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IN THE NEWS

Adding Nuance to the Kanye Controversy

By Sofia Sherer '25

Recently, there has been a lot of controversy on social media surrounding Kanye West. Kim Kardashian filed for divorce in January of 2021, but it was only recently, on March 2, 2022, that Kim changed her legal marital status to single. Kanye and Kim have four children together: North, Saint, Chicago, and Psalm. They have joint custody of all children and are expected to provide for them equally.

However, in January, Kanye claimed that he was not given an invite to his daughter Chicago's birthday party (although he showed up anyway), which began a controversy that is still continuing today. The controversy continued in February when Kanye publicly spoke about his issue with Kim allowing North to use TikTok. He believes that it was inappropriate and that the decision should have been run by him first. While Kanye may have truly been looking out for North, some feel that it was completely inappropriate for him to discuss Kim's parenting on a public platform. Later in February, Kim posted on social media about her attempts to be the best mother that she can be for their children while also

dealing with her divorce from Kanye. She explained that it is harmful for this situation to be public and that people should not jump to conclusions before they know the situation.

You may have seen the title of my article and assumed that I would have made light about the situation and maybe even have made fun of Kanye. Swifties, I am sorry to disappoint you, but that is not my reason for writing on this topic. Even I have to admit that, at first, I found the fact that Kanye went completely unhinged on Twitter and Instagram hilarious! However, over time, the situation unsettled me more and more. I understand that Kanye has been diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, however I do not believe that this is necessarily the only mental health issue that he may have.

Clearly, Kanye is going through something very serious and many people around him are not trying to help him. The Internet has made him the butt of a joke. A large portion of his fan base has chosen to "protect his image" rather than open their eyes to the severity of the situation. Having mental health problems is nothing to be ashamed of, however it is a cause for concern when underlying mental health problems are not being addressed.

My intention is not to defend his actions. I do not think that what he has done is at all justifiable. I am also a Swiftie, so I think that many of his actions in the past have also been very questionable. However,



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I do believe that having some sort of perspective on these situations is extremely important. Kanye needs help. I am not saying that you can't laugh at some of the things that he has posted about or said, but keep in mind that there is more to this story than what is shown on social media.

Beijing Winter Games

By Quynh Nguyen '23

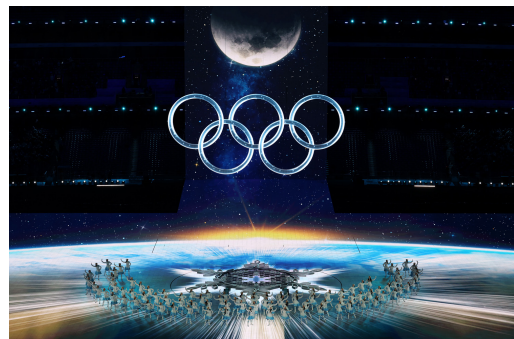
After the summer games in 2008, the Olympics returned to Beijing, China, this time for the winter games. From February 4th to February 20th, over 109 events took place in sports ranging from bobsled to skeleton. The most popular event though, was men's figure skating.

This year's event was full of notable contenders. Two time Olympic gold medalist and fan favorite, Yuzuru Hanyu, made history as the first person to attempt the Quadruple Axel. Nathan Chen, representing the USA, set a world record for his short program after scoring 113.97 points. Boyang Jin, representing China, wowed his home crowd with his free skate. Donovan Carrillo was the first Mexican figure skater to qualify for the Olympics in 30 years. He gained fans overnight with his overflowing charisma. There were also a few young skaters making their Olympic debut such as Cha Jun-hwan from Korea, Yuma Kagitama from Japan, and Daniel Grassel from Italy.

In the end, American Nathan Chen finished in first place with a total score of 332.60 earning him a gold medal. Behind him was Yuma's Kagitama with a total score of 310.5 and Shoma Uno with a total score of 293. All three men received their medals during a medal ceremony held after the event.

