream, and bean crumbles on top. Without being overly sweet,

the cake is soft and spongy and has fragrant hints of mugwort and nutty injeolmi in every bite.

Although it is a cake shop, Harucake’s signature menu also includes drinks. Strawberry milk with homemade strawberry puree is a constant bestseller, along with the soosoo latte—a coffee with homemade corn cream, whole milk, and a cute little frozen corn on top. Harucake also offers other sweets, such as egg tarts and strawberry scones.

The price is on the steeper side, with cakes sold for \$13 to \$14 a slice. Still, a visit to Harucake is recommended to those who enjoy delicious cakes and drinks and want to experience a bit of Korea in LA! There can be hour-long waits on Saturdays, but visits during the weekdays have little to no lines.

Customers can also visit the Harucake website at harucake-shop.com to learn more about the business, view the various flavors, and order custom-made cakes and standard cakes with signature tastes and designs. The store is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 12 to 6 P.M.

Editors Column

Returning to Rotary MUN!



Sean Kim
Grade 12
Los Alamitos High School



Delegates hard at work negotiating possible solutions to end the war.
[Source: Author, Sean Kim]

Recently, I had the privilege of attending a Model UN conference held at Palos Verdes Peninsula High School, an event hosted in partnership with the Rotary Club. Delegates from high schools across Southern California came to discuss critical current and historical topics, ranging from the United Nations Reform to the Armenian Genocide.

In my junior year of high school, I served as head chair for a committee centered around Future Nuclear Disarmament. Back then, I had sat at the dias with a gavel, ensuring delegates remained diplo-

matic and organizing the flow of the round. This time around, I was a historical speaker, specifically a World War I German officer named Max Hoffman. The committee was about the Brest Litovsk Treaty, featuring delegates representing major countries such as the United Kingdom, Serbia, and Austria-Hungary.

In order to prepare for the committee, I needed to write two speeches representing the viewpoints and arguments of my character. Because Max Hoffman was a German General, I spent the majority of my time researching the Brest Litovsk

Treaty from the German perspective. I asked myself questions like “What did Germany achieve from the Treaty? What major effect did the Treaty have on the future of Germany? How did the Treaty impact the relationships of Eastern Europe after the Treaty’s eventual dissolution in 1918?” to ensure my speeches were informative and on-message.

However, my role as a Historical Speaker did not end with just delivering speeches. I needed to stand up at the podium and answer questions from a room of forty-five passionate delegates for ten whole minutes. While ten minutes feels short while watching your favorite TV show, the questioning period felt extremely long under the limelight. Delegates asked me both insightful and accusatory questions, with some focusing on my policies as General and others directly critiquing Germany’s behavior towards the then-new nations, such as Ukraine or Belarus.

Despite agreeing with some claims and disagreeing with oth-

ers, I put my own opinions aside and remained dedicated to what Max Hoffman, or more importantly, the Germans, would think. In many cases, I found myself saying things I did not personally believe in, especially on issues regarding cultures and self-determination. However, facing the room before me, I dived deep into my character, resolved to embody the cold-hearted, ruthless general who negotiated the Treaty over a century ago.

Overall, my experience serving as a historical speaker was new and exciting. While it was initially terrifying, I grew accustomed to standing firm at the podium and speaking my views confidently (even if they were not my own). Of course, reuniting with the Model UN team at Palos Verdes Peninsula was amazing as well, and I made sure to invite them all to Griffmun, my own school’s conference, in February. Rotary MUN was just as amazing as last year; I will never forget everyone’s faces when I ended my speech with “Germany above all!”

Student Reporter

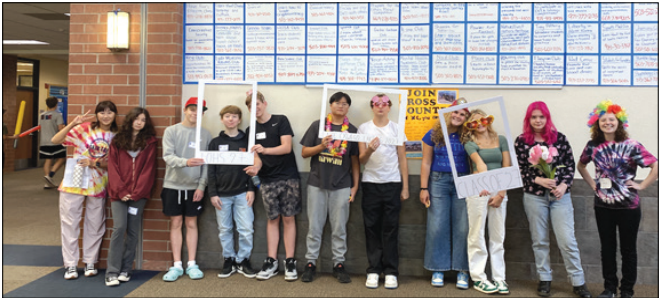
Freshman First Day



Ansley Kang
Grade 11
Lake Oswego High School

This year’s freshmen class of 2027 has made their way through the first month of the school year. After orientation, their first tests, homecoming, and football games, many of the school’s freshmen feel like they’ve got the hang of things. Laker Crew leaders are upperclassmen who volunteered to go through training to make freshman orientation day as welcoming as possible for freshmen entering high school. They have also been keeping in touch with their freshmen group to make sure that the transition into high school is smooth.

