

yearbook

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Assembled in a large circle and tied together with lime green yarn, the *Heritage* yearbook staff recited their vows and concluded the first ever yearbook wedding ceremony with cupcakes and apple juice. The wedding provided an interesting way to kick off the year, encouraging staff members to stay committed to the book and to each other.

"I believe it was a good new tradition to have, and it helps demonstrate the commitment that there is to yearbook. Just like when you get married, you have to truly love and believe in what you are doing," senior editor-in-chief Rachel Hoffman said.

The 38 staff members showed their commitment right from the beginning, gathering quotes and photos to assemble the yearbook. Some, such as sophomore photographer Uriah Roe, went to new extremes.

"I walked three miles [to a JV football practice] and three miles back, and then when I got there I found out that the f-stop wouldn't adjust. I spent 30 minutes trying to adjust it, and eventually I just went home; my camera wasn't working at all," Roe said.

Senior editor-in-chief Caroline Heller and the other yearbook editors adjusted to new roles and responsibilities on the *Heritage* staff.

"The best part about being co-editors-in-chief is I don't have to do it all alone: I have Rachel to rely on if I'm having a bad day; I can just let her take over," Heller said. "I'm more design and she's more management, and I don't always deal with people as well as she does, so I don't have to worry about those things."

Senior photo editor Mike Abell did not have a co-editor, but he still enjoyed mentoring the photographers.

"I like being a resource for people who are under me. I just like helping people who need help," Abell said.

The hard work, the bonding during late nights and the secrecy about the theme from the rest of the school until distribution day distinguished yearbook from sports or clubs.

"Yearbook is more than just a class or activity, it's more than just a family," Heller said. "Yearbook is like a cult. Yearbook kids are really the only kids that understand how terrible it is to sometimes be a yearbook kid and how amazing and hilarious and just awesome it is. Nobody else understands it, and most people think the book poofs out, in like, two days."

The yearbook staff agreed with this statement. Writers and photographers sometimes struggled to get the perfect quote or picture, and new editors were initially shocked with huge deadlines.

"It's almost like the elves who work on the shoes at nighttime. Nobody really sees us, but we're down here working like crazy," Abell said.

All the stress and secrecy was worth it as the yearbook family proudly displayed their work.

"I like the fact that all of our hard work and everything that we do -- we get to see a product at the end of the year. There are real skills you learn in journalism, and the yearbook is something that people really do keep forever," Hoffman said.

SIDEBAR:

Several staff members spent a week in July at a journalism conference in Dallas. New editors picked up skills in computer programs and design strategies, and senior editor-in-chiefs Rachel Hoffman and Caroline Heller began preparation for the book. The staff members agreed that the conference was a positive experience.

"I actually learned a lot because this is my first time doing design; now I have an idea of what to do, so I'm really excited to put it into the yearbook," sophomore design editor Nanae Urano said.

They also had their fair share of laughs after finding Dr. Pepper barbecue sauce during a mall visit, hearing sophomore design editor Emma Adcox talk about meatballs in her sleep and helping Heller carry her new yearbooks on the flight home after she exceeded the luggage weight limit by 18 pounds.

"I had to open up my luggage in front of everyone with...all my dirty laundry, and I had to get all the books out, and everybody had to carry a yearbook onto the plane so my baggage wouldn't be heavy. We still have books scattered at our houses," Heller said.