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THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL Olympian

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Student body leaders step up for next season

By Samuel Jarvis

CVHS election results are in, and the winners for the ASB elections are Alex Winn (ASB president), Natalia Jamal (ASB vice president), Adibelle Liu (ASB treasurer), Tamdin Bista (ASB secretary), and Sophia Bonilla (ASB school board representative).

“My goal is to build on the many school events we have at CVHS, such as the culture fest and the winter ball, and make them as inviting and fun as they can be. I believe the key piece is to encourage more students to engage with each other to experience everything we have to offer and have a great time along the way!”



SAM JARVIS

ASB Representatives Alex Winn, Natalia Jamal, Adibelle Liu, Tamdin Bista, and Sophia Bonilla (left to right)

said new ASB President Winn. “I will strive to create a strong and inclusive impact on all aspects of the student body’s experience at CVHS, to ensure that everyone feels heard and supported through

their time at Castro Valley High!” said new ASB Vice President Jamal. Senior class election winners are Kai Rasmussen (president), Paige Pacheco (vice president), Ethan Koo

(treasurer), and Dylan Hidayat (secretary). Junior class election winners are Sarah Yang (president), Bella Velasquez (vice president), Teagan Larson (treasurer), and

Joanna Li (secretary). Sophomore class election winners are Phoebe Ramos-Yee (president), Tyler Lunes (vice president), Oliver Wu (treasurer), and Sofia Chkhartishvili (secretary).

“Every 15 Minutes” wrecks idea of drunk driving

By Madison Lee

Eliza Garrett, a senior attending CVHS, sat with her head down in a dim prison cell, holding the weight of being responsible for the deaths of CVHS seniors Adelaide Wilhelm and Gavin Perkins and the permanent injury to CVHS junior Mairan McNeill. Facing a sentence of a minimum of 15 years in prison, one single choice, a single incident, ended up affecting the lives of many forever. Garrett, Wilhelm, and Perkins were leaving a friend’s party where they spent the day drinking and partying, when they were involved in a brutal car accident on March 26. Wilhelm and Perkins were thrown out of the car when Garrett swerved to avoid a stopping car. Their arms and head were cut open with shattered glass and they were left unconscious. McNeill,



NATALIE LE

Adelaide Wilhelm was thrown out of a car in the “Every 15 Minutes” production.

a pedestrian trying to cross the street, was hit, leaving a bloodied wound at the neck. Wilhelm was pronounced dead at the scene, and Perkins later died at the hospital. McNeill survived, but lost her vocal chords, causing her to not be able to speak or sing, her one true passion, ever again. “Singing means everything to me. When I’m sick, and I don’t get to sing, I definitely feel worse,” McNeill reflected, “I hope I never lose the ability to sing or even to speak because it really is my life.” This story is a result from the Every 15 Minutes program, a two-day educational

experience for high school students to see the devastating results and effects of drinking and driving. Though this event was a production and no students were actually harmed, the juniors and seniors of CVHS watched as Garrett’s choice to drink and drive destroyed the lives of many around her and ruined the trajectory of her own life. “This experience, I think, would ruin my life. Going to prison would completely throw my life off track, and I wouldn’t even know where to start,” Garrett said. In addition to this story, every 15 minutes, two students

were called on the schoolwide announcements, and those students were taken away from their classes, where a rose was placed on their desk, symbolizing the number of fatalities caused by impaired driving. On March 27, a funeral was held for all the students involved in the production, where juniors and seniors watched the full production together and heard from a guest speaker, an actual victim of drunk driving, where she lost her whole family. The events of a car accident, especially an impaired one, doesn’t just affect the victims,

but the loved ones around them too. Students watched as the parents of Wilhelm and Perkins broke down crying after hearing the news of their child dying, something that no parent could ever imagine. “We’re only here for one lifetime. I think if I were to pass away, my parents would be heartbroken,” Wilhelm said. “I’m very close with my parents, my parents are separated and I’m an only child, so I’ve had a very unique relationship with my parents. [The thought of my parents losing me] it absolutely crushes me,” Perkins reflected. Every 15 Minutes isn’t just to scare students away from drinking. It’s to ensure safe decision making. If you do drink and you need a ride home, it is urged to get a ride from a sober driver, sleep over at a friend’s house, or call a parent or guardian. Before we make the decision to get behind the wheel and drive impaired, consider: life is so fragile and unpredictable, is driving really worth losing it?

