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The Guidon

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Hays High School | 2300 E. 13th St. | Hays, Kan. 67601



FALL MUSICAL

Cast presents 'Sweeney Todd'
to large audiences this fall
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ON THE COVER



Cover photo illustration by Eric Lucio

ORGANIZATIONS

FFA chapter members compete at nationals, as organization continues another busy year

By Clare Tholstrup
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Hays High School's FFA chapter has had another busy year so far with many different events, including hosting the Greenhand Conference this October and going to the National FFA Convention in November.

The national convention was held in Indianapolis, Ind., from Nov. 1-4, providing an opportunity for FFA members from across the nation to gather in one location, celebrate different achievements, compete at the national level and learn more about FFA.

This year, only four FFA members and the chapter advisor were in attendance to represent Hays High. The reason only four members went, as opposed to the usual 12, is because they were representing Kansas to compete for the national agriculture sales team. Those FFA members were 2023 graduates Emma Anderson, Mackenzie Hagerman, Karli Neher and Jalynn Weilert, and Hays High's chapter advisor is agriculture instructor Nikole Winter.

"This year was unique, as it was the first year that I have had a team competing at the national level as an advisor," Winter said.

The team of four ranked 14th in the nation in the Ag Sales Career Development Event competition, making it into the silver division. That was an impressive achievement for Hays High's FFA chapter, according to Winter.

However, the national competition is not the only contest that the chapter members have done this year; other contests have included Dairy Cattle Judging, Land and Homesite Judging and the Greenhand Conference. Those contests are held at the district level, so the chapter competes against other chapters in the Northwest District of Kansas.



Photo courtesy of Nikole Winter

NATIONAL TEAM

2023 graduates Jalynn Weilert, Karli Neher, Mackenzie Hagerman and Emma Anderson join together at the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., in November. The four competed in the national agriculture sales competition, earning 14th in the nation in the contest.

"What I am most proud of is seeing is our chapter having so much participation on the district level," junior Marisa Wasinger, chapter vice president, said. "A lot of schools around us do not have as much involvement, so it is great to see our chapter growing and being involved."

There have also been many activities held just within the chapter itself. Those activities are geared toward helping with the community, such as volunteering at the food pantry, and building connections among members of the chapter, such as bowling or playing dodgeball.

"The 2023 year was very successful for the Hays FFA chapter, and I feel that the 2023-2024 school year will be just as successful," Winter said. "There are a lot of students who are very competitive and smart in FFA, and I am hopeful that they will perform well as competitions throughout the year and maybe even have another national-qualifying team!"

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

In November, Hays High School students performed in the Fall Musical, "Sweeney Todd," with junior Jordan Aschenbrenner playing a lead role.

What was your favorite part about being in the musical?

"My favorite part of being in Fall Musical would have to be the people I'd see every day because everyone is so supportive and fun to be around, and you also form connections that you'll have for the rest of your life."

How did you like playing your character?

"My character, Mrs. Lovett, was a very exciting role to play because there are so many different directions you could go with her. She's very extroverted and always puts her opinions out there, which made her a very entertaining role."



junior Jordan Aschenbrenner

What were some of the struggles you had with acting in the musical?

"Some struggles I faced also had to do with the difficulty of the character. First, there was an accent I had that I just couldn't get rid of, the number of lines she had was difficult to memorize and it took a while for me to be extroverted enough to play her."

Did you learn anything else from doing this year's musical?

"I'd say I've grown as a person, and I've learned how to manage my stress and time."

What are some of the reasons you like performing?

"Some of my reasons for performing are the pure enjoyment I get, showing off the show we worked so hard on and getting to perform with all my friends."

FINE ARTS

Students perform 'Sweeney Todd' for Fall Musical

LOVE STORY

Anthony, played by senior Nate Henderson, and Johanna, portrayed by senior Kendra Ryan, profess their love for one another in the musical.



Photo by Maycie Holdeman (Indian Call)



Photo by Jessica Augustine

EVIL PLANS

Playing Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney Todd, junior Jordan Aschenbrenner and senior Eric Lucio devise their gruesome plan of having Sweeney Todd murder people and then having Mrs. Lovett bake their bodies into pies at her pie shop during the Fall Musical performance on Nov. 10 at 12th Street Auditorium.

LAW & ORDER

The Beadle, portrayed by senior Atlas Seib, and Judge Turpin, played by junior Oscar Flores, discuss recent events during the Fall Musical.



Photo by Jessica Augustine

By Reagan Bates

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This year's Hays High School Fall Musical, "Sweeney Todd," was performed at 12th Street Auditorium from Nov. 9 to Nov. 12.

"Sweeney Todd" is a lengthy musical, being around three hours, and is considered PG-13 due to violence and gore. It was written originally by Stephen Sondheim and performed on Broadway in 1979.

The musical depicts the story of a barber, Sweeney Todd, who returns to London after being wrongfully imprisoned for 15 years. With the help of pie shop owner, Mrs. Lovett, he seeks revenge for the death of his wife and kidnapping of his daughter.

