

The Flock

March '22, Week 10

WISH Academy Student News

Volume 1, Issue 1

Our Mission

~ Hannah Benveniste

D11 - Welcome to the first issue of *The Flock*; we are a by students, for students newspaper. We hope to strengthen the community by creating an atmosphere of transparency and collaboration. By elevating students' voices the WISH community spirit will grow. Our mission is to keep students updated on events, schoolwide debates, and policy. We strive to become an entertaining yet educational resource that will foster a love for journalism for generations of WISH students.

Our team is currently made up of Emma Petersen, Gabriel Koppula, Nicholas Steinman, Hannah Benveniste, and our Sports Journalist, Dillion Jenkins. We want to give a big thanks to our faculty advisor Ms. Avalos. Over a month-long period, we worked hard to propose, research, write, edit, and format informational articles about community debates, clubs, school events, and more, but keeping the tradition of journalism alive at WISH is much more than informational articles. We are proud to announce our Games Section featuring crossword puzzles and word searches and our Opinion Section, which provides an outlet for students to share their voices.

The newspaper club is ... (see pg. 2)

MASKS OPTIONAL 3/23



Students gather to spectate the Pi Day math contest last week. Although wearing face masks outdoors has not been required for several weeks, many students still do so when not eating.

~ Nicholas Steinman

LOS ANGELES - On Friday, March 18, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) announced that it had reached an agreement with labor unions to lift the district's indoor mask mandate for students and staff beginning this Wednesday, March 23. This came after the state and county had both ended their mandates on March 12. On Sunday, WISH announced that, in accordance with this, WISH's indoor mask mandate will also end on March 23, provided that the agreement is ratified by the LAUSD teachers' union as expected. After that point, the school will still provide masks to those who wish to wear them. Mask-wearing has been optional outdoors for several weeks.

WISH and the district intend to continue with other measures such as weekly COVID testing and daily school passes for the remainder of the school year.

This all comes amidst a wave of pressure nationally and locally to end remaining mask mandates and other COVID measures, especially at schools. This has been buoyed by changes in national and state health guidelines, as well as some seeking to move on over two years after the pandemic first began. However, some have expressed concerns at the safety implications of this and other changes given that the virus is still spreading globally. Many have also raised concerns about the impacts on immunocompromised ... (see pg. 4)

Success at Youth & Govt. Summit

~ Nicholas Steinman

CALIFORNIA - A month ago,, high schoolers and adults from across California packed into a Zoom webinar for the final culmination of their months of work as lawyers, lobbyists, reporters, politicians, and candidates in the state YMCA's Model Legislature and Court program. The nearly 75-year-old program, which usually takes place in person in the actual chambers of the state capitol, provides students with valuable experience taking on various roles in a massive simulation of state government. It also provides an opportunity to take part in many



activities and bond with others, locally and at statewide conferences. Students draft bills, give speeches, prepare lengthy analyses, run for office, and perform many other functions after months of preparation within dozens of local delegations. Despite being held online, this ... (see pg. 5)

