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Background Image: The Grade 9 class participates in a tug-o-war competition at the beginning-of-year spirit assembly.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

COVID-19 AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Anne Thompson Staff Writer

April 22nd, 2020 marked the fiftieth celebrated Earth Day in the history of humankind. The celebration draws its origins all the way back to 1970, but numerous events in the years leading up to the first Earth Day prompted its creation. All around the world, citizens were beginning to take note of the smog and haze, which covered their once crystal clear skies, being pumped out of automobiles and transportation vehicles, and their homeland covered in trash and filth. American author Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, first published in 1962, raised awareness for the impact of humanity on the wellbeing of all wildlife and organisms.



Smog in Los Angeles, October 1973. Source: LA Times

THE WEIGHT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Fifty years later, the air carries a sort of heaviness that extends far beyond that of our hazy, polluted atmosphere. Humanity bears the burden of sickness and grief, and an isolation that halters the celebrations and protests planned for Earth Day. Countless students and citizens from around the globe had been planning to strike in solidarity with one another, demanding that our world leaders take tangible action to hinder the current climate crisis. Disadvantaged communities around the world are continuing to feel the worsening effects of climate change, even as we all take shelter inside of our homes. In CBS News coverage of the first Earth Day in 1970, the host described the message of protesters concisely: "We must act, or die." Time has not changed the meaning of those simple words; humanity must take progressive action, or suffer dire consequences. Climate change remains at the forefront of crises, and will not be fixed by the lack of travel and human activity during the age of COVID-19.

IDEOLOGICAL EXTREMES

There are some who dare to say that humanity is the "true virus," but this mindset is completely dangerous and plays into principles of ecofascism that predate our current health crisis.

Ecofacism is the harmful union between environmentalism and ultra-conservative, neo-Nazi ideals. Ecofacists use the warming climate as an excuse to target minorities and underprivileged groups who do not even contribute to climate change in a significant way. Some extreme ecofacists even hope for genocide of certain groups of people. Many individuals, some not even aware of their own contribution to these ideas, are claiming that COVID-19 is a beneficial force on behalf of our current reduction of carbon emissions. The absolute absurdity of this logic is clear; a large number of human deaths are not going to stop global warming, and this tragedy is simply a horrible thing which to attach positive meaning. COVID-19 was not sent from the depths of the Earth to punish us for global warming.

A WAKE-UP CALL

As the novel coronavirus forces us all to spend nearly all of our time within the confines of our own homes, many individuals have begun turning to the outdoors in order to find solace and peace of mind. Walks, runs, and bike rides have become part of the daily rituals of citizens everywhere. Perhaps this serves as an awakening to many of the unbreakable union between humanity and the planet we call home. It is indescribably important to hold in mind that however dark things may seem, there is hope for our future. People will fight for the protection of Earth and our bond to it. Technologies that have the ability to halt global warming already exist, and are continually becoming more affordable and accessible. This time of isolation gives the more fortunate space for reflection, and coming out of our health crisis, the world is going to be more ready to advocate for change than ever.

AN IMPACT FELT AROUND THE WORLD

Jessenia Lopez Staff Writer

LEARNING ABOUT AN ISSUE

During the past three years, the fourth grade classes ('25 through '27) at Sage Ridge have been fundraising money to build a well in South Sudan. The students read *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park -- a story about how some people may have to travel at two hours or more to a pond in order to get water. After reading the book, they became motivated to do something to help the people in Sudan have a more viable way of accessing water for everyday necessities. Under the guidance of Mrs. Oksness, the students started the journey of fundraising money to help build a well in South Sudan.

