

“The only true wisdom is in  
knowing you know nothing”

- Socrates

Quote by: Caden Nam ('26)

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# The World Will Dance

*Mira Lakhani ('29)*

As On February 8, 2026, Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny (Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio) delivered a groundbreaking performance at the Super Bowl 60 Halftime Show. Surprise guests, cultural symbolism, political commentary, historic milestones, and intricate visual storytelling all came together in a performance that sparked conversation around the world.

It has been a monumental year for Bad Bunny. After becoming the first artist to win the Grammy Award for Album of the Year for a project entirely in Spanish earlier this month, he returned to the Super Bowl stage after appearing as a guest during Shakira's halftime show six years ago. This time, he headlined the biggest entertainment stage in the world, continuing to break records. An estimated 128.8 million viewers tuned in, making history as the first halftime show performed entirely in Spanish, while online engagement shattered NFL social media records.

Leading up to the performance, speculation about guest appearances flooded social media. Fans predicted artists like Cardi B, Rauw Alejandro, J Balvin, Daddy Yankee, and even Drake. Ultimately, Bad Bunny brought out musical inspirations Ricky Martin and Lady Gaga, along with appearances from Cardi B, Pedro Pascal, Karol G, Young Miko, Jessica Alba, and others, creating a powerful showcase of Latino voices across entertainment.

During a transition into "Monaco," Bad Bunny paused for a personal moment, telling the audience, "Mi nombre es Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio... y si hoy estoy aquí es porque nunca dejé de creer en mí. Tú también deberías creer en ti. Vales más de lo que piensas." The message reflected his journey from uploading music to SoundCloud while working at a grocery store to performing on one of the world's largest stages, emphasizing perseverance and self-belief regardless of background.

Throughout the show, he emphasized inclusion and the universal power of music. The promotional

campaign "The World Will Dance" highlighted people of different backgrounds dancing together, reinforcing the idea that language is not a barrier to cultural connection. His salsa performance with Lady Gaga further underscored that theme. The show closed with him declaring "God Bless America," followed by a visual display of flags from across the Americas, highlighting a broader definition of the word "America." A line from his Grammy speech appeared on screen: "The only thing more powerful than hate is love," before he honored Puerto Rico with the words "We are still here."

The performance also carried significant political weight. Bad Bunny has been outspoken about immigration issues and the treatment of Latinos in the United States, which led to mixed reactions surrounding his selection for such a prominent American cultural event. Discussions about patriotism and identity intensified, with critics questioning his place on the stage while supporters praised the representation and visibility. Despite the controversy, the performance resonated globally and sparked meaningful conversations about culture, belonging, and national identity.

Beyond the headlines, the show highlighted Bad Bunny's longstanding support for the LGBTQ+ community. He has frequently challenged traditional expectations of masculinity, expressed himself through gender-fluid fashion, and advocated for queer rights. His collaboration with Ricky Martin and Lady Gaga, both major queer icons, alongside queer backup dancers, reinforced themes of visibility and acceptance. Their performances together blended genres and cultural influences while celebrating shared heritage and identity.

The song choices throughout the show were intentional and deeply rooted in cultural history. Much of the setlist centered on reggaeton, a genre that emerged in Puerto Rico in the late 1980s from Panamanian and Jamaican influences and faced censorship due to its ties to marginalized communities. By bringing reggaeton to one of the largest stages in the world, Bad Bunny honored its origins while celebrating its global impact.



# Superbowl 60

## *Charlie Murray ('29)*

He opened with “Tití Me Preguntó,” one of his most recognizable hits, and included tributes to pioneers of the genre such as Tego Calderón, Don Omar, Héctor “El Father,” and Daddy Yankee. Other selections like “Yo Perreo Sola,” “NuevaYol,” and “El Apagón” highlighted themes of feminism, diaspora, and Puerto Rican resilience, while songs from *Debí Tirar Más Fotos* incorporated traditional Caribbean rhythms.

The performance’s visual storytelling was just as layered as the music. The opening transported viewers to a sugar plantation, with jíbaros cutting sugarcane to represent a history of labor exploitation. Native Caribbean symbols like the Flor de Maga and the endangered Sapo Concho appeared throughout the set.

As the performance progressed, Bad Bunny moved through scenes representing everyday Puerto Rican life: domino tables, food stands, nail salons, and neighborhood markets.

A casita transformed into a childhood living room, symbolizing personal growth and nostalgia. One transition featured a real wedding ceremony for fans, while another depicted El Barrio in New York, highlighting diaspora communities.

The set concluded with imagery referencing power outages in Puerto Rico, a reminder of ongoing infrastructure struggles. Even his wardrobe carried symbolism, including a jersey with the number 64 referencing the underreported death toll after Hurricane Maria. The recurring light blue Puerto Rican flag symbolized independence, resilience, and cultural pride.

Despite criticism and political tension surrounding the show, the performance stood as a celebration of culture and identity. It blended entertainment with history, storytelling, and advocacy, creating a moment that resonated with audiences far beyond the stadium.