While athletes experienced Olympic glory, the real star of the winter games was Beijing 2022's official mascot Bing Dwen Dwen. Bing Dwen Dwen is a panda that is surrounded by a suit of ice. Its friendly personality and clumsy nature captured the hearts of not only the athletes, but of viewers all over the world.

To conclude the 2022 winter games, athletes marched in a closing ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, the Olympic flag was handed over to the Mayor of Milan, the host city of the 2026 winter games. In hosting the Olympics, China faced many struggles with climate change and COVID-19. Regardless, they were still able to pull through and organize an Olympics worth remembering.





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D.A. ALL DAY!

Robin Resilience Challenge

By Aisling Kelly '25

On March 7, 2022, Dominican Academy began participating in the thirty-day Robin Resilience Challenge. Students of all grades, teachers and staff were invited to participate in the challenge. This challenge is an opportunity for the D.A. community to connect with one another, practice resilience, and win prizes such as a twenty-five, fifty, or one hundred dollar gift card. Contestants will also be entered into a raffle contest.

For thirty days, participants will log onto the Robin website to complete simple tasks that help them reduce stress or anxiety, as well as connect with other members of the D.A. community. Each day, there is a certain number of points one can obtain, and if a person receives the maximum amount of points, they will reach the top of the leaderboard. However, if a person misses a day, it could set them back significantly, getting in the way of their chances of winning.

To gain points, a person must complete simple tasks, such as reading the daily intention, sharing appreciation for

other participants, reading the daily inspiration, completing the daily gratitude and talking about resilience. For the D.A. community, the daily intention is the Dominican Academy pledge, so students can read it and plan to follow it throughout their day. The daily inspiration is a quote that can be helpful to consider throughout the day. For example, the first quote was from American humorist Sam Levenson: "Don't watch the clock, do what it does; keep going." Other quotes have been from notable figures such as Nelson Mandela and Theodore Roosevelt. Participants are encouraged to express daily gratitude, typically for things they don't think about often. They can also talk about resilience in their daily lives by reviewing various components that made them resilient that day, such as being productive or taking time for self-care. Lastly, there is a section where participants can express appreciation or compliment others. This section is public, so other people can reply to a comment, or like the comment, making this challenge helpful for community-building.

People all throughout Dominican Academy are participating in the challenge and the leaderboard is extremely close. If participants keep their streaks and continue being resilient, they can win amazing prizes. Even if one does not win, this challenge is still beneficial, as it is an opportunity to reduce stress, become more invested in the Dominican Academy community and become more resilient.



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Spirit Week

By Mariacarla Bettocchi '25

This is Spirit Week! Monday started with Pajama Day (a nice break from uniforms), followed by Decade Day, Disney Day, Meme Day, and ending with Color Wars. On Disney Day, friends are considering dressing up in groups, like the Disney princesses or Inside Out characters. Groups are also coordinating for Meme Day. A few freshmen are planning to dress up as the Sway Boys from TikTok.



For Decade Day, the freshmen will dress up for the 1960s, the sophomores will be the 1990s, the juniors will be the 2000s, and the seniors will be the 1970s! For Color Wars, students will wear clothing that corresponds to their grade's assigned color. The seniors will wear blue, the juniors green, the sophomores red, and the freshmen purple. One freshman mentioned that she is

apprehensive about this day because students in her grade can get very competitive, but it's sure to be a fun week. Spirit Week is a great opportunity for students to relax and be creative with their outfits while showing off their school spirit!

Winter Track

By Lily Lawler '25

This winter, the Dominican Academy Track team ran through Central Park as strong and fast as ever, despite the freezing and sometimes treacherous weather this winter had in store. Unfortunately, because of schedule changes and COVID-19 restrictions, D.A. was only able to compete in two indoor track competitions. However, these two competitions were big successes for D.A. competitors. Many students on the Track team decided to run the 1000 meter race and came out with very strong times; all under four minutes!