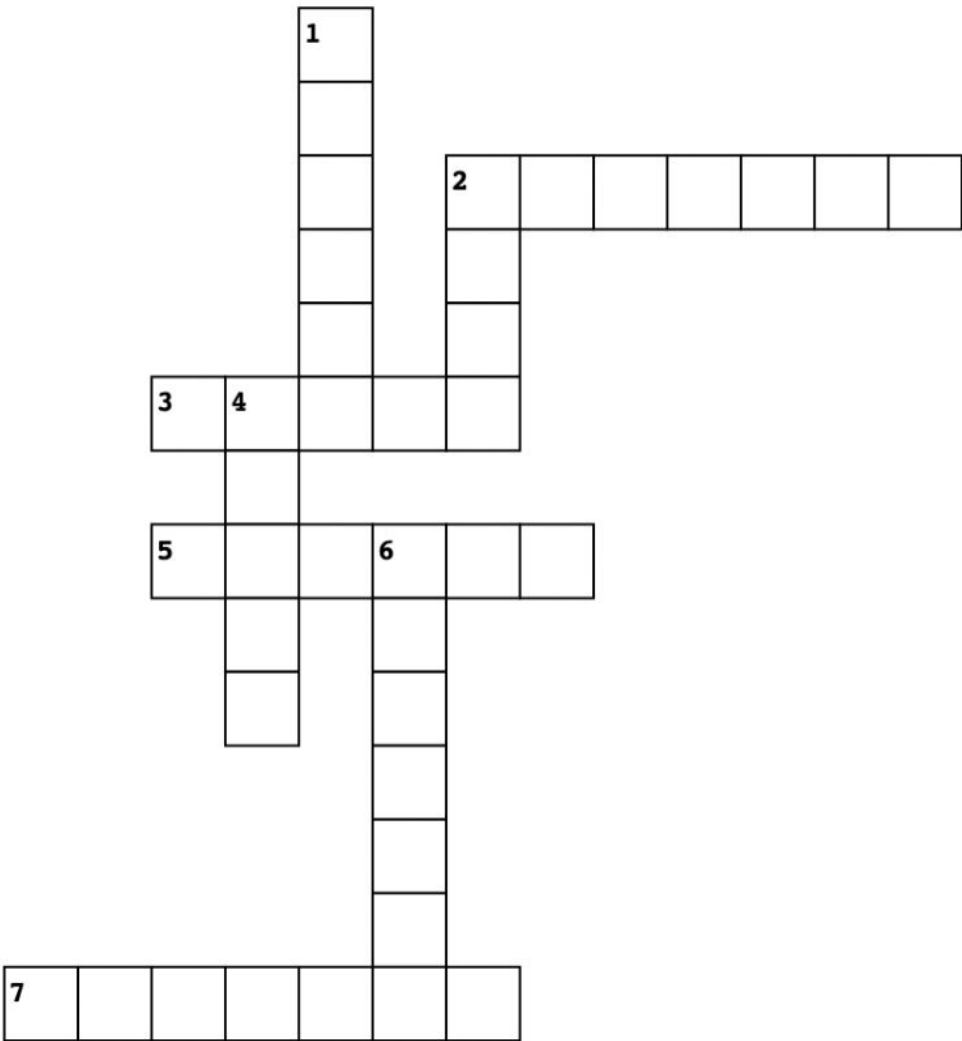
In the paper...

Read on to see:

- Recent News
- Lunch Club Updates
- Extracurricular Achievements
- Upcoming Events
- Month in Review
- Sports Update
- Crosswords
- Pictures