Although the musical is not typically

performed by high schools, as a result of the cast members' hours of rehearsals, they were extremely successful, according to musical director Alex Underwood.

"I thought they owned it," Underwood said. "I was expecting them to be able to achieve a respectable version, but instead, they dived into this show so it was their own – artistic, musical, accurate, consistent, confident. Truly a beautiful interpretation."

There were some concerns raised about the musical not being "family friendly," as most of the school's musicals in the past have been aimed at entertaining younger audiences. However, Underwood said that "Sweeney Todd" had significantly higher attendance and ticket sales than last year's musical, "Seussical," which was intended more for families.

"Going into this musical, I wasn't sure

how people would respond to it because it had murder and blood and all that fun stuff, but everyone I talked to really loved it, and I think they were actually surprised on how well we did," junior Jordan Aschenbrenner said. "I don't think anyone expected it to be as good as it was, and that makes me feel even more proud of everyone involved!"

In addition to Aschenbrenner, who played the leading female role of Mrs. Lovett, senior Eric Lucio played the lead of Sweeney Todd.

"I felt really honored to be trusted with something that was so difficult, and I put a lot of preparation towards it, so I was really thankful that it all paid off," Lucio said. "I was thankful that [director] Adrian [Rifat] and Alex [Underwood] trusted me with something that was so meaningful."

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SKILLS

Entrepreneurship students develop original businesses

By Kale Schwien
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The end of the first semester at Hays High School also means the end of the first semester Entrepreneurship class.

Taught by business instructor Silas Hibbs, who also teaches Business Essentials, Economics and Emerging Technologies, Entrepreneurship students have created business ideas from scratch and developed their skills in business and in technology.

"I teach Entrepreneurship because I love the topic and I think it's a topic everyone, whether you're in medicine or whether you're a teacher, needs to understand," Hibbs said.

Students have been working on their businesses all semester, with an ultimate goal of kickstarting their businesses when they graduate from high school, or even sooner. Students in the class have also learned to manage their time and resources to make the most profit out of their businesses.

Senior Ty Dempsey, a student in the class, said that he learned how developing an original business idea can allow young entrepreneurs to gain a competitive advantage over other businesses.

"The business that I am doing is woodworking and carpentry," Dempsey said, adding that he makes and sells furniture and decorative objects. "I chose to do woodworking and carpentry because no one else in the class did it, and I like to do it."

Not all the students are creating or selling a product, however, as some are selling a service.

"My business partner, [junior] Kale Schwien, and I provide tennis lessons to the buyers," senior Xavier Catura said. "This class really helped us get off of our feet, and we also received great advice from Mr. Hibbs. This class helped me mostly with not having an employee mindset and how to manage clients."

According to Hibbs, one of the goals for the class is to develop the students' creativity so they can find new and interesting ways to make money.

"Another point of this class is to try to teach students to overcome adversity," Hibbs said. "I say this because I had to overcome a lot of adversity, being a Hays kid that was also a dual sport athlete in college."

His background in the business world also has allowed Hibbs to share practical strategies with students. For Hibbs, who graduated in 2005 from Hays High, he attended Tabor College, where he majored in Accounting/Finance, Marketing and Management while on scholarship to play soccer track and also earned Master's degrees in Business Administration and in Education.

After college, he was hired by Koch Industries in Wichita, where he was a trader who was responsible for 13 fertilizer terminals across Wisconsin. After working at Koch Industries for just less than five years, Hibbs left the company and started his teaching career at Hays High in August 2018.

"My sincere hope for all my students is that they make significant growth and progress in their unique process of self-actualization," Hibbs said.

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COLLABORATION

Sophomore English class partners with kindergarteners for activities

By Kennedy Fischer
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Over the summer, Heidi Wamser, a kindergarten teacher at Roosevelt Elementary School, worked with Kelly Ackerman and Lisa Renz, both English teachers at Hays High School, to set up the kindergarten buddies program for this school year.

"We really figured it would be a great experience for our students to develop relationships with younger students and be seen as role models for the kindergarteners," Renz said.

There are 33 students who participate in the buddy program, including 16 sophomores in the G3 English II class and 17 kindergarteners in Wamser's class. The students have met four times this semester to read, do learning activities, play at recess and eat lunch together. Each month, they have switched between meeting at Hays High or at Roosevelt Elementary.

During the first meeting on Oct. 10, all of the students went to Via Christi, where they "reverse Trick-or-Treated," meaning that they gave candy to the people living there. The second time the buddies met, on Oct. 20, the high school students went to Roosevelt to do a Halloween activity, eat lunch and enjoy recess. At their third meeting on Nov. 10, the kindergarten students came to Hays High, where they read a Thanksgiving book, completed a Thanksgiving activity and at lunch together again. And, during their

most recent meeting on Dec. 8, the students did another activity together relating to the holidays. To make the program more special, they even created matching T-shirts that they wear when they meet.