RAISING MONEY

In order to raise money, the students decided that they would walk around the school with a gallon of water and they had people pledge to give them money after every lap they completed. Student Emma Sapp ('26) remembers that with every lap the gallon of water got heavier and heavier and she said "I cannot imagine what it would be [like] to do something like that everyday" but she did feel a sense of accomplishment after it all ended. Sophia Soran ('25) remembers walking around the school with her friend while raising money for a good cause and she said that it "was my favorite memory during my Sage Ridge experience." Both students feel a sense of accomplishment knowing that what they did, even though it seems like a small gesture, helped a lot people have easier access to clean water.

DIGGING A WELL

After three years of fundraising, the well was dug in the village of Rum-mouth in Apuk North County, Gogrial State, South Sudan on January 31, 2020. Water for South Sudan sent a letter to SRS which read, "We hope you are as inspired by this as we are. Thanks to you, a village in South Sudan now has access to clean water. Without water, life cannot sustain itself. Thank you for watering the seeds of change in South Sudan. Your generosity will provide countless opportunities for communities in South Sudan!" Students here at Sage Ridge are very dedicated in helping other communities even when they are far from our campus. Send congratulations to our fourth grade classes, who have worked hard to provide water to those who need it. This charitable spirit exemplifies the Sage Ridge pillars perfectly, and these students have truly made the community proud.

Great job, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders!



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SRS Music Program Recognized

Ethan Vicks Staff Writer

This year, Sage Ridge School won the Support Music Merit Award because of its commitment to music education. The NAMM Foundation rewards individual schools with the award if the school provides music education to every student. The Music teacher at Sage Ridge this year is Dominic Vitale.

In order for a school to receive the award, it must meet a number of qualifications. These qualifications include the amount of funding the music program receives, the graduation requirements for music, music class participation, amount of instruction time, amount and quality of the facilities, and support for the music making programs. Sage Ridge had to give many detailed answers regarding the qualifications, and all of the answers given were verified by school officials. The responses Sage Ridge gave were reviewed and approved by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

"Music education is a big part of the unique student experience at Sage Ridge. Mr. Vitale's lessons inspire creativity and collaboration. We study music across many eras and genres, learning cultural literacy while having a great time. Music at Sage Ridge has been an amazing experience." -Robert Schader ('25)

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,400 members around the world. The goal of NAMM is to

strengthen the music products industry and promote the pleasures and benefits of making music. They dream of a world where every single child has a passion for learning music.

Dominic Vitale has been teaching music at Sage Ridge for one year. He has loved music his whole life, which is why he enjoys teaching kids how to both appreciate and make music themselves. The curriculum Mr. Vitale put in from Grade 3 to Grade 8 is designed to first build knowledge in the early years, and then develop and apply that knowledge through music making on contemporary instruments in middle school. Mr. Vitale believes that it is impossible to learn every single aspect of music, so he bases what he teaches his students on both his own knowledge and the national standards for music. Mr. Vitale has done an excellent job running the music program and teaching students music.

"Music at Sage Ridge School is special because of the support the arts receive from the administration and the board of the school. Every student that attends Sage Ridge School from grades 3-7 is expected to have a music course, and each of these courses lasts for a quarter; this schedule is fairly rare, which allows students at Sage Ridge School to receive an arts education that surpasses that of most other students in the country." -- Mr. Dominic Vitale

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: SIENA HALL RECOGNIZED FOR STEM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In early April of this year, senior Siena Hall was awarded a Society of Women Engineers (Sierra Nevada Section) Certificate of Achievement for her work in STEM. In the Sierra Nevada section of the Society of Women Engineers, members promote engineering awareness and advancement of math and science education locally. The Society of Women Engineers is one of the largest advocates for women in STEM around the world, and receiving this award is a great honor.

Siena is a great representative of academic success within our school, as she is a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. However, she really is a star when it comes to STEM. Siena has received multiple STEM awards within Sage Ridge, and we are very proud of her work. She plans to continue using the skills that she has developed in STEM throughout her future at the Naval Academy. Siena says, "I am very excited about all of the opportunities I will have in the future because of STEM. The Naval Academy curriculum is very STEM-focused and its engineering programs are fantastic so I am hoping to pursue an engineering major there." Congratulations, Siena! This award is a great representation of your hard work at Sage Ridge, and we can't wait to see what you do next in your ventures at the Naval Academy!



