

Audience can fall under the gaze of Big Brother in "1984"

BY DANIEL NASH
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Big Brother is watching. Or, in the case of Sumner High School's production of "1984," Superintendent Gil Mendoza is watching.

The high school drama department borrowed the administrator's face and voice for the stage adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian novel, about a government worker's growing unease with the totalitarian society in which he lives. Mendoza is the stand-in for Big Brother, the unseen but ever-present dictator of Oceania. His face is printed on a poster that will hang over the audience at all times during the show and his voice was recorded for the character's speaker box announcements in various scenes.

The show will open at 7 p.m. Friday, with 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. shows on Saturday and a 2 p.m. show on Sunday.

Drama Club Director Rachel Street used Mendoza as a way of encouraging students and the community to compare the fictional society against the real society in which they live.

"I really felt like this show would bring in community members," she said. "People will see the posters and think, 'Oh, 1984, I read that in high school.' And I think that with all the political changes in our world right now that people are concerned about, this provides a fantasy form of what politics in the future would look like."



Photo by Daniel Nash

Madison Dreiger and Austin Heatherly participate in the "Two Minutes of Hate."

The Saturday matinee will include a panel to discuss the issues presented in the play, with panelists including Mendoza, Sumner Mayor Dave Enslow, former Seattle City Councilman Jim Street, the Rev. Kim Laterell from Creator Lutheran, Police Deputy Dana Hubbard and retired Sumner drama teacher Joanne Gear.

The show is dually-cast, meaning different actors will play different roles depending on the show. Protagonist Winston Smith is played by Austin Heatherly and love interest Julia is played by Madison Dreiger. Josh Heinlen plays O'Brien, an Inner Party member and the personified antagonist of the story.

The show will use all three stages in the Performing Arts Center. The set design focuses heavily on color to depict the atmosphere of

Oceania. The streets and Winston's apartment are gray to denote a lack of life, Julia and Winston's shared apartment has various colors to show happiness and O'Brien's apartment is flushed with red to show the wealth of Inner Party members.

Tickets for the show can be bought at the door and at SHS before opening night. Prices are \$7 for students, \$10 for adults.