While some of the sophomores were apprehensive about the program to start, they have enjoyed being with their buddies from the kindergarten class.

"At the beginning, I was skeptical about how it would go, but now, I really enjoy it," sophomore Wes Dreiling said. "I think it would be awesome for future classes."

Through the semester, students in the program have shown a lot of growth, according to their teachers. Ackerman and Renz said the sophomores have developed patience with the younger students, while Wamser said she has been impressed with how the sophomores have interacted with her students.

"One of our students who was very reluctant to participate has now changed his mind and works very well with his little, even lying on the floor and coloring

with her last month," Renz said.

With the buddy program being successful this semester, the teachers say they hope to continue it in the future.

"One of the best things that Mrs. Ackerman and I have ever done is going on this year," Renz said. "Hopefully, we will be able to continue this into next year, as it has had such a positive impact on both the 'bigs' and the 'littles.'"



Photo courtesy of Lisa Renz

BUDDIES

Sophomores Wes Dreiling and Cassidy Smith play on the Roosevelt Elementary School with their kindergarten buddies on Oct. 20. Students in Kelly Ackerman's and Lisa Renz's G3 English II class and students in Heidi Wamser's kindergarten class met four times this semester for different learning activities.

WHAT IS IN YOUR FOOD?

Plant-based diets, such as vegetarianism or veganism, become popular for various reasons, but also have challenges

By Delia Dixon
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Plant-based diets, or eating styles that prioritize fruits, vegetables and plant-based proteins, are increasing in popularity, especially among younger generations. While there are various plant-based diets, vegetarianism and veganism are two styles that are more familiar. Vegetarianism refers to a lifestyle that some people follow when they do not include any meat in their diets. This is commonly confused with veganism. Vegans, however, do not consume any foods derived from animals, including meat products, dairy products or eggs. While there are benefits to avoiding meat, there are also challenges that arise.

Reasons for becoming a vegetarian or a vegan vary, ranging from personal preferences to health choices. While some people simply do not really enjoy the taste or the texture of meat, others choose not to eat meat or animal products because they believe it is cruel to the animals or because they want to avoid excessive use of environmental resources, therefore reducing their carbon footprint.

Health benefits are also a reason that people choose plant-based diets. According to Harvard Medical School, vegetarians and vegans tend to consume less saturated fat and cholesterol and more dietary fiber, folic acid, magnesium, potassium, phytochemicals (plant chemicals) and Vitamins C and E. This results in often having lower blood cholesterol, blood pressure and body mass index.

“Being vegetarian has affected my life by making me have to be aware of what I’m eating,” said junior Emmaline Leuschner, whose entire family follows a vegetarian lifestyle. “A positive is that I know what’s in my food and am cautious when eating.”

In some cases, it is more difficult to maintain a healthy diet as a vegetarian or a vegan. With the absence of meat in their diets, they must find the necessary nutrients that meat contains, such as iron or protein, in other forms.

“Being vegetarian for a while made it very difficult to eat healthily,” said junior Kiera Dealy, who has avoided eating meat most of her life and became a vegetarian about a year and a half ago. “As a kid, I didn’t always like to eat my vegetables, which is ironic. My parents support my choice, though, and try their best to accommodate me.”

The challenge of sustaining a balanced diet as a vegetarian or a vegan is also caused by the lack of plant-based choices in many public settings.

“To be honest, I do not think the school does a very good job accommodating for vegetarians,” Dealy said. “The salads they have are the only option I have found. While some meals, like the cheese sandwich or the mac and cheese, I can eat, I have found packing a lunch is easiest.”

It is not just the school that falls short when it comes to providing vegetarian or vegan meals. Many popular restaurants struggle to incorporate the diets into any of their menu items. It is even more difficult for vegans because they avoid foods that have any animal products.

“There are often not any vegetarian options at a restaurant or school function, so I have to bring my own food,” Leuschner said.

While it may be burdensome at times, plant-based diets have environmental benefits as well. According to the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, if everyone in the United States adopted a vegetarian diet or the Planetary Health diet, which is a diet that emphasizes plants over meats, there would be 30 percent fewer global extinctions, largely because of a smaller footprint to raise livestock for meat. Additionally, transitioning toward more plant-based diets could reduce food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 29 to 70 percent.

“The most rewarding part of this eating style is knowing I am helping the environment,” Dealy said. “Being vegetarian is beneficial for lowering carbon emissions, using less water and takes less land to grow compared to an animal.”

Which of the following diets or lifestyles have you previously tried or do you currently follow?

Low-Calorie Diet 25.58%
Intermittent Fasting 25.58%
Low-Carbohydrate Diet 16.28%
Other Popular Diet 16.28%
Vegetarian or Vegan Diet 11.63%
Low-Fat Diet 4.65%

Information from a survey of students;
graphic from Vecteezy

With increased genetic modification of food products, consumers need to understand their concerns and the research

By Eleanor Bittel
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In recent years, consumers have seen a variety of labels on their food products from the grocery store, including one that they may not fully understand: “no GMOs.”