WORD GAMES

Planets



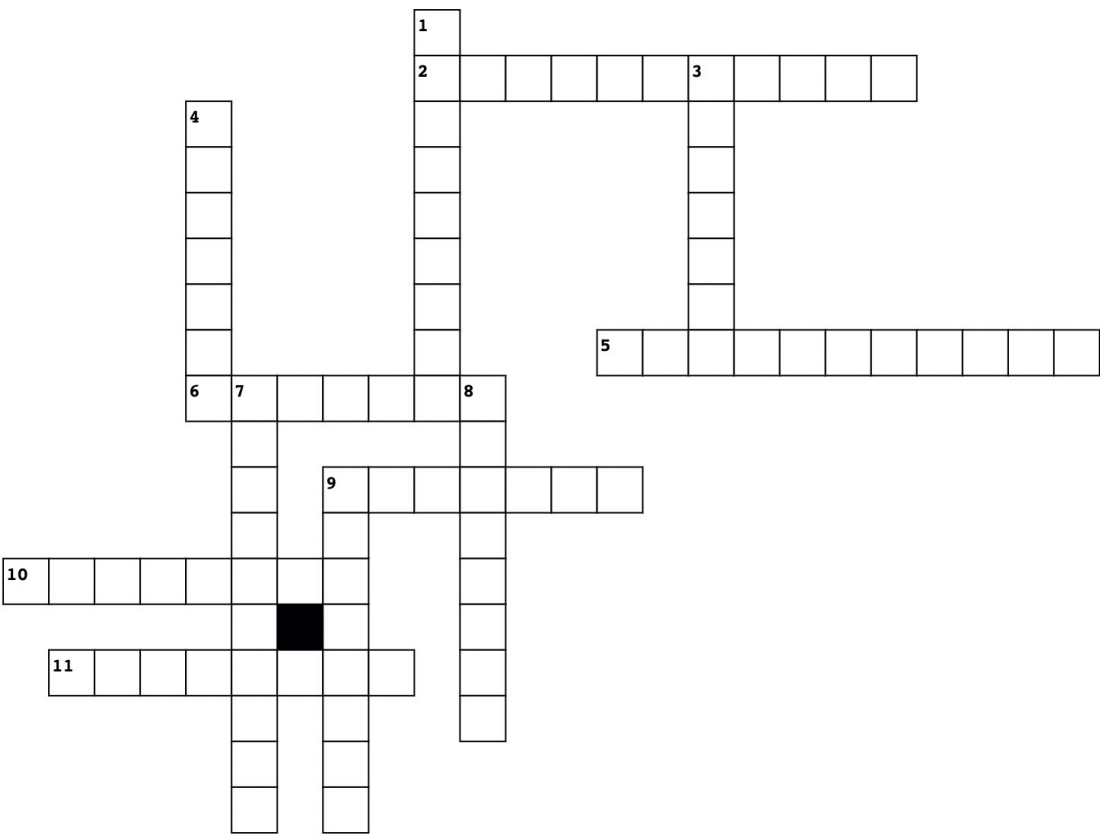
Down

- 1. A gas giant, but with huge visible rings
- 2. Cold planet with a red, rocky surface
- 4. A life-sustaining planet that most of us call home
- 6. The blue planet that is the only planet in our solar system that is not visible to the naked eye

Across

- 2. The smallest planet in the system; the closest to the sun
- 3. The ice giant that is the closest planet to Earth
- 5. An ice giant that has 27 moons and rotates on its side
- 7. A stormy gas giant; the biggest planet in the system

Common Animals



Down

- 1. A green lizard with a 360-degree field of vision, better known as Rango
- 3. A pinkish salamander that can be found living in high altitude water
- 4. A reddish-brown antelope living in Africa and Asia that can run up to 60 mph
- 7. A light-colored, squidlike mollusk with two tentacles
- 8. Nocturnal animal that lives underground, it is also the first word in the English dictionary
- 9. Red-headed mammal that can occasionally have stripes

Across

- 2. Aggressive carnivores that are not as sweet as they sound
- 5. Venomous lizards that are characterized by their orange and black pattern
- 6. Almost a porcupine, not quite a hedgehog
- 9. Tiny animals that live in underground systems in the plains of Africa
- 10. An ant-eating mammal that has the ability to roll into a ball
- 11. An amphibian who hangs out on plants and croaks around 75 times per minute

Our Mission

(from pg. 1) ... always looking for new members. We need writers and editors as well as formatters, fact-checkers, and data collectors. We are also looking for artists interested in starting a comic strip. If you want to participate in the formation of this newspaper, you can contact Ms. Avalos at cavalos@wishcharter.org or the Editor and Chief, Hannah, at hannahb@wishcharter.org. You can also stop by the Newspaper club on Tuesdays in D11. If you do not want to join the club, but want to see your voice reflected, you can email Hannah or Ms. Avalos proposals, concerns, or even entirely written articles. There would be no Newspaper without readers, so thank you.

Academic Decathlon Team Competes



Some members of WISH's inaugural Academic Decathlon team pose for a photo

~ Emma Petersen

LOS ANGELES - WISH launched its Academic Decathlon team during the last months of 2021, just in time for the start of competitions in January. The team has already competed in all three events of the season: Essay Competition, Speech and Interview, and the Subject Tests. In late January, Decathletes participated in the Essay Competition

on the WISH campus and were given a choice of three different prompts. They were given 50 minutes to complete their essays. The next competition was Speech and Interview, which was held at El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills. Prior to the event, Decathletes wrote a three to four minute long speech. In addition to this pre-written address, Decathletes also wrote an impromptu two minute speech at the event. They also took part in a short interview following the speeches. One of the decathletes described the event as “An exciting new experience.” The last of the competitions, the Subject Tests, took ... (see pg. 4)

WISH Wash

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Dance



WISH Middle School students on the East Coast trip in Spring 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the trip's cancellation in the last two years, it was opened this year to WISH High School students.