Student burnout

How academics quietly damage student’s mental health



By Heldana Deme

For many high school students, grades are no longer just letters on a report card. They’ve become measurements of our worth, intelligence, and even our future success. While academic achievement is beyond important, the pressure surrounding grades has been quietly damaging students’ mental health and turning learning into stress, and ambition into exhaustion.

As a student who has always pushed myself to succeed in

every aspect of my life, I know this pressure firsthand and how badly it hurts people. I entered this school year with high expectations for myself; I wanted perfect grades, strong extracurriculars, and proof of all my hard work meant something to someone other than myself. At first, that pressure felt motivating. I stayed up late finishing assignments, double-checked every answer, and held myself up to standards that were near impossible to (healthily) maintain. Over time, that constant pressure stopped feeling like motivation and more like survival.

Earlier this year, I finally burned out. What many people don’t realize is that burnout doesn’t happen all at once. It builds up slowly through sleepless nights, endless assignments, and more energy drinks than is

safe to consume. For me, it reached a point where I no longer felt proud of what I thought I was accomplishing. Instead, I felt anxious every time I opened my laptop, guilty whenever I rested, and I was constantly afraid of falling behind everyone else. My mental health worsened, and as a result, the grades I had worked so hard to protect began to slip.

The irony in this is that the system meant to reward hard work often punishes the very students who care about it the most. High-achieving students are often praised for being “driven”, but that drive can quickly become unhealthy when it starts to be fueled by fear instead of passion. Many students—like myself—tie their self-worth to their GPA, believing that anything less than excellence is failure. When schools emphasize

competition, or class rank, or performance, without equally supporting their students’ wellbeing, they create an environment where stress becomes normalized. The lack of support offered makes this even worse. Students are expected to juggle advanced classes, sports, clubs, jobs, and family responsibilities, all while planning for college and maintaining a perfect academic image. Despite this, conversations about mental health often come only after students have already reached their breaking point. Unfortunately, by then, the damage has already been done.

Grades should reflect our learning, not determine whether a student feels successful as a person. A lower score shouldn’t make someone feel like they’re falling apart—but for

many students, it does. The emotional weight attached to academic performance has become too heavy, and schools need to recognize that mental health is just as important as the achievements we make along the way.

Students cannot continue thriving in environments that only value output; if schools truly want our success to be their own, they need to redefine what success means to them. Success should include balance, wellbeing, and the ability to learn without sacrificing your own health.

No grade is worth losing yourself over. High school is supposed to prepare students for the future, but if the process destroys a person’s ability to live beyond what a transcript says about them, then something in that system has to change.

Classroom chaos



By Valentina Huynh

The stench of spoiled milk hits your nose. There are childish drawings scribbled with thick, bold markers sprawled across the wall. The back corner of the room is a paradise for ants, with leftover muffins and an unknown sticky residue left on the table. Not only that, when you sit down and look up, someone has drawn a pizza inside the clock. Classroom 507 has descended into chaos after the absence of their sophomore English teacher, Aaron Dennis.

Since October, students have had countless substitutes and received little guidance, leaving them restless and independent. “Some dudes were vaping the entire time, and I saw something molding for two months in a drawer,” claimed sophomore Derek

Huang.

Other students have expressed their concerns about how the class is run. “The class is pretty confusing. We kinda just do our own thing because the classwork assigned to us is relatively easy and just busy work. Overall, the class is kinda annoying because there’s nothing ever set in stone. I liked it better when Mr. Dennis was here cause we actually had stuff to do,” said sophomore Aleksandr Robuchon.

Sophomore James Masculine agreed, frustrated by the lack of structure. “I dislike that we have had so many subs, and that they can’t just get like one person,” said Masculine.

Students are assigned work to keep them busy, rather than improving their English skills and preparing them for next year’s English class. The chaotic nature of the classroom is detrimental to students, leading to students feeling anxious and frustrated.

“The classwork isn’t improving my writing skills, and the classroom is filthy and a mess—even with subs.