GMOs, or genetically modified organisms, are animals or plants that have been altered through genetic engineering, which involves identifying the genetic material that produces a desired trait in an organism, copying that information from the organism with the trait, inserting that gene into another organism and growing that new organism, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

While cross-breeding and selective breeding of organisms with certain genetic traits has been done for centuries, modifying the genetic DNA of products dates back to 1973 when two biochemists inserted DNA from one bacteria into another. Nine years later, in 1982, the FDA approved the first consumer product using GMOs, human insulin for diabetes, and 12 years afterwards, in 1994, approved the first produce item with GMOs, a breed of tomato.

Since then, GMOs have been used in many of the food products that people consume daily, including apples, corn, soybeans, squash and more. These products are often genetically modified in order to add nutrients, resist pests or withstand herbicides, but there is an ongoing debate about the impact of GMOs.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Some of the main health concerns about GMOs that consumers have include possible toxins, allergic reactions, antibiotic resistance, immune system suppression and nutritional loss, according to the Center for Food Safety, which states that its mission is “to empower people, support farmers, and protect the earth from the harmful impacts of industrial agriculture.”

“I try to shop non-GMO, but I am sure they are in my diet,” senior Lilian McGrath said. “I am not sure if there are any health benefits from GMOs, but I would be concerned with how they affect the immune system.”

However, it is important to note that rigorous testing and regulatory processes are in place to ensure the safety of GMOs before they are approved for consumption. Going back to 1986, the U.S. federal government created the Coordinated Framework for the Regulation of Biotechnology, which established safety guidelines for GMOs, with the FDA, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture working together to regulate GMO use. Furthermore, in 2003, the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization developed international standards and regulations for GMO food safety.

In fact, these major scientific organizations have stated that GMOs currently on the market are safe to eat with no evidence of negative health effects directly caused by consuming GMOs, as “foods from GMO plants must meet the same requirements,

including the same safety standards, as foods derived from traditionally bred plants,” according to the FDA.

It is worth mentioning that bioengineered products actually can have positive impacts on human health as well. Plants can be engineered to have increased nutrients, such as biofortified crops that are enriched with essential minerals and vitamins.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Outside of the health concerns related to GMOs, another concern is the potential impact on biodiversity, or the variety of plants in the ecosystem. Some scientists worry that GMOs could lead to a decrease in biodiversity because genetically modified crops are often engineered to be resistant to pests and weeds. This can result in the dominance of a few specific crop varieties.

Along with biodiversity concerns, is the possible resistance of pests and weeds to pesticides and herbicides. GMOs that are engineered to be resistant to pests and weeds could lead to these things becoming resistant to chemicals over time, meaning that more bioengineering or stronger pesticides and herbicides would be necessary to control them.

But, GMOs have been developed to address some of these environmental challenges. One genetically modified crop, Bt Cotton, uses genes from the soil bacterium *Bacillus Thuringiensis* (Bt), that allow the plant to produce a toxin that kills specific insects. Plants like this, which can produce its own insecticide, reduces the need for chemical pesticides, which can have a positive impact on the environment by decreasing the use of potentially harmful manmade chemicals.

LABELING CONCERNS

Beyond concerns about consuming GMO products, another debate is about labeling GMO food products. While some people argue that consumers have the right to transparent labeling of GMO products so that they know what is in their food, others say that labeling might create unnecessary fear or confusion.

When it comes to labeling bioengineered food products, different countries have different regulations; some require GMO labeling, and some do not. In the United States, the FDA requires labeling for most food products containing genetically modified ingredients. However, there are some exceptions, like when GMOs are not detectable in the final product or when the food is highly refined. So, GMO labels may not be on every item.

In other countries, such as in the European Union, GMO labeling is generally more stringent. The EU requires clear labeling of products that contain or are produced from GMOs, regardless of detectability or refinement.

If consumers want to avoid GMOs, they should look for products labeled “non-GMO” or for those without a “bioengineered” label, as that is the standard term in the United States for GMO food products as of January 2022.

“Unfortunately, you can’t walk into a grocery store anymore and not purchase GMOs in some form,” science teacher Daniel Dickerson said.

Praises

- Hot Chocolate
- Gojo from "Jujutsu Kaisen"
- Wired Headphones
- "Trolls" Franchise
- Koi Fish
- Mewing

Protests

- Finals
- Burps
- Length of the School Year
- Near from "Death Note"
- Broken Claw-Clips
- COVID