Laker Crew leader and junior Ophelia Lu hoped that “every freshman feels comfortable in the school, and being able to go up and talk to their Laker Crew leaders, and upperclassmen. Although we’re already well into the new school year, it’s never too late to reach out to someone for some advice. Personally, I love it when my freshmen say hi to me in



Laker Crew leaders with their freshman group on the first day.
[Source: Author, Ansley Kang]

the hallways.”

Although it has been several months, freshmen still remember the differences between high school and junior high. “The expectations and workloads for grades are really different in high school versus middle school. The due dates and the amount of work and effort you do is really important,” said freshman Ben Song. Freshman Gino Yang added, “It’s a lot more work, which is kind of scary, but there’s a lot more space and people, and we’re learning

a lot more in school, which I like.”

With it only being the first month of school, the freshmen still have more things to experience and learn moving forward. Upperclassmen now have gone through many learning experiences and would agree that they’ve grown significantly as people since their first year of high school. With it only being the first month of school, the freshmen still have many more things to experience and learn moving forward. Upperclassmen now have gone through many learn-

ing experiences and would agree that they’ve grown significantly as people since their first year of high school.

With four years ahead of them, the freshmen continue to explore and discover new things they’re excited about. “I’m just excited to be able to start driving. With that freedom, I’ll be able to explore new places together with my friends,” said Ben Song.

If there’s any advice that junior Ruben Bhowmik would give to incoming freshmen, it would be to “Try to experience as many things as you can, like interesting classes, clubs, and school events. You have time now that you’re probably not going to have in later years, so if you end up enjoying one of those things that you tried now, you’ll leave yourself with a lot more time to keep experiencing it, and it can make future plans for both high school and life, in general, more clear and easier to follow.”

Student Reporter

Tiler Peck and Friends’ Moving Modern Ballet Performance



Aspen Lee
Grade 9
Santa Fe Christian Schools

In early November, a once-New York City Ballet Company prima ballerina, and her students and friends, came to the San Diego Civic Theater to perform a piece called Turn it Out. Together the team of 17 put together a show made of ballet, contemporary, and tap routines that brought a new perspective on the art of dance.

Performed in front of almost 3,000 viewers, Tiler Peck and Friends began the program with a modernized pointe piece. The six dancers on the stage wore abstract costumes of vibrant colors, pointe shoes with opposing hues, and sparkling makeup to make each dancer shine under the stage lights. Choreographed by Tiler Peck, the ballerinas danced across the large stage, creating a sequence of movements that repeated in different orders to make the piece, Thousandth Orange, come to life. The three male ballet dancers accompanied the female ballerinas in partner sections, where it would seem as though the dancers were floating along the white background.

Not only was Turn it Out an engaging piece that is uncommon in the ballet industry, but the musicians were also on the stage playing live music under lights with the dancers. From the pizzicato of the violin, viola, and cello to the piano resonating all the way to the top balconies, the artistic production in every piece made each ballet touch the audience’s heart.

Swift Arrow, a duo between Tiler Peck and Roman Mejia, was an emotional performance on pointe that demonstrated the delicacy and intensity in a single ballet movement. As if an arrow passed through the movements, the ballerina and her partner elegantly leaped, turned, and flew across the stage, making each motion seem effortless and simple.

Following the duet, Tiler Peck, Jillian Meyers, and Michelle Dorrance participated in their choreographed piece, Time Spell. Starting off this third dance, tapper Michelle Dor-



Tiler Peck finished her program with The Barre Project with her partners under the stage lights.
[Source: Author, Aspen Lee]

rance presented a consistent rhythm that set the beat for the remaining dance. The tap acapella was accompanied by contemporary dancers as they slowly entered the stage, improvising their own parts as the climax built up to perform a modern dance, that was perfectly in sync and incredible to witness, come together. During the second movement of Time Spell, ballerinas came onto the floor, creating the same beat as the tappers with their pointe shoes, showing a creative view of using the clear sound of the pointe shoe boxes hitting the stage. To bring the whole piece together, vocalists, Aaron Mar-

cellus and Penelope Wendtlandt, sang loops to emphasize the sounds in every section of the routine. This shared a story with those in the audience of all ages and inspired many of the young students to see another perspective on ballet.

To end the program, Tiler Peck and Friends finished it off with The Barre Project, putting barre in another light rather than just a repetitive warm-up. An electric beat in the background lifted the atmosphere, and the ballerina and her partners used this to show the beauty of dance and how it all begins at the barre.