The subs don’t really care about the students and have little to no involvement. I usually just do the busy work Ms. K assigns every day. All of this has made me feel very behind other students in my grade. I don’t feel properly prepared for next year,” stated sophomore Karen Chen.

This is not Dennis’s first sudden departure. In fact, two years ago, Dennis was temporarily suspended. However, Dennis has been gone for far longer than the last time, with no clear answer from the administration on when or if he is returning.

If the students are provided a consistent and passionate substitute for Dennis, their discontent could be alleviated. However, the months spent doing busy work rather than engaging and challenging work is a setback for students’ English proficiency. Along with that, students have had to work in an unsanitary and chaotic classroom that can be disruptive to learning.

“It stinks to be in the classroom, both literally and metaphorically,” said Chen.

Trojan Talk

RE: DECA shows kids how to compete

“This is really cool how we have a really successful DECA chapter at CVHS. I think it is a really great experience for people to perform in front of business icons that have once been in the game and are now teaching students our age their techniques at these conferences. I also think it is really great we have a teacher like Mr. Thompson at our school to give students these opportunities to connect with people they otherwise

-Jacob Heisick

RE: “Wicked 2” actors are wickedly ill

“I agree with this. Cynthia and Ariana both looked so much healthier in the first movie compared to the second which were released almost exactly a year apart from each other. It’s also strange to think about if you’ve ever looked into the things going on on the Wizard of Oz set where a lot of the actors faced both physical and mental complications.”

-Lily Sabado

RE: Social media is making misinformation believable

“I really liked your thoughts on this topic. I can tell you’re passionate about it. I think it’s important to be driven and potent about questioning things we see online, because in the long run, being constantly fed misinformation is damaging for sure.”

-Lilyana Hayes

RE: Trojans protest ICE at school-wide walkout

“This walkout will forever be a memorable moment standing against evil and raising our fists to what’s right. Every voice matters and I’m glad we got to come together as a school and stand up for that.”

-Angeli Hidalgo

RE: DECA shows kids how to compete

“I love that they have come so far in our chapter! I can’t wait to see more accomplishments in the future.”

-Caleb Carroll

Why Anti-feminism is bad for media



By Mairén McNeill

When it comes to people like Taylor Swift, people are bound to have varying opinions about her. But those

who hate on anyone who enjoys her music are doing more than expressing their opinions--they're attempting to normalize anti-feminism and market it as freedom of expression.

I once was asked to name my favorite artist in front of a classroom. Panicking, I realized I enjoyed a lot of music by different artists and didn't have a particular favorite at first. Then, I remembered just how many of Taylor Swift's songs I enjoyed and said her

name. Immediately, I was harassed by some of the boys in my class: "If you like her music, you're actually so basic."

Rather than just expressing their opinion of her, they also expressed an opinion of me for liking her. When the boys ridiculed me, some of the girls began to laugh with them.

In that classroom, my peers and I were taught that publicly expressing a liking for something feminist would get you laughed at.

As a similar situation happened

back in middle school, when I was asked to name my favorite movie. I said Captain Marvel, from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. I was immediately judged by my teacher, who began to laugh at me. The rest of the class followed, and I ducked my head in embarrassment.

Any time after that, I would lie about my favorite movie to avoid the classic "Of course you would like that movie". If my teacher didn't like the movie, that's okay; he didn't have to.

But for him to shame me out of liking it is disgusting and does nothing more than tear down women.

The same concept applies to the Barbie movie - while most people loved it, some found it superficial and unrealistic.

And that's okay; it's their opinion.

But when people go out of their way to shame anyone who did enjoy the movie, it's more likely because they feel threatened by its message than anything else.

College admissions process is overly stressful



By Leila Tran

With an increasing number of college graduates ending up jobless, CVHS seniors feel a decrease in the stability of their future careers.

The college application process has grown into an environment of rivalry and animosity amongst high school seniors all over the world. Acceptance into prestigious universities is no longer an achievement of

bringing aspiring students closer to success, but a title of high status to fuel the belief in one's own competence and expertise. Students become attached to the praise of acceptance, rather than focusing on the sole reason for attaining the degree in the first place: to get a job.

With increasing uncertainty amongst students, those who aspire to earn a four-year degree in hopes of supporting their careers find themselves trapped in a cycle of overachievement to the point of exhaustion.