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Running in Central Park was definitely a challenge this winter considering the snow, rain and frigid temperatures. Because it is optimal to wear light clothes while running to ensure maximum speed and distance, Track team members had a difficult time staying warm. Dominican Academy students definitely felt this extreme drop in temperatures since the fall, and though it was hard to manage, everyone pushed through with gloves and hats to preserve precious body heat.

This definitely made the cold weather easier to manage, but the snow was an even harder obstacle to overcome. A popular route for the D.A. Track team is Central Park's lower loop, which is about 1.75 miles long. Luckily, most of this route was usually shoveled after snow, but at times there were definitely some icy patches in the way. Usually students were able to avoid these areas, but there were a few times that track team members unfortunately took a fall on the concrete running path. Luckily, there were no injuries.

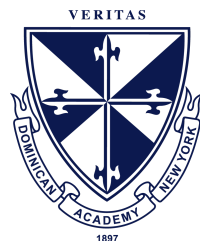
Between cracked lips, shivering bodies, and a few falls, one might think that running in Central Park in the winter is a terrible experience, but this is not always the case. Everyone on the Track team had a lot of fun exploring Central Park in the winter and seeing some of the amazing snow creations made by people all around. Running in the snow is beautiful, when you

are surrounded by so much beauty. But what made running in Central Park in the winter the most special experience was the bonds that students made with each other; whether that was through their joy of running, or their commiserations on the difficulties of running in the park during the winter months.

Princeton Certamen By Demetra Chudley '24

Some say that Latin is a dead language, but if they could step into Room 8 on Mondays and Tuesdays after school, they would certainly be proven wrong. That is where the D.A. Certamen team meets to practice for Princeton Certamen. The date of the biggest Certamen competition of the year was announced a few weeks ago and ever since, the team members have been choosing their specialties, going head to head in practice, and studying as the date drew closer.

Though everyone who joins Certamen does so because of an interest in Latin, there is a lot more that goes into these competitions. Each team member chooses a specialty (grammar, history, mythology or culture) and teams are arranged so that each has a balance of specialities. There are only four people on each team, so two D.A. teams were entered into the Princeton Certamen on March 19th. These teams practice against each other, translating sentences and debating myths for the past few weeks.



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Finally, the day of the tournament arrived. It began with a keynote address on expanding the study of classics beyond its Greco-Roman boundaries. At 11 A.M., the competition started, and each team dove headfirst into the first of three preliminary rounds. The teams were each placed in a room with two others, where they competed to earn up to 400 points answering 20 questions per round. Each correctly answered toss up question was followed by two bonus questions, which gave the team that answered correctly a chance to win extra points.

Each round lasted about an hour, and in between rounds, students got to know their competition. Conversation varied from favorite Greco-Roman deity to who could name all seven wonders of the world. Though neither team from Dominican Academy managed to make it to semifinals, all team members made our school proud in showing off their classics knowledge. In the end, the teams placed tenth and twenty first. More than a title, however, they earned the chance to spend a day connecting with others who love classics as much as they do.

Swimming Championships

By Julia Sheehan '23

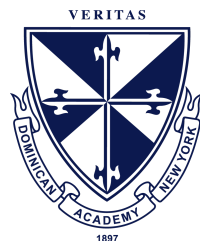
At the end of January and early February, the Dominican Academy Swim Team competed in their B and A Championships, respectively. B Championships took place at St. Francis

College in Brooklyn. The A Championships was a qualifiers-only event. This year, Dominican Academy took 10 swimmers to B Championships and 11 to A Championships.

The 200 IM relay placed 3rd, swam by Julia Garcia-Lascurain, Grace DiMattia, Kayla Henning and Mairead Peel. In the 200 Freestyle, Mairead Peel and senior Brigid O'Driscoll placed in the top 3. The 200 IM also saw some high placements, with Kayla Henning, placing 2nd. Sophomore Audrey McElhatton placed 1st in the 500 freestyle.