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ENTERTAINMENT

ASK SPIKE

Dear Spike,

Why does everybody believe that just because we are all quarantined, we do not still have busy schedules?
-Busy Bug

Hey Busy Bug,

Great question! It is hard to forget that we have schedules and busy lives during a quarantine. While you should be home (I'm scorpion distancing) during this time, it does not always mean that we have tons of free time. A lot of times, people are not thinking about what other people are doing; working and going to school from home is hard on everyone! It's important to remember to work on time management. If you're having some serious overload problems be sure to talk to your parents or teachers. It is a lot of stress to work from home and it is easy to get distracted when you need to spend time on other things. Just remember to breathe and reach out to people if you need help!

Dear Spike, What are you doing during Scorpion School? - Lemonade

Hey Lemonade,

I feel honored to be asked! Like all of you, I am social distancing and learning about new things from my home! This isn't really new for me as scorpions are not very social creatures, but not having the option to see anyone is bringing me down a little. However, to keep myself and others safe, I've been staying in my home. I've been doing a lot of home improvement (my rock is now very clean and spacious), as well as getting plenty to eat. I've been keeping in touch with all my friends and the staff at Sage Ridge to beat the boredom, and of course, I've been answering all your lovely questions! Maybe I'll write a novel about my life, who knows!



Dear Spike,

As we near the end of this school year, many of my friends, including the best friend I've ever had, are moving to other schools for next year. With social distancing in the front of everybody's mind, I haven't seen my best friend in person in 3 weeks and will likely not see them for another 3-4. Then, suddenly the end arrives and it is time to say 'goodbye.' How does one get through the pain of having to say goodbye to someone they love?

- Spoon

Hey Spoon,

I am really sorry to hear about your dilemma. You're not alone with this problem as many of us are missing family and friends dearly. Obviously I know it is not the same, but you have access to so much technology to keep in touch with your friends who are leaving to other schools. You won't have to say goodbye forever, even though I know that texting and calling is simply not the same. My best suggestion to you is to just hold on. This will end, and it may be hard until then, but you and your friends will be reunited before you know it! Hope that helps, stick in there!

Dear Spike,

Sometimes I want to ask more questions but I can't really ask them privately or without taking time away from someone else who might have a question. What should I do?

- Fish Food

Hey Fish Food,

I am not 100% sure what you're talking about but I'm going to assume that it is school related. You should never feel embarrassed to ask more questions and never feel like you are taking time from someone! If you have a question, chances are that you are not the only person with that question and someone else just might be too shy to ask. If you are still hesitant though and don't get a chance to ask privately, then email your teacher! I strongly suggest that you just ask whatever questions you have in person (or over Zoom if we are in quarantine) though, as the responses may be more helpful with someone actually talking to you.



A throwback to the beginning of the year, when Spike joined the Sting Squad's dance routine!



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SAGE RIDGE SENIORS



Elena Albregts University of California, Santa Barbara



Sophie Bell Lewis & Clark College



Siena Hall United States Naval Academy



Jessenia Lopez Garcia Truckee Meadows Community College



Sophia Moreno Truckee Meadows Community College



Varun Pandit University of Nevada, Reno (Honors Program)



Luxi Sun Gap Year



Julian Vlad Chapman University

Class of 2020



Colin Klein Boston College



Maddy Lewis
Southern Methodist University



Catlin Liu University of California, San Diego



Cade Rombardo University of Portland



Aryan Shukla University of Southern California



Max Sierzenski University of Delaware (Honors Program)

NARRATIVE: APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Gesche Waffle (Anonymous)
Submission

Disclaimer: This is one person's perspective on the uncertainties of the college application process. Note that every student has a different experience, and that you should not expect your own process to be similar.

