

# 70th Chin National Day celebration entices



Sophomore Anthony Lin scoops sweet shwe yin aye while wearing a Falam paun scarf. He went to the event because of his friend sophomore Elizabeth Bawilung. Lin watched people dance and play games. Behind him, a crowd gathers as two men sit across from each other on an elevated pole and try to knock the other off (Photo by Adam Crozier).

**By Luis Zepeda**

With a Chin population of 16,000 and growing in Indianapolis, particularly in Perry Township, Burmese culture is close and authentic.

For someone like junior **Dawt Cin**, Chin National Day is a yearly celebration that makes her feel closer to her homeland. On the other hand, sophomore **Joseph Carper** was a bit taken aback after attending the Chin cultural celebration.

"Being in a room full of people where none of them looked like me, it was weird," said Carper, who is Caucasian.

The festivities begin with speeches by sponsors, important figures and pastors, followed by games, food, competition, dancing, and even a rapping Chin Idol winner.

Chin National Day was officially Feb. 20, but the celebration was Saturday at Manual High School. At Perry, a celebration Wednesday attracted many students featuring a fashion show, food and games.

The day is a celebration of the vote to adopt Democratic elections at the state and local levels in Burma 70 years ago.

This year, the approach to the Chin holiday was a bit different, with a higher

focus on the culturistic side than in past years. The celebration included more variety in nationalistic music, dance, and food.

Carper was impressed with the garments.

Most Chin clothing is separated into traditional and modern. Traditional clothing is often handed down by family while modern is more decorative in nature, according to Chin students. Traditional garb is also one solid color or pattern as opposed to the different, unique patterns and colors found in modern wear.

Cin's father loaned Carper his traditional shoulder wrap in order for him to fit in with his Southeast Asian classmates a little better.

"I felt a lot closer to the culture, I felt more at place, I didn't feel alienated."

Chin culture is also found within the food, especially the spices.

"A lot of our food is inspired by other places such as Burma and India and incorporated into our culture," said junior **Beth Par**.

Cin loved being able to come together with her Chin friends and her non-Burmese friends.

"My favorite part is bringing my American friends and have them see me in a way I normally don't show."

## Harper creates different characters

**By Sam Cook**

The theater and music departments offer many opportunities for aspiring student actors, but here's another: Speech Team.

Junior **Rachel Harper** competes in the humorous interpretation category, playing multiple characters all by herself in "World's Best Teacher," written by Clint Snyder.

She plays a classroom of children meeting their new Russian teacher Ms. Porschtov. She plays the role of all of the children and the teacher, each with a different voice and demeanor.

"The different traits and habits expressed by each character come together to create a visual representation," Harper said. For example, when one character is supposed to be laid back and careless, she leans back and uses exaggerated hand gestures to reflect that personality, she said.

The speech team competed at Columbus East last weekend. Three students attended the meet with Harper and junior **Tyler McDonald** both placing and receiving ribbons in their respective categories. Sophomore **Aeden Tharpe** also attended his first competition. Coach **Christine Dearth** stated that they "all did well."

The speech competition hosts fourteen different events split between interpretation and debating. Perry's team specializes in Interpretation with all students performing an interpretation. After the performance students are judged at the event and receive notes including both strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

Rachel explained, "I've had my fair share of both useful and odd criticism from past judges, but overall, the feedback I've gotten has been very helpful."

The speech team has had fewer members this year than last year. Scheduling conflicts and other issues have lowered turnout yet Dearth was positive about prospects for next year.

The speech team will be hosting sectionals this weekend. Five Perry students will compete against 118 other students.

"The goal of sectionals is for them to make it to state, I'm hopeful for them," Dearth said.



**Rachel Harper**



**Aeden Tharpe**

## REACH Club helps students transition

**By Payton Romans**

Last year, a new idea emerged to help transgender students who either cannot afford to buy clothes representing their identity, or whose parents refuse to buy them.

"Anyone wanting to explore their identity wants to take that first step in transitioning, but a lot of times don't know how," said REACH club president **John Bitsui**. That's where REACH Club comes in.

REACH Club, meaning Respect Everyone and Coexist Happily, is a welcoming club that represents the LGBTQ+ community. It is open to anyone, including people who identify as straight and are interested in becoming educated on the topics the club stands for.

Bitsui, sophomore **Savannah Whitaker** and freshman **Iliany Novia**, all students holding leadership positions in REACH, came up with the idea of having a donation box where anyone willing could donate old clothes, new makeup, money or anything they found appropriate. The idea is to make the transition more comfortable and easy.

So far, REACH Club has collected \$15-\$20 and makeup donations as well. Bitsui plans on donating a lot of

his old closet to help out too.

"Everything helps, even spare change," said junior and cis female **Kate Rogers**.

The group is hopeful for more donations coming soon and are already pleased with the income they have collected.

"I know when I was transitioning, it was really hard to start because of clothes and appearance. So I'm hoping that this donation box can save some struggle to anyone else in the same position," said Bitsui.

Distribution of the donations are given out as first come first serve. The person wanting something from the box approaches Bitsui and asks what is available, and are then granted whatever item the president thinks can help.

If interested in donating, willing participants are encouraged to bring in their lightly used clothes or makeup to economics teacher **Sarah Wintin-Guthrie's** room, 12AE. Clothes must be washed before bringing in and makeup unused.