In the end, the 2026 halftime show demonstrated how music can function as both celebration and commentary.

Bad Bunny used one of the world’s largest stages to share messages of love, resilience, and unity, leaving audiences with a performance that was as meaningful as it was unforgettable.

On Sunday, February 8th, over 137 million tuned in to watch Super Bowl LX, a face-off between the Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots. Two of the best fanbases, two identical 14–3 Records, and two great teams, ready to battle for the ultimate prize in football.



Just eleven years ago, the Seahawks and Patriots faced each other in Super Bowl XLIX in Arizona. Seattle’s defense, the Legion of Boom, was one of the greatest secondaries ever seen. Quarterback Russell Wilson and running back Marshawn Lynch led their offense to the one-yard line with just 20 seconds left in the game.

The Seahawks infamously chose to throw the ball instead of handing it off to Lynch, one of the greatest running backs of the era. Malcolm Butler intercepted the pass from Wilson and secured the game for the Patriots. This notorious play has haunted the Seahawks ever since.

This year, on their run to the Super Bowl, the Seahawks started the year off slowly with losses to the 49ers and the Buccaneers in their first five games. They had a string of dominant wins before losing to the Rams in Week 11. The Seahawks then had a seven-game winning streak, crushing teams like the Falcons and the Panthers, and even shutting out the Vikings. With their 14–3 record, the Seahawks won their division, fighting off the 49ers and Rams, who are some of the best teams in the league, and secured the NFC’s #1 overall seed.

During the playoffs, the Seahawks defeated both of their division rivals. In the Divisional Round, obliterating the San Francisco 49ers, they won with a score of 41–6. Before going on to just barely winning with a score of 31–27 in NFC Championship Game against the Los Angeles Rams in another instant classic. The win punched the Seahawks their first Superbowl ticket since the goal line interception.

Coming into Super Bowl LX, the 2026 Seahawks sought to avenge the infamous interception from eleven years before and beat the Patriots in the historic rematch. Coming into Super Bowl LX, the Seahawks were strong favorites. For the first time since the Legion of Boom, they had the strongest defense (now known as The Dark Side), allowing the fewest points per game (17.2), the fewest yards per carry (3.7 yd), and allowing the fewest points per possession (1.48). Their offense was led by quarterback Sam Darnold, a free agent signing from the previous summer, and Jaxon Smith-Njigba, a young and very talented wide receiver coming off a record breaking season and being the NFL AP Offensive Player of The Year.



The Super Bowl started well for Seattle, scoring a field goal on their opening drive. The Patriots couldn't handle Seattle's oppressive Dark Side defense, punting all five possessions in the first half. The Seahawks ended the half 9–0 after scoring three field goals. Following Bad Bunny's halftime show, the game was similar. Seattle's defense was impenetrable, forcing a strip-sack that was recovered and scored by Uchenna Nwosu. The Seahawks went on to score a touchdown through AJ Barner and another two field goals. They won the Super Bowl with a score of 29–13. Kenneth Walker was also named Super Bowl MVP for his 135 rushing yards.

When the Seahawks returned from the Super Bowl venue in San Francisco, an estimated one million people packed into downtown Seattle to celebrate the game in the Seahawks' victory parade.

The Seahawks aren't finished. During the parade, Leonard Williams said, "We're not done. We're coming back next year!" Their team should remain mostly intact, with few departures likely.



If injury doesn't come into play, Seattle will have a very strong team for next season as well and one of the best young minds in the game in that of Head Coach Mike Macdonald.

The Seahawks have redeemed their mistakes in Super Bowl XLIX and recreated a defensive force not seen since the Legion of Boom.



Cruising by their rivals and taking the greatest prize in football, the Seahawks have rewritten history. Now, they won't be the team remembered for losing the ball, inches away from NFL Immortality, but instead they'll be known for the dominant Super Bowl performance.

Hopefully we are witnessing the beginnings of a football dynasty in Seattle.

# Groundhogs (and the Day)

*Allyson Lin (‘28)*

Humankind’s reverence of the furry, the fuzzy, and the cute is a long-standing tradition, and Groundhog Day is just one of many events that celebrates creatures that are destined to become marketable plushies. Every February 2nd, a few select judges observe the emergence of groundhog, Mr. Punxsutawney Phil from his burrow in order to determine the remaining length of winter.

If the esteemed groundhog sees his shadow, he predicts six more weeks of winter; but if a shadow is absent, he predicts that spring will arrive early. Although the Pensilvanian Punxsutawney Phil is the most well-known groundhog, over a dozen states have their own little weather-predictors, such as General Beauregard Lee (Georgia) and Buckeye Chuck (Ohio).

By now, most have figured out that Punxsutawney Phil, otherwise known as the Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinaire (the official government title of the skittery rodent) has been employed longer than most of the readers of this article.