My friend Mel McGinnis was talking. The four of us were sitting around a Starbucks table, with our books laying on the table (although we were hardly studying) next to coffee. Sunlight filled the room from the big windows behind us. There were four of us: Mel, Terri, Laura, and I. We were all seniors in high school, but we were all destined for vastly different paths.

Somehow, we started talking about college. Mel believed college was nothing less than a place to sit in class and eventually obtain a diploma. He said he'd rather spend four years of his life in a place that made him happy -- that's what college meant for him.

Terri said she had loved her dream school so much that she felt she would not be happy anywhere else. She said, "Before I applied, my email was always bombarded by invitations, saying 'come to me, come to me.' But afterwards, they told me that I just wasn't good enough. They dragged my heart around with a waitlist, made me consider the illusive 'what if's,' while being scared of committing to so many emotions for nothing. I sometimes feel so incompetent." Terri looked around the table.

"Why do you want to go there anyways?" Mel asked.

"At least they gave me a chance. And that's approval." Terri said, "I liked everything I saw. During the visit, on the website, my friends who go there... I was so sure it was the one."

"But things can be different from your expectations." Laura said, "all the college websites look kind of the same to me. Columbia's Core, USC's General Ed, and UChicago's Core are all a similar concept. Almost every school has a study-abroad program to similar places... China, Germany, and what have you..."

"But it's all nuanced!" Terri said.

"Hey... the earth is only so big." I weakly joked.

"They might be somewhat different, but you're never going to know what you'll get until you are actually there anyways," Laura said. "That's why I sometimes feel silly when I write a 'Why us?' essay. It's like writing a blank check from an account that's not yet yours. But still... colleges expect something different, something individual, from each person, but after reading 999,999 other essays, it's impossible to be original."

"I like writing those essays. Sometimes an essay writes itself, but others are uncomfortably awkward to even sit through while proofreading. I guess that's how you define a fit school."

"I didn't get in with the essay that wrote itself, by the way." Terri added.

"Nick, where do you want to go?" Laura asked.

"I don't know," I said. "East coast or west coast. Or a gap year. I could head right on out to the east, NYU, or something like that."

"What does that mean?" Laura said.

"It means what I said," I said. "I haven't really thought it through too much. That's all it means."

It was true. Before I applied, I thought about where I had a chance, and when I applied, I came up with something to explain the choices I made for myself. Or, rather, to explain the choices that were forced onto me by some kind of power.

"I might not do pre-law after all," Laura said, "But lately I haven't been so sure about anything. I don't think I've ever been so lost in my life. What do you guys want to do after college?"

"I mean..." Terri said.

But Terri just sat there. She did not end up finishing her sentence.

I realized that I also had little clue what I wanted to do. People around me go to school then college as naturally as eating and sleeping. A lot of my friends wanted to become lawyers and doctors, so I started to want that too. But this time--unlike when I answered that I wanted to be a scientist when I was four--my words had weight.

And Terri still never finished her sentence, until Mel turned his cup over. He spilled the unmelted ice cubes out onto a napkin.

"Coffee's gone." Mel said.

Terri said, "Now what?"

QUARANTINE ACTIVITY IDEAS

Josh Stanko Staff Writer

Even though there is a global pandemic erupting and expanding at a rapid rate, and people are required to stay in their homes, families want to be outside and get back to their normal lives. Many people are starting to get bored, and think they are running out of things to do. But there are numerous activities to do during the pandemic to keep you productive and make yourself feel better.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

You can ride your bike with your family, although you can't interact with anyone, and stay six feet apart at all times. You can go many places on a bike: to the surrounding terrain and destinations that we have in Reno, in and around the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and, of course, Lake Tahoe.

Another thing that you can do is mow the lawn. Mowing your

lawn is beneficial for a few reasons: you get Vitamin D from being outside in the sun and you get a workout for your legs!

