HELLO
MY NAME IS

the Cougar

SUMMER 2026

Albany High School
Albany, California, 94706

Highlighting senior *Artists*
see pg. 16

The future of the *Art Building*
see pg. 4

HELLO READER,

Welcome to the final edition of *The Cougar* for the 2025-2026 school year! This Summer Issue has adopted a theme of growing up in Albany, with a focus on Albany High School's graduating seniors.

As we prepare to leave this publication behind, we would love to give a special thanks to our editorial board. Managing editors Darla Lawson, Sadie Nystrom, and Maya Osvald have seamlessly learned the ropes of overseeing multiple stories at a time. Our Head of Sports, Judah Kupers, has built our sports coverage from the ground up and filled our Instagram with game recaps. Our Head of Social Media, Laura Garcia, has curated our social media with a coherent aesthetic. Last but not least, our Head of Layout and Design, Nasiah Tesch, refines each of our magazines with color palettes and cover art. A huge thank you to our editorial board this year for making the journalism news room run smoothly.

Throughout this year, our entire staff have been working to increase online publishing on both our website and our Instagram. If you would like to read *The Cougar* between issues, go to https://albanyhighcougar.com/ or follow @albanyhighcougar.

Thank you for taking the time to read this edition of *The Cougar*! Although this issue has a strong focus on class of 2026, there is a piece for everyone and we hope you enjoy the end of your school year!

Thanks for reading,

Thalia Savage and **Sisseline Lovejoy**
The Cougar's Editors-in-Chief



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The Cougar is a student-led and written publication at Albany High School. We distribute free issues around campus and city.

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Sauce of The Summer

Rachel Hubbard Shares Her Legendary Red Sauce Recipe

WRITTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED AND DESIGNED BY: **NINA MEIER-BOLTON**





Photo courtesy of:
Rachel Hubbard

Rachel Hubbard is Albany High School's one and only photography teacher, and she, like many AHS students, loves Italian food.

Hubbard's red sauce is far superior to any canned sauce you'd buy at the store. She says "it's a really simple recipe" and "a good comfort food." Though many don't typically think of red sauce dishes as something to eat during the summer. Prime tomato season is July through October, with the savory fruit peaking in freshness in the summer. Hubbard says that this red sauce is definitely something that she makes year round.

Red sauce dishes are fit for any gathering, bringing people together and being versatile in a way that lets you add in or take out ingredients to your taste. Try Hubbard's red sauce recipe this summer at your table.







Ingredients:

(Makes 4 Cups)
1) ¼ cups extra-virgin olive oil
2) 1 spanish onion, chopped in ¼ in dice
3) 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
4) 3 tbs chopped fresh thyme leaves (or 1 tbs dried thyme)
5) ½ medium carrot, finely shredded
6) 2 28-oz cans peeled whole tomatoes, crushed by hand and juices reserved
7) 1 Italian sweet sausage and 1 spicy Italian sausage
8) 10-15 sliced mushrooms

Steps:

1) Heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook until soft and light golden brown for about 8 to 10 minutes.

2) Add thyme and carrot and cook for 5 minutes, then add mushrooms stirring frequently until soft.

3) Add tomatoes and tomato juice and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring often, until thickened. For a blended version, use an immersion blender to blend the sauce.

4) In a separate pan, brown the sausage. After the sauce has finished, add the sausage to the pan and stir.

5) Season with salt and serve. This sauce lasts for 1 week in the refrigerator or up to 6 months in the freezer.

A Fresh Coat

AHS's Art Building Has Decades of History Painted Into It- Renovation Could Change That.

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY: **Zoey Osvald** PHOTOGRAPHED BY: **Michael Finley** and **Zoey Osvald**

Dozens of murals decorate the inside of the Albany High School art building, some dating back to the 1970s. As the building is scheduled for renovation, they may not be there much longer.

Superintendent Sara Stone says in an interview, "It's almost impossible to preserve a mural." The building will be modernized to better fit the school's programs. The building's vintage charm will not be a priority.

The AHS art building is the oldest building in the district; music, culinary, dance, and studio art classes have run inside since the 1960s. It also houses the central kitchen for the entire district and the only theater space.

The vintage murals lining its walls give the building a distinct character. Unlike other buildings in the district, the art building has an atmosphere that fosters creativity and welcomes artistic expression. Sophomore Talia Silverman says, "It feels like a creative environment." Junior Mori Peskin says that the best part of the building is "its character; all the art from the '90s." These murals help to make the building special to students, but their future is uncertain.

Stone sees the building very differently from the students. While students lovingly describe a space full of character, Stone says, "It's kind of dingy and dark." She described her

2003



2009



1984



Student work has decorated the walls of the art building for years; these murals can be found inside

goal outcome as artsy, but lightened, and overall more modernized. Whatever becomes of the murals, the renovation is moving forward. Principal Darren McNally says, "[the building] doesn't really meet our needs anymore. If it's not knocked down or rebuilt, it probably needs to be gutted."

McNally says, "The biggest thing I'd like to see for the renovations is a classroom dedicated to our dance [program]. I'd love to see a purpose-built space so that they have the things they need."



The Albany High School Art Building as seen from the outside

Sophomore Saira Sankar says, "Being in the dance space a lot, it gets really overwhelming, especially with dance clubs; it's really hard to stay on track and get our stuff done because there is so much going on in the cafeteria." There are also plans for a larger performing arts space to support performances across the entire district, according to Stone.

> "[The art building] is very funky. In my opinion, it's not clean. It's pretty dirty, I just think it's dark"
>
> –Sara Stone, Superintendent

Sankar says, "[the murals] show our student history, and trying to preserve that would be preferable." The modernization may improve the functionality of the building, but an atmosphere that took decades to create will be lost forever.

1998



1978



1984



More Than a Teacher

A Look At Why Some Teachers Run Extracurriculars

WRITTEN BY: **OMAR JOHNSON** DESIGNED BY: **SAMIPYA SUBEDI**

When thinking about the role of a teacher, your mind might immediately jump to the classroom. But many teachers do a lot more than just teaching. Whether in school or at home, there is far more to their lives than just teaching classes.

Social studies teacher M.A. Malanche is the coach for the JV softball team. When asked about why he took the job, he says that there were lots of reasons including the fact that he loves sports and that he had coaching experience for football and wrestling. He thought that coaching the softball team would be a fun challenge for him.