However, it’s lesser known that Groundhog Day first began as a tradition on February 2nd, 1886. On that day, a newspaper named the Punxsutawney Spirit first declared that a Groundhog Day would be celebrated in Philadelphia. Ever since, the same Punxsutawney Phil has reportedly been predicting the length of winter for over 140 years (although, groundhogs can only live 14 years...)! Even though Groundhog Day has stood as a tradition for centuries, the factor that truly propelled the holiday into the history books was the release of Columbia Picture’s “Groundhog Day”, starring Bill Murray.

Since “Groundhog Day” was released, over 30,000 people per year have been visiting Gobbler’s Knob, the location of Phil’s burrow. However, “Groundhog Day” isn’t the only celebrity appearance that Phil has made.

In 1986, Phil made the commute to DC to converse with Nixon, and in 1995, Phil appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

As with all popular subjects, Punxsutawney Phil’s fame couldn’t have grown without controversy. On January 27th, 2010, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), one of the most notorious animal rights organizations, began calling for Phil to be permanently retired and replaced with a robotic groundhog. On the 28th of January in 2020, these calls were strengthened as AI began advancing at a rapid pace, and PETA began calling for Phil to be replaced with an AI groundhog.



Although Phil’s shadow dictates that this winter will last for a few more weeks, this article will only last for a couple more sentences. Whether you see Groundhog Day as a fun American staple or as an overrated celebration, hopefully you learned a couple of fun facts from this article. Cheers for a few more weeks of winter!



# Lunar New Year 2026: New Year, New Animals, New Elements, and New Beginnings

*Everette Deng (‘27)*

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Lunar New Year (also known as Seollal in Korean, and Tết in Vietnamese), also known as the “Spring Festival”, represents a holiday marking the start a new year in the zodiac calendar and a period associated with energy, speed, and transformation. It is a major holiday across the East Asian subcontinent, featuring family gatherings, red envelopes, and lion dances. The astronomical patterns and appearance of the moon dictate the dates of celebration during this holiday, as the holiday is almost always scheduled to occur every year on the second full moon after the winter solstice typically taking place between January 17 and February 20th.

This year, Lunar New Year took place on February 17th. The celebrations typically last 16 days, culminating with the Lantern Festival which will take place on March 3.

The Lunar New Year also marks a new year within the Chinese Zodiac, a tradition followed by many other East Asian nations sharing the belief that the zodiac influences personal traits, luck, and fortune.

This zodiac calendar has a 12-year cycle with each year having an animal sign. Each 12-year cycle starts with a Year of the Rat and ends with the Year of the Pig. There are also five elements used in turn per 12-year cycle: wood, fire, earth, gold and water, together creating a 60-year cycle. Therefore, the Year of the Fire Horse is the first since 1966 making this upcoming year even more special to the East Asian community.

The first part of celebrations during this holiday includes family reunions. Lunar New Year involves one of the world’s largest human migrations as people return home—notably, China is expecting over two-million cross border trips during this holiday. Furthermore, homes and streets are decorated with red lanterns to symbolize luck and prosperity. Public events often feature traditional lion and dragon dances, firecrackers, and Asian music and dance performances. Symbolic, “lucky” foods are eaten, including dumplings, fish, and special desserts. And lastly, the elderly in the family pass around red envelopes filled with money to children.

The celebrations are also not just confined to Chinese culture—Lunar New Year is not just celebrated by China but is widely celebrated throughout a lot of East Asian countries like South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Taiwan, to name a few. In Vietnam, people focus on ancestor worship, cleaning, and visiting family.

Key traditions include eating bánh chưng (sticky rice cakes) and displaying peach blossoms in the north or yellow apricot blossoms in the south. And in South Korea, celebrations involve wearing hanbok (traditional clothing), performing deep bows to elders, eating tteokguk (rice cake soup), and playing games like yut nori.

Even if you aren’t from East Asia or of East Asian descent, keep in mind that Lunar New Year is not exclusive to those from the region or culture—anyone is welcome to take part in celebrating this holiday!

During these 16 days of celebration try to focus on coming together and doing fun things with your extended family, attend mesmerizing cultural performances, supporting local East Asian-owned businesses in the area, or even take the opportunity to try new cuisines from the other side of the world you don’t normally come across often!

And finally, don’t forget to wish you and everyone close to you good luck, peace, and prosperity for the new year!

Chúc mừng năm mới!

# Skiing - the Better Sport

*Samuel Chouaniere ('29)*

Skiers and snowboarders have long argued about which sport is better, but, if we're being real, skiing takes the dub. Skiing is much superior to snowboarding because skiers are better to be around, skiing treats the mountain better, and it gives you way more versatility.



Snowboarding might look cool in certain situations, but when you actually think about the entire mountain experience, skiing is simply the best option. Also, I want to respect the opinions of snowboarders and skiers equally, and I will concede that this is a slightly biased article.

First off, the kind of people they are on the mountain matters. Snowboarders are known to be the most annoying ones out there. Why do they always stop right in the middle of a run and just sit down? It makes no sense.