Staff Playlist

Reagan Bates

"You've Got Everything Now"
by The Smiths

Eleanor Bittel

"Northern Attitude"
by Noah Kahan

Delia Dixon

"Florida Kilos"
by Lana Del Rey

Kennedi Fischer

"Hard Candy Christmas"
by Dolly Parton

LeRoy Goodspeed

"November"
by Tyler, The Creator

Feyden Hileman

"Power Trip"
by J. Cole

Justin Houchen

"Finger Back"
by Vampire Weekend

Eric Lucio

"I KNOW?"
by Travis Scott

Maddie Meis

"Shame"
by Mitski

Justus Nelson

"Borderline"
by Madonna

Madighan Norris

"A&W"
by Lana Del Rey

Kale Schwien

"Swimming Pools"
by Kendrick Lamar

Clare Tholstrup

"Captain Jack"
by Billy Joel

Jake Wente

"Open Arms"
by SZ

Tavia Wynn-Coffman

"Pink Matter"
by Frank Ocean

Jessica Augustine

"O Holy Night"
by Celine Dion



Cartoon by Eleanor Bittel

'Christmas spirit' is still alive, just less prevalent sometimes

From celebrating the birth of sweet baby Jesus, to getting your hands on that one item you have been dying to buy, to enjoying your work's holiday party, Christmas has different meanings to many different people, but what is the "real" meaning of the season?

First, the reason behind Christmas differs relative to what you believe. Christians celebrate Christmas to remember the birth of Jesus, and the traditions they follow symbolize the story of the Nativity, while people with different ideologies might celebrate the holidays to bring family together. Although, despite one's religious affiliation, the common theme of Christmas is showing love to others through giving.

Though some may disagree, we believe that people still hold onto that central idea of Christmas. Despite the greed and the ungratefulness that some people display, and despite the emphasis on materialistic values during the season, ultimately, most people recognize the importance of separating themselves from their possessions to focus on what is important: compassion, family and love. However, while most adults wholeheartedly would rather spend time with their loved ones rather than receive an expensive present, their children may think differently. Nevertheless, as these children mature, they also become wiser and usually realize what is important.

Going further, one can see the true meaning of the season through the labor people put in to see their family during this time of the year. The holiday season is full of travel, with people driving long hours or flying long distances just to see the ones they love. Children return from college, grandparents prepare extra beds and siblings reunite. If you look at the actions, rather than what is portrayed by businesses or negative news outlets, you will see the good intentions for Christmas is still present.

Likewise, most communities put in a considerable amount of effort to make sure others have a good Christmas as well, spreading the "giving" spirit. For example, the community of Hays participates in many service projects each year, such as Operation Christmas Child, the Angel Tree and more. These all allow for community members seriously give back to others.

In conclusion, the Christmas spirit might seem like a forgotten omen of the holiday. However, once you take a closer look at the people and organizations around you, one realizes that its central theme is still very much there, though it might just be harder to see.

Opinion of the Guidon Staff

Agree: 4

Disagree: 9

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Information/Policies

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The *Guidon* is a student-produced newsmagazine published to inform and entertain the Hays High community, to record the history of the school and to serve as an educational tool for journalism students. Under the supervision of a faculty adviser, journalism students have the opportunities to inform, investigate, entertain, interpret and evaluate in an open forum – all accepted functions of the traditional free press – and have the responsibilities to provide accurate, fair, objective and truthful coverage. Should unintentional errors in content be made, they will be retracted in the next issue of the school year.

The views expressed here are those of The *Guidon* staff and do not express the opinions of the USD 489 Board of Education, administration, faculty or staff. Advertisements must meet content, deadline and size requirements, and acceptance does not constitute an endorsement from the student staff or by the school district.

The staff welcomes letters to the editor, as long as they are not libelous, an invasion of privacy, obscene or copyright protected. Letters must be signed and must include the writer's name, address and phone number.

The *Guidon* print edition earned the Kansas Scholastic Press Association All-Kansas Award in 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022; received the National Scholastic Press Association Pacemaker Award in 2009; was an NSPA Pacemaker Finalist in 2009 and 2011; and received the NSPA First Class Award in 2012, 2018, 2021 and 2022. The *Guidon* online edition earned the KSPA All-Kansas Award in 2017 and 2018 and was an NSPA Pacemaker Finalist in 2019.

Other policy information is available upon request by contacting adviser Jessica Augustine at jaugustine@usd489.com.

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LISTEN IN WITH ERIC

While not stellar, Beyoncé's 'Renaissance' offers carefree listening

Upon the release of Beyoncé's, "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," on Dec. 1, I returned to listen to her 2022 album, "RENAISSANCE."

Released on July 29, 2022, "RENAISSANCE" was her first album since her rendition of the live action film of "The Lion King" in 2019. Along with the release, Beyoncé announced "The Renaissance World Tour," in which she travelled across the globe from May 10 to Oct. 1 of this year. The tour pulled in more than \$579 million, making it the highest grossing tour by a female artist, second only to Taylor Swift's Eras Tour.

With 16 tracks and a run time of an hour and two minutes, the project has sold more than a million copies in total and earned a 9/10 on Pitchfork, a 91/100 on Metacritic and a 4.6/5 on Google Reviews. Beyoncé maintained her common theme of minimal features, with only Beam, Grace Jones and Tems making appearances on the project.



