

What Prom Is *ACTUALLY* Like



Jenna Kim
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My date and I before driving to Prom!
[Source: Author, Jenna Kim]



Friends together, happy and excited, before the big dance!
[Source: Author, Jenna Kim]

THE PROMPOSAL

At the beginning of this semester, my friends were already starting to talk about the big event of the year: Prom. However, I was skeptical. It was a busy season, on a Friday only after 2 of my AP exams, and worst of all, it seemed like I had to go with someone other than my usual friend group. And while I told my friends I was planning to go just so they wouldn't be upset, I was genuinely planning on not attending prom.

However, all this changed when my friend prom-posed to me the week before the dance! I remember that I was reviewing for my AP Microeconomics exam when I saw 20 missed calls from my best friend Aurora. When I came downstairs, my friend Tristan was holding a sign that said, "I know I'm not Beabadoo-bee, but can we be the perfect pair at prom?" It was truly a sweet gesture, and I found it really considerate because my favorite artist is Beabadoo-bee.

GETTING READY

Then, the best part, getting ready! Watching various "prom vlogs" on YouTube and sending in-spo pictures with friends on Pinterest truly got me excited for this part of prom. The process was meticulous but rewarding as my friends and I curled our hair, did our make-up (I watched a tutorial because I could not trust myself), and got ready with our dates to take pictures. It's something about getting ready with your friends, however, that is the best part of the night for

me, because we all experience the excitement for the night together.

PROM

At the prom itself, the event started with a dinner course of tacos and drinks, and afterward, much dancing and photos. The best part of the night was seeing all of my senior friends, especially since they would be graduating soon. (And of course, their dresses were fabulous!) And thankfully, we were blessed with a good DJ for our prom, so the night was filled with lots of dancing and screaming songs with friends.

AFTER PROM

While there was an after-party happening after the prom was over, my date and I chose not to go and instead went to get ice cream at Somi Somi with our close friends. We all had a great time with our matcha flavors and fish-shaped crackers, and I thought this was a great culmination to the night. Overall, I really enjoyed prom, and even though I started out thinking I wasn't going to go, I think all of the little surprises, like the promposal, getting ready with friends, taking pictures, and going to ice cream, were the surprising gems that truly made this night special. I cannot wait for my senior prom next year, and what new adventures it will bring!

Spreading Positivity: Clipping in Sports Competitions



Kaylyn Yu
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As a student athlete returns to the team tent after his warm-up, he spots a colorful clip perched on his bag. He grins at the message: "YOU GOT THIS," suddenly looking forward to his competition.

The trend of clipping athletes in sports competitions has only developed recently, originating from both cheer and volleyball. Essentially, the act of "clipping" is to secure a decorated clothespin with an encouraging message on another competitor's gear. This simple but kind gesture encourages anyone who receives a clip to feel better about their performance.

I was intrigued after hearing of this idea from a friend in volleyball, and wondered if I could participate in the movement as well. The thought of spreading positive energy using an element of arts and crafts compelled me to start my own kindness act in my sport, track and field. I waited for a home meet at Chantilly High School that happened to be a large varsity invitational, which was daunting at first, but I deduced that each additional school meant another opportunity

to clip people.

The first step was to purchase the clothespins. I found that they were surprisingly accessible and affordable, and for less than five dollars, I picked up a 100-pack at my local Walmart. I was unsure how many clips I should buy, questioning whether I would even be able to give out all 100 of them. Next, I ruminated on which messages to fill the clips with, focusing on organizing a balance of both motivating and uplifting quotes that any track athlete could connect to. My teammates continued contributing numerous funny and creative ideas, and the list kept growing longer throughout the day. Some of the short phrases I wrote included "LOCK IN" and "KEEP GOING." With the help of friends, I managed to load each clothespin with one message on each side.

As the invite began, more schools arrived until the track was packed with attendees. Finally, I began handing out clips to students in Chantilly until midday, when most of my teammates had all been clipped. Although it was intimidating, the gratitude

my own team had reacted with encouraged me to reach out to other teams, visiting their tents and clipping athletes' bags. It became easier to approach people over time, and soon enough, to my shock, I had run out of clips.

Kelsey Zrenda, a freshman at Chantilly High School, shared her opinion on "clipping": "I love it because it brings positivity into the sport; it's also a great way to team-bond and make new friends. I like to receive clips since they are always so creatively made, which makes them fun to collect."