The scrutiny of peers, family, and society only adds to this pressure. Even so, those who receive their degree continue to face the challenges of unemployment due to an increase in labor

market freezes, technological improvements, economic fluctuations, etc. The entire admissions process has become something solely based on performance: a spectacle. Thus, in recent years, many have begun to ask one question: Are college admissions worth the stress and anxiety?

In the past, it was no difficult task for one to earn a degree and begin their career immediately after graduation. In recent years, however, finding a job after college has become a grueling process, resulting in the unemployment of many graduates.

The competition of attending a reputable university has overtaken students' mental health in hopes that the outcome would be worth the

struggle if it grants a higher chance of employment. Yet, many seniors continue to fixate on society's praise of their acceptance, rather than on how it will impact their future careers. Now, many are left to question whether or not the prestige of their university, let alone a college degree, guarantees their stability at all.

"I feel like the process was a bit difficult because of all the pressure put on me to get into a good school and get a good job. I'm starting to feel less certain about my future, though, because I know that even people with a degree aren't getting jobs," said senior Miley Giang.

It is becoming more apparent to CVHS students that not even a degree can guarantee stable careers as they have in the

past. Senior Miguel Cardona expresses his concerns over this growing issue.

"I think it's much easier for our parents to say that going to college is the blueprint for making money in life and succeeding in a career, but they had it much easier than us. For me personally, I feel like the college application process was more stressful than it needed to be, and the specific university I chose would most likely not affect my career at all," said Cardona.

Although high school students all over the world continue to prioritize college applications over mental health, the question of whether or not this process is even worth the stress has been gaining momentum amongst today's generation.

How to Fail Your Very First Driver's Test



By Pari Muni

The morning of my driver's test, I woke up determined. I thought I would pass on my first try. All the hours of practice had to amount to something, right? After all, I already passed the written test, which was supposedly much more difficult. This couldn't be much worse—and it wasn't, at the start that is.

My test was in the early afternoon, so my mom and I decided it would be a good idea to get in some final practice beforehand to polish up my skills. For one whole hour, I changed lanes, made tight right turns, and parked between lines. I was ready. Or

so I thought.

I pulled my car up to the designated spot and waited for my examiner. A lady walked out of the building before approaching my car. She assessed it to make sure it was functioning safely before sitting in the passenger seat. She explained the instructions I needed to follow while I listened intently. "Exit through here," she said, pointing.

I carefully drove out of the parking lot. I tried my very best to comply with her directions as I continued. I watched out of the corner of my eye as she marked my scoring sheet. With every stroke of her pen, my initial confidence dissipated.

She then asked me to park along a curb. "Easy enough," I thought. I aligned my car and reversed in a straight line while using the vehicle's camera. I wasn't aware of it then, but I had just made a fatal mistake. It only occurred to me when we drove back to the DMV—my test had felt particularly short.

"You failed," she stated casually, handing me my score sheet. "You should not use your camera when reversing. You need to look through the back window. You can try again in two weeks."

What a silly mistake. Can you believe I forgot that?

Consequently, I practiced more in the following days, paying extra attention to the minor details and the importance of driving.

Exactly two weeks later, I retook the test. My examiner was an elderly man with a kind face who introduced himself as Oliver. I followed each and every one of his instructions; while I noticed he marked me for a few mistakes, I chose not to let it deter me.

It was time to reverse along a curb again. As I began to align my car, a stray cat crossed my path—a good omen, I'd like to think. "Try not to use your camera," the examiner reminded me. I smiled and thanked him. By now, I learned from my mistake. I looked out my rear window and reversed.

When I drove back to the DMV, he told me I passed!

So if there are any two lessons to take away from my story, they would be: One,

never let past experiences or fear of failure keep you from succeeding; and two, always look through your rear window when reversing!



THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Olympian

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Choir Pops concert captivates audience

By Rachel Zhen

As the CFA plunged into darkness, a green glow illuminated from the stage while the audience waited in anticipation to hear the opening song, “Apple” by Charli XCX. On April 9-11, the CVHS Choir presented its annual Pops concert. The theme for this year’s Pops concert is “Down to Earth.”