The 200 freestyle relay placed 6th, swam by Maisie Aniello, Kate Izzo, Brigid O'Driscoll and Ila Ferrier. Ila Ferrier also placed 6th in the 100 backstroke, and Julia Garcia-Lascurain placed 1st. The 100 breaststroke saw Audrey McElhatton and Grace DiMattia place in the top 4. In the final event of the day, the 400 Freestyle relay, D.A. placed 3rd with a team of Mairead Peel, Damaris Lindsay, Kate Izzo and Audrey McElhatton. D.A. ended up placing 3rd overall at the meet.

The following weekend, D.A. took 11 swimmers to A Championships. The first day was a preliminary round to determine who would be swimming the next day to win points for the team. Not every swimmer makes it to the second day, but every single D.A. swimmer competed on both days and scored points for the team.



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Beginning with the relays, the 200 IM relay placed 3rd with amazing swims by Isabella Marcotullio, Emilianna Gonzalez, Juliana Dragan and Maya Faughnan. The 200 freestyle relay placed 5th, swam by Ella Madden, Maya Faughnan, Olivia Michalik and Layla Sheehan. The 400 freestyle relay placed 4th, swam by Isabella Marcotullio, Juliana Dragan, Julia Sheehan and Emilianna Gonzalez.

In the 200 freestyle, Juliana Dragan placed 8th overall. In the 50 free, freshman Emilianna Gonzalez not only placed 3rd overall, but also set a D.A. record with a time of 25.56 seconds – only a few tenths of a second off from breaking the GCHSAA record. Emilianna was nominated for the All-League Award from D.A., which goes to swimmers who have demonstrated exceptional skill, dedication and sportsmanship. We're so proud of our "Spider Monkey!"

The 100 butterfly saw four D.A. swimmers place – Olivia Michalik, Ella Madden, Juliana Dragan and Emilianna Gonzalez. In the 500 free, Natalie Holert placed 20th, Julia Sheehan won her heat, and Isabella Marcotullio placed 5th. In the 100 breaststroke, freshmen Annie McGraw placed 23rd, moving up a place from preliminaries and Maya Faughnan placed 16th. In the 100 back, junior Natalie Holert dropped nine seconds and won her heat, placing 17th. Seniors Ella Madden and Isabella Marcotullio placed 16th and 5th, respectively. Overall, D.A. placed 5th,

beating out their rivals, Fontbonne Hall, and only two points behind St. Joseph Hill – an amazing meet for one of the smallest teams there.

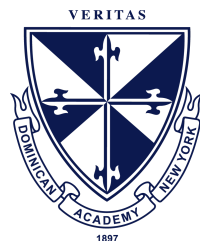
None of this would be possible without a few people - Assistant Coach Peter Marcotullio, whose handstand competitions always made practice fun. And we can truly not thank our captains, Isabella and Ella, enough. Isabella was nominated for a career swimming award – only given to a few swimmers who had consistently placed in the top eight of all their events in their first three years of GCHSAA swim. Ella is a true friend to every single swimmer on that team and truly the loudest cheerer at every meet. The winning season would not be possible without Coach Kristin Karabees, who was one of two recipients of the Coach of the Year award, voted on by other coaches of GCHSAA swim teams. Coach Kristin is a model of dedication and support. The team owes so much to her and appreciates all her hard work over the years.

125th Anniversary Mass

By Kate Izzo '22

Dominican Academy celebrated its 125th anniversary at St. Vincent Ferrer on March 5, 2022. The beautiful mass was organized by Dorothy Filoramo, '58. She did a wonderful job and the D.A. community is so grateful to her.

Most of the hymns were in Latin, offering D.A. students a chance to hone their



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translation skills outside of the classroom. It was also an interesting look at what masses could have sounded like when D.A. opened. The celebrant, the Very Reverend Kenneth R. Letoile, OP, gave a fascinating homily.

Members of the National Honor Society offered up gifts to represent the four pillars of Dominican Academy. Ana Winston brought up D.A. Theology books, representing the pillar of study. Marielle Kudera brought up a special prayer written in honor of the 125th anniversary to represent the pillar of prayer. Charlotte Ainsworth brought up a globe, representing the pillar of service. Finally, I brought up a folder with the names of every student, faculty and staff member to represent the pillar of community. My gift was my favorite because the thing that I love most about D.A. is the community. The people I have met at D.A. have completely changed my life and I could not imagine loving anywhere else as much as I love it here.