Even though some may dismiss these words on a clip, the thought that someone had smiled because of it made every effort worth it. I am so glad that I decided to promote the clipping trend in my own environment. Not only was it enjoyable to decorate and distribute the messages, but the fact that I had become a positive influence to a stranger brought me joy. I would definitely try this again with more preparation next time, and I would highly recommend anyone in a competitive sport to join, too!



I created a long list of ideas to include on the clothespins for variety, aiming to spark positivity in fellow athletes.
[Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

Korean Restaurant and Cafe Chains are Taking Over LA



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For those who have been out and about in LA lately, or even simply scrolling on social media, the ever-increasing prevalence of new Korean restaurants and cafés popping up in the city recently is impossible to miss. Two of the newest and most talked-about are Café Knotted and DamSot, both extremely popular chains in the delicious-food-filled Seoul, South Korea, and now making their U.S. debut right here in Los Angeles.

However, the popularity of these restaurants does not come without merit. For example, just after opening its doors at the always-bustling Westfield Century City, Café Knotted has become a dessert heaven for donut lovers, while also carrying creative lattes and drinks. In Korea, with over one hundred locations, Knotted is most well known for their insanely fluffy, cream-filled doughnuts with flavors like strawberry, tiramisu, and a unique but mouth-watering kaya butter filling. The vibe is super cute too: pastel colors of yellow and pink smiley faces coat the walls and are accompanied by a stuffed bear mascot called "Sugar Bear." On top of that, their drink menu is truly wild. Ever had a corn cream latte? Or a strawberry cream top matcha? Now's your



The Beef Belly Sot Bap and Spicy Eggplant Sot Bap (pictured) from DamSot are two of their most popular dishes.
[Source: Author, Sora Ju]

chance. The lines can reportedly be over an hour long, but these delicious sweet treats seem to be worth the wait.

Then there's DamSot in Koreatown, which opened this past

January. Damsot is a popular destination in Korea for both tourists and locals, bringing something completely unique to Los Angeles: delicious sot bap, or Korean pot rice. This dish comes out in a

hot metal bowl, and as you eat, the bottom layer of rice gets crispy and turns into nurunggi, which you finish off by pouring barley tea over. Although it may sound strange at first, it's actually an incredibly hearty, comforting, and satisfying meal, perfect for colder weather. While their steak version is the most popular, DamSot offers tons of options: salmon, spicy eggplant with pork (their signature, and my personal favorite), and even abalone. Additionally, the presentation is super aesthetic, with everything served on wooden trays and banchan (Korean side dishes) provided on cute, traditionally painted small plates.

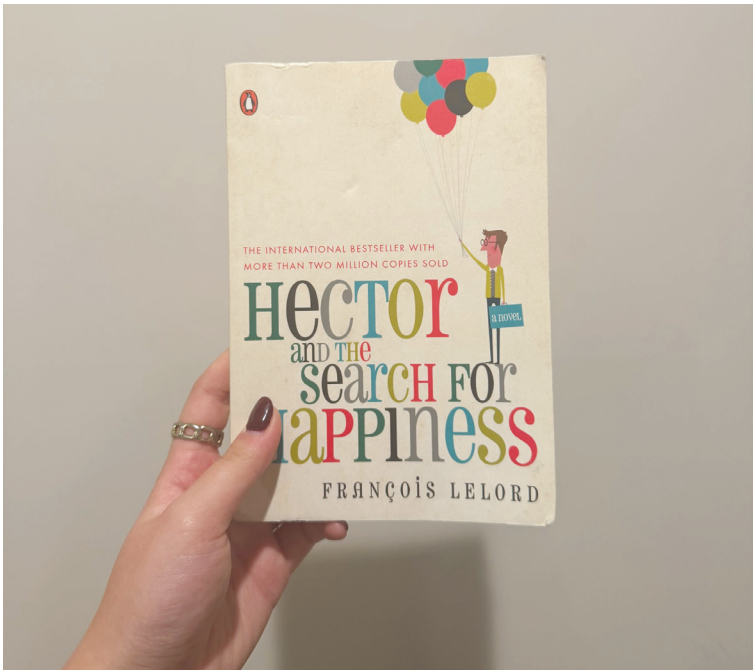
DamSot and Knotted are two delicious spots for a sweet treat and a hearty meal, and they are merely a small part of a bigger wave of Korean brands coming to LA—like Camel Coffee in Silver Lake and Jjampong Zizon in K-Town—more Korean chains that opened their doors to the public recently and garnered warm welcomes, and more are on the way. So, for those who are into Korean food (or just really good food in general), this is a great time to be in LA. The next time in Century City or Koreatown, consider checking these new spots out—just be ready to wait in line!