Malanche gathers the JV softball team in a huddle.
Photo by: Judah Kupers

When asked about his motivation for taking the job, Malanche says, "Part of what motivated that is mourning the Oakland A's, and enjoying the opportunity to put on my old leather glove and be at a ballfield in the springtime."

He adds, "And to a lesser extent, I am partially motivated by my desire to coach my own kids some day when I have them."

Malanche talks about the amount of time he spends every day, and says that he is usually there early for his 95 minute practices, and normally stays after.

Malanche says, "The time and care you put into it shapes the outcomes, and it's been a lot of fun trying to help my players develop the skills required to compete. Outside of practice, I spend time looking up training drills, structuring practices, and collecting and organizing resources for players."

Malanche added, "I am regularly sending out communications to players, the varsity and middle school coaches, and our Athletic Director. Meanwhile, teaching full time takes a lot out of you, but it's essential to embrace the positive struggles that come with balancing your time in order to do what you want to do."

Math teacher Kathleen Bliss supervises the theatre ensemble after school. When asked about what led to her taking the job, she says, "The prior supervisor was ready to hand the job off to someone else. She knew I was a big fan of the theatre ensemble's productions, so she asked me. Initially, I thought I would be sharing the job with a teacher, but it turned out to be just me."

One might feel upset or frustrated after that, but Bliss says, "It is really a lot of work, but it is also such a joy to be able to support-and just witness up close-our theatre ensemble put a show together. They continuously amaze me."

The ensemble also takes up a considerable amount of time for Bliss after school, "Theatre ensemble puts on three productions a year. The number of hours depends on whether it is a regular week vs. 'tech week' or 'show week.' Those two weeks leading up to the shows we stay late each day after school, so it's a lot of hours. Around 25 hours a week. For regular rehearsal weeks, maybe around 12-15

hours. If we happen to be between shows then it's just one to two hours a week."

For teacher Avri Finch, becoming an assistant coach for the basketball team had similar reasons. Finch says, "I love basketball, and I played basketball, always knew I wanted to coach because it's a way to stay involved in the game after playing. You can impact kids who are playing the game, and ultimately you get to stay involved with basketball as much as possible."

When asked about how much time he takes a week for coaching, Finch says that between practices, gameplanning, film study, games, and travel it takes around 20 hours a week.

While talking about balancing the time commitment of coaching with teaching, Finch says, "It just means that I have to be better with my time management and get my work for teaching done first because, ultimately, you gotta have teaching as the first priority."

With a player's perspective, freshman Jack Schneider is a basketball player with Finch as a coach. When asked about having a coach who teaches at the school, he says, "I personally like it because I can ask him about basketball related topics during the school day. I don't have him as a teacher, but it's still beneficial to have him there. It's important to maintain a relationship as a coach and a player, so him being there every day is really good."

While students greatly appreciate when teachers help with extracurriculars, for some teachers that's just not in the cards. For math teacher Hasan Rayyan, his commute from Sacramento takes a long time and he has a family including a young son. When you combine those two factors it's difficult to offer after school hours. Rayyan says, "It's nice to be home a little earlier so you can join [your family] in their activities and support them."



Finch stands next to his old basketball jersey which hangs in his classroom
Photo by: Omar Johnson

When asked about supporting students outside of school, Rayyan says, "My availability is other times. We have advisory, lunchtime, and before school. After school is by choice."

> "You can impact kids who are playing the game, and ultimately you just get to stay involved with basketball as much as possible."
> -Avri Finch

Another math teacher, Danielle DeLaurentis, is in a similar situation. She says, "I am unable to meet with students after school because I pick up my children, ages three and seven, from school. I'm part time so that I can balance my family life with work while my kids are young."

From an administrative perspective, principal Darren McNally talks about how teachers' ability to stay after school affects the times when they are needed for staff mandatory meetings and other things of that nature. "For after school, there are certain meetings that teachers are required to attend, but otherwise I don't have specific regular responsibilities for teachers after school."

When talking about the expectations he has of teachers he says, "There is no expectation from me that teachers do extracurricular activities. These kinds of things are considered an 'extra duty' above and beyond the usual responsibilities for teachers. For some things, like the theater producer or athletic coaches, it is considered an extra 'job' on top of their teaching assignments."

Redefining Intimacy

A Closer Look at Alice Wong's Newest Anthology

WRITTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED, AND DESIGNED BY: **SISSELINE LOVEJOY**

"Disability Intimacy" is an anthology of essays by authors whose lives are affected by disability, and edited by Alice Wong. Unlike Wong's first anthology: "Disability Visibility", which covered a wider variety of topics, this book focuses more specifically on what it means to access intimacy as a person with a disability. This collection focuses on every aspect and definition of intimacy. In her introduction, Wong writes, "Intimacy is more than sex or romantic love. Intimacy is an ever-expanding universe composed of a myriad of heavenly bodies. Intimacy is about relationships within a person's self, with others, with communities, with nature, and beyond." The book is split into four sections: Love and Care, Pleasure and Desire, Creativity and Power, and Everything and Everywhere. This article will highlight one piece from each section that felt especially meaningful, whether in its message, story or ideas.

LOVE & CARE

"The Most Valuable Thing I Can Teach My Kid is How To Be Lazy" by Gracen Brilmyer

In this essay, Gracen Brilmyer addresses what it means to be a disabled parent, including the fear that her own body's needs will prevent her from prioritizing her child, making her a selfish and unfit parent. As a young disabled woman, I find my community is often taught that our needs are to prevent us from existing in the same way as able bodied people. The idea that we could succeed in getting a higher education, building a life, a family and a career are rarely shown as a possibility. This concept often makes me wonder what lies ahead for me. The lack of open

> "The world is on fire; rest will help to quench those flames."

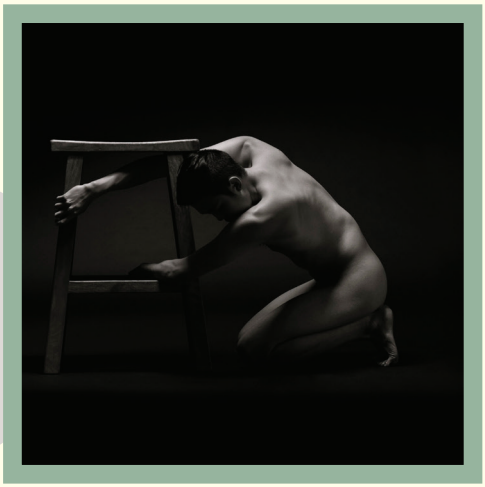
mindedness about what it means to be a successful adult leads us to believe that our adapted lives are not an acceptable alternative. Brilmyer's piece aims to change that idea.