There could be people flying down the hill behind them, and they'll just plop down in the worst possible spot.

That causes crashes and makes the whole run more dangerous. Skiers, most of the time, are aware enough to pull over to the side and stay out of traffic. It's just basic mountain etiquette.

On top of that, a lot of snowboarders only care about "steez" and hitting jumps in the terrain park. That's

cool for some people, but the mountain is bigger than just the park.

Second, versatility. Skiing gives you way more options. Because your legs move independently, you have better balance and control. If one ski slips, you can recover quickly.

You can handle groomers, moguls, trees, powder, steep runs, and even the terrain park for some people. Snowboarders have both feet strapped onto one board, which limits movement and makes some terrain way harder. Flat sections are a perfect example. Skiers just glide right through without thinking about it.

Snowboarders either lose all their speed or must unstrap and walk. That fact alone shows which sport is more practical. Skiing adapts to the mountain, whereas snowboarding forces it to work for you.



Another pretty big point is how each sport affects the snow and the terrain. Snowboarding tends to scrape snow off of steeper runs, especially when they're side-slipping.

That leaves behind icy patches that nobody likes. Since their board is sideways, it pushes snow downhill rather than carving clean lines.

# Senioritis :(

*Nima Rahbar ('26)*

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In low snow conditions like this year, we need all the snow we can get, but snowboarders ruin the small amount of snow we do have. An example of this is the mountain I go to. It's completely snowboard-free, and even with some of the lowest snow in 30 years, it's still great skiing.

The mountain next to this one allows snowboarders and has had the same amount of snow. The runs over there are horrible right now.



Also, skiers carve more evenly and maintain better flow on the run. Even the constant sitting from snowboarders creates uneven snow piles and bumps that mess up the surface. Skiers stay moving a lot and disrupt the run less often.

At the end of the day, both sports require skill and practice, and both can be fun.

But skiing offers more control, more terrain options, a better overall experience on the mountain, and keeps the snow better.

It's more efficient, more versatile, and honestly more respectful to everyone else riding. Snowboarding might have its moments, especially in the park, but if you want the full mountain experience and the most freedom out there, skiing is clearly the best.



# Galentines

*Arushi Gupta ('28)*

Every February, just before Valentine's Day, is Galentine's Day. It falls on February 13th and the day celebrates female friendship. The word comes from the show *Parks and Recreation* in 2010. What started with Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler) gathering her friends for waffles and appreciation in a fictional brunch has become a cultural movement. Today, Galentines is celebrated all across the US as a tribute to platonic love. Unlike Valentine's Day, which is focused on romantic relationships, Galentine's focuses on friendships that are the emotional backbones of our lives. In a world that often prioritizes romantic milestones and moments, Galentines shifts the narrative to focus on friendships that are equally as worthy of celebration.

The best part of Galentine's Day is the flexibility. There are no strict rules or expectations. While the original celebration occurred over brunch, it is also now celebrated as craft parties, dinner outings and spa evenings. I personally hosted a dinner last year followed by a classic, *Twilight*. We had the best time and while the photos we took weren't necessarily very instagramable, it was the fact that we all came together to celebrate our friendship that was actually important. It was easy to set up as many desserts and symbols sold for Valentine's work equally well for Galentines. If you want to host your own, check out stores such as Trader Joe's and Costco for their Valentine's themed food such as heart pasta and remember that there are often recipes online for anything you might want to make.

Social media has also played a large role in the rise of Galentine's. Every year, aesthetic photos of matching pjs, themed parties, and inspiration fill Instagram and TikTok. While this can be a positive thing by encouraging more girls to participate, it is important to remember that the day is not about aesthetics, it's about sharing gratitude for those closest to you. This trend reflects a cultural shift toward recognizing the importance of female friendship for mental health, as studies show strong friendships can reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing. While it has already passed this year, let this be your reminder to tell your friends how grateful you are for them and maybe take it as a sign to host your own get together next year.

# My Pitch for The Pitt

*Julia Stewart ('28)*

I have never loved medical dramas. I never got into *Grey's Anatomy*, my interest in *ER* has been half-hearted at best, and I have always thought of myself as outside the target audience for drama-centered medical shows. I assumed that all these shows could be was unrealistic and focused exclusively on catastrophized plots that didn't appeal to me. This changed on January 9th, 2025.



Streaming on HBO Max, *The Pitt* is a medical procedural drama about a Pittsburgh Emergency Room. Each season consists of a 15-hour shift at the hospital, with each episode representing a single hour of that shift. This premise is not just a gimmick, meant to make it stand out at awards shows; it fosters a sense of urgency and realism in the characters' struggles and serves as the show's foundation.

There are no sweeping jump cuts to condense patients' storylines, and there are no moments to pause and narrate a trauma, so viewers are forced to experience characters' emotions and face the urgency and slog of a medical shift. Patients wait. Doctors wait. Nurses wait. Viewers are not granted the comfort of distance.

