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THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Olympian

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WE ARE BORN TO SEEK THE TRUTH!

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Distance learning extended as infections rise

By Jeanette Wallis

Schools in CVUSD will remain in distance learning until at least February, with CVHS not planned to reopen until early March. If things are safe enough for students to return to campus in the spring, elementary-aged students will be back on campus as early as Feb. 1, while middle and high school students have a return date of March 8.

In an email sent out to families on Nov. 20, Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi explained to CVUSD families that the reopening schedule is still tentative and mostly depends on COVID conditions and guidance from the Alameda County Public Health Department.

"The dates of reopening schools starting with elementary in February, as approved by the Board on Nov. 12, are predicated on conditions improving and health orders allowing for reopening," wrote Ahmadi. "As we have always done, we will closely monitor the local health conditions and provide updates."

These initial reopening plans were created before Alameda County dropped back into the Purple Tier, as well as before the holidays, during which experts expect the number of COVID cases to increase. Because of this, it is possible that the

current reopening dates will be pushed back. Ahmadi reminded parents that the number one priority was the safety and health of all students and staff.

"Working closely with the Alameda County Public Health Department, we will monitor developments related to COVID and continue our discussions with our bargaining units to ensure a successful school reopening," Ahmadi wrote.

"I am glad that schools are taking precautions on safety of the people on campus," said sophomore Tony Mei. "We cannot afford to gamble on this and risk the safety of the people by letting them back on campus."

Back on Oct. 14, Castro Valley school board members initially decided to wait to reconsider reopening until their first meeting in January. This decision was not met with happy responses from all sides, as several parents voiced their concerns about online learning.

"Daycares are open and so are parks, malls, barbers, gyms and stores ... open the schools!" parent Hilda Zuniga commented.

"Open up the schools! Make it a choice if some people are fearful of sending their kids. Those parents can teach their kids from home," said grandparent Alicia Villa. "Not all parents can afford to stay home with their children."

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Trojans rejoice as Biden beats Trump



Supporters of President-Elect Joe Biden celebrate in Castro Valley.

MEGAN BALDWIN

By Lauren French

This year's presidential election has driven an already divided country apart even more, but Joe Biden's win over President Donald Trump gave a huge sense of relief to a large part of the CVHS population.

"After hearing the results of the election, I think a lot of the country is able to take a sigh of relief. The work is definitely not over yet, but this was a step in the right direction," said junior Brooke Kundert.

Many here in Castro Valley share that belief. "I'm really glad Trump is finally leaving office, but I am nervous for what's to come in future months," shared Leah Janaway, another junior.

With the exception of the 2000 election, this was one of the longest elections America has had. There were tens of millions of mail-in ballots from voters across America with the fear of the ongoing pandemic.

Because of the huge number of these envelopes and rules

in some states about waiting to count the votes until election day, it took until Friday, Nov. 7 to determine that Biden would win the Electoral College. Trump disputed the results and challenged the election in court for weeks beyond that.

Democrats were found to be more likely to vote by mail, and Republicans more likely to vote at the polls. Because of this and with the way the ballots are counted, Trump had received more votes by the end of election night, and was quick to claim his victory to a second term.

In the following days, Biden slowly started receiving more and more votes while the mail-in ballots were finally getting counted. This prompted Trump to begin asking states to "Stop the count!" as he wrote on Twitter.

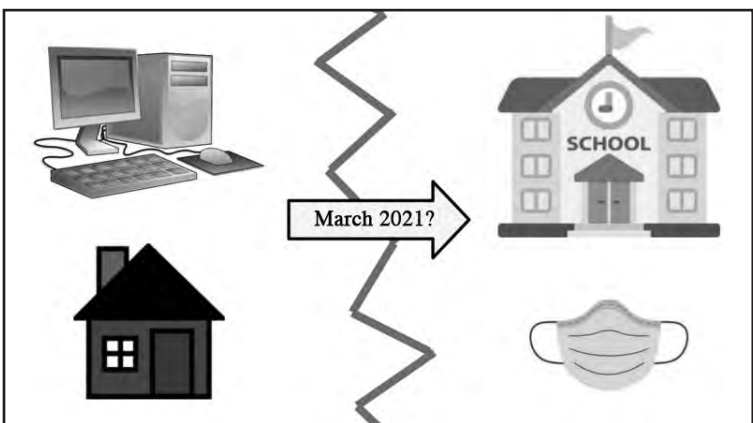
"It's the idea of disenfranchising people that I find so despicable," said history teacher Jeff Goldstein about Trump's behavior. "If we are the democracy we say we are, we should want to count more

votes and should do more to incorporate people's voices."

While the majority of CVHS students were relieved and thankful Trump will not be reelected for another term, some students agree with his accusations of election fraud against Biden.

"I was a bit surprised by the results because it was really close in the beginning," said sophomore Anthony Molettieri. "Also, I feel like people jump to the conclusion that all Trump supporters are racist, and that's not true. Supporting the president doesn't make you a bad person. Yes he has made mistakes, but we all do."

"I think this has been one of the weirdest and most obnoxious elections we've had and it's technically still not over," conveyed Agamroop Kaur, a student who used to live in Castro Valley. "I believe both sides handled it awfully. I think that they should have waited for the full process to carry out before any winner was declared."