They begin with a scene of their child urging them to nap together. "Abba, I have an idea, put on your pajamas and your big mask, turn off the light and get into bed," the child says. It frames rest, and care for your own body as something you can share with, and teach to your children. Rather than feeling ignored, their child joins the care time, snuggling and being lulled by their sleep apnea machine. Brilmyer's essay reminds us that disabled lives can be and are just as full and beautiful as those of the abled. It highlights the idea that listening to your body and taking care of it is important and unselfish That selfcare can be fun, and most importantly, that we don't need to feel alone in our disabled needs.

PLEASURE AND DESIRE

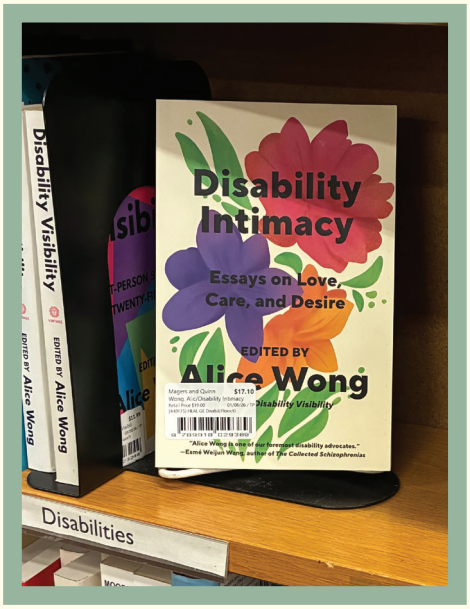
"Staring at Curvature" by Travis Chi Wing Lau

> "The work here was as much about relinquishing as it was about reclamation: the letting go of narratives imposed upon my own curved form."



"Entaglement" **Photo by:** Den Sweeny

"Staring at Curvature" discusses Travis Chi Wing Lau's experience modeling and being photographed as a gay man with scoliosis. When first working with less thoughtful photographers, Lau was made to feel that his body was wrong, ugly, or unfit for projects. In his 2016 proj-



ect, "Curvature", with photographer Den Sweeny, Lau explored the way his spine moves and reflects light, comparing his back to the moon's surface. Taking their time to care for their bodies, Sweeny and Lau worked together to create a collection that shows off Lau's entire beauty, including, not despite, his disability. Lau describes the safe feeling that this environment created saying, "I knew I was in safe hands rather than in front of fetishizing eyes--hands that wanted to… "make" or cocreate an image together with me that tells the lived experience and history of my disabled body on my own terms." The idea that disabled bodies can be beautiful and represented in artforms is radical, and changes the way we view our own disabilities. As we continue to show our bodies and disabilities in the media, we teach ourselves that we belong and deserve to be seen.

CREATIVITY AND POWER

"A Love Letter To London" by Emilie L. Gossiaux

Through "A Love Letter to London," Emilie L. Gossiaux explores the connection between herself and her guide dog, London. As London prepares to retire, this piece is a reflection of everything a service animal can bring to a disabled person's experience. Gossiaux describes their relationship as a "crisscross between maternal, spousal, emotional and practical," and expresses a deep gratitude for the independence London provides her. Existing in a disabled body often requires accepting help from other people. As much as we look for independence, some things simply cannot be done on our own in an unadapted world. Service dogs allow disabled people to access

> "Learning to travel with London was so exhilarating. I walked faster, with more confidence."

a new state of interdependence, in which we can coexist with these animals, providing for each other. This creates a sense of freedom for people that is otherwise not offered to us. Gossiaux spends much of her piece talking about the exhilarating experience of being able to move quickly through big cities without fear. This piece is a snapshot into the beauty and freedom we can experience through these animals and opportunities they provide.

EVERYTHING AND EVERYWHERE

"The Leg Chapter" by Ashley Shew

In The Leg Chapter, Ashley Shew explores the way having access to prosthetics allows her to pass as able bodied. Shew describes her prosthetic as a defense, allowing her to avoid judgement and prejudice, at the cost of compromising a part of who she is. She writes "The promise of prosthetics to this cyborg is that I can push people away who would do me damage." Although her prosthetic may make her daily life more convenient, she describes a negative impact on her ability to feel confident and be intimate with her disabled identity

> "They want too much for us to be a tragedy so the abled can be the heroes, can save us."

and community. The idea that disabled people want to get closer and closer to a non-disabled body hinders our ability to create intimacy built off of the love of our own bodies. Being disabled is not inherently negative; pain and inaccessibility reduce our quality of life, but our bodies' differences do not make us lesser. The idea that disability is inherently negative has been constructed by an ableist mindset and society throughout history. Shew addresses the differences in the way she is treated and thought of by people around her depending on whether or not she is wearing her prosthetic. Although her body does not change, the public's idea of her ability and worth is drastically different. She writes, "I look less disabled to other people; I am no different, but different perceptions get placed upon me. People can forget for a time that I am disabled." Shew reminds us that "more disabled" is not, and has never been synonymous with "less than" and that disabled pride can help carry us through this life.

From Then 'til Now

SENIORS SHARE WHAT THEY WOULD'VE LIKED TO HEAR WHEN THEY FIRST STARTED HIGH SCHOOL

WRITTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED, AND DESIGNED BY: **JANE KIM, SELDON LHAMO,** AND **GOLDEN RANDOLPH**

Looking back, what advice would you give yourself, academics-wise?

Auggie Ciley says, "Make sure you turn in all your work on time. Make peace with your teachers, stay on their good side."





PHOTO COURTESY OF: AUGGIE CILEY





PHOTO COURTESY OF: AVERY WEN

If you could send an inspirational message to your younger self, what would it be?

Avery Wen says, "Not to compare. Because it's easy to look at where other people are and where you are and be down about it. Just do your own thing!"

What lesson from high school will stick with you the most?

Imani West says, "Try to think about your future self while you are still trying to grow. And keep setting new goals."