This is what makes *The Pitt* different: it is immersive, placing viewers into the experiences of medical professionals rather than dramatizing and sanitizing their professions for the rest of the world.

# Stepping Outside

## *Molly Copeland ('26)*

That is why I celebrate this show. Instead of cutting away from trauma or focusing on unrealistic, fleeting spectacles, *The Pitt* lingers. It allows silence in exam rooms. It shows paperwork. It depicts the bureaucracy, exhaustion, and repetition that define a shift as much as any life-or-death emergency. Creator Scott Gemmill and executive producers Noah Wyle and John Wells share this vision for a medical show that represents the lives of medical workers, and they have not strayed from it for a second. Each scene, each line, and each shot have been intentionally created by a team of writers and medical advisors to be as accurate and truthful as possible.

What surprised me most about the show was that it serves a higher purpose than just being a medical drama. Instead of being a great medical show, it is a great show. It explores universal themes through the lens of medicine and is an incredible representation of a post-Covid world. Unlike previous medical shows, which are largely centered in timeless apolitical bubbles, *The Pitt* documents the current issues facing the medical world: funding, staffing shortages, burnout, insurance, and even AI. As these forces converge, viewers like me are left with an incredible piece of art, unrestricted by genre and grounded in honesty.

*The Pitt* fundamentally reshaped my understanding of what a medical drama can accomplish. It proves that realism does not weaken storytelling; it deepens it. By resisting exaggeration and refusing sentimentality, the show uncovers something far more compelling than spectacle: truth. *The Pitt* is subtle, trusting its audience to sit with discomfort, to notice details, and to fully immerse in the world of the Pittsburgh ER.

This show is not only a showcase of artistic mastery and research, but it is also just an amazing watch. You get attached to the characters, you are struck with the insanity of real experiences of nurses and doctors, and you become a part of this emergency room. Above all, *The Pitt* is honest; it tells narratives truthfully, it represents medicine without sanitization, and it is truthfully human. It proves that realism is not the enemy of drama; it is, in fact, its most powerful form. So, get some popcorn (if you can stomach it!) and put away your second screen, because *The Pitt* is an entire world to live in and recover from every Thursday at 6 pm.

On February 2nd, during the last period of the day, students from 5th through 12th grade stepped out of their classrooms and into the cold February air together. Nothing about the schedule changed, but the atmosphere did. Students across all grades felt more unified than usual. Hand-painted posters in streaks of red and blue with thick black marker read “ICE Out,” “Families Belong Together,” “No More Raids,” and more. Some students chanted, while others held their signs above their heads with the support of friends and classmates. It was peaceful. It was organized. But mostly, it felt urgent.

The protest centered on U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a federal agency created in 2003 after the September 11 attacks as part of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE merged elements of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service with the U.S. Customs Service. Today, it has more than 20,000 employees and a budget topping \$9 billion, making it one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the country.

ICE operates through two main branches. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) focuses on crimes like human trafficking, narcotics smuggling, cybercrime, and financial fraud. The other branch: Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) handles immigration arrests, detention, and deportations inside the United States. While HSI’s work often happens behind the scenes, ERO’s operations have placed ICE at the center of national debate.

Since President Donald Trump returned to office in January 2025, the agency has expanded significantly. The administration reported more than 605,000 deportations between January and December 2025. It also claimed that nearly 1.9 million immigrants “voluntarily self-deported” after widespread public messaging campaigns. At one point, about 65,000 people were being held in ICE detention facilities nationwide. A recruitment campaign aiming to hire 10,000 additional officers was described by officials as a “wartime” effort.

The agency's use of force has also faced scrutiny. Under constitutional standards and Department of Homeland Security policy, deadly force may only be used when an officer reasonably believes there is an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.

In January 2026, two fatal shootings in Minneapolis intensified national attention, outrage, and confusion. On January 7th, 37-year-old Renée Nicole Good, a U.S. citizen, was shot and killed by an ICE agent while behind the wheel of her car. Federal officials said the agent acted in self-defense, while local officials disputed that claim, arguing she posed no immediate threat. Weeks later, on January 24th, intensive care nurse Alex Pretti was shot and killed during an encounter involving Border Patrol agents, part of Customs and Border Protection, which now frequently works alongside ICE in interior cities. Video footage recorded by witnesses later contradicted early federal statements about the incidents. (Editor's note: Some footage related to these events may be disturbing to viewers.) Both events sparked major protests across the country.

Operation Metro Surge, a large-scale federal deployment in Minnesota, brought roughly 2,000 ICE and partner agency officers into Minneapolis. Masked agents, unmarked vehicles, and public arrests heightened tensions. Critics described feeling as if neighborhoods were being militarized, while supporters argued the operation was necessary to enforce immigration law and restore order. National polling reflects a divided country. While roughly half of Americans support some level of deportation, late January surveys showed a majority believed ICE was being "too tough" or had gone "too far." At the 2026 Grammy Awards, several artists publicly criticized immigration enforcement during acceptance speeches, with one declaring "ICE out" on live television.