After the mass, guests came back to D.A. for a reception and building tour. Liturgical dancers performed in the auditorium for visitors. There were refreshments on the Mezzanine and in the Library. In addition, DAPA set up a booth to sell tickets for the annual Dominican Academy Gala to take place on April 8, 2022.

I was so glad to celebrate 125 years of Dominican Academy with members of the community who love it just as much as I

do. Although I am graduating this year, I look forward to seeing how D.A. will grow in the years to come!

ARTS & CULTURE

What's an NFT?

By Damaris Lindsay '23

I think I can collectively speak for everyone when I say that one day, we all were just browsing the Internet when we came across the word NFT and didn't think much of it. But soon enough, NFTs were *everywhere*. So, what exactly *is* an NFT?

NFT stands for "non-fungible token," which is a token that represents ownership of an original piece of digital media, whether that be a meme, a gif, or any other online phenomenon. When you purchase an NFT, you receive a unique digital code that corresponds to the piece of media purchased. With the emergence of cryptocurrency, NFTs gained unbelievable popularity in 2021 as the idea spread to include all types of digital artwork. NFTs are stored on public blockchains which are used to secure your token. The most widely used blockchains are Bitcoin and Ethereum.

Although NFTs may sound fun and innocuous, their impact on the world is more harmful than harmless. Cryptocurrency is essentially the use of energy as wealth which wastes an immense amount of energy.



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Even if one were to use tangible currency to buy NFTs, the amount of energy used in blockchain technology is almost equivalent to that of cryptocurrency. Ultimately, the process of purchasing an NFT is extremely harmful to the environment no matter how you attempt to get around it.

This then poses the question: “Why are NFTs so popular?” That’s what I’m trying to figure out. It seems that every day more and more celebrities announce on Twitter the release of their brand new NFT, but I have never heard of any backlash of the environmental effects they have.

And then there’s the question of: “Why can’t I just take a screenshot?” and you know what, you definitely can. It certainly will decrease the environmental impact of the transaction, but that leads to the exploitation of artists whose art is being sold. Artists are constantly being exploited and the emergence of NFTs gives them the ability to take control of the sale of their work. When you just screenshot an NFT, you are ultimately stealing that piece of art from the artist.

So, this leaves us wondering if there’s any ethical way to delve into the world of NFTs, and after a little bit of research, I have discovered the holy grail: environmentally friendly blockchain markets. A number of NFT platforms have gone clean as a way to support artists without the horrific environmental impacts.

Overall, I don’t know how to feel about NFTs. I think it is a fairly new idea that could grow into something bigger and more sustainable in the near future, but for now, I’ll just stick with a good, old-fashioned museum when I want to see art.

Oscar Predictions

By: Julia Cramer ‘24

Editor’s Note: The following article was submitted for publication before the Academy Awards were broadcast on TV. The ultimate winners are bolded.

With the 94th Academy Awards on March 27, 2022, the yearly buzz over this year’s nominees and the likely winners has begun. Various websites have been drawing different conclusions about what and who will take home prizes in each category, especially the ever-elusive winner of Best Picture. Most people believe that the Academy merely votes for whichever film they think was the best by an objective standard. And while that is true to some extent, it’s much more complicated than that. The Oscars is a game with rules, trends, and patterns that appear when you examine the former winners of these categories.

This year’s Best Picture nominees are: *Belfast*, *CODA*, *Don’t Look Up*, *Drive My Car*, *Dune*, *King Richard*, *Licorice Pizza*, *Nightmare Alley*, *The Power of the Dog* and *West Side Story*. A list filled with fantastic movies, but the Academy isn’t



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looking for a movie- it's looking for a "film," interpretations of this word vary from person to person, but the Academy has a rather clear, personal definition. The Academy loves a good drama, with over 90% of all Best Picture winners being dramas, movies that cover serious topics. Another good characteristic of a movie is to be either a period film or a biopic- a movie about a real person or a true story- which is another popular trend among Oscar winning films. It's even better when a movie is a historical biopic.

