

# Trojan Tribune



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News From Ouray High School

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## Ouray Dancers Crack Annual Weehawken Ballet

by Cliona Pasek

“That moment when you step from the wings onto the stage you go from total blackness to a blinding hot glare. But there is that moment. Like being inside lightning. It’s terrifying. It’s wonderful.” The Crane’s Dance by Meg Howrey tells the story of a professional dancer and her struggles, and for a ballerina, this moment is her entire world. Plenty of Ouray School’s ballerinas and other dancers sought such a moment this past weekend. On December 9th and 10th, a multitude of kids from kindergarten to 11th grade performed in Weehawken Creative Arts production of The Nutcracker.

“It was so good!” said junior Abbie Link, who played the Snow Queen, “I was so excited! So many people came, and I was like, ‘Man! I get to show off my kick skills!’”

Weehawken Creative Arts has been a part of Ouray County since 2004. According to students, however, Ms. Natasha Pyette, the dance director at Weehawken, gave the dance program a new look with her ABT certification and creativity.

“We had one bar. Ms. Natasha built this pro-

duction out of absolutely nothing and was only 23 or 24. She used Walmart leotards and hand sewed everything and now it’s this big thing with over 200 people. We are now dancing in the Pavilion and have silks and it is insane.”

The Weehawken 200 person company has spread to Montrose and Ridgway full-time and Silverton part-time and now has more than 10 dance teachers. A variety of classes is now offered, including Aerial silks, jazz, tap, hip-hop, and upper-level ballet. Weehawken Dance presents two different productions each year, one in the spring and the other in the winter. Each winter, they alternate the Polar Express and the Nutcracker.

Auditions were held in September, and roles were announced a few days later. Ouray School students Nisha Harding, River Manley, Abbie Link, and Cliona Pasek all danced leads.

“I didn’t feel like I did that good in auditions. I was like, ‘it’s fine’ because our teachers know us super super well and they’ve seen us and what we can do,” said Abbie.

In preparation for the show, hours of rehearsals were necessary. Students rehearsed during their classes, plus, for leads, 8-20 hours every weekend. Practicing started to wear down their tired bodies.

“The rehearsals were long, and sometimes tiring, you get a couple blisters here and there,” said River, “But I love the long rehearsal days. I get really excited for them. I’m just like. ‘Yes! I get to dance all day.’”

Although they may only be juniors, for Nisha and Abbie this was their last Nutcracker and a very emotional one.

“I cried one time! I do not cry, I hate crying in front of people. Thinking about taking off my costume and knowing I had to put it away and not do the Nutcracker ever again I started crying and saying, ‘It’s not fair!’ I just didn’t want it to be over,” said Abbie Link. “100% all the time all the time,” she continued, “all I want to do is dance all the time. I can’t listen to a song and not imagine choreography to match that song. I physically can’t. It becomes a part of you.”

## Students Embrace Sources of Strength

by Ally King

Seeing someone fall, do you laugh or do you help them up? Ouray students in a new program called Sources of Strength are working to turn school negativity into positivity. “We don’t want students to get overwhelmed at school,” said peer leader Abbie Link.

Sources of Strength is a group of peer leaders trying to promote positivity and wellness to students. “Students go through good time and tough times,” said librarian Mrs. Cappi Castro, “but in those tough times we want students to turn to support and strength within themselves and the school.”

Sources of Strength focuses on 3 main emotions and how to deal with them: “Anger, anxiety, and depression,” Mrs. Cappi said. Her main goals are to “bring the school together as a community and inspire students to lean on each other.”

“I’m glad to be a peer leader in Sources of Strength,” said junior Nisha Harding. Nisha picked the activities for the school’s Sources of Strength pep rally this past Tuesday. “I picked fun activities that everyone would enjoy,” said Nisha, “while trying to bring the school together.”

Peer leaders in Sources of Strength hold meet-

ings to figure out ways to bring unity throughout the whole school. “We want bullying to end,” said Nisha, “and to be able to impact our world through the connection of hope, help, and strength.”

“The program is for students to know there is someone there for them in times of struggle,” said freshman Joy Vann. Joy believes Sources of Strength is a great tool for schools to use to prevent bullying. “No one should laugh if someone falls down the stairs,” said Joy, “They should walk over check if they’re okay and help them up.”

