



The Lion's Roar

GERLACH K-12'S MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WRAP JOURNALISM ASSIGNMENT



Photo: Mrs. Black

The staff of *Lion's Roar* poses proudly outside Gerlach K-12, ready to share stories from around the community in their first-ever student publication.

A Project Rooted In Connection & Community

by Mrs. Black, Ms. Ellie & Mr. Jared

Welcome to the very first edition of “The Lion’s Roar”.

For this special debut issue, ten secondary student (grades 6–12) contributed to a celebration of local voices. Most students took on the role of journalist—contacting their subject, preparing questions, conducting interviews, and writing their piece. A few explored different ways to tell stories: one created a comic book, while another curated a music playlist.

Most interviews took place at either Bruno’s Country Club or the Gerlach Library—thank you to both organizations for supporting student work. Our newsroom also extends heartfelt thanks to Moon Mandell, who joined us via video to share insights on the art of photojournalism.

We were thrilled to receive interest from more than twice as many community members as we have students—thank you to all who made time and encouraged students along the way.

As you read these profiles, we hope you will see our town the way our students do: full of inspiring, hardworking people who make Gerlach and Empire extraordinary places to call home.

If you’d like to be part of our next edition (planned for December or January), please email gerlach@washoeschools.net or call (775) 557-2326.

Push Through. No Matter What

by Jacob Keesee

As a kid, Mark Keesee moved a lot around California.

The reason he had to move a lot was because his dad kept getting new jobs. Mark mostly lived in trailer parks. Since he was young, he didn’t have a choice about moving or not—all he knew was that he had to pack up his stuff and load it up in the trailer.

When Mark turned 16, he moved out. He was tired of moving so much. So, he decided to get a job and buy an apartment so he could stay in one spot for a long time. Eventually, Mark moved to Lake Tahoe and bought a duplex. He had a nice view of the lake.

Then, Mark moved to Gerlach. Mark worked as a mechanic and a truck driver for Courtney Rock and Transport. Mark retired from this job because he got in a car crash and had to get surgery. After the car crash, he would lay low from work for a while, but not for too long...

Soon after surgery, Mark went back to work. This time, he went to work for Burning Man. A non-



MARK KEESEE

Photo: Jacob Keesee

profit organization that has a big party every year. If you’re interested, you should look it up. It’s clear that Mark likes working on cars because he is also a mechanic for Burning Man.

Mark has always pushed through challenges like work and moving as a kid. “Pushing through stuff will just help you get through anything,” said Mark.

A Soul That Shines Everywhere She Goes

by SweetPea McCumsey

Ryan McNulty is a kind-hearted member of our community who wants everyone to feel welcomed and feel a sense of belonging.

Ryan is supportive, passionate, altruistic, and simply a friend to all. When I met Ryan for the first time, I immediately felt a sense of warmth and empathy radiating off of her. She is extremely passionate about everything she puts her heart and mind into. She loves finding happiness and opportunities in every moment—or as Ryan likes to put it, “I love the little adventures that lead to learning more about yourself and others, I love finding new opportunities everywhere I go.”

In herself and in others, some of her biggest values are having a tight-knit community, meaning that she wants all of her friends to be very close.

See FAMILY on Page 2

Finding Balance Through Massage, Movement And Music

by Arlette Macias-Ruiz

In our small and unique community, we have a gem—Adah Lavoy. Adah is a massage therapist who has supported people in many ways, one of them being massage therapy. She was also a mental health TheraTec in the state of Oregon at a stabilization crisis unit. During our time together, Adah mentioned how she liked helping people that needed to be rehabilitated into society after being in state institutions or prisons. She taught them to “live life on life’s terms.”

Adah shares that when she needed to have hip surgery, it was her physical therapist, Bonnie Holland, who inspired her to become a massage therapist “I had this special woman who inspired me.”

She was intrigued by doing what her physical therapist did since at the time Adah was a mental health TheraTec. Bonnie taught her about more than just being a physical therapist. Bonnie also taught Adah that “it’s all in continued education”. Once Adah got her license to touch, she continued her education in physical therapy. Today, Adah is learning about molecular biology and chemistry—and how she can transfer them into a chiropractic doctorate program.