With this information, we can make a fairly accurate guess as to what's going to win the category of Best Picture. We can rule out *Licorice Pizza*, a "quirky" slice-of-life romance with a concerning age gap. *Nightmare Alley* performed too poorly in box offices to win. We can also rule out *Don't Look Up*. With the median age of an Academy member being sixty-three, a movie about their generation's inability to understand modern issues facing the world isn't likely to win, especially one that relies on technology to tell its story. A good example of this is when *The Social Network* lost to *The King's Speech*.

West Side Story is also unlikely to win, with musicals taking up a very small percentage of Best Picture winners and it is also the remake of a movie that has already taken home the title of Best Picture. *Dune*, another remake, is far too fantasy-based for it to win. *Belfast*, is unlikely to win because of its "short" run time, with most winners

being much more lengthy films. However, it's safe to not entirely rule it out of the running. *Drive My Car*, a foreign film about grief and love could be an unassuming underdog that takes the win, especially since it is about an actor and the Academy, many of which are actors and directors, loves movies about familiar stories. It's likely that it will win Best International Feature Film. However, they may not have another foreign film win again, since *Parasite* won in 2020.

While most predictions go to *The Power of the Dog* winning Best Picture, I'm not so sure that it is the shoe-in that many claim it is. *CODA*, a movie about the daughter of deaf parents and her desire to go to music school and *King Richard*, which tells the tale of Serena and Venus Williams from the perspective of their father, are both strong contenders to win. In the end, I'd say that the likely winners come down to *The Power of the Dog*, *CODA* or *King Richard*.

Moving onto Best Actor, the nominees are Javier Bardeem (*Being the Ricardos*), Denzel Washington (*Macbeth*), Benedict Cumberbatch (*The Power of the Dog*), Andrew Garfield, (*Tick Tick... Boom*) and Will Smith (*King Richard*.) My prediction is that **Will Smith** will take home Best Actor, with Benedict Cumberbatch also being a strong contender. As much as I'd like to see Andrew Garfield win Best Actor, it's unlikely that he will. For Best Actress, the nominees are Jessica Chastain (*The Eyes of Tammy Faye*), Olivia Colman (*The Lost Daughter*), Nicole Kidman (*Being The*



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Ricardos), Penelope Cruz (*Parallel Mothers*) and Kristen Stewart (*Spencer*.) My prediction is that either **Jessica Chastain** or Kristen Stewart will win Best Actress.

The Super Bowl 2022

By: Joanna Eva Raffaele '25

We have all heard about the event that people internationally tune in to see, the Super Bowl. The days leading up to the event are crucial to hardcore fans. The Los Angeles Rams won the 2022 Super Bowl in front of a home crowd at SoFi Stadium on Sunday, February 13, defeating the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20. This was not the only thing that people were talking about, as the halftime show was a hit amongst viewers at home. Watchers were on the edge of their seats the entire game. The Los Angeles Rams came from behind to win over the Cincinnati Bengals. Wow!

Every year, people say the game, hilarious commercials and the incredible halftime show only get better! People had mixed emotions on the halftime show but most thought it was a hit! The legendary rappers and artists who performed included Dr. Dre, Kendrick Lamar, Eminem, Snoop Dogg and Mary J. Blige. Some people also claim that the weather was a struggle with the highest temperature being 84 degrees. Many other celebrities got tickets to see the Super Bowl as well. Legendary tennis player Billie Jean King did the coin toss. Following that, the game began. Overall, the Super Bowl was a huge success and another

legendary event in history that will never be forgotten!



HAIM: A Profile

By Melanie Robichaux '23

The best way to describe the HAIM sisters is connected. These San Fernando Valley natives were primordially musical; forming the band “Rockin’Haim” with their parents Moti and Donna as children. Now they’re a Grammy nominated group, venturing into all aspects of the art world. Themes of family, identity, anger and the emotions of women in their 20s and 30s are captured within the lyrics of all three of their studio albums.