~ Nicholas Steinman

With winter coming to an end and the beginning of Spring Break now less than a month away (the final short day prior to break being the 8th of April), a number of exciting happenings await students in the coming weeks. The MS/HS talent show will be taking place on Monday, March 28. Auditions have already taken place, and many acts from both schools will be presenting, featuring musicians and other performers. The talent show will take place from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the stage between the C and D buildings. The Spring Dance will take place on Thursday, March 31 at the CenterPointe Club in Playa Vista,

with ticket sales having already begun. See our article on this for more information. Academically, there are also several important dates to know before break. Parent-teacher conferences have taken place last week, and this week marks the end of the third quarter of the school year. As usual, assignments will be due earlier in the week. In addition, exhibition projects will also be due at the end of the quarter, with presentations occurring soon after on April 6. Spring Break will begin on Monday, April 11th. The first week of Spring Break will also include the East Coast Trip for participating students. The trip will be a densely-packed tour along the coast from Boston to Washington, DC. For many participants, it may be only after this, in the week of Monday, April 17, that they will be able to get some rest.

The poster for WISH's Middle School / High School talent show, taking place next Monday at 5:30 PM.



~ Nicholas Steinman

In celebration of the beginning of the spring season, WISH Academy will be holding a Spring Formal Dance at the CenterPointe Club in Playa Vista on Thursday, March 31. Students will be welcome to bring guests, but they must either be fully vaccinated or show a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the event. For WISH students, the school will already have such COVID tests on record. In addition, face masks will not be required indoors or outdoors for fully vaccinated attendees. This will not apply to those without proof of vaccination. Tickets are already on sale for \$25 each outside of the main office, and will cost \$35 each at the door on the night of the dance. Attendees will also be expected to have a signed permission slip, copies of which can be found in the K building. Much more information on the event, which will be not dissimilar to last semester's Homecoming Dance (pictured above), is expected to be announced shortly.

WISH Baseball

~ Dillon Jenkins

It's baseball season at WISH Academy and the WISH community is looking forward to some action! This season, eight players will be playing for the WISH Academy baseball team: Marcus Young, Amare Mackenzie, Christan Silva, Nathan Valdivia, Sol Miller, Jose Luna, Keith Hartman, and Alex Handelman. Coach Kevin Fragg is leading the team this season and is currently arranging the roster. His first major decision for the team of many to come will be figuring out who is going to be the pitcher; everyone will certainly be competing for this position on the team. ... (see pg. 5)

Month in Review

~ Nicholas Steinman

While sometimes overshadowed in terms of events by busier fall and spring months, the winter months of the school year represent a culmination of many activities throughout the school year, as well as a time for new beginnings. The past month (February and early March) has been no exception. Schoolwide, this time corresponds to the third quarter of the year. This brings a focus on service learning, as well as the deadline for yearly service hours. As a result, WISH has recently held events like the Annual Beach

Cleanup at Toes Beach on March 5th, which featured a great turnout from all three schools. After taking last year off due to COVID-19, the cleanup was very successful and productive. In addition to this, many students also performed community service on their own time in various ... (see pg. 6)

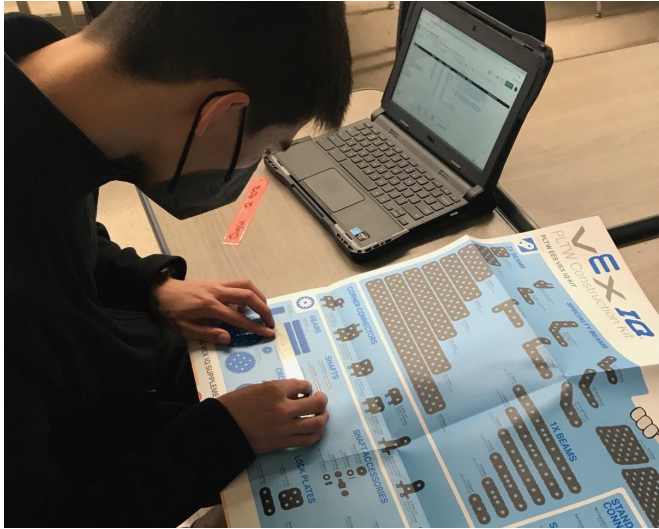
WISH celebrated Pi Day on 3/14 with a pie-eating and math contest, pictured here.



