

RILEY UNEKIS

Portfolio of the Year Submission

EXPLAINING CONTRIBUTIONS AND WHAT WAS LEARNED

My art skill during the 2019-2020 school year became more refined. I fell into the rhythm of what I felt like my 'style' is.

During the start of the school year, I was still heavily basing my art style on some of my favorite artists; it was still my drawing, but it just didn't feel like it had my personality in it. The first semester I was enrolled in digital design (portfolio for graphic design). Since I was the only person in that class, my teacher let me set the pace for the projects and work I wanted to accomplish. She handed me a worksheet and had me fill out my goals for the year. At first, I had no idea what I wanted to accomplish. I wrote down a few things: work on my Photoshop skills, advance my knowledge of Illustrator and Indesign, and to make it through the full month of Inktober.

On the first day of Inktober, I became extremely frustrated because what I had in my head was not being produced by my hands. After the first week, I flipped through my past work and found out that my style really varied based on the day and what reference images I used. That's when it hit me: I needed to refine my drawing style.

While we were putting together the third issue of our newspaper, my editor-in-chief, Sami, approached me with an offer. She told me I could design the next issue cover. I was extremely excited because this was going to be my very first cover, but that was soon shattered when reality set in. I was about to design the cover of our newspaper's next issue, and the whole school was going to see it. I felt

that if they didn't like the cover, the likelihood of them reading it would drop. I needed to blow this cover out of the water. The only piece of information Sami told me was that it had to be "future." My mind immediately found an idea, and I started to sketch it out, then the next day I started to flesh it out in Illustrator.

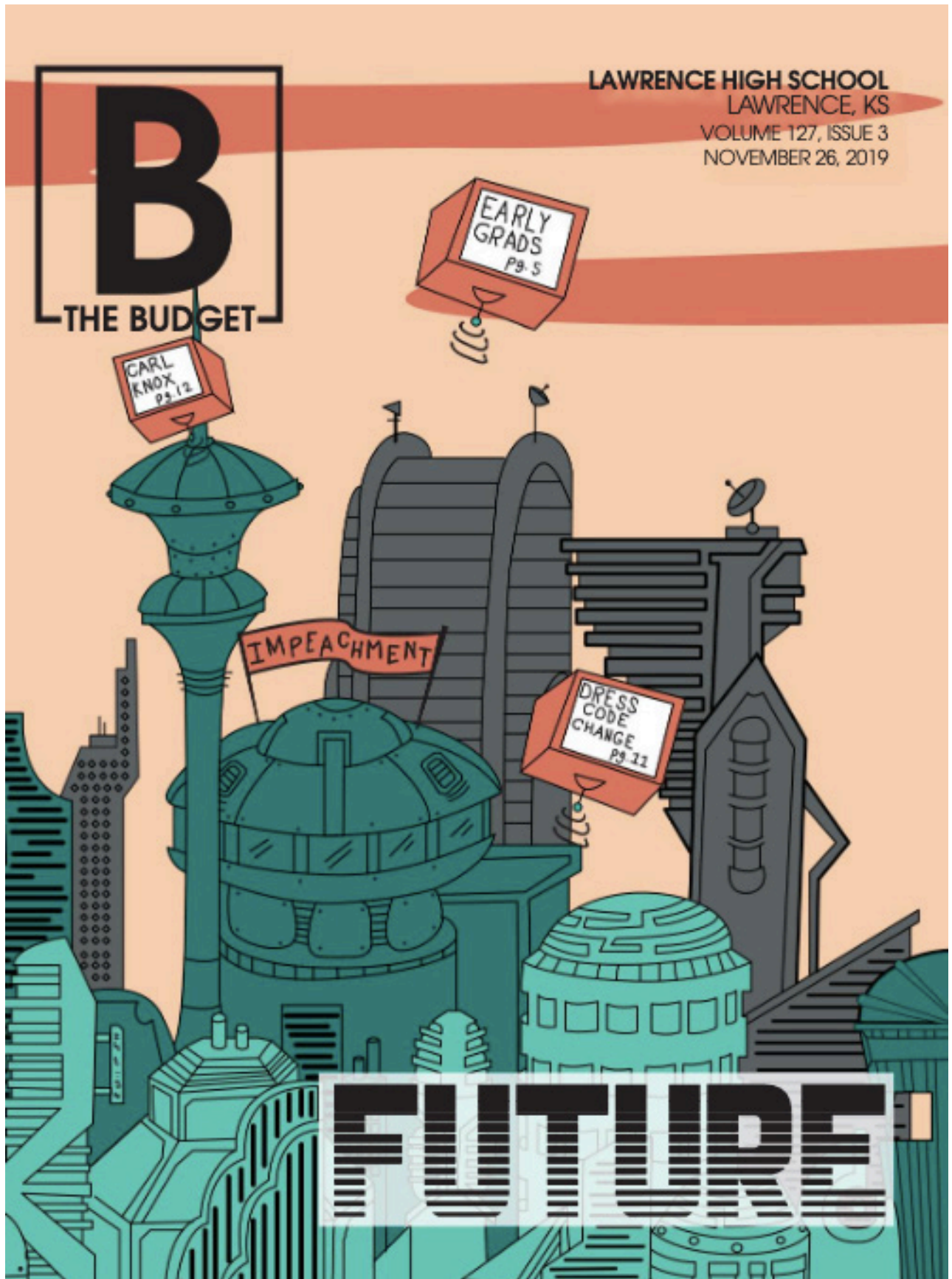
About halfway through the week, I absolutely hated the design. It wasn't what I was looking for; it didn't have the right feel or flow. So I did the only logical thing. I scrapped it and started from scratch. The final idea hit me like a truck. I didn't waste any time. I ripped open the sketch book and scribbled down my idea then went straight to Illustrator. The final result is the cover of our third issue of The Budget, and it won second place in photo illustration for from the Kansas Scholastic Press Association.