Their 2013 and 2017 releases, *Days Are Gone* and *Something to Tell You*, feature upbeat, pop ballads, while *Women in Music Pt. III* contains a diverse range of vulnerable, rageful and fun little tunes. Through the writing process, they emphasized authentic and “straight from the brain” lyrics to get the most genuine and relatable takes on life experiences. This



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album, like Este, Danielle and Alana, radiates confidence.



These days, HAIM are exploring the film world. Shortly after the 2020 release of their Grammy nominated, third studio album, HAIM's "Cherry Flavored Stomach Ache," was featured on Netflix's *The Last Letter From Your Lover*. This is the first of hopefully many HAIM songs on film soundtracks. Along with this small feature, the Haim sisters hit the big screen in *Licorice Pizza*. Leading lady, Alana Haim, played Alana Kane in this love letter to LA in the 1970s. The movie follows a woman navigating self-discovery in the abundant and competitive world of Hollywood with the help of her "15 going on 50" best friend. Although their roles are significantly less substantial, the rest of the Haim family plays Alana's supportive, but semi-judgmental family. Despite this being her acting debut, Alana Haim is now a Critics' Choice, BAFTA and Golden Globe nominee. These appearances are clearly just a taste of HAIM and their growing influence on modern day media.

FOR FUN!

Winter Break Travel

By Ivanka Beriwal '25

During the week of February 21-28, the D.A. community went on our long awaited winter break. Over break, some of the most popular destinations were skiing in Vermont or Colorado, going to the sunny beaches of Florida, or staying at home and having a self care week. Many students went skiing or snowboarding because the winter sports season is almost over and they wanted to make the most of it. Whether you are an intermediate or a beginner skier/snowboarder, the sport is so much fun! You leave the slopes feeling both rejuvenated and sore. On the other hand, some people couldn't wait for summer and escaped to the hot climate of Florida. There is a scientific study showing that hot weather makes people happier! The mask mandate is lifted in the state so people can freely roam without masks. I talked to a couple of freshmen about their time over break and this is what I got in response.

Vivian Lee: "I went on a rigorous hiking course in Ohio and enjoyed time with my family and the outdoors. During my hike, I got inspiration on my research paper topic for Tech 1 class. When I came home I was taught Greek culture and overall had an amazing and relaxing break."



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Anna Genov: “I was super ecstatic for my trip to Aspen, but there were a series of unfortunate events. My family and I boarded a plane to Colorado but landed in Texas because there was a storm in Colorado. We had a layover in Texas for two hours and missed our flight to Aspen. My family and I drove four hours to Denver because there was no flight to Aspen from Texas. We caught a different flight to Aspen from Denver. Finally, we got to the long awaited Colorado. On the first day of snowboarding I got altitude sickness but managed to snowboard anyways. Then on my second time up, I was snowboarding down a green mountain, felt dizzy and fell to the ground. I destroyed some ligament in my arm, went to the hospital but there was a car accident so had to wait for two hours, then went home after an X-ray. The next day, my dad tore his ACL and I was his personal errand runner (I went to the supermarket five times)! When we were going to board our flight home, we couldn't fly out of Aspen because a plane skidded off the runway. Who does that happen to? So we had to fly to Texas and drive four hours to Denver, again. When you would think it's all good, the flight home was delayed for four hours. My trip was genuinely cursed but my family and I managed to get out alive! Moral of the story, make sure your planes are on track and be careful on the slopes.”

Thank you to Vivian and Anna for sharing your stories. We look forward to Spring Break!

Why Should You Read More?

By Keira Muller '24

Students grow up constantly being told they need to read more, sometimes to build stamina or to practice for standardized tests. However, few people stop to wonder why they *really* should be reading more. There are numerous cognitive benefits to devoting time each day to read — whether it's fiction or nonfiction, the act itself is incredibly instrumental.