Or, while you're stuck at home, you can play basketball. If you are stuck inside, go outside, get exercise and play any sport you have the room and equipment for. It's good to go outside and get oxygen flowing through your lungs. Get the blood pumping by playing some hoops against your family!



Playing Basketball at home!



There's plenty of things to do around home!

Something more productive that you can do during quarantine is some chores that help you take care of yourself, such as making your bed, waking up early, cleaning yourself with a cold shower to wake you up, making yourself something to eat, brushing your teeth, and getting ready for the day. Those chores are not only essential tasks, but they also will inspire you to keep moving forward because you are completing tasks that inspire a sense of achievement. For your family, you can clean your room and other's rooms, you can vacuum the

floors, and fold the laundry. You can do the dishes, unload the dishwasher. and even make yourself and your family dinner. This may even be a good opportunity to learn how to cook! It feels amazing to make something for your family, and you will likely feel inspired to do more. Plus, then you'll be able to make sure that your surroundings in your at-home environment are nice

and tidy for as long as you need! Staying healthy is still very important, whether that happens through sports or through physical work around the house.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW!

You can delve into a new activity, such as photography. It's easy--just start by taking pictures of things! It doesn't really matter what you take pictures of; you can take a picture of your dog or a pine tree with all of its green needles. You can literally take a picture of anything in your backyard or in your house. You can also create a collage of photos of different parts of Reno, or some cinematic shots.

VIDEO GAMES

You can also play video games. There are so many things that you can do that can keep yourself busy and help to make quarantine more bearable by doing something enjoyable. You can do everything outside or inside that will keep you busy and determined to do that certain activity. And fear not. We will get through this as a community after following the requirements to help halt the pandemic.



STAYING HOME: A TEENAGER'S PERSPECTIVE

Eric Albregts Staff Writer

SOCIAL INTERACTION

The world is in a tough place right now, and any sense of normalcy has vanished, especially for teenagers. Most teenagers living in today's society are focused on being social and participating in typical teenage shenanigans. After social distancing, however, it has become pretty hard to continue to be social.

For example, in my life, ski season has ended, so I can't ski with friends anymore. Also, all of the trampoline parks have closed. The only way to stay connected with friends is through social media, video games, or FaceTime (parents, this is why you should allow your kids to play a little more video games than normal!).

For most teens, school is one of the only ways to stay connected with the people in their lives. At school, they can talk face to face with friends throughout the day. Now, it has become very difficult to talk to other people. Since teenagers can no longer "joke around" and fuel off of each other's energy in-person, they are becoming lazier and having less energy. In addition, there is the challenge of online school. Even at its best, online school is not as engaging as normal school. I often find myself dazing off easier in online school, since it is much harder to focus on a computer.



STAYING POSITIVE: NEW OPPORTUNITIES

On the flip side, because everybody is stuck at home, a lot of teenagers are trying new things. For example, Elena (my sister) and I started regularly playing basketball. I have also been bouncing on my trampoline and trying new things every day.

Something many people (including myself) have gotten involved in is trying to make new food and drinks. The other day I made chocolate pudding! Also, pretty much everyday I make myself some tea.

Keeping your home environment clean has become especially important. Another thing I have been doing is cleaning up my room and rearranging the furniture. Additionally, I also know that my friend Ethan has also been remodeling his room. With all this free time, a lot of people have taken on tasks (such as cleaning) that they would normally find very boring in an attempt to maintain their productivity.

Additionally, this is a great time to spend time with family or sleep in. Since school starts at nine, I have been getting around ten hours of sleep every night. It makes me feel a lot more energized during the day. A fun activity to stay connected with your family, as I've found, is to go on drives. Last week, I went with my dad to a coffee shop and back, and quality time to relax like this has been great.