“Pops is a student-led show, and so it’s pretty impressive already that we managed to do the show with so many people,” said sophomore Elise Wong. “Some challenges I faced were probably the late-night rehearsals and shows, as well as the small backstage rooms that we used. It was raining very often, and most of the time we weren’t able to get fresh air from the green rooms,” she explained when asked what challenges arose.

“Experiencing pops was something I wish I could’ve enjoyed sooner, and overall,



Spotlight group performs a song in front of the audience.

SAM JARVIS

the choir in general. The people there are wonderful to the point where I didn’t even care much about staying late after school for pops rehearsals. All the singers and dancers did an amazing job with their performances. I can’t wait to perform with those same people again next year with new incoming freshmen as well!” said

junior Mia Bagaybagayan.

One of the most memorable moments came during the seniors’ final performance of “The Scientist” by Coldplay. Their performance carried a strong sense of emotion, marking their final Pops concert as a group. For many of the seniors, the song also held personal meaning, since they performed another

Coldplay song together in eighth grade.

It was a bittersweet moment as they said their last goodbyes.

Reflecting on their experiences, senior Chris Munoz shared, “One last time performing makes me feel happy yet sad because I put so much effort into performing and making this

show, but everything paid off because of the outcome, and it definitely makes me feel proud of the work I put out to the audience. But it’s sad because I know I won’t ever get the chance to express myself like that on stage. Thank you, Laryssa Sadoway.”

Another senior, Kris Lansdowne, described similar experiences, saying, “It was honestly really emotional performing at Pops as a senior, especially because this was both my first and last year in choir. I didn’t expect to feel so connected to something in such a short time, but stepping on stage for that final performance made it hit all at once. Knowing I won’t get to experience it again made it bittersweet; it felt like I was saying goodbye just as I was finally finding my place in it.”

As the lights dimmed on this year’s Pops concert, it marked the beginning and end for many performers and the audience alike.

Robotics club prepares for “FIRST” competition

By Nathaniel Johanson

Every other semester, the CVHS Robotics club prepares itself for its annual “FIRST Robotics competition.” Then, they spend the next semester on the competition itself. Hosted by Jessica Porter in rooms 407B and 407C, the club constantly toils to create a robot for the competition.

Founded in 2019, hailing their mascot and team’s namesake, Wallace, a robot, since the beginning of the club, the team has been in pursuit of creating new opportunities for CVHS. They’re battle-proven from COVID-19’s pandemic, and notably have been sponsored by Google, NASA, Boeing, and PG&E over the years. While it started as an engineering and 3D printing club, it gradually grew into joining and focusing on the “FIRST Robotics competition” when more students wanted to enter the competition. So far, they have participated in five competitions, with each new robot being significantly better as students pass down their skills and robotics wisdom.

During the first semester, the club spends its time

preparing its new members and gathering funding. The competition’s specifications are often announced between March and April, leaving the rest of the second semester up to the club to deliver. Students learn how to engineer, build, program, and market a robot from their peers.

This year, they had a club record of points in the competition, and after the stressful competition season, they continue studying their craft and reflecting on their performance.

“It’s very interesting, you know,” said Duy Anh Nguyen, a team programming officer. “It’s a really fun way to get hands-on experience with engineering, and there’s a unique game every year so you’re always building a new robot.”

This year, FIRST Robotics challenged CVHS and other schools in the area to create a robot that could intake small balls and launch them into a hoop. For a trepidating 15 seconds, it had to do that autonomously, then undertake 90-second manual mode. Their robot was able to score, albeit inconsistently, due to the lack of data they had for

calibrating their robot.

People can donate at <https://team8045.com/support-us>. With a greater budget, the club can be less frugal and pursue the creation of more prototypes (and fill the aforementioned data gap). Additionally, the extra resources allow them to have spare resources during the training semester, with better and more equipment.



Robotics club takes a group photo with Wallace.

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Culture Fest captivates students

By Sarada Khanal

Bright, colorful flags filled the cafeteria, representing the diverse identities on campus. CVHS students gathered together to celebrate Culture Fest on Friday, Feb. 27. Each of the cafeteria tables had an activity meant to foster a sense of community. At one table, people were asked to write down a family recipe they wished to share, and other tables offered similarly interesting activities. Alongside that, tables filled the cafeteria as different clubs assembled with games, food, and more.