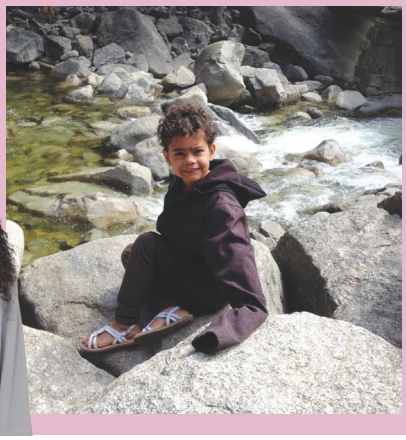


PHOTO COURTESY OF: IMANI WEST

Seniors Go Collegiate

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY: **TYLER SHEVELSON** AND **GWEN PINGREE**



Between community college and Division 1, only 7 percent of high school athletes make it to the collegiate level. This year, Albany High School has produced many who will be taking this next step in their athletic careers.

The first cougar commit is the starting guard for the Albany High varsity boy's basketball team, senior Pasha Azar. Azar has committed to play basketball for the Contra Costa Comets. Albany isn't known for its athletic commits, so when asked what the hardest part of the recruitment process was, Azar says, "Being at a smaller school, we don't get recruited as much for basketball." High school sports can cause some internal conflict. When asked what Azar's biggest struggle with high school sports was, Azar says, "Getting along with the head coach of Albany, we went through some things, and it took a few years, but it ended well, and we had a great season." Committing to playing sports in college can be difficult so when asked if he had any advice for younger players, Azar says, "Just listen to your coaches, the coaches that you know are right, never doubt yourself, always bet on yourself, and just keep working."



Albany High School varsity softball captain Mackenzie Marion is heading to Utah Valley University. She started playing around age nine because her grandpa also played. Playing Division I softball has been a goal she has been working towards throughout her career with the cougars. When asked why she committed to UVU, she says, "I didn't want to stay in California, I wanted to branch off somewhere, be on my own, and learn things by myself." Alongside that, Marion also likes the competition level that this rising Division I school offers, and the new conference they are entering. Another thing that separated UVU from other schools for Marion is how "the coaches are really nice and it's very family oriented." Marion's favorite part of softball is playing as a team and winning.

Photo Courtesy of: Mackenzie Marion

Aasish Dangol is committed to swim at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He started swimming at four years old because his older sister swam, so he picked it up too. From a young age, Dangol realized he had a talent which sparked his dream of swimming in college. He says his favorite part of swimming is "the community and friends I make, and the chats we have." Dangol also talks about how challenging the mental aspect of swimming can be. In his junior year he had a very bad ankle injury which made things difficult. He says "it's also hard when results plateau to keep enjoying practice." Dangol says that he committed to MIT because "the team just seemed great, it's a great school and it's around my swimming level." In college he is looking forward to nationals and having more training partners.



Photo Courtesy of: Judah Kupers

Read about more signing seniors on our website!



What part of college are you most excited for?

"I think I'm most excited to be in a new environment with like a lot of new people that I'll get to know over the next 4 years."
- Nico Cardenas

How did you pick your college?

"I chose UCSC because of the location. And both of my parents went there so im following in thier footsteps."
- Kenya Fechter

DESIGNED BY: **SADIE NYSTROM**

Hand-drawn flower illustrations by:
the "Audubon of Botany",
Mary Vaux Walcott (1860–1940).

Senior Map

Class of 2026: IN-STATE

Berkeley City College
- Caleb McNulty
- Ninapauline Meier-Bolton
- Tenzin Deyang
- Samten Wangchuk
- Grace Ha
- Antoine Cotte
- Itai Weinberg

California Polytechnic Maritime Academy
- Addison Mercer

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
- Leah Zonana
- Juliana Nicosia
- Yasmine Waharte
- Cole Mahoney
- Anna Stewart

California State University, Long Beach
- Emmi Chang

College of Marin
- Willem Loveless

Contra Costa College
- Auggie Cilley
- Tenzin Norzom

Diablo Valley College
- Emiko Fernandez

Laney College
- Preston McGowen

Loyola Marymount University
- Madison Jones

Multiple Community Colleges
- Will Parenteau
- Aayush Bhattarai
- Leo Lopez
- Aarohan Subedi

Occidental College
- Delara Agha

Pomona College
- Joanne Kim

Sacramento State University
- Ella Grace Hammond

San Diego State University
- Ayenat Thomas
- Riley Kolsch

San Francisco State University
- Anaya West-Walker
- Eunice Min
- Lucia Anderson

San Jose State University
- Anshuman Acharya
- Namgyal Kalden

Solano Community College
- Giselle Mendez

Sonoma State University
- Achilles Samson

University of California, Berkeley
- Aashi Gupta
- Andrew Li
- Tenzing Gyamokhang
- Audriella Matano Kang
- Matthew Tan
- Evan Lee
- Iris Yu
- Leda Kendall

University of California, Davis
- Stefan Tsai
- Timothy Kim
- Suhani Brunet
- Nirvaan Jaswal
- Tenzin Thinley
- Kaelin Morris
- Summer Mickelson

University of California, Irvine
- William Chen

University of California, Los Angeles
- Nico Cardenas
- Nils Hummel
- Dexter Johnson
- Avery Wen

University of California, Riverside
- Misheel Darkhanbayar
- Rojina Refai
- Misha Rozhin

University of California, San Diego
- Lucy Still

University of Califonia, Santa Barbara
- Naomi Cook
- Jill Winnacker

University of California, Santa Cruz
- Nicolas Rusa
- Tenzin Palzom
- Kadin DeMarche
- Kenya Fechter
- Ash Ramos
- Zoe Maderas
- Selina Liu
- Emalani Perez
- Jasper Graf
- Marie-Claire McDavitt
- Kali Le
- Kaya Miyasaki

University of San Francisco
- Sharon Xu
- Zor Gill

University of Southern California
- Emilie Yoo
- Finn Willits-Musell

Class of 2026: OUT-OF-STATE

Arizona

Arizona State University
Tyler Shevelson

University of Arizona
Sisseline Lovejoy

Colorado

Colorado College
Finn Gradia

University of Colorado
Jasper Hengl

District of Columbia

Georgetown University
Sabrina Yee

Howard University
Kayla Thuku

Georgia

Georgia Institute of Technology
Alex Bowen

Illinois

Columbia College Chicago
Ezra Stone

University of Loyola
Kalia Griffin

Indiana

Purdue University
Lucas Bai

Maryland

University of Maryland
Maya Chen

Massachusetts

Boston University
Judy Chen

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Aasish Dangol

Massachusetts (continued)