However, quarantine is obviously not all good. I have noticed I have been crankier, and I am pretty much always bored (even if I have things to do!). This is probably because I am in the same place for the majority of my day, and there is no change in scenery. This lack of change can make life quite boring and



abnormal. Quarantine for a teen is often very annoying, but there are things that we can do to make it more enjoyable.

OPINION

Movie Review: The Rise of Skywalker

Tessa Mendez-Leal Staff Writer

Arguably the most popular and well loved series in the history of cinema is Star Wars, a story that follows the Skywalkers on their quests throughout the generations. The movies are timeless, and have been leading the classics since May 25th, 1977, so it's no surprise that people were greatly polarized when the final movie came out. In this scenario, the movie divided the Star Wars fans in two, as fans either absolutely loved or despised the film, but what really is fair to say about the last movie? In this article, I hope to be as true to the lore as possible, and provide evidence as to what was commendable

about Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker (December 16th, 2019), and what wasn't.

DISCLAIMER: This article is meant for those who have seen the movie, and will be very confusing for those who have not. There are major spoilers, as well.

What didn't work

The biggest point against the Rise of Skywalker is the one about the reveal of Rey's heritage when she shoots down a ship with a bolt of lightning. The majority of fans on the internet have spoken out to find this, well, ridiculous. I couldn't agree more, but not for the reason most people say. For those of you who do not know (how did you get here?), Emperor Palpatine could control lightning, and died at the very end of Episode VI: The Empire Strikes Back, being flung into a sea of lightning by his adopted son, Darth Vader. The

scene was iconic, and held so much meaning to each character and each audience member involved. The late emperor was killed by someone considered to be his son, for torturing that man's son, by being flung into a sea of the element he claims to control. There was no way the scene could have gotten better. It was the first time we had seen Darth Vader act on the side of the light, and it sent the fans ranting and raving about "the best star wars movie ever made" since. In the Rise of Skywalker, they erase the memory of that death

by resurrecting Palpatine, and instead make his "final death" one caused by Rey and Kylo Ren. While the scene was epic, it simply was not and should not be the canon death for that character. Emperor Palpatine's return defeats the meaning behind his death way back in the sixth installment (second movie) and cheapens the finality of any momentous deaths in Star Wars altogether. With that logic, what is to stop Han Solo from coming back in an epilogue other than Harrison Ford's own schedule? Additionally, Rey being a palpatine also shoves dirt on the fact that Rey was no one from nowhere, which was

sort of the whole point of her role as a protagonist, yet Disney took that back quite quickly.



There is a great quote by critic Paul Asay that states "For fans of this franchise, The Rise of Skywalker works: not necessarily logically, but emotionally." I think this quote encompasses a lot of what went right with the final installment of Star Wars. The movie was never going to be accepted by all of the Star Wars fans, as too many people were expecting too many things, and though Disney has an absolutely excellent track record for making fantastic movies, this franchise did not start with them, and many people already had issues with the ending being charged to the company. Regardless, they respected the laws of the franchise in many regards, and I think their work deserves to be appreciated.



The Rise of Skywalker details the rise of a Palpatine, and that fact in itself is one that stands out amongst the crowd. Rey was the perfect protagonist to end off the series (sue me), because she represented the idea of a Skywalker without genetically being one herself. With her, being a Skywalker became an honor, and it put power into our favorite characters that were watching over her as ghosts in that final scene, and introduced the idea of rising against one's heritage for their

own values. The movie denounced the idea of "dark" and "light" and introduced that there is a gray in all of us. Rey, being a Palpatine and naturally tempted by the dark side, still chose to be a light bringer, and her saber glowed gold to prove it. Though, once again, I find it disappointing that she had to be a Palpatine for this message to be properly portrayed, I understand why Disney felt the need to do it.