By Eric Lucio
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Throughout the album, Beyoncé most prominently explores the themes of self-empowerment and self-expression, with tracks with names such as, "I'M THAT GIRL," and lyrics like, "Comfortable in my skin, cozy with who I am," in "COZY." Beyoncé has always been a role model for millions across the globe, especially females. From famous song such as "Run the World (Girls)" and "Bow Down," "Queen Bey" has always supported gender equality and feminism, with her most prominent theme of strengthening women.

In the album, Beyoncé also pays tribute to the black and queer leaders in music history, using production styles from genres such as disco, gospel and techno. Compared to prior albums, "RENAISSANCE" has a much more carefree feeling to the album, which served as a breath of fresh air. With politics and conflict flooding the news every day, having an important figure such as Beyoncé gives hope to people and

reminds people to have fun, even with all of the problems in the world today. Specifically, I loved "BREAK MY SOUL," "VIRGO'S GROOVE" and the closing track, "SUMMER RENAISSANCE."

After listening to the album, it is honestly hard to find many critiques. As a legend in the music world, Beyoncé obviously had A-list production put into her project. If I were to say anything I disliked about the album, I would say that her music does not appeal to everyone; however, no music appeals to everyone, and there will always be someone with negative reviews. And, even though it does not appeal to everyone, I believe most people would enjoy the album, at least on a surface level. While I believe it is a fun project to listen to, I do not know how heavily integrated it would be into my everyday rotation, and not every track in the album necessarily stuck out to me enough to listen to repeatedly.

Personally, I would rate it as a 9/10, and I would recommend it to those who love this style of music and encourage those who do not typically listen to this style to give this project a listen.

For last-minute gift-giving ideas, staff member offers choices

Each year is known for its popular products, and Christmas gives people an opportunity to buy the things that have been trending throughout the year. So, here are some top gift ideas for 2023.

1) Stanley Tumblers

Everywhere you look, almost everyone has a Stanley cup or a similar version of the brand for staying hydrated during the day. A Stanley cup retails for between \$40 to \$50 and can be found at most sporting goods stores or on the Stanley website.

2) Skincare Products

Glow Recipe's Watermelon Dew Drops and Summer Fridays Lip Butter Balm are two products that are extremely popular for adding moisture to skin and to lips. The Watermelon Dew Drops retail for \$35, while the Lip Butter Balm retails for \$24 on the companies' websites.

3) Shoes

UGG Tasman slippers and Birkenstock Boston shoes are comfortable shoes for everyday wear. You can find these shoes on either of their websites or even go scope out a local shoe store for them. The UGGs retail for \$110, and the Birkenstocks retail for \$158.

4) Cargo Pants

A product for everyone that has become an overnight sensation is the cargo style of pants. Cargos can be found at any retail store, but a reliable place can be Amazon.

5) Apple Watch & AirPods

Every Christmas, Apple products, such as the Apple Watch or AirPods, are popular. There are different versions of each product, so prices will vary.

6) Lululemon Clothing

For women, the most popular Lululemon item is the Align Leggings, which retail from \$98 to \$118. For men, the Pace Breaker Linerless Shorts are the most popular item, which retail for \$68.

7) LEGOs

Throughout 2023, LEGO announced many new lines of their products. A line that has become popular is the botanical sets, which contain a variety of flowers. The bouquets retail for \$59, and the individual sets retail for \$49 on the LEGO website.

8) Bluetooth Speakers

A gift that will be guaranteed to be used is any type of electronic gadget, more specifically, a Bluetooth speaker. The prices range by brand, by features and by size, but two popular options are the JBL Go 3 portable is \$29.95, and the JBL Flip 5 portable is \$79.95.

9) Hoodies

Almost every Christmas, someone will ask for clothes, especially hoodies. They are essential for all seasons, as they can be paired with anything and dressed up or down. You can find hoodies at almost any retail store, with prices varying.

10) Stuffed Animals

Jelly Cats, which include luxury fabrics and stuffings, retail from \$15 to \$40 on their website, while Warmies, which are weighted stuffed animals that you can warm in the microwave or freeze, range in price from \$14.99 to \$29.99, depending on the size.



By Tavia
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PREVIEWS

READY FOR WINTER

Winter sports teams start their competitions as long season begins

By Feyden Hileman
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BOYS BASKETBALL

with coach Sean Dreiling

Are there any new or returning athletes that you are excited to see play this year? If so, who are they?

"I am excited to watch all of our athletes compete. We are blessed with a great group of guys – a hard-working group of guys that put in a lot of time for this program."

What are you hoping to achieve this year?

"Our goal is to always reach our potential, whether that is a WAC [Western Athletic Conference] title or a state tournament run. We just want to put in the work and get the most out of our season."

What are you expecting from your athletes this season?

"I am expecting them to be great teammates and to be coachable. I am expecting them to be enthusiastic about our team, accountable to themselves and one another and the toughest team in western Kansas."

Photo by Arely Maldonado (Indian Call)

GIRLS BASKETBALL

with coach Len Melvin

Are there any new or returning athletes that you are excited to see play this year. If so, who are they?

"We are excited about the group we have coming back, as well as the new freshmen. We feel like we have some good players returning that create some excitement for our season."