In Washington state, tensions have also risen. State leaders have emphasized constitutional protections and limited cooperation with certain federal immigration enforcement activities under the Keep Washington Working Act, a state law that restricts how local agencies can assist federal immigration authorities in many situations. The Northwest ICE Processing Center in Tacoma has faced backlash over detention conditions and overcrowding. Advocacy groups across the state continue to inform residents of their rights, including the right to remain silent and the right to

refuse entry without a judicial warrant.

ICE leadership maintains that the agency protects national security and public safety, pointing to investigations that have dismantled trafficking networks and seized illegal narcotics. They argue that enforcement targets individuals who have violated immigration law or committed crimes. The debate is not simply about whether immigration enforcement should exist, but about how it is carried out and who is affected.

The February 2nd walkout did not claim to solve the issue of immigration policy. Instead, it showed how national decisions ripple into local communities, both inside and outside of EPS. For some students, the protest was personal: family, friends, or fear of separation. For others, it was about civil liberties and the limits of federal power. For many, it was about safety and the belief that schools should feel secure for everyone.



Regardless of political perspective, ICE has become one of the most powerful and debated institutions in the country. Its policies affect hundreds of thousands of people each year, and as investigations continue and policies evolve, the conversation continues as well. On February 2nd, students made it clear that they are paying attention and want to be part of that conversation.

If you are feeling overwhelmed or impacted by any of the issues discussed, support is available. EPS offers counseling resources, and organizations across Washington state can help. Talking to a counselor, teacher, friend, or trusted adult can make a difference, and students can share their perspectives by submitting articles to the Eagle Eye.

# Hydration Hierarchy: Ranking the Water at Eastside Prep

*Vera Li ('29)*

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Humans can survive weeks without food, but only three days without water. Water is a fundamental part of Eastside Prep, from the plumbing to the humidity in the air to the fuel that powers our students through the day. Whether you're recovering from a soul-crushing biology test or cleansing your palate after scarfing down a dense chocolate bundt cake, that sip of cool, crisp fountain water is the ultimate reset for washing away academic and lunchtime despair. Yet even as one of the most basic compounds in the world, not all water is created equal. So today, I'm going to lay out the definitive guide to the best and worst water at Eastside Prep.

What ultimately inspired this article is my personal vendetta against the TMAC second-floor water. Unfortunately, the fountain falls short in both its mechanics and taste. The stream is way too slow-moving and stubby, failing to reach the intended height or velocity for a refreshing sip. It's also lukewarm, the worst of both worlds; definitely not the cool, crisp sensation I was expecting from typical fountain water, but I'd also take actual warm water over it any day.

To make matters worse, it has this peculiar after-taste, almost salty-sweet in nature. As one student succinctly puts it: "ts water absolutely buns." Based on my and others' experience, the TMAC second-floor water is easily the worst water at EPS. It'll work if you're desperate, but I strongly suggest taking the extra flight of stairs to use the gym or TMAC first-floor fountains instead. However, in a shocking turn of events, the quality of the TMAC

second-floor water has significantly improved over the past few days. I suppose this aligns with EPS's reflective approach to learning; even the water has room for improvement.

Moving on to the highlights: having been at this school since fifth grade, I can confidently say that the best water is on the LPC second floor. Maybe I'm biased because the LPC second floor has a lot of hidden gems, like the low-traffic bathrooms, the warm-toned library, and the peaceful nook right next to the faculty collab room (plus the occasional free candy in the teachers' offices). But the true crown jewel is the small black water machine beside the women's bathroom. One student claims that it's their "favorite water in the whole school" and that they appreciate the "customizability" and "taste" of it. After having this water multiple times, I agree: it's great. But I think what makes it truly superior over the years is the paper cones you drink it in. The best description I can give is that it gives the water a subtly saccharine taste, as if the cups were speckled with tiny sugar crystals.

And continuing with that point about customizability, the machine even offers various temperature settings: cold, cool, and "hot" (which is never actually hot, but I also rarely use it). So, by a landslide, the small black water machine has the best water here.



Next up is another strong contender: hot water, specifically the dispenser in the LPC cafe. It's your classic hot water that does the job for instant ramen, tea, or an unsettling water-based hot cocoa, and of course, for drinking on its own, which many claim has digestion benefits over cold water. The hot water is simply a staple, and I appreciate how accessible it is. So, considering its versatility and convenient location in the LPC cafe, it takes its place alongside the other LPC first-floor fountain, hidden behind the little wall flap beside the high tables and chairs. The best fountain water at EPS for sure: it's ice-cold, has a steep arch, and fewer people go there, meaning you can have some peace and quiet while drinking your water. Overall, the LPC first-floor water combined takes second place.

Finally, TALI water. It's pretty good: cold, steady stream, solid height. But I don't love the placement. It sits right in the middle of the bridging hallway of each TALI floor, where junior and senior friend groups tend to congregate, so it's just not the most peaceful place to drink from. Because of the overall experience, I'm giving it third place.