Northeastern University
Kelly Jung

Williams College
Eddie Kolodny

Tufts University
Akash Shah

Michigan

University of Michigan
Shayna Phillips

Minnesota

University of Minnesota
Ryan Li

New York

Colombia University
Winston Li

Pratt Institute
Avery Newell

School of Visual Arts
Gwenyth Etheridge

Syracuse University
Hyacinth Taylor

Ohio

Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences
Kalia Balagtas

Case Western Reserve University
Hailey Rogers

Oregon

Lewis and Clark College
Chloe Kupers

Oregon State University
Matteo Liberati
Tommaso Liberati
Jacob Hiltscher

Oregon (continued)

University of Oregon
Dmitri Meyer
Hana Cohen
Lisa Newman
Hailey Reinhardt

Willamette University
Avery Dawson Sheldon

Pennsylvania

Lehigh University
Kyle Lui
Kunsel Chodak

Rhode Island

Brown University
Yuri Pretto

Rhode Island School of Design
Iola Gravois

Washington

Seattle University
Lili Nierva

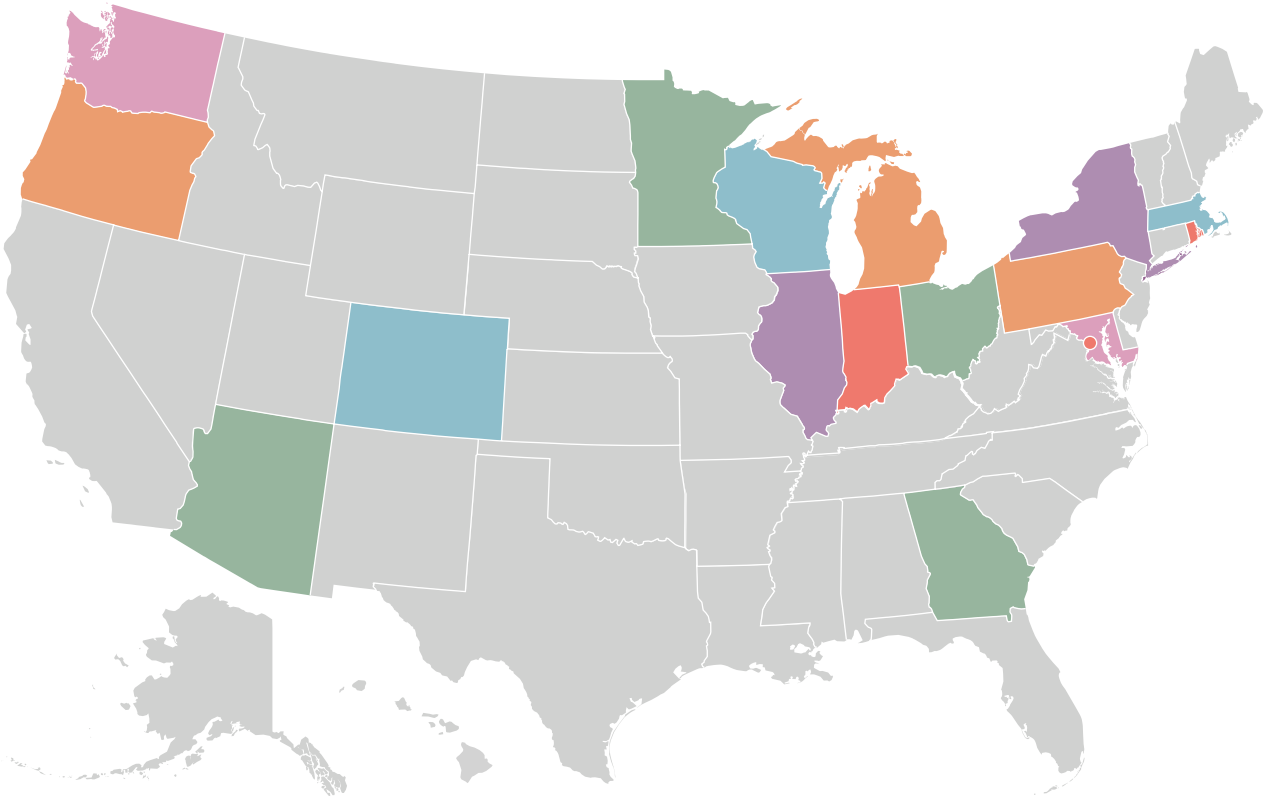
University of Washington
Alex Martinez
Ana Owen
Zoey Yan

Whitman College
Casey Gradia
Ben Ruby

Wisconsin

University of Wisconsin
Kyle Chien

Lawrence University
Donica Paras



Class of 2026: INTERNATIONAL

Canada

McGill University

Lise Arnaud

University of British Columbia

Chloe Bertrand

University of Victoria

Evan Weinstein

University of Toronto

Charlee Trenkle

United Kingdom

Oxford University

Koren Roth





"I've spent a long time [in California]. I've pretty much been here my whole life, and I think it's time to go somewhere new."

- Kyle Chien

DESIGNED BY: **DARLA LAWSON** AND **MAYA OSVALD**

ARTIST SPOTL

Choir Yasmin Gonzalez

WRITTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED, AND DESIGNED BY: **LEO LOPEZ** AND **LILA WEBER**

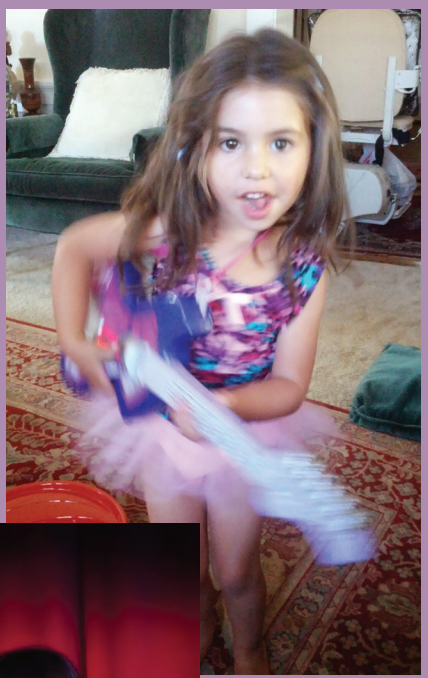
1. What's your favorite performance?