As the night kicked off at 6 p.m., students chattered as they walked from table to table, meeting with different clubs and learning about new cultures. The French Culture Club taught students about Mardi Gras, a lively festival filled with rich history, and gave out macarons, while students got the chance to make their own masks. Students gathered

around the Filipino Club, eager to grab some lumpia and halo-halo.

At the ASL Club, students spun a wheel, answering trivia questions about Deaf history for candy. The smell of food wafted through the air as BSU gave out mac and cheese along with rice and beans, and the East African Student Association gave sambusa, triangular deep-fried pastries.

“I loved helping kids learn about Mardi Gras and helping them make masks for Mardi Gras,” shared senior Sifan Badaso, secretary of the East African Student Association.

Half an hour later, the excitement reached its peak as several students went up to perform. Senior Eden Teclemariam was the announcer for the night, and performances were kicked off by the national anthem from CVHS choir students. After that, the exciting performances only continued.

The German Club performed a beautiful waltz, with four students dancing elegantly on stage. Two of the performers included Harper Kieley and Paul Grazzini. Next, the room filled with electric energy as the K-Pop Club danced to “Touch”



dancer performs at culture fest.

SARADA KHANAL

by KATSEYE. All dressed in pastel, their movements were sharp as they danced to the trending song. Their performance left the audience astounded as they brought the energy in the room to a high applause that rang out throughout the cafeteria.

“I could tell everyone put a lot of effort into their

performances and they did absolutely amazing. There was so much to do and I got to try so many amazing new foods,” commented senior Memphis Duncan, who attended the event for the first time.

A symphony filled the cafeteria as the only middle school performer for the night, Xavier James, played a beautiful violin

solo. Next, Latinos Unidos performed two very colorful dances. Their bright dresses swayed as they danced to “El Toro Mambo” and “El Son de la Negra.” This same showcase of talent continued throughout the night as performers displayed different identities, highlighting the diversity that makes CVHS so special.

Lion Dancing Club loved by audience

By Brenda Huynh

The bright hue of a lion dances about as the hard knocking of drums plays in the background. Little does the audience know: two people make up a single lion. Namely, these two parts are the head and the bottom.

The Lion Dancing club was founded in the 2024-25 school year by CVHS graduate student Justin Lee and three others, including the current club president, senior Isaac Nguyen.

At the start of their careers, the group practiced after school for hours, finally leaving around 5 p.m., when the school was closing. Over the weekend, they would get additional practice at the park.

Dedicated to spreading their culture, the dancers bought all the props, including their first lion costume, an additional three more later on, the gongs, and the drums, with their own expenses.

“It’s important to have this club because it represents

different cultures, and during celebrations, it’s a form of how we appreciate our culture and community,” said Nguyen. “I enjoy how this club connects us to different schools and communities around Castro Valley, and I enjoy performing.”

With Southern-style lion costumes, the group has performed self-choreographed dances all over for places such as CVHS, the Alameda Library, and Palomares Elementary School. Not to mention, their collaborations with different clubs and organizations, such as CVHS Spotlight and the Chinese Culture Club. The group also performed at the Lunar New Year celebration and Culture Fest at CVHS.

“It’s a great way to meet new people, start a new hobby, and explore East Asian culture,” said junior Amelia Wang, who dances as a lion head.

This year, the club has expanded way past what it used to be, and on Thursdays in the gym, over 20 students take on the festivities of learning the joys of lion dancing.

“All the students work so hard, every time they practice, it has a lot of lifting, dancing, it takes a lot of energy,” said club advisor Joy Sun, who is also the Mandarin teacher at CVHS.

Lion dancing is rooted in thousands of years of history, and combines movements between two dancers requiring core strength, lifting, and the confidence to do so.

“It’s a great form of exercise and has cultural importance,” stated senior dancer Matthew Lee.

While the dancers tend to take the spotlight, the music the lions dance to truly captures the essence of Chinese culture. The instruments, too, make up the performance.

“I like clapping the cymbals and experimenting with different rhythms,” stated senior cymbal player Maddox Low.

For the Lion Dancing Club, the joy of dancing comes from spreading and appreciating culture.

“I’m happy to see this club growing and to see so many kids interested in this club,” said Sun.



Lion dancing club pose for photo.