AcaDeca. Team

(from pg. 2) ... place on February 5th over Zoom. Participating Decathletes completed 7 exams and had 30 minutes to complete each one. The subjects ranged widely, quizzing on everything from economics to art and music. Following this intense test session, the team was relieved. “We were just glad that the [competitions] were over and we could start preparing for next year,” said a member of the WAHS team. During the awards ceremony at El Camino Real Charter High School, the WISH Academic Decathlon team won a total of 10 awards. These awards covered all sections of the season. The WAHS team won awards in all three competitions. Some of the specific awards included expertise in subject tests, such as economics, math, and literature. Currently, the Academic Decathlon team is comprised of 9th and 10th grade students and the club is now open for more to join with next year’s competitions on the horizon. As the 21-22 season has ended, the team meets on Fridays during lunch in Ms. Doyle’s room to discuss their plans for next year's competitions. Each year, a theme for the contests; This year’s theme was water meaning that the questions included in the subject tests revolved around the subject of water. The next theme for the Decathlon will be released in May, and WISH Decathletes have already begun to prepare for the competitions.

NASA Selects Project



CubeSAT member Nathan Scott at work in D7 ~ Gabriel Koppula

D7 - Getting to work as NASA on projects that go beyond the dark expanse of space is an incredible feat. However, even young engineers of today can reach for the stars! At the end of January, the CubeSAT club, short for Cube Satellite, won a \$1500 grant from the NASA TechRise Student Challenge to build their project for a rocket leaving our planet in 2023. Recently, *The Flock* snagged an interview with Nathan Scott, one of the members of the team who will be building this exciting project! **What’s your name, and what are the names of your team?** My name is Nathan Scott, and the CubeSAT team consists of Catalina C., Jayla D.O., Logan W, and myself. **What is CubeSAT?** The CubeSAT Lunch Club focuses on researching and building interesting STEM projects, particularly related to space. We enter our project proposals in a bunch of different contests, including some created by NASA. Our most recent proposal was actually selected

by NASA’s TechRise program to be built and launched into space. **How and when did this whole thing begin?** This club was actually started last year during virtual learning by Catalina as a robotics club, but there wasn’t much interest and we weren’t able to do much on Zoom. Because of this, we decided to change the focus to small space-related projects in the second semester of last year. Our first project was called CTE Mission CubeSAT, and we designed a small cube-shaped satellite (hence the name) that we would launch via a high-altitude balloon. **What’s the project about?** Our most recent project was created for the TechRise Student Challenge, and it’s run by NASA’s FutureEngineers program. It was a nationwide contest where middle and high school engineering classes and clubs designed an experiment for either a high-altitude balloon or a sub-orbital rocket. We chose to create our project around the rocket, and our project focuses on how waves move through water in zero gravity. **How are you planning to accomplish this?** Right now, we’re still in the planning phase of the project. Every 2 weeks, we have a Zoom meeting with a group of NASA engineers who are helping us find good components and deal with some of the complicated problems that come with launching an experiment into space. Once we ... (see pg. 6)



From top: members of the Academic Decathlon team with their medals, a NASA logo-marked box delivered to the CubeSAT lunch club

Mask Mandate Ending

(from pg. 1) ... people and others especially vulnerable to the virus, which could be especially relevant to WISH, given its inclusive focus. Others counter, however, that COVID-19 is now spreading at a very low rate and that new techniques exist to fight it, and argue that at some point it will be necessary to end mask requirements for those comfortable not wearing them. To many, masks have been uncomfortable and inconvenient, a reminder of the pandemic that stifles interpersonal connection even in-person. Despite the change in policy, it remains unclear how many WISH students and staff will immediately

take off their masks. Many expressed surprise and some concern at the decision when asked on Monday, although others looked forward to seeing people’s faces again. It’ll certainly be interesting to see how this historic moment unfolds at WISH. In any case, some at LAUSD have made their intent to move beyond this issue clear. As Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said at the end of a statement last week, “Please consider your situation and do what is best for you or your child. Now that this important issue is behind us, it is time to focus on each student’s full academic potential.”

Sports Update - WISH Baseball

(from pg. 3) ... Coach Fragg will have to look at each player’s strengths before finalizing the roster and giving the players their positions. The team practices Wednesday’s from 5pm-7pm on the track field. The first game will be on Friday, March 25 from 4:30-7:30 at the WAHS/WESM campus on West Manchester Avenue. We are excited to see what our team can do this year. Gooooooooo team! With the first game coming up, let's take home our first win and go strong throughout the season!