“With Sources of Strength we plan to stop bullying,” said program coordinator Alex Durham, who works for Voyager. Alex thinks the program has a great teaching aspect for students. “Sources relates to many things,” said Alex. “Some of those are bullying, homework problems, finding friends, building a school community, and being positive.”

“I plan on continuing Sources of Strength throughout high school,” said Abbie. “I hope other students also benefit from the positive aspects of this program.”

## Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow

by Caeley Eddy

Not enough snow, no sledding, and no skiing. It has snowed very little this winter. In fact some students even got to go dirt biking in December.

Many Ouray residents are concerned that we may not get enough snow this year. “I am worried about the moisture in the high country for the summer,” said Mayor Pam Larson. “We need the snow pack to keep things moist all summer, that’s one. Well for the skiing, especially the cross country skiing, that brings people up to spend some money. Everything seems very dry this winter. Not a good thing because we have a lot of dead trees.”

Right now in Ouray snow is not falling as much as it did last year in 2016. “It means our climate is changing,” said school tech advisor Markus Van Meter. “I moved to Ouray to ski so it’s a pretty big deal when we have seasons like we are having right now and it’s hard to get the stoke going when our mountains are brown. However, Mother Nature likes balance and traditionally when Colorado has had dry weather to start winter, we tend to make up for it in the spring. Fortunately, ski season in the San Juan can last 6 months-well into June in some years so I’m still very optimistic.”

According to Onthesnow.com, Telluride typi-

cally has a 3-4 foot base by this point in the season. But this year is very different. With lack of snow Telluride had to delay its opening. “I ski every season about once every two weeks. I want it to snow; the weather said no snow until Christmas; it’s so annoying!” said freshman Audrey Gibbs. Right now only six runs out of 148 are open in Telluride. Skiers may not get to ski until January, which is totally abnormal. “In this part of Colorado, well Southwest Colorado it is high desert, which makes it not all that uncommon for us to experience periods of drought,” said Erin Eddy. “The last winter I remember was in 1989 it didn’t snow all winter just like this. I also remember one when I was a kid in 1978 which was 40 years ago when it didn’t snow all winter.”

The seasons seem to be changing. Winter comes later and ends earlier. This can make it easier on people so they don’t have to shovel as much, but it could also impact our water sources. Less snow each year it could cause serious drought, especially due to where Ouray is.

“You know I don’t like not having snow, what am I supposed to do for sports? But for now I’m waiting to get on the slopes and start snowboarding again,” said 8th grader Charlie Tyler.

## Band Program Jazzed

by Mackenzie Gibbs

The entire Ouray High School Stage Band stands up as they start the second verse of Brian Setzer Orchestra’s “Jump, Jive, and Wail.” The crowd goes wild as the band starts to dance with synchronized horn motions.

Mr. Michael Scott has been the Ouray School’s middle and high school band director since the 2015-16 school year. Parents, teachers, and students never cease to be impressed with how much he has improved the music program here at Ouray.

“It was amazing when I went to the first band concert directed by Mr. Scott,” said parent Mike Gibbs. “The whole time I was thinking, ‘these are the same kids from last year?’”

The high school stage band is spread out over three different class periods. Therefore, the majority of the practice time for students is separate from the whole. Prior to the most recent concert, the band only practiced each song all together twice. “It’s really impressive how it’s all able to come together,” said senior Evan Vann. “It’s really all thanks to Mr Scott. He makes sure that every player is secure in musical subtleties so that we all fit together almost seamlessly.”

Mr Scott has also increased student interest in band participation. As of this semester, nearly half of the high school student is taking a class from him, and they all love it.

“Last year, I had two band periods a day,” said senior Keegan Eddy. “It was awesome because first period was just me and Mr Scott. We got to hang out every morning. It was great.”

And it is not just high school that adores the band teacher. Middle schoolers are finding a love for music through him as well. “If Mr Scott got fired, there would probably be riots,” said eighth grader Rock Gibbs. “So many people love him and find an outlet in music. I’d be so mad.”

The school administration is also appreciative of Mr Scott. “Let’s be honest, this guy has more job security than I do,” said superintendent Scott Pankow. “If there was a dire situation of budget cuts, I would not be surprised if he got kept over me. I pride myself in bringing fantastic teachers into this school and he is one of my best accomplishments.”

## Heard in the Halls

“Here’s a fun fact for all of you: I haven’t eaten a banana in about seven years.”

## Calendar

Friday, December 22

End of 1st Semester/Winter Break Begins