# The Many Ways We Say I Care

*Audrey Zhang ('29)*

Valentine's Day, or Galentine's Day if you prefer, is a time to express love and care for someone special in your life. One important part of the Valentine's tradition is giving a gift. From flowers to expensive jewelry, there are many different options people might choose to give.

One classic gift is flowers, usually red roses. Red symbolizes strong, deep love, making it a safe yet beautiful choice. Other colors can have meanings too. Hot pink symbolizes appreciation, light pink indicates gentleness, and yellow represents friendship. White could mean purity and new beginnings, though some cultures associate it with death, and it is therefore a riskier flower color for Valentine's Day.

Another classic gift is chocolate. These warm, creamy, bite-sized treats offer sweet moment that can be shared with someone special. Some people complain that chocolates seem like a last-minute gift, something grabbed from the back of a pantry. Still, they can show that the giver pays attention to details and knows what flavors their person enjoys. Although both flowers and candies are thoughtful gifts for Valentine's Day, some people prefer long lasting gifts, such as jewelry. These accessories made of precious metals serves as an indicator of everlasting care and "forever-love." Nevertheless, this article is written for a school of teenagers, and most of us are not about to spend a thousand dollars on a diamond necklace for someone. Therefore, if you did receive an expensive piece of jewelry for Valentine's Day, the person who gave it to you is either stinking rich or has gone through great lengths to get you that gift, so be grateful!

Although gifts like these are popular, some people find hand-made gifts more meaningful. Hand-made gifts show real dedication and patience, while also serving as custom-made items that show deep under-

-standing of their special someone's personality and life.

In the end, there are many Valentine's gifts someone might choose to give, and this article isn't meant to be a strict rulebook. Feel free to read it however you'd like: a light reflection on your own Valentine's Day, inspiration for next year, or simply something fun to read.

If you're still in the Valentine's mood, here's a bonus crochet pattern for a rose:

- 92x chain stitches.
- While working on the chain, skip two stitches, then double crochet onto stitch #90. Double crochet down the rest of the chain.
- Now, we'll turn back around and work on the double crochets we just did to make the petals:
- Skip two stitches.
- On the third, do 10 treble crochets.
- Afterwards, skip three stitches and slip stitch into the fourth stitch.
- Begin the next petal from there. Continue all the way to the end.
- At the end, finish off the crocheting part (cut the yarn, tie some knots, whatever you usually do).
- Roll the petal chain up, then sew the bottom together. (Sorry, there is sewing).
- Finish!



# Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr

*Aliya Hassan ('30)*

Ramadan Mubarak!

The month of Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It is a special month welcomed by the greeting Ramadan Mubarak (rama-dhan moo-baa-rak), which means "blessed Ramadan." During this month, Muslims fast each day from dawn till dusk. Before the sun rises, they eat a meal called Suhoor (suh-hoor), also known as Sehri (seh-ree). They abstain from food and drink (including water!) all day. When the sun sets, they break their fast with a meal called Iftar (if-taar), usually beginning with water and a sweet date, followed by fruit and a hearty meal.

Ramadan is a time of reflection and generosity. A big part of Ramadan is about charity and caring for communities near and far. Mosques host Iftar meals for those in need. Ramadan brings people together through frequent Iftar gatherings with friends, family, and the wider community.

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr (eed ul-fit-ter), the "Festival of the Breaking of the Fast" (often just called Eid). Eid day starts with community prayers, followed by the greeting Eid Mubarak (eed moo-baa-rak), meaning "blessed Eid." Eid lasts three days (or more!). People celebrate throughout the holiday with special food, clothing, and gatherings with family and friends. It is a time of joy, happiness, and connection with the community. Eidi (ee-dee), which can be either money or gifts, is given to children. Charitable donations (zakat) are distributed among those in need in the community.

In our EPS community, people celebrate Ramadan and Eid in their own unique ways. When interviewed, Ismael Rashid '32 said that fasting is "hard and challenging," but the Iftar celebrations are great. Myra Dar '30 said that there is a lot of "diverse culture" during Eid. She named several of her favorite dishes during the "elaborate, big parties," which in-

-clude qeema pasta, dehi bhalla, biryani, and savvaiyaan. Aamir Mukadam '32 mentioned that he really enjoys "sitting with [his] friends" during Iftar and Eid. He said that his "mother makes gulab jaman," which is an extremely delicious, sweet dessert. Several families celebrate Chaand Raat (directly translating to "moon night"), the night before Eid, by gathering with family and friends and putting mehndi (henna) on their hands. I personally love the community, family, and—of course—food during Eid. Some of my favorite dishes are my mother's savvaiyaan and my grandmother's chicken pullao. Eid is one of my favorite times of the year.

This year, Ramadan started on the eve of February 17, and Eid al-Fitr is expected to be on March 20 (depending on the sighting of the new crescent moon).