A selection of recent WISH sports photos



Youth & Government Victory



The California YMCA announced Ava Castro-DeVarona’s election to be the 75-year-old program’s next Youth Governor on Feb. 27

(from pg. 1) ... conference was especially significant for the many WISH students and other Westchester delegates in attendance. The conference, which was held on the 26th and 27th of January, had already been eventful. Two groups from the Westchester delegation, led by Hannah Benveniste and Kelsey Atlas, advocated for the bills they had written in front of committees of legislators, and one of these, regarding the California Prison Industry Authority, passed unanimously, although it was vetoed days later by the Youth Governor. Meanwhile, other delegates had taken part in court cases, analyzed bills, created budgets, wrote reports, and participated in leadership. Now, it was time for the conference’s election results to be announced. After a primary election a month earlier, WISH 11th-grader and Westchester delegate Ava Castro-DeVarona had been voted one of the final two candidates to be next year’s Youth Governor, the program’s highest position. After some closing speeches, awards, the Chief Justice election results, and a very stressful

animation of a race to represent the results, it was announced that Ava won. She will be the principal student leader of the program, often numbering several thousand participants, over multiple conferences and months of preparation work by students and adults across the state next year, when the program is expected to transition back to its full in-person form at the state capitol in Sacramento. After the close of this final session, Westchester delegates and advisors gathered in a very congratulatory final online check-in, marking in many ways the end of the program year. Regardless, more remained to be done. The final Westchester delegation meeting has yet to be held, and many delegates from Westchester and surrounding areas attended a retreat at Camp Surf in San Diego just last weekend in order to connect with other delegates. Even upon the closure of the year, the coming months will be just the start for Ava and the new delegation officers as they begin preparations for next year’s sessions. All California high school schoolers are welcome to join Model Legislature and Court, part of the state YMCA’s Youth and Government Program, and financial assistance for the program’s expense is available. Westchester delegation meetings begin around September each year. The author won the statewide James C. Risner Outstanding Committee Chair Award, which is also cool.

Month in Review

(from pg. 3) ... functions, alone or with family and friends.

This month also marked a culmination of the work of many extracurricular groups and lunch clubs. WISH's Academic Decathlon team had its competitions, and those in the Westchester Model Legislature & Court Delegation had their final conference and, more recently, an overnight retreat. This newspaper features articles on both of these groups and more.

Many of WISH's sports teams have also finished their seasons in the past few weeks as we enter a new season, and just as many have begun new ones. *The Flock* has covered this briefly in another piece.

Indeed, many new clubs and activities have been formed lately. This publication itself is the product of Newspaper Club, held on Tuesdays during lunch in D11. In addition, Games Club (Thursdays, K8) and Anime Club (Mondays, K2) have begun operating to provide more activities to students during lunch.

Students also participated in competitions such as the Pageant of the Arts this month, with some advancing. As well, students participated in IAB testing to prepare for the SBAC, and 9th graders took the mandatory state fitness test.

Finally, WISH observed Black History Month in February, and is observing Women's History Month in March. Many activities have taken

place to educate the community about Black history and women's history, such as the WISH theater program's production *From Douglass to Gorman* in February. Activities in advisory and in various classes also took place.

Overall, it's been an eventful few weeks, and there's much more left to do as the end of the school year slowly approaches. We hope you had an excellent month.



From top: RISE students at their Women's History Month display, the WISH Annual Beach Cleanup on Saturday, March 5.

NASA Selects CubeSat Club

(from pg. 4) ... finish planning, we will build a few prototype experiments to test here on earth before building our final experiment and shipping it off to NASA.

How did it feel getting selected by NASA? When I first heard that our project was selected, I really couldn't believe it. We were only one of over 600 schools nationwide to submit proposals, and some other schools had whole engineering classes working together. Even now, I'm still surprised and proud of how our tiny group of four sophomores who only meet for 15 minutes a week got selected.

Is there any way I can get involved? If you want to join the CubeSAT team, we meet every Monday during the second half of lunch (11:55-12:10) and every Tuesday morning during office hours (8:00-8:40). Any and all help is welcome!

When is the project launching? We will send the project to NASA in early June, and the rocket will launch in early 2023.

What are some challenges you might face in the process? A challenge we might face would definitely be time constraints, and also making sure that the liquid within the box doesn't leak out, and damage things within the outer area.