It is also for this reason that the very controversial romance between Rey and Kylo Ren was so significant. Rewatching the movies before it, I could see the love and will to save the other that both Rey and Kylo Ren portrayed. The desire to bring Kylo to light and Rey to dark were both acts meant to preserve their unity in a situation which they each thought best. In the end, Kylo was the one that was brought to the light side. Using an incredibly difficult maneuver of the force that can only be used by those on the light side, he sacrificed himself for the one he loved, and died, and that is how it should be. Kylo's message was completed full circle in that sole act, and the criticisms of Star Wars being too stereotypical by attempting to define good and evil so easily were brought to a halt.

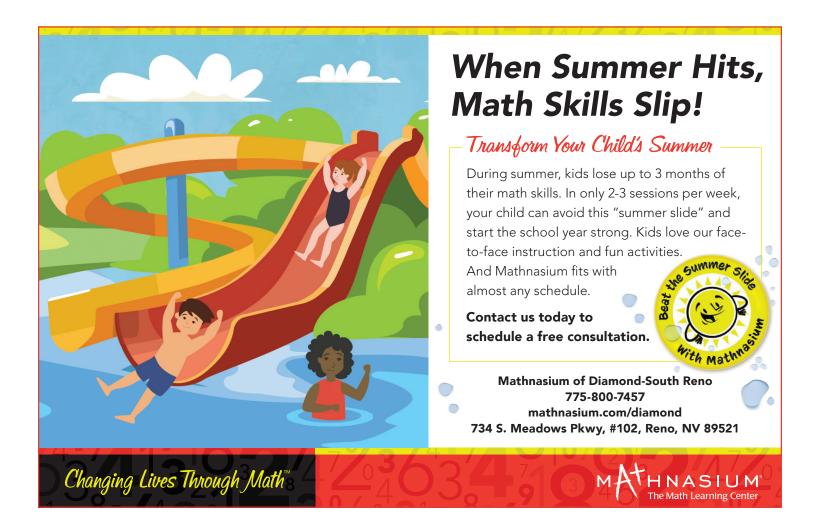
Tying everything together, the series ended exactly the way it began, with a Skywalker, regardless of background, gazing at the moons of Tatooine, representing the everlasting quest to seek justice not just in the galaxy but inside each of us.



Palpatine's Second Demise



A Tragic Romance



STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS COMPETITION

The Ridge Art Competition is meant to exhibit student-produced art. Students submitted art for our poetry competition and our visual arts competition (split into two-dimensional and three-dimensional categories) to have an opportunity to showcase their artistic talents. This quarter, The Ridge received a record number of submissions and had select members meet privately to discuss which submissions were most worthy of recognition based on skill, substance, and general visual appeal.



POETRY COMPETITION WINNER

FALTERING

by Tessa Méndez Leal ('21)

It was a painting,
or it wanted to be.
She had been there for hours,
her mind wild with visions of alien dimensions,
beauty that stuttered and ceased at the brush.
Her skin was now laced with sweat,
nails clogged with pigment from scratches at the mist of her portal
It was the thoughts that enraged her.
For every penny there were dimes, and she couldn't distinguish portal from pretender.
She wanted to show them,
whisk them away to where her gold shone.
If only dime had not consumed.

VISUAL ART COMPETITION WINNERS

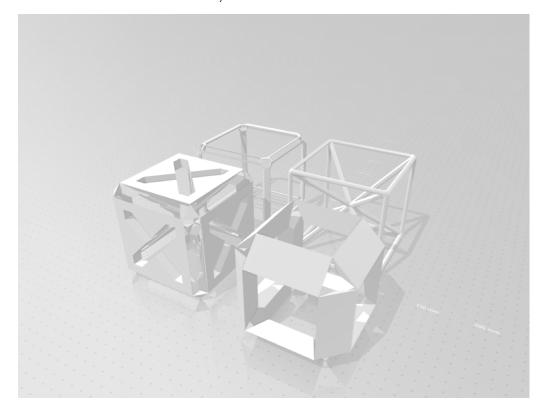
Festive Owl

by Faith Phillips ('24)



Cubes

by Austin Schler ('21)





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