BRENDA HUYNH

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Trojan tennis team beats Piedmont

By Franci Da Costa

The Trojans have been fighting hard this season and have won another match, this time against the Piedmont Highlanders, on April 14. They tied 3-3 in singles and won 4-1 in doubles, coming out to the winning score 7-11.

It's apparent that Trojans work well in teams, as their communication on the courts was beautiful.

Before starting the matches, Coach Ebone Taylor was sure of their win. She knew the boys had been giving it their all at practice. "Last game we lost badly, but I have a feeling our scores are going to be flipped. That's how confident I am," Taylor remarked.

Half of the players lost their singles, but Advait Sathyanand won his sets by a landslide; his opponent was only able to score a few points. His score was 6-2 and 6-3. "I played well overall. I did make some mistakes here and there", Sathyanad noted.

The Trojans seemed to be winning match after match, and Taylor was elated to see their practice

shine in play. "I'm so happy with them, it's been a windy day, but they're mastering the wind," Taylor commented.

One of the players, Guhan Anandkumar, faced a formidable opponent and got "bagled" in both his sets, 6-0 and 6-0. Bagled being a tennis term for losing every point. His opponent was fierce, but he gave it his all.

"I didn't play well. I'm too close to the ball sometimes, but I'm happy to support my team and keep fighting," Anandkumar says with humility.

While the Trojans tied in singles, their synergy in doubles was quite an eye-catcher, amazing the audience with their compatibility.



FRANCI DA COSTA



Swim team celebrates seniors and success

By Sarada Khanal

On March 26, CVHS swimmers celebrated their senior night with a smashing victory against Hayward High School; the girls' team took the win 137-4, and the boys' team similarly destroyed the competition 139-9. This day was a milestone for all the seniors who dedicated both time and effort to the sport.

Families lined up at the edge of the pool, holding their posters and flowers as they watched their seniors dive into the pool. Eighteen seniors were celebrated for their commitment to the sport.

"It was a great way to end this journey, and it gives me a lot of hope for the rest of the season. It was great

to have so much support, and I'm glad we defeated them on our senior night," commented senior Elena Robuchon.

Their win against Hayward was a great way to celebrate the night and many athletes also achieved a personal victory that night. Freshman Evan Li scored the most points for the boys' varsity team. He scored 12 points with a personal best in the 50 free and 100 back. Tied with him were Kenny Li and Adam Forrest, who also scored 12 points. Senior Forrest played very competitively, placing first in all four of his events.

The girls' team left no room for the competition, sweeping wins both left and right. Special acknowledgement to the seniors Dasha Kryuchkova, Stella Chang, and Chloe Gilbert. Kryuchkova scored

10 points for the team and placed first in three of her events. Closely behind, senior Stella Chang scored 9 points for the team.

"All of the seniors are strong swimmers and we work together great as a team. We all support each other and get a lot of support from our coaches," commented senior Chloe Yim.

Overall, both teams performed spectacularly and represented CVHS well.

"I'm glad we defeated them on our senior night,"

Elena Robuchon
Varsity Captain



SARADA KHANAL

“The Phoenician Scheme” breaks a Wes Anderson dry streak

By Isaac Hulse



After weathering his sixth plane crash and a temporary experience in the afterlife, wealthy arms dealer Zsa Zsa Korda faces the reality that he needs to get his affairs in order. His checkered history has made him an enemy of the whole world, but more importantly, has estranged him from his daughter Liesl, whom he has tapped to succeed him.

The most recent project released by “Fantastic Mr. Fox” and “The Grand Budapest Hotel” director Wes Anderson, “The Phoenician Scheme” premiered on May 18, 2025 at the Cannes Film Festival to a seven and a half minute standing ovation. The movie started screening in the U.S. on May 30, 2025.

It received a cumulative 2.3-star rating out of 4 from the Screen International Jury Grid, a highly respected panel that watches and rates movies entered into awards shows or festivals like Cannes.

Korda’s titular “Phoenician Scheme” motivates the entire movie. His riskiest and most expensive investment, the plot surrounds Korda, Liesl, and Norwegian entomologist-turned-tutor-turned-administrative assistant Bjorn Lund as they try to source funding for this potentially lucrative project in the fictional country of Modern Greater Independent Phoenicia.