Editors Column

The Problem With Happiness



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Hector and the Search for Happiness offers great insight into the true meanings of being happy. [Source: Author, Rachel Chung]

In my senior seminar class, Happiness - The Language, Literature, and Legacy of Well-Being, the class explored both common misconceptions and the truths in how happiness manifests itself in daily life. Well too often, the prospect of experiencing happiness, a

simple emotion that is characterized by a smile on someone’s face, is the one that is misinterpreted the most. My class was assigned to read Hector and the Search for Happiness by Francis LeLord, a novel about a psychiatrist who travels

around the world to learn lessons about what happiness truly is. Through dissecting this novel, in addition to other supplementary writing pieces, our class learned what being happy really means. During our discussions, the class came to the idea that happiness is oftentimes treated as an ultimate destination or desire that can only be achieved through meeting materialistic goals. Many people rely on these goals to give their lives a sense of purpose, but they often start becoming unattainable when companies say that people will be happier with their bodies with this surgery or that they’ll be happier with a certain makeup product, et cetera. The issue with this mentality is that when people place happiness as a goal to reach, it is unlikely that any attempts will ever achieve those standards. The bar of expectations changes constantly within our current-day media, leading to a lifelong pursuit of happiness. Our society, which often places higher value on owning houses, cars, and the latest trending product, places pressure on people to measure their happiness through external benchmarks, not their own internal moral compass.

This pressure gives off the idea that happiness is something to be earned when in reality, happiness is a state of being that needs to be embraced. After adopting this mindset, you’ll find there is no set path to experiencing happiness and it does not equate to the feeling of achieving materialistic goals. Happiness is the act of savoring the simple and mundane moments that life has to offer. Taking this class and learning these lessons during my first semester of senior year helped me in the way I approached school and college applications. I had always felt that I’d finally be happy and content with my life once I got into college or ended the semester with straight A’s. And while these may be good life goals to hold, the ways I approached them were ultimately detrimental to my mental health. I viewed happiness as something to be earned, a reward for my hard work. However, this class reminded me of the importance of taking a break and creating ways to find happiness. I urge you to do the same. As often as you can, pause to find joy in the little moments—because happiness isn’t the finish line, the journey itself is.

Editors Column

Las Vegas: An Entire Travel Itinerary



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Experiencing holiday breaks as a high school student hits differently. I had to start studying for some upcoming tests, even over breaks, while also taking time to de-stress from the grueling previous semester. To make meaningful memories during my last school vacation, my family and I took a two-day trip to Las Vegas. One may think there aren’t many attractions in Vegas for minors to enjoy, given its nickname “Sin City.” But in reality, Vegas can be a family-friendly travel destination! Although my time there was short, I visited the ice skating rink operated by the Cosmopolitan Hotel and watched the KA Show by Cirque du Soleil, both of which are activities younger children can enjoy. As soon as we checked into our hotel, I was lucky enough to catch the Bellagio Hotel’s fountain show, which runs every thirty minutes from 8 P.M. to midnight. Whether you watch the show from your hotel room or see it while walking down the Vegas Strip, where many of the most famous hotels in Vegas are located, it’s a beautiful sight. It’s one of the most convenient attractions to see from your hotel if you’re staying on the Strip. The next day, I visited the Cos-



A change in scenery - the view in Las Vegas during break was amazing. [Source: Author, Angel Song]

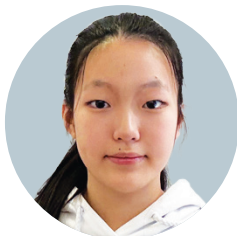
mopolitan’s outdoor ice skating rink. Although the rink is not extremely spacious, there is enough room for adults and children to enjoy. Skates are available for rent, and the price depends on the

number of skaters in your party. This rink is unlike any other; its location right next to the Cosmopolitan offers the skaters a view of the Strip, which is especially beautiful at nighttime. However,

one downside is that there can be many skaters at certain hours, which is a testament to the rink’s popularity. I ended my two-day trip by watching the KA Show at MGM Grand. This 90-minute performance is a coming-of-age story of a young man and woman experiencing challenges, love, and adventures, appropriate for viewers above the age of three. Cirque du Soleil, an exclusively human circus, offers shows at various well-known Vegas hotels, with the most popular performances being the “O” and KA Shows. To watch either of these, staying in a hotel on the Strip near the hotels that host the acts is optimal; I stayed at the Cosmopolitan, and all it took was a fifteen-minute walk to get to MGM Grand on time. However, it’s important to note that Cirque du Soleil shows are extremely popular: book seats in advance! Visiting Las Vegas was a nice break for a tired high school student. Even though this was not my first time traveling to this beautiful city, I realized that the fun never stops in Vegas, even for minors. For many of us in Southern California, a quick family trip to Vegas can be the vacation of a lifetime.