What are you hoping to achieve this year?

"We really want to keep moving the program in the right direction. We have a difficult schedule, so we know each night will be a challenge."

What are you expecting from your athletes this season?

"It's easy to look at wins and losses as the barometer of success, but there is so much more to it. These kids will go on to be professionals in their careers, moms, wives, etc., and we want their experience playing basketball to be a positive one that offers successes later on in life."

Photo by Ava Schoenberger (Indian Call)

BOYS SWIMMING

with coach Kendra Clary

Are there any new or returning athletes that you are excited to see compete this year. If so, who are they?

"Junior Marshall Sook was a prominent name in WAC last year, and I think he has worked really hard on building from that. Alongside him are quite a few talented athletes that are trying to get a relay to state."

What are you hoping to achieve this year?

"I am hoping to fine tune some techniques and see a lot of speed from that. I believe we will be a strong contender at WAC and create some great swims."

What are you expecting from your athletes this season?

"This year will be a big change for the boys in terms of training. I am expecting trust in trying new things and perseverance to push through the harder practices. Building strong character will hopefully branch out to other life skills."

Photo by Marisa Wasinger (Indian Call)

BOYS & GIRLS WRESTLING

with coach Heath Meder

Are there any new or returning athletes that you are excited to see play this year. If so, who are they?

"I'm always glad to see the new athletes come in and see what they can do at the high school level. Returning are [senior] Elijah McCullough, a state placer, and [senior] Harley Zimmerman, a state champion, as well as many other state placers on the guys' side that we are hoping to get on the podium. On the girls' side, returning are [junior] Tionna Napue, a returning state finalist, and [senior] Lex Burton, a two-time state placer, as well as a core group of girls that have been to state."

What are you hoping to achieve this year?

"On the guys' side, I'm hoping to finish better than we did last year and finish in Top 5 in the state for 5A. On the girls' side, we finished sixth last year, and with the girls coming back, I think we can easily achieve that and more with all the experience that we have."

Photo by Ava Schoenberger (Indian Call)



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ATHLETE
OF THE MONTH

Boys Basketball



senior Jack Weimer

With the Hays City Shootout taking place on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 and 2, there already have been some great games of basketball, with senior Jack Weimer standing out for the boys team.

Weimer said that, since he has played basketball from a young age, he has had to sacrifice a lot of time and put a lot of effort into the sport.

"I've been playing since I was five years old," Weimer said, adding that he has been competing with most of the same teammates the entire time.

Playing with most of the same teammates for the greater part of his career really helped him to create a bond with his teammates to play more fluently together.

"I've been playing with [seniors] Kyzer Fox and Edwin Muller the longest," Weimer said.

Averaging 12 points per game at the Shootout, Weimer said he hopes to continue to grow this margin by becoming one of the the top scorers for the team this season and he hopes to have a successful post-season run.

RECORDS

Cheerleading prepares for nationals yet again

By Justus Nelson
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On Nov. 29 at the winter athletics pep assembly, Hays High School staff and students caught a glimpse of what the Indian cheer team has been bringing to local, state and eventually national competitions this year.

Thus far, the cheer squad has competed in two competitions, including the Thomas More Prep (TMP) Showcase in Hays and the state cheer contest in Topeka.

The TMP Showcase, which was Nov. 4, was hosted by the TMP cheerleaders at their school. This competition was a "Game Day" style competition, with participating teams having to perform their school's fight song, a band dance and a crowd-leading cheer. Several schools attended, with Hays High earning a I rating, which is the highest a team could score, and also receiving the "Best Fight Song Award."

"I feel like we have done well this year," senior Hannah Klein said. "Although it can be difficult adjusting to a new team, we have adapted well and been able to gain new skills we have never done before. It has been fun!"

The cheerleaders then went to the state competition on Nov. 18 in Topeka, which was also structured in the "Game Day" format. In the 5A division, 18 cheer teams participated, with Hays High placing 11th overall.

"While we did not make it into finals, we did drastically increase our scores in all three preliminary rounds and received some great compliments from the judges," coach Mackenzie James said. "I have always talked to the team about how success is not measured by how well you do compared to others, but by doing the absolute best you can in that moment. I walked away from state knowing it was a success because the team did the absolute best routine they were capable of that day."



Photo courtesy of Mackenzie James

CHEER SQUAD

The 2023-2024 cheerleaders gather together at the Kansas State High School Activities Association state cheer competition on Nov. 18 in Topeka. While there, the Indian cheerleaders finished 11th in the Class 5A division.

To prepare for the two competitions and for their year of cheering for events, the cheerleaders attended two summer camps, including the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) camp and the Kansas Shrine Bowl camp.

At the NCA camp, the varsity squad received a bid to compete at the NCA High School Nationals Competition in Dallas, Texas, on Jan. 20 and 21, which they attended for the first time last year and will attend again this year.