The movie is extremely stylish. If there are two things that Anderson excels at, they are creating a pervasive visual atmosphere and writing eccentric, prickly characters. A compliment and a critique, Anderson does these in such a textbook way that he almost parodies himself.

The acting does not really help his case, as while no one acted poorly in this movie, there are some notable areas where it really feels like the actors

are acting like they are Wes Anderson characters instead of characters who happen to be affected by the creative decisions of Wes Anderson. This is at some points charming and at some points disengaging for me.

For example, Bjorn, played by Michael Cera, is a character dripping with Anderson’s eccentricity and charming impotence, and at no point does Cera’s acting (and hilarious yet incredible accent work) interfere with the character of Bjorn in the movie.

On the other hand, Tom Hanks and Bryan Cranston, who play brothers and investors in Korda’s scheme, seem to play up the fact that they are in a Wes Anderson movie throughout their performance. This could have been helped, I feel, by granting them more screen time.

In my opinion, starting with his second stop-motion movie, “Isle of Dogs,” Wes Anderson has heavily leaned into style over substance to the point where it seems like his new movies are based on his old movies. To this point, it feels like “The Phoenician Scheme” riffs on “The Grand Budapest Hotel” in its use of historical pastiche, a large ensemble cast, and subtextual political critique.

However, the aspect of this movie that brings it together and puts it a step above his more modern projects is that it genuinely possesses substance. The entire movie was written in memory of Anderson’s father-in-law, Fouad Malouf. Because of this, the themes of fatherhood, death, and family really come from the heart in this movie, and they all lend to the simplicity of the plot.

All in all, this movie is really quite good. It makes for an interesting retrospective by someone whose career and life are far from over, and it really does shine among Anderson’s later filmography. I would recommend it to people who like history, comedy, and most of all, Anderson himself.

“The Phoenician Scheme” is streaming on Amazon Prime Video.



Michael Cera (left) Benicio del Toro (center) and Mia Threapleton (right) in “The Phoenician Scheme”.

Mario Galaxy fails to deliver

By Wee Lee



Released three years after the first film, the Mario Galaxy Movie soared to new heights as the Mario Brothers traveled through planet to planet on their mission to rescue the kidnapped Princess Rosalina from the clutches of Bowser Jr. Stealing Rosalina’s cosmic powers in order to rescue his father and conquer the galaxy, Mario and friends assemble to stop Bowser Jr’s plans and save the Mushroom Kingdom once more.

The movie expanded its universe with the cinematic debut of long awaited Mario classics such as Yoshi, Bowser Jr, and Rosalina alongside icons of the Galaxy franchise such as Queen Honey, Gearmos, Whittles, and power ups like the spring and cloud mushrooms.

Though what was quite surprising was the appearances

of other Nintendo franchises in the film. Most notably was Fox McCloud from the Starfox series who, despite coming from a completely separate universe, takes on a major role alongside

the brothers, Toad, and Peach.

With all these cameos all about, one has to wonder how the story is able to seamlessly fit them all in. Unfortunately, that is where the movie begins to run into problems.

Pacing is an important part of any narrative and the first half of the movie does a solid job at slowly building up the tension and conflicts within the story. However, the story begins to move at a somewhat rapid fire pace marked by the introduction of the Gateway Galaxy.

Adapted from the games, the setting acts as a bustling spaceport city making it a perfect place to showcase all the aforementioned characters. The problem comes from how much time the movie seems to want to dedicate to showing each and every minor character pulled from the franchise.

Some scenes tend to dedicate

too much time to showcasing the movie’s niche character inclusions such as the casino fight, serving little plot development besides being a fun set piece filled to the brim with references. As a result, other plot points like Mario, Luigi, and Bowser being stranded on the Honeyhive Galaxy are handwaved a shallow solution in order to move along the story.

The issue of references overtaking the movie even bleeds into the climax as unlike previous fights who had amazing and fluid choreography, the final battle awkwardly pauses to point out reference after reference. In turn, these cameos diminished all the tension that had been built up over the course of the runtime.

While it is fun to point at the appearance of your favorite franchise appearing for a moment in a movie, they are not a suitable substitute for a story. In sacrificing a coherent narrative in exchange for fanservice, the Mario Galaxy Movie as a result falls short of the high expectations that its games have given it.

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We Are The World

By Isaac Hulse