Student Reporter

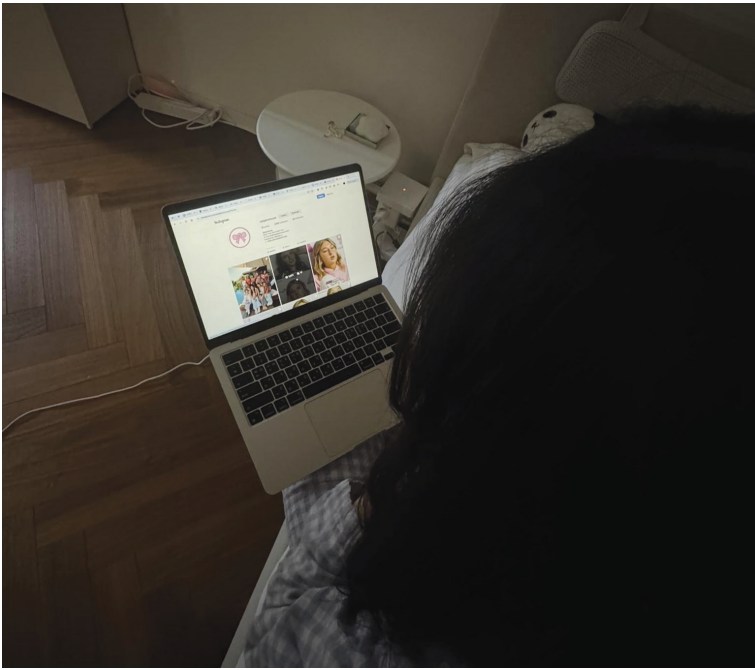
Glow House or Dull House



Yerin Park
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In our current generation, becoming an “influencer” has become one of the most popular job desires among teenagers. Influencers are often the biggest rising stars and the most impactful figures for young girls who aspire to be like them in the future. While the purpose of an influencer is to be a role model and to encourage young people to gain confidence, they can often have a reverse effect and be a discouragement to today’s youth. A group of teenage girl influencers formed a group called the “Glow House.” This house was initially revealed in early January and began introducing one member each week until, building up to April, they finally all came together to do activities which they stated would “change the world for younger girls.” Compared to what they expected, they received backlash after revealing each member. This came from the irony that the chosen members had with their purpose. The idea of the House was to empower and uplift the new generation by inspiring confidence, but the members would make the girls looking up to them feel the exact opposite. Out of 14 members, only two were girls of color, and there was only one body type, as

all of the girls were skinny, and the House had no plus-sized girls. This resulted in backlash because the house wasn’t promoting inclusivity, but instead promoting the idea that white skinny girls are the most suitable for becoming influencers. “With the excessive amount of times these influencers collaborate, many of them make it seem as if it is okay to devote their time to do activities outside of school, making it seem normal for teenage girls to skip school,” said Lucy Park. “This is the worst influence media could give, resulting in detrimental side effects to their young viewers who will grow prejudices about the necessity of school.” However, the members of Glow House have turned down some of the doubts that people initially had about them with the activities they do. After their meetup in April, they volunteered in women’s shelters, held donations, and did podcasts. The most shocking part of their actions was some of the discussions they held in their podcasts. As opposed to what most people thought, they actually seemed to have normal lives behind the closed curtains of their glamorous influencer careers. In contrast to their image on



Teenagers can easily be inspired by content creators, so it is important that they promote healthy lifestyles. [Source: Author, Yerin Park]

social media, many of the young girls in the group struggled with their mental health, unhealthy breakups, bullying, and other hardships that many teenagers commonly go through. This reminded many of Glow Houses fans that they were also teenagers attending school, dealing with issues similar to theirs.

Their struggles ended up being an educational resource to young girls like their initial intentions, as many realized that no matter how you look or what platform you may have on social media, you are bound to fall under the same struggles, making some of these problems inevitable at a young age.