My favorite concert that I have done so far has been last year's variety show that was like peak for me really because I had a duet with my best friend, a solo, and it had just great vibes throughout the entire thing.



2.Who is your biggest artistic influence?

For my career I would definitely say Ms. Huizinga. She is everything you would want to be as a music major which is literally just straight out of college immediately get a job, save up money, now going back to get her masters. It's incredible how dedicated she is and how far she's made it. Even vocal-wise she's always been who I reach to.





3.Who influenced you to be creative?

Definitely my mom. She can play almost any musical instrument you throw at her. Both of my parents are musicians; they met playing mariachi. But my mom's always been the one pushing me towards dance, pushing me towards making music. She would always take me to her gigs, I'd be sitting on her lap while she would be playing guitar. She introduced me to the world and the culture that music could give me.

4. Do you plan on pursuing singing in the future?

Yes I do, I'm going to San Diego State for my music education degree and after that the goal is to hopefully one day direct my own choir.



Top left: Yasmin performing in Coffee House. **Top middle:** Yazmin as a child playing her toy guitar **Bottom left:** Yasmin and Cassidy Clark performing at the 2025 Variety Show. **Bottom right:** Young Yazmin with her mom and surrounding mariachi band. **Photos courtesy of:** Yazmin Gonzales

LIGHT

Fine Art

Iris Yu

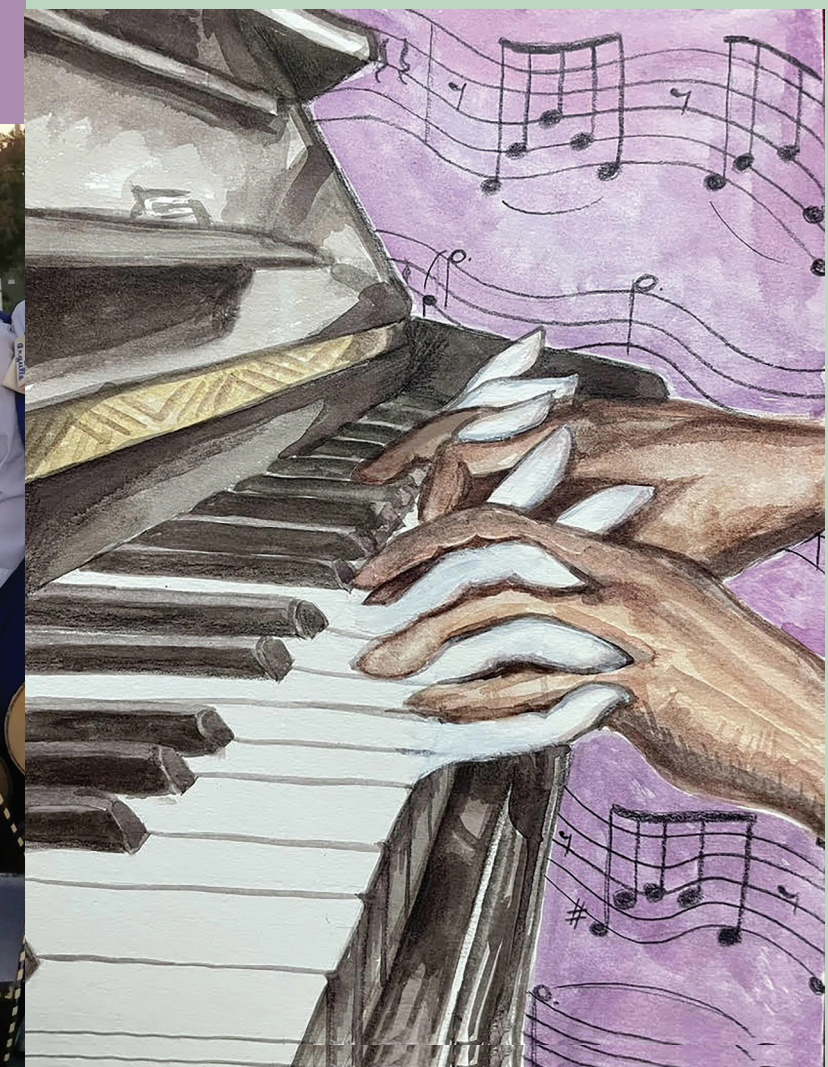


1. Tell us about a piece or moment that felt fun

One time for one of my favorite paintings I did a whole new process. I made it on cardboard instead of a canvas, I didn't sketch before I just went straight on and I was playing with it as I went. It was really fun.

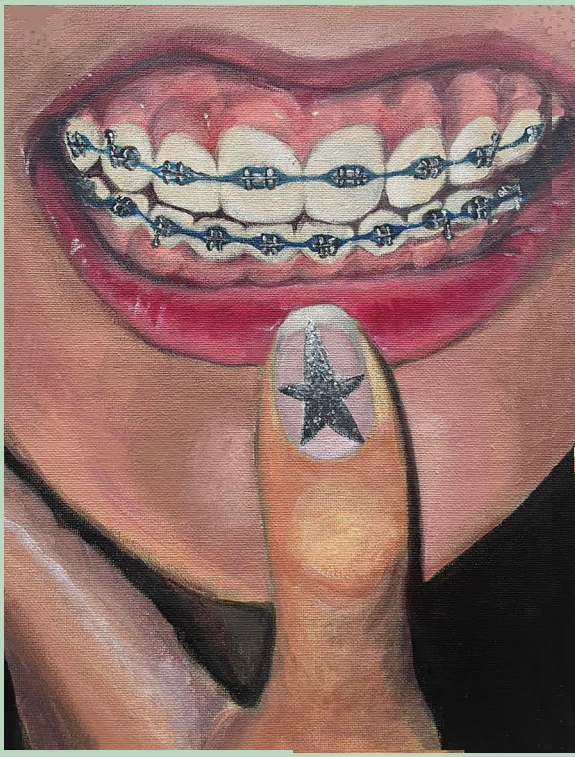
2. Who is your biggest artistic influence?

My biggest influence graduated two years ago. Her name is Elaine, and she currently attends UC Berkeley. She is doing art, and her art is so cool! I'm always so inspired by her. Right now she's trying to go into design which is what I'm trying to go into. She was like a mentor to me, she introduced me to art competitions, taught me how to skip up an art class, and she even gave me some art supplies. That was really helpful and I really look up to her a lot.