Adah says that massage therapy is so much more than just a luxury experience or rubbing lotion on people. It’s a way of feeling better and self-care for so many people. “There’s benefits from it both mentally and physically.”

Since Adah’s job takes a lot of strength and energy, she makes sure to do a few things for self-care. One of the things she does for self-care is to use a five-pound hula hoop. “I try to schedule myself where I’m not so busy that I can’t practice self-care.”



ADAH skating on Highway 447.



ADAH assists a patient at her studio on Main Street.

Photos provided by Adah

She is also passionate about roller skating. “The longest trip I’ve done on roller skates was from San Diego, CA to Portland, OR and it took eight weeks. [It] was for a fundraiser for a group called Adventure Cycling—they have been putting the bike corridors in America since the 70s, and we helped raise \$50,000 dollars to have a new bikeway system along the Mississippi River.” She also stated that she takes lots of walks with her dog and she likes being out with nature.

Fun Fact: Something not many people know about Adah is that she loves Japanese goth music. “[People] see that I have tattoos and piercings and what not so they think I might be a little bit alternative but deep down I love Japanese goth and a lot of people don’t know that because they might hear me play my spa music, or they find flutes relaxing, but in between my sessions I put on my Japanese goth.” Her favorite band is Buck-Tick.

Family. Continued from Page 1

“Family is something that matters most to me. Blood related or not, I want everyone to be a big happy family.”

Ryan loves having the freedom to be herself. She also appreciates people who are able to simply be themselves around her—she likes knowing that people feel close and comfortable enough to be their unique selves. Ryan likes down-to-earth people that show no regret in being true to their heart and soul. “I appreciate authenticity and a sense of togetherness.”



RYAN and SWEET PEA Photo: Sweet Pea McCumsey

Ryan has an adventurous personality, a free spirited heart, and a love for finding pockets of peace throughout her daily life. Ryan said, “I am very outgoing, and I love meeting new people, which is ironic because I am usually really shy around people that I have never met.”

Ryan loves venturing out and trying new things, she is very open minded, and loves to spread kindness and positivity everywhere she goes. Ryan is very passionate about all things she incorporates in her life, such as her job, friends, family, dancing, and being surrounded by a loving community. My hope is that more people can see the world like Ryan does, through opportunistic, visionary, hopeful, kind, and nurturing eyes.

Would you like to participate in our next issue of The Lion's Roar?

If so, we would like to hear from you!
gerlach@washoeschools.net
(775) 557-2326

BOOK REVIEW

Connor Black’s most recent title:

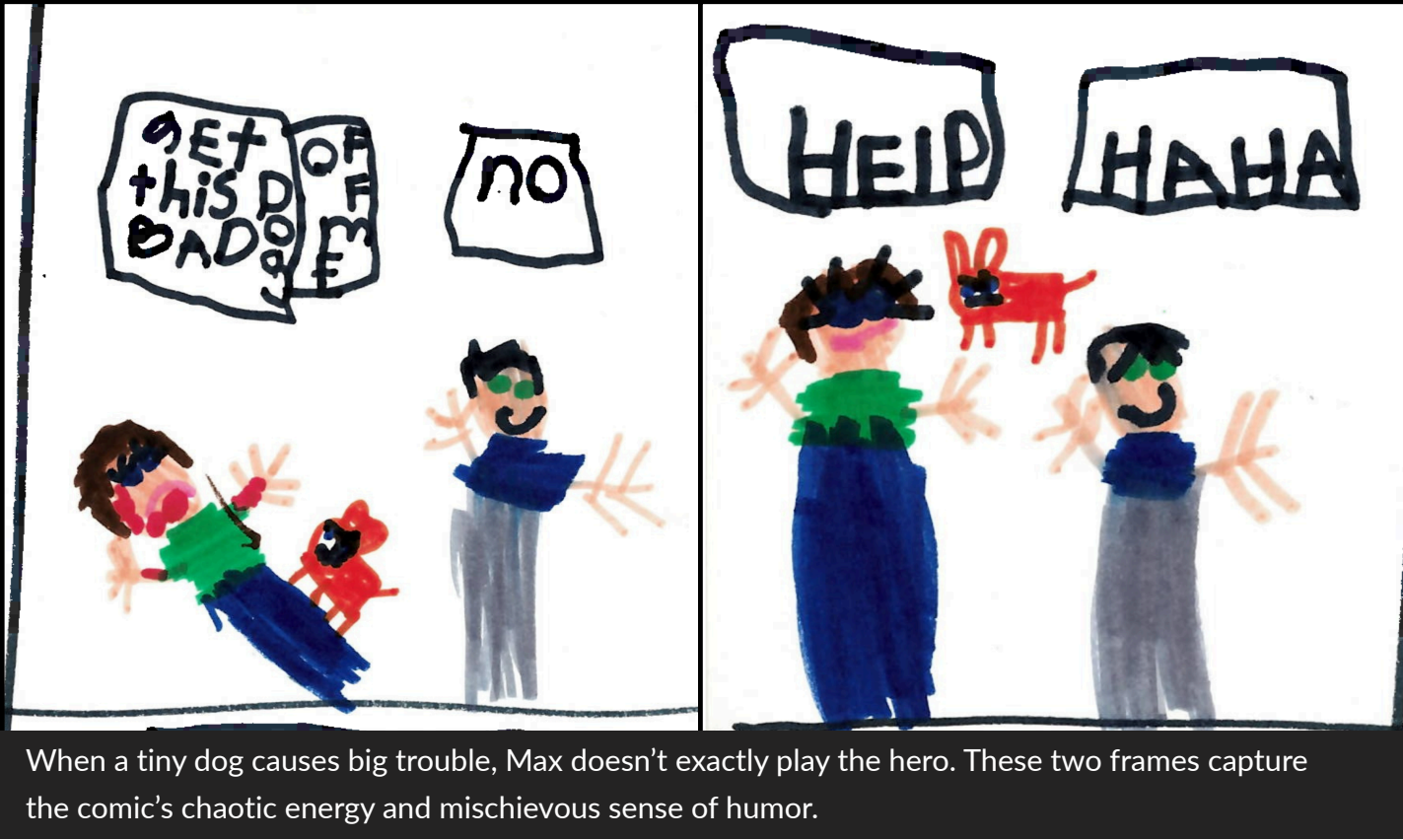
“Max”

by Ms. Alex, Ms Ellie & Mr. Jared

From the creator of “The Angry Chicken” series comes another wild ride.

“Max” is a clever, funny, and action-packed comic book that keeps readers on their toes with sudden plot twists and comical exaggerations, all of which show Connor’s talent for storytelling.

Visit www.washoeschools.net/gerlach or use the QR code to unlock the rest of Max’s story.



Once A Teacher, Always A Teacher:

The Art of Teaching Lives Beyond Classroom Walls

by McKinna Thomas

Take out your map and focus in on a little corner of the world called Gerlach, Nevada. Home to approximately 130 residents and to countless natural wonders. If you zoom in, you will find bright-eyed Melissa Kibelbek, also known as Lala, sitting with a cup of coffee being interviewed by a local and curious high school student inside of the town’s one and only Bruno’s Country Club.

Lala’s passion for not only teaching but also learning was inspiring to listen to.

To start the interview off, I said to Lala, “I understand that you were a health educator for middle school students. I am personally planning to pursue a career as a teacher, and I would love to hear what the most rewarding aspect of that career was for you.”

Lala responded, “I have always loved an underdog. And I consistently tried to put myself in their shoes. The kids who would fall asleep on their desks, or sit in the back, or whatever that may be—seeing them feel unmotivated and excluded was heartbreaking. So, when we were in my class, I was able to connect them with the kids who actively participated, and watching their spark come back was really exciting.”

Right off the bat, I knew Lala was a kind and empathetic soul. As she discussed her teaching journey, it was apparent that she believed every kid deserves to be seen. It doesn’t matter what age you may be, it never feels good to be left out or feel like you aren’t enough. Lala recognizes this and has carried that upstander energy into the life she is living now, or in other words, outside of the classroom walls.