I felt like that cover was the turning point in my drawing ability. I pushed myself to find a style and let a little bit of my personality fall into my work. I started to draw more and more of our feature graphics, and I ended up designing three more covers after the first one. My drawing skill also helped me outside of journalism and back in graphic design class. I started making T-shirt designs and ended up selling them to a few of my peers to help raise money for a future screen printing press in the classroom.

I am incredibly excited to further advance my artistic skills in the next year and also assume the position as co-editor-in-chief, next to one of my friends from elementary school.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: FUTURE

Cover of the third issue of The Budget, featured changes that were happening during construction at Lawrence highschool. It also touched on early graduating students and their future plans.



COVER ILLUSTRATION: SUBSTANCE STRUGGLES

Cover of the fifth issue of The Budget, examined the drug education in our district and broke down the teen substance abuse problem. I used a blue on the skin color and the substance to pop out against the fading red, creating a 3D effect.



ILLUSTRATION: SAMI HUGGING THE BUDGET

Illustration of our senior editor and chief saying her goodbyes to the publication. Used in our senior issue, that was mailed to all attending students at Lawrence High School.

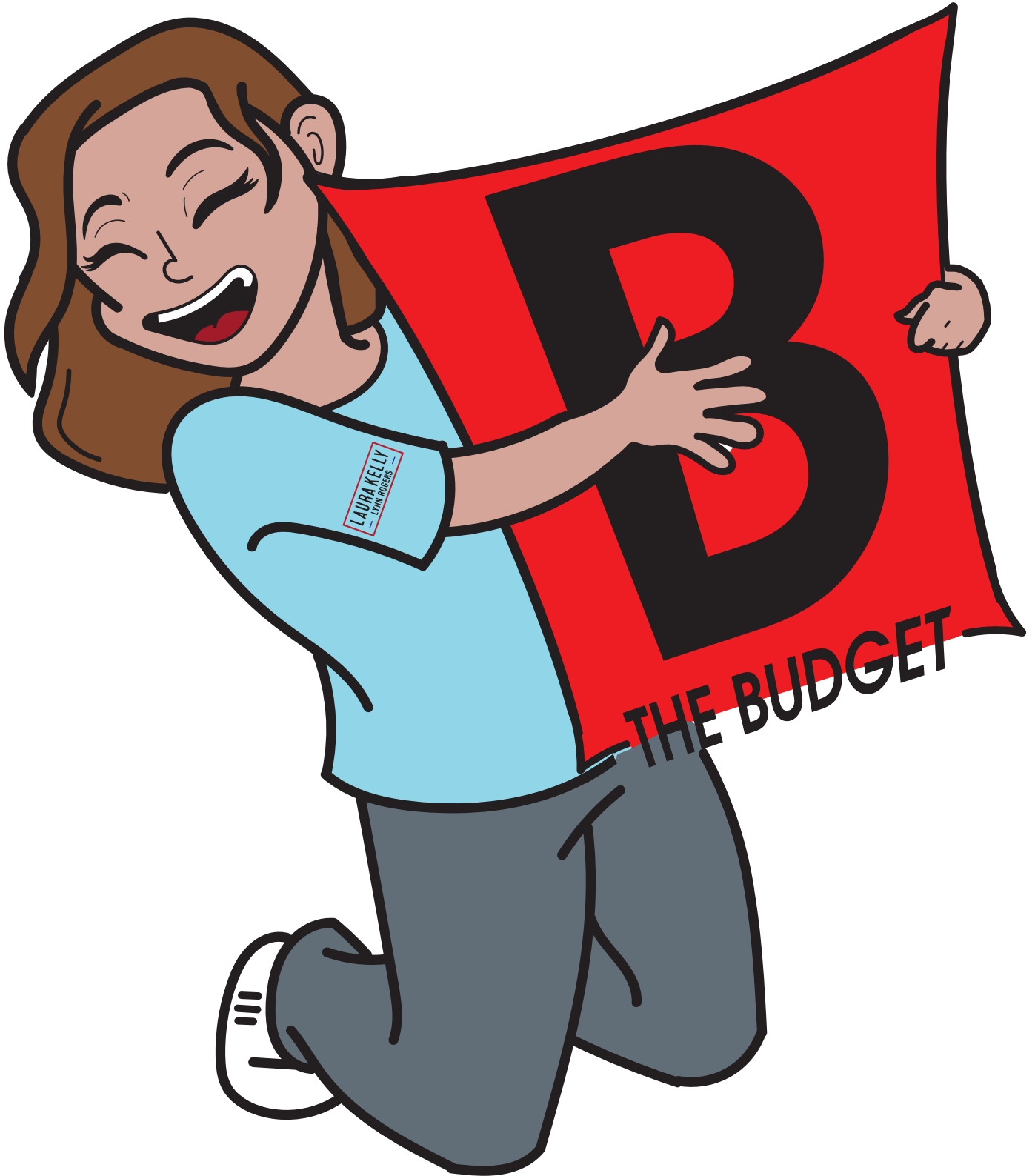


ILLUSTRATION: DANIEL HUNTING COVID

Illustration of our senior Co-Editor and Chief of online, swatting at COVID. Used in our senior issue, that was mailed to all attending students at Lawrence High School. The Idea of a COVID mosquito was inspired by kids TV show, Word World.



ILLUSTRATION: MEME CALENDAR

Illustration of the 2019 Memes for the comic of the December issue. It encompasses the most popular meme during the months of 2019.