3. What influenced you to start creating art?

I remember doing art my whole life. When I was little, I would already be drawing and doodling. It's just something I've always loved.



4. Do you plan on pursuing art in the future?

In this economy if you're going to be an artist, you're not going to make any money unless you get really lucky. So I'm trying to pursue commercial design like; graphic design, illustration, UX, UI, and things like that. I think that's a way I can incorporate my creativity into my job because this is what I like to do.

Top right: "Degloving" acrylic paint and colored pencil on cardboard. **Middle right:** "Brace Yourself" acrylic paint. **Bottom left:** "Piano Man" watercolor and colored pencil on paper. **Photos by:** Iris Yu

Photography
Timothy Kim

1. Who or what influenced you to start creating?

As a kid I was always into drawing but was never influenced by anyone. For photography I was always into watching movies which started my interest in cinematic shots.



Photos by: Timothy Kim

2. What's your favorite piece you have ever made?

One of the ones I really like is of a man walking his dog at night. There's a park near my house with a bunch of street lamps, so I went at night hoping I'd find someone because there are always people walking their dogs, keeping in mind it would be a black and white photo with a strong light source shining down from above.



3. Who is your biggest artistic influence?

Photographers Ray K. Metzker, and Fan Ho are the ones that come to mind. They have very dynamic photos that I try replicating a lot. I'm cautious about where the light source is the strongest, which also shows me where the shadow is. I wait until the subject is in the ray of light, then I use the shadows to create a frame for that subject.

4. Do you plan to pursue photography in the future?

I want to major in design, I applied to some schools for industrial design and I applied to some as just design, to test the waters and choose a concentration.

For photography, I definitely will pursue it as a hobby. I'm open to making a career out of it, but still not completely sure.



Theater Ben Ruby



1. What's your favorite theatre production you have been a part of?

I think my favorite might have been *Chicago* just because that was probably the most high quality of a production we have done. We had a really good director and a great cast and it was just fun to be with an amazing director and amazing actors.

2. Who are your biggest artistic influences?

I got into theatre because both my mom and my grandma were both thespians and they loved drama but I'd say if anything my biggest influences are Lin Manuel Miranda because I saw Hamilton when I was pretty young and I loved it and I was like 'oh I want to be like him!'

3. What influenced you to start doing theatre?

Doing all those small plays in fourth grade was what made me realize I like acting, I like doing theatre, and so I did the musical theatre option in fifth grade. And I just kept doing it.

4. Do you plan to pursue acting in the future?

I plan on pursuing theatre as a hobby in college but not as a major or a job.



Top: from *Puffs (2025)*: from left to right: Ben Ruby, Avery Dawson-Sheldon, Kalia Balagtas, and Sisseline Lovejoy. **Middle:** from *Chicago (2026)*: Ben Ruby as Amos Hart. **Bottom:** from *A Midsummer Nights Dream (2024): from left to right:* Avery Dawson-Sheldon, Ben Ruby, Julia Daniels, and Hyacinth Taylor.
Photos by: Iris Yu and Kai Rankin

PROM STYLE SPOTLIGHT

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY: **JOSIE JOHNSON** AND **SUVI TROUTMAN**
PHOTOGRAPHED BY: **JOSIE JOHNSON** AND **GWEN PINGREE**

MATCHING DUO



There were many couples at prom with coordinating outfits, but Seniors Jill Winnacker and Alton Tangsirikusolwong stood out because of their floral pattern and execution. They made sure the tie, dress, corsage, and nails all matched.

Shockingly, they didn't have much time to plan their coordination. Winnacker says, "It was really last minute. We figured out [that we were going together] like three days before." Tangsirikusolwong bought the tie on Amazon the day before prom, and bought options so Winnacker could pick out which one matched best. In the end, their outfits perfectly matched, and they were a pair to remember at prom.

COLOR OF THE NIGHT

Light pink seemed to be the color of the night, with girl after girl showing up in a light pink dress. Juniors Mackenzie Shepherd, Freya Piroth, Lucy Fortier, and Anya Fox are pictured here in their pink dresses. The friends said they hadn't planned to match, but coincidentally, they all ended up loving pink dresses.

When asked why pink was so popular, Fox says, "It looks good on a lot of people and I feel like a lot of girls really like pink, and honestly a lot of guys like pink too." In fact, many guys wore pink ties to match their dates' pink dresses. Some people might be upset that there was so much matching at prom, but Fox says, "Actually, I was really happy that so many people wore pink. I thought that was so cute for photos."



COLORFUL SUIT



Senior Douglas Sims stood out among the crowd at prom with a one-of-a-kind purple suit. Sims says most suits are either navy blue, grey, or black, but he decided to go against expectations. He says that he thinks more guys should wear colorful suits to prom.

Sims says the color choice for his suit was influenced mostly by his sister. He says, "It was kinda a knock at my sister because her favorite color is purple and I said I would wear purple to one of my proms." By wearing a colorful purple suit and accessorizing with a necklace and watch, Sims was also able to express his personal style.

INTRICATE DRESS

Senior Estrella Clarke decided to make her senior prom dress one to remember. "I knew senior year I wanted a big, giant, pink dress," she says. When she found out the theme was Bridgerton, wearing a "princess dress" was perfect. She said that dancing was difficult in such a big dress, but says "I don't know when I'll get another chance to wear something like that so it was definitely worth it."

Clarke comments on social expectations for what to wear in high school, saying,"I had the mindset that I'm a senior, I'm not gonna be here in two months. I might as well enjoy it for me and not base it off what everyone else is gonna think."



CUSTOM CREATION



Senior Edie Leong has loved sewing since she took her first sewing class at seven years old. She has made bags, pants, tops, and now her prom dress. She says, "I've always loved to sew and I feel like I thought it would be really cool to make my own." Leong found a dress pattern on Etsy and started sewing around three weeks before prom. The whole process took her about 20 hours.

She says, "dyeing the fabric was difficult because I had to figure out what color I wanted and test different swatches and it took so long." After all her hard work, Leong says the dress turned out how she envisioned it.

A Trip to Remember

How Seniors Celebrate Their Final Year With Unforgettable Trips

WRITTEN BY: **BRYN MICHENFELDER** DESIGNED BY: **JUDAH KUPERS**

Planning a senior trip sounds simple: pick a date, a destination, then pack your bags and go.