I learned quickly: Lala was gifted with a driven, determined, and upbeat personality. It truly radiates off her. When she was an educator, it was more important than ever to keep those natural-born characteristics in constant effect. She noticed that the kids were drawn to and excited by a teacher who cared.

“I don’t know if you were going to ask this, but I am going to offer it. There are so many rewarding and positive aspects of being a teacher, but there was one big downside for me. It was having to deal with other teachers who really didn’t like their jobs. They were burnt out and jaded. It was a real bummer too, because I am coming in super stoked to be here, and my coworkers would try and put me down.”

Emphasis on “try”. Because whether Lala was faced with difficult coworkers, distracted students, or life’s day-to-day struggles. She was born ready to take on the challenge. She knew it was the right thing to keep her chin up, put a smile on her face, and keep moving forward with her students’ best interests at heart. That, to me, is what it means to be a teacher.

The last thing that I asked Lala was, “I have always dreamt of being a teacher too, and I cannot wait to start that career path. What is the best advice that you would give me?” Lala said, “The best advice I could give you would be, please do it. The world needs good teachers, and I can already tell—you’re going to be a great one.”



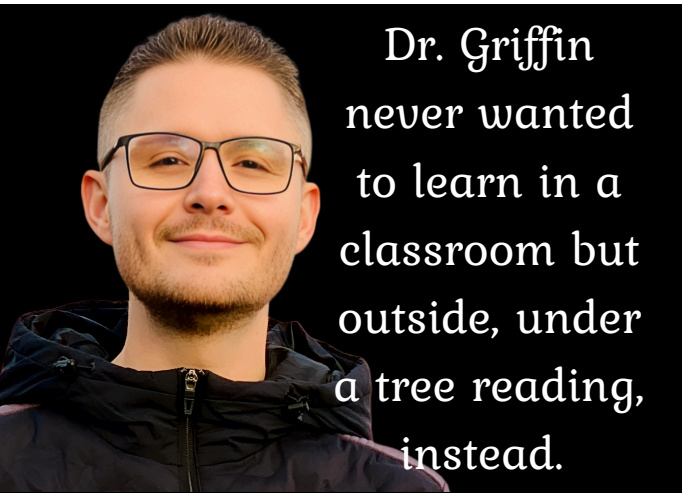
LALA in Black Rock City. Photo provided by Lala

From Georgia Roots to Global Adventures

by Emelly Salazar

At a university called UNR in Reno, Nevada there is a professor named Dr. Jeffrey Griffin. Dr. Griffin is a political science professor at UNR and is 33 years old. Dr. Griffin was born in the small town of Ocilla, Georgia. The house he lived in during childhood is the same house his great-great-grandfather built from the wood at the property. Dr. Griffin’s only dream is to help people as much as he can, without any limits. This dream started at the age of 4 when he was in the church singing.

In second grade, Dr. Griffin never wanted to learn in a classroom but outside, under a tree reading, instead. The



Photos provided by Dr. Griffin

DJ CASSIDY'S DANCE CORNER

HAND-CURATED BY CASSIDY WALTERS

"HOTEL CEILING" BY RIXTON

"APT." BY ROSÉ & BRUNO MARS

"VAMPIRE" BY OLIVIA RODRIGO

"FAKE LOVE" BY BTS

"DYNAMITE" BY BTS

"BOY WITH LUV" BY BTS (FEAT. HALSEY)

"TASTE" BY SABRINA CARPENTER

"THAT'S SO TRUE" BY GRACIE ABRAMS

"LOSE YOU TO LOVE ME" BY SELENA GOMEZ

"24K MAGIC" BY BRUNO MARS

teacher, Terry Cain, noticed this, talked about it to Dr. Griffin, and told him “If you aren’t having fun during class then I’m not having fun.” The very next day his teacher moved all the desks into a circle to make it mimic a campfire, placing a small lantern in the middle as a fire where they would read every day in the morning. This experience helped Dr. Griffin in the future as a professor.

In high school, Dr. Griffin’s teacher, Wendy McFarland, saw potential in him and as a result entered him in Irwin Country High School (ICHS) literary and one-act competitions for speaking, singing, and acting. Dr. Griffin graduated Georgia College in 2013 with his B.A., Political Science at 22 and then in 2022 he got his Ph.D. in Political Science from UNR at 31.