"In recent years, we have attended state and national cheer competitions for the first time in school history," James said. "We have increased the level of difficulty of our skills and helped just change the overall culture and atmosphere within the team. They have worked hard and have a true desire to grow and learn new things. Many of the athletes on the cheer team put in extra work outside of practice by attending additional stunting and tumbling classes. I think that alone shows how dedicated they are to the program."

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Students spend their money to experience seeing their favorite musical artists

IN CONCERT

By Jacob Wentle
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Concerts can be a surreal experience in which fans can see their favorite artists live.

While performances have happened throughout history, original concerts started around the 17th century when artists like Beethoven and Mozart performed their symphonies for crowds of people, according to Britannica at www.britannica.com/art/concert. But, concerts in the modern world have changed a lot, from selling out entire football stadiums and performing up to three-hour shows with no breaks.

Hays High School students have attended their fair share of concerts from major artists. This year, artists including Beyoncé, Zach Bryan, Doja Cat, Drake, Travis Scott, Taylor Swift, SZA, U2 and Morgan Wallen were on tour. Plus, artists like Bad Bunny, Foo Fighters, Nicki Minaj, Melanie Martinez, Playboi Carti, Olivia Rodrigo and more have announced tours for next year.

"I went to go see Travis Scott at T-Mobile Center in Kansas City, which was such a cool experience because of how big his stage was and how the lights and production were so well thought out," junior Izabel Schmidt said. "I went with my friends, and we all were so hype, and so was the crowd around us, which made it so much fun."

These artists have all dropped their new music throughout the past year, which is usually why artists go on tour. But, there are some cases in which that is different, such as Playboi Carti; he has not released any music since 2021, yet he is going on tour starting in January 2024, which leads fans to think he will be dropping a new album soon.

"When my favorite artists drop new music, I always make sure I listen to the full album and memorize all the words, so that, if there is a tour following the new album, then if I get to go to their show, then I will know all the words," senior Morgan Geerdes said. "Another good thing that artists often do that I love is they will release a live version of their album, so if you do not get a chance to go to the concert, you can listen at home and feel like you were there."

While albums may be easy to access through streaming sites, concerts are often expensive in terms of tickets. For concerts at most smaller venues, tickets are usually priced more reasonably, whereas a larger concert in an arena or a stadium can cost anywhere from \$150 to \$600 or more.

"I spent about \$400 for my ticket to see Taylor Swift this summer, but I was able to get floor seats and be in the 16th row," senior Helen Cappuccio said. "Personally, I think the price was worth it, especially since so many people paid way more than what I did for seats that were in a way worse spot. I would say that the price was nothing compared to the memory I'll have for the rest of my life."

When buying concert tickets, it is often best to purchase the tickets through the sales sites that the artists use, but sometimes, when tickets sell out so quickly, people turn to using resale sites. On those resale sites, some people may sell their tickets at the original or lower prices if they cannot attend, but some people also buy the tickets and then sell them, trying to make more money.

"When I went to see Harry Styles for the third time in Texas, I bought the tickets as a resale because the tickets sold out so fast," senior Lacy Droegemeier said. "Although they were a little more expensive, I would say that it was worth it because the trip was so much fun, and spending the extra money was better than not being able to go at all."

Beyond just a single concert from one artist, some students have attended music festivals, such as Country Stampede, Lollapalooza, Rolling Loud, Sunflower Music Festival and more, which often last for multiple days. These festivals include many different artists who take turns performing and sometimes perform together.

"Over the summer, I got the chance to go to Lollapalooza with my best friend and my brother," senior Andrea Zarate said. "The festival was in Chicago, and it was such an amazing experience because I got to see so many different artists, and everybody who was at the festival was so cool and had on the coolest outfits."

"I spent about \$400 for my ticket to see Taylor Swift this summer, but I was able to get floor seats and be in the 16th row. I would say that the price was nothing compared to the memory I'll have for the rest of my life."

senior Helen Cappuccio



Student Statistics

What is your favorite concert that has happened in 2023?
(in a poll of 27 students)

- 33% - "Taylor Swift: Eras Tour"
- 18% - "SZA: SOS Tour"
- 27% - "Travis Scott: Utopia Tour"
- 22% - "Zach Bryan: Burn, Burn, Burn Tour"



Future Films

Dec. 1

- "The Shift"
- "Godzilla Minus One"
- "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé"

Dec. 5

- "Betrayal"
- "Fireline"
- "Nightmare on 34th Street"

Dec. 6

- "The Abyss"

Dec. 15

- "Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget"
- "The Family Plan"
- "Wonka"

Dec. 22

- "Anyone But You"
- "Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom"

Dec. 25

- "Ferrari"
- "The Color Purple"



Witty Wisecracks

How does Santa Claus pay his elves throughout December?

With cold, hard cash!

Did you hear about the snowmen who fell in love in December?

It was love at frost sight!

Why did the singer bring a ladder to the concert?

To reach the high notes!

Why did the concert-goer bring a map to the gig?

They heard the band was going to break down a bridge.

Why did the band go fishing?

They heard they would catch some great bass there!