To those who celebrate, have a wonderful rest of your Ramadan and, in advance, Eid Mubarak!

# Book Reviews and Recommendations

## *Ananya Raman ('30)*

As one of the dullest months of the year, coming right after some of the most widely celebrated holidays and peak cozy winter vibes, February is a time when you just want to stay inside and do nothing. Luckily, there are plenty of ways to stay entertained at home, including picking up a good book. Here are a few recommendations.

Children of the Fox by Kevin Sands is one of the best fantasy books I have ever read and still one of my favorites. The first book in the Thieves of Shadow trilogy, it's perfect for anyone who loves suspense, heists, and rich fantasy worlds. The story follows five kids, ages 13–16, who must carry out a dangerous heist for an eccentric man named Mr. Solomon. Their world is very different from ours, filled with magic users, spirits (an important theme), and even two moons. The main character, Callan, is an orphan raised by one of the greatest thieves of his time before being recruited for this high-stakes mission. His team includes an acrobat, a deadly knife thrower, a sleight-of-hand magi-

cian, and a street-smart kid with gang connections. In their world, magic users are called weavers, led by the powerful High Weaver, second only to the King. The crew's goal is to steal the Dragon's Eye, one of the High Weaver's most prized possessions, an artifact with a mysterious past.

Spirits play a major role in the story. Thieves follow the spirit of the fox, Shuna, while weavers follow the spirit of the bear, Artha. Because these spirits are enemies, thieves and weavers are constantly at odds, making the heist even more dangerous.

This book is packed with action, suspense, and excellent world-building that makes it hard to put down. Kevin Sands is also the author of The Blackthorn Key series, another great set of mysteries.

Another great pick is The Swifts by Beth Lincoln, a mystery with plenty of humor mixed in. The story is set in modern-day Britain inside the Swift family's closed-off mansion.

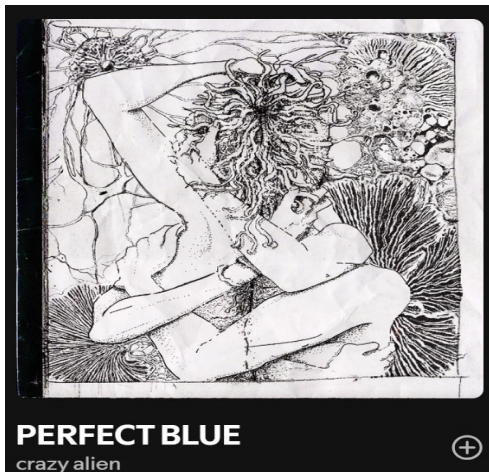
The Swifts have a unique tradition: when a child is born, their parents open a dictionary to a random page and choose a word as their name, which is supposed to define them for life. The main character is named Shenanigan, so her family constantly assumes she's up to no good. The story is both heartwarming and funny, with strong themes about finding your own identity while others try to define it for you.

The plot takes place during a large family reunion at their old house, where the family matriarch is suddenly killed. It's up to Shenanigan, her sisters, and a few other relatives to figure out who did it. The book is part of a series, with the second just as fun as the first and more on the way.

Whether you're in the mood for a high-stakes fantasy heist or a cozy mystery with humor, both of these books are great ways to make a quiet February a little more exciting. Staying inside doesn't have to be boring when you have a story that pulls you in, and these are definitely the kinds of books that make the time fly by.

# Music of the Month

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**PERFECT BLUE**  
crazy alien

*Ella Wang ('26)*



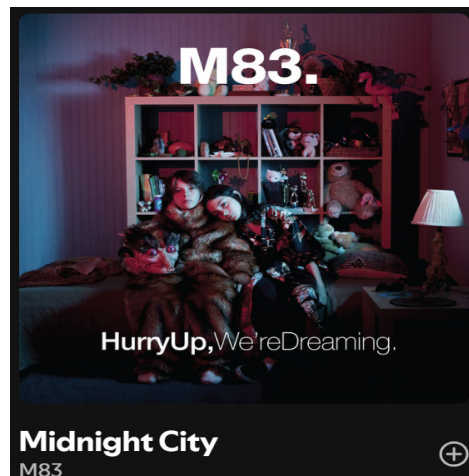
**Plateau**  
Meat Puppets

*Cass Megiddo ('26)*



**Garden Shed (feat. Estelle)**  
Tyler, The Creator, Estelle

*Alex Simone ('26)*



**Midnight City**  
M83

*Nima Rahbar ('26)*

# Mini Word Search: February Buzzwords

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V A L E N T I N E S  
Q V B P R W I L N Y  
J I H H O C L T N Q  
M C D C R O C H E T  
S E A H A W K S E K  
V I W Q P M D K V P  
S E N I O R S I E G  
B L Y X A N C I M W  
P I T T H K N N Q Q  
I F W A K A X G H O

Valentines  
crochet

seahawks  
skiing

seniors  
ice

pitt