A young GRIFFIN with his teacher, WENDY.

During his life, Dr. Griffin has lived and worked in South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe for work-related reasons. He also lived in South Korea for some time, first as a personal adventure before he made it a home for himself. Throughout his life he also wanted to be a musician but could not and instead became a professor where he is able to live out his dream of helping people and his many students. A fun fact about Dr. Griffin is that his favorite food is cereal and fruits.

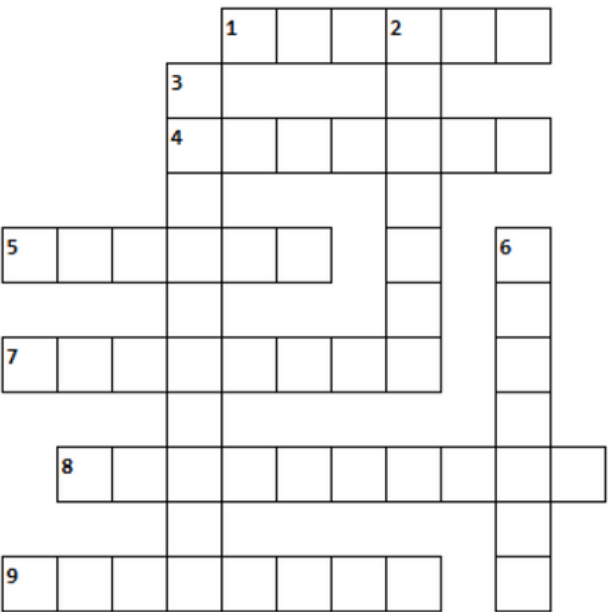
CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Hunting Season
- 4 World Famous
- 5 Makes fertilizer, drywall & alabaster.
- 7 Plays with deer on the range.
- 8 Built in 1909 by Western Pacific.
- 9 Check your boots with a UV light.

Down

- 2 Pyramid Lake Pauite name for the Pyramid Lake area.
- 3 Josie Pearl
- 6 Planet X



Sylkia Sanchez Painting the World with Kindness

by Melissa Paredes Ayala



SYLKIA visited Gerlach K-12. Photo: Melissa Paredes Ayala

Sylkia Sánchez is a woman who has been in Gerlach for approximately 20 years. Her first time in Gerlach was in 1997, which was also the year she attended the Burning Man festival for her first time along with her partner at that time. After that experience, she continued coming back every year because she really liked Gerlach. She used to camp and explore new places—traveling was something she loved—yet she found her home in Gerlach, Nevada.

Sylkia was born in Sinaloa, Mexico and grew up in Los Angeles, California. Before deciding to stay in Gerlach, she received a lot of support from many people in Sinaloa. She spent her childhood in Los Angeles and studied at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Silkia had a job opportunity at Walt Disney Animation that she really wanted, so she decided not to graduate from CalArts and went straight to work instead. She worked at Disney for 10 years, from 1991 to 2001.

She told me how animation was different at that time because there wasn't much technology. So, all the work had to be done on paper and by hand. She worked on many films, including “Pocahontas,” “Aladdin,” “The Lion King,” “Hercules,” “Mulan,” and several others.

Sylkia never married because she preferred to see unfamiliar places, meet new people, and experience more of the world. She has an adventurous personality and loves to try new things. She was very kind from the start of the interview and seemed like a nice person with a lot of passion and energy. I really enjoyed being able to interview Sylkia and learn a few things about her.



Seth Frandsen

by Jaxon Etcheverry

Seth is cool, funny, chill and loud. He likes to play games with everybody, me too. He communicates with people easily too.

“I wanted to be a pilot ever since I was a kid,” Seth mentioned because he liked so much about flying. “The excitement, the thrill, the speed, the height. Everything about flying—I adore.” But it did not work out for him because it was “100 thousand dollars to get fully licensed.”

Seth also studied finance, economics, and business analytics. “I learned how businesses shape the economy, how the power of money supply and control can drive the economy, and how utilizing mathematics in setting pricing can help further drive business growth. I also learned how the financial markets work.”