In reality, there is so much more behind the scenes. From coordinating schedules, managing budgets and agreeing on activities everyone will actually enjoy, the process quickly becomes much more complicated. Senior trips offer students a chance to celebrate together before they go their seperate ways.

Senior Naomi Cook, is taking a trip to Spain, France and Italy alongside seniors Tenzing Gyamokhang and Jasper Hengl. She says, "I was in charge of booking where we are staying, so I had to do a lot of research and keep going back and comparing prices between hotels as well as bus, ferry, and plane tickets."

In addition to that, booking transportation is another major logistical factor. Senior Charlee Trenkle is going to Amsterdam with a group of friends. She says, "There's a lot of people going on the trip which makes figuring out transportation difficult."

Bigger groups also have to figure out how to accommodate people's schedules. Senior Jasper Graf is planning to go backpacking in Mexico with senior Pasha Azar, Itai Weinberg, Deron Lyons, and Adrian Mandizvidza. He says, "It's hard trying to get everyone's time to line up for the trip because we all have sports and tournaments we have to work around. We have to find an empty block when we are all free."

Another factor to consider is choosing between driving and flying. Some roads can reward you with stunning scenery including coastal views, rolling hills, or mountain passes. Other roads can be long and boring, stretching through miles of desert. Flying is quicker, but comes with a high price plus the hassle of dealing with airports and security checks.

> **"I'm excited to explore new places, especially with my friends."**
>
> Jeremy Banks

Senior Leda Kendall, who is going backpacking in Wind River, Wyoming, says, "I had to figure out if I was going to fly or drive to Wyoming because the drive is really boring but flights are expensive. I decided that I'm going to drive."

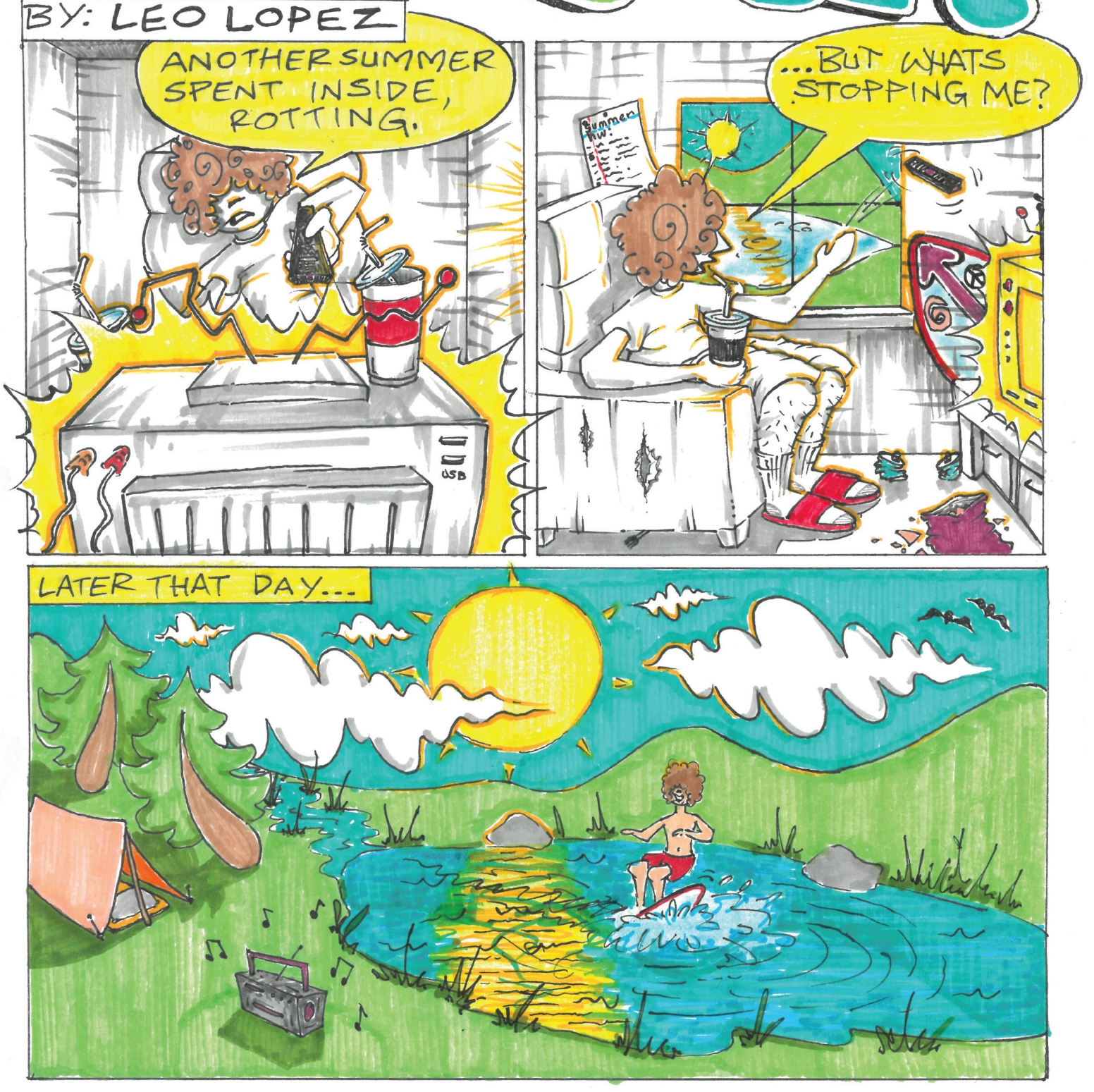
It's also important to think about the smaller essentials, like packing for weather, organizing travel documents, and preparing a backup plan in case something goes wrong. Kendall says, "When packing for backpacking you really have to pay attention to all the small details like how much food you're bringing and how much all of your stuff weighs. You even have to pack for the possibility of coming across bears."

Beyond thinking of transportation, creating an itinerary requires balancing different interests. Some friends may want to relax while others want to be active and explore, so planning your schedule ahead of time helps avoid conflict. Cook says, "We have all of our dates, transportation, locations, and plans all in shared google docs and groupchats to help us stay organized and prepared."

While it can feel stressful at times, all the effort pays off in the end. Senior Jeremy Banks, who is going to Spain and France with friends, says, "I'm excited to explore new places, especially with my friends."

SCHOOL'S OUT

BY: LEO LOPEZ



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