One of the most obvious benefits of reading is the focus that it requires. Students across the globe struggle with holding their attention on one subject at a time every day. This is one of the reasons that many individuals avoid reading. Reading any plot engages the mind far more than watching a TV show or movie. However, continuous use of the regions of the brain utilized for reading will build one's ability to focus overtime.

Not only that, but reading has been shown to improve memory and retention. This is why many early Alzheimers or Dementia patients dedicate as much time as possible to reading. The mental stimulation provided by the unconscious analysis of any story is enough to help to protect critical thinking and memorization skills.

Finally, there is a direct correlation between reading and high vocabulary comprehension. This is one of the many reasons why it is so important for young



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children to read in their early education — it provides vocabulary during one of the key intervals of language development. This, however, does not mean that reading cannot provide such benefits to adults and adolescents. Vocabulary expansion is crucial to intellectual development for all ages.

But the real question is: what is the correlation between all of these enjoyments and the grades of high school students like those at D.A.? One of the easiest ways to raise SAT scores is through an improved vocabulary. Additionally, researchers from Sam Houston State University conducted a study in 2016 that demonstrated that students who read outside of school for leisure performed better in not just English but also in Math, Science and History. Not to mention that most successful millionaires and even *billionaires* say that the habit of reading has led them to their successes. Bill Gates once noted, “You don’t really start getting old until you stop learning, every book teaches me something new or helps me see things differently.” Reading is just one of the many ways to expand your knowledge, but it is one of the simplest steps students can take to further their academic and professional careers.

The Wonder of Wordle

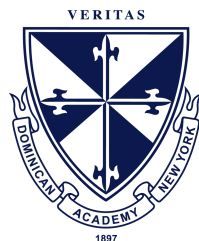
By Ava Filocamo ‘23

In the last three months, the ubiquitous online word game *Wordle* has skyrocketed, preoccupying millions of people worldwide as they guess the right combination of letters. Born

in a software engineer’s home in Brooklyn as a game for his partner, it has grown to become one of the most popular games for all ages. Its popularity soared due to its wide audience appeal, skill-less strategies and the ability to compare scores with friends and family. The competitiveness and pride is fierce, with the question of “How many attempts did it take you?” asked on the daily. The appearance of the green squares offers a dopamine high that is easily addicting.

To make the game more intriguing, the player can only play once a day. This limit builds anticipation and desire to play again. Whether they win (or lose), the player still needs to wait 24 hours until the next word. The player has six tries to guess the five letter word of the day. The game begins with no hints, and a player randomly inputs their own choice of a five letter word. The game then tells the user if any of their letters are in the correct spots to help give some clue as to whether or not they are close to guessing the word. It either takes patience and methodology or simple luck to determine the correct word. Most players claim their personal strategy is the best: start with as many vowels as possible; start with the same word every time; avoid “odd” letters. It’s not an easy task, and the less tries it takes the player to guess the word - the better. The player can share their attempts with others and many post their tries on social media. However, players never post the word of the day out of respect for others who have not played yet. Otherwise, the *Wordle* fanbase will cry “Treason!”

The idea for *Wordle* blossomed due to quarantine blues. *Wordle* came to life when Josh Wardle wanted to create a new word game for his wife. His wife loved crosswords and puzzles, but he wanted something new just for the two of



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them. The name *Wordle* came from a play on the creator's own name - Wardle. As they played, the game was immensely compulsive and competitive among the tw= and Mr. Wardle decided to share the game with the rest of his family. Wardle's family found it so entertaining that in October of 2021, he shared *Wordle* with the public. On November 1st, 90 people participated. Two months later, *Wordle* had over 300,000 players a day. That number kept increasing, and now millions of people are addicted to the intense and intricate game.

On January 31, the New York Times bought *Wordle*, and added the game to its page along with many others, including *Tiles*, *Spelling Bee*, *Sudoku*, *Vertex*. *Wordle* is now an instant classic and crowd-pleaser, born from the boredom and solitude of the leading 5 letter word of our time - COVID-19.