He went to high school in Las Vegas and was raised there to which is really a cool place to be raised in with all the cool stores and places to go to like the M&M store or the Coca-Cola store with all the weird flavors they have there, He liked being outdoors with all the mountains and rocks that surround him.



SETH and **JAXON** Photo: Brandy Etcheverry

He said that “I spent some time cold calling for the university trying to gain donations. I spent some time working for Allstate as an insurance agent (salesman) in the city Reno before moving to Empire.” He said, “I learned about the opportunity at a local career fair hosted by a professor at UNR. After the career fair, my future in risk management was set in stone”.

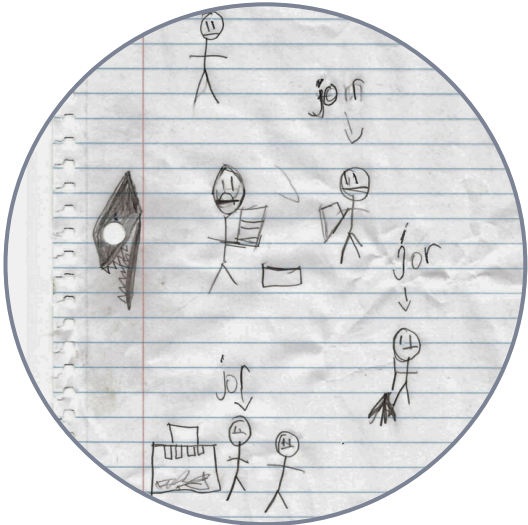
Seth mentioned that his dad is a construction worker which is cool because it’s like Legos if you think about it: with all the building and placing you have to do, and building houses.

He said that he also did insurance which helps individuals and businesses understand and purchase insurance policies, cold caller which is someone that’s often a salesperson, who makes unsolicited phone calls to potential customers and to an auto shop and the shop workers who diagnose and repair vehicles, and who perform tasks ranging from routine maintenance to complex repairs.

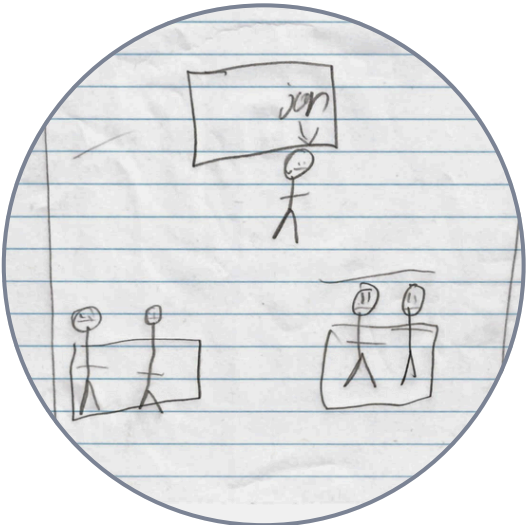
Joe Kibelbek is a good guy

by Nathan Salazar

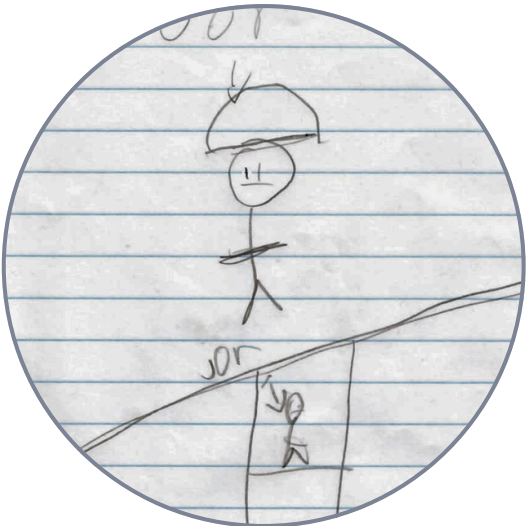
Joe is a helpful person.
He likes to help his friends.



Joe was a teacher. Joe loves science.
He taught science. He enjoys teaching
kids. He also volunteered at schools.



Joe has been to the bottom of a mine.
Joe’s friend was working in a mine.



Joe loves pets, adventuring and
cooking! He has 2 dogs and he loves
them very much.