Students can expect more distance learning in 2021. MIGUEL BERNAS

Open letter makes suggestions for President-elect

Editorial:

Dear President-elect Biden,

Congratulations on your election. Here at *The Olympian* we are thrilled to have you as our 46th president and look forward to what the next four years will hold.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a major toll on our lives and we are hoping to see improvements. We believe expanding mask requirements and increasing access to testing would be beneficial because they have been proven effective methods of keeping cases under control. In the long run, we think developing a vaccine should be a priority, and once it is made, it should be easily accessible to everyone because a vaccine is our best solution at returning to our "normal" lives quickly.

Climate change is a growing issue that requires attention, and it is important that your administration address it. We suggest protecting endangered species in the Arctic by permanently preserving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, building more efficient cars and buildings to reduce waste,



Numerous challenges await Pres.-elect Joe Biden.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA WONG

and making agriculture a key part of the solution to sustain the environment. Your plans for climate change gained our approval, and we believe they will yield positive change. However, try to also appeal to Republicans, conservatives and Trump supporters who are concerned about the economy.

A large sum of our budget goes towards the military, which is why we support a decrease in military funding and using that

money for other projects. We also think the ban on transgender people should be lifted because it is discriminatory. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty should be signed and the arms treaty with Russia reestablished, because it would ease relations with Russia and create a safer political climate. We also support U.S. military withdrawal from the Middle East because it would promote peace and appeal to Republicans who

support a withdrawal.

Trump's presidency raised multiple moral concerns over immigration and we believe his actions such as separating families and keeping people in cages should be the first to be undone. Construction of his wall should stop, as it symbolizes bad relations with Mexico, and ICE should be abolished or reformed. However, immigration doesn't need to be the top priority because COVID-19 is a bigger

issue plaguing our country, and public health measures at the border regarding the pandemic should be kept in place.

The issue of civil rights has been ongoing in our country, and recently grew over the past few months, splitting our country. *The Olympian* supports the fight for equality, thus supporting reinstatement of anti-discrimination policies from the Obama era and expansion of affirmative action to jobs to protect people of color and uplift their voices. We would like to see systemic racism in law enforcement addressed and solutions found to reduce police brutality.

A more equal funding system for schools should also be established because the lack of funding for certain schools, especially in poorer minority areas, results in limited opportunities for those children.

Mr. President-elect, thank you for considering our suggestions and good luck helping our country to "build back better," as your campaign promised.

Sincerely,
CVHS journalism students

America needs to graduate from the Electoral College



By Malin Johansson

Living through both the 2016 and 2020 elections has made me see problems with the way America elects presidents. I remember being so excited that Hilary Clinton had more votes

than Donald Trump until my mom explained to that's not how presidents got elected. I was more than a little disappointed to learn that Clinton lost the Electoral College but almost 2.9 million people voted for her than Trump. I realized that Americans don't vote directly for their own president.

The founding fathers were a group of intellectual elites who distrusted the common men of America. They wanted people to have an opinion on who would be president but not actually elect them in case they disagreed with the popular vote, so they created the electoral college.

There are many downsides to the Electoral College. It disproportionately represents

voters, giving some people more power than others depending on the state they live in. People living in states with a large population means their vote has less power than a person's vote in a smaller state. For example, in Wyoming a vote counts four times as much as in Texas.

The election results are determined by a minority of the population. In 2008, 70.39 percent of the votes casted for president were not factored in to determine the winner of the election. Most states use the winner-takes-all method to determine which candidate gets all of their electoral votes. But, in some states the electors don't have to vote for who won the popular vote in their state.

This makes voting completely pointless if it does not even effect who the electors vote for.

Maine and Nebraska use the congressional district method which uses the popular vote of each district to divide the electoral votes. This is one method that could be used instead of the winner-takes-all method, and better represents people's votes.

The method that is the most democratic and fair is by popular vote. This means that every person represents one vote and everyone's votes make a difference in the election. If we changed to the popular vote and ended the Electoral College, I believe there would be a better voter turnout. If people knew

their votes counted, people would be more willing to vote. What is the point of voting for a Republican in California with the Electoral College system? A Republican vote in California is useless because California is overwhelmingly liberal.

Some people say that without an Electoral College, smaller states would have less power, which is true. However, smaller states should have less power than bigger states because they have fewer people in them.

The recent election was decided by very close votes in swing states even though Joe Biden won over 7 million more votes than Trump. This proves there is something wrong with the Electoral College system.

Debunking President Trump's voter fraud lawsuits



By Eric Nepveux-Kjelstrom

As the election comes to a close, President Donald

Trump's fraud lawsuits continue to end empty-handed. Many have little evidence or irrelevant evidence. I have no doubt that these lawsuits will not change the end result of the race.

Trump promised lots of undeniable evidence of voter fraud in Detroit, but that is not what happened. According to *The New York Times*, 200 affidavits were submitted as evidence, but they mostly just turned out to be "complaints by Republican poll watchers who felt uncomfortable in Detroit or who said local elections officials had treated them unkindly." One Detroit poll watcher said

she "felt intimidated by union people who were staring at her."

A rumor about ballots being rejected because they were filled out in Sharpie led to a lawsuit in Arizona, even though the rumor was proven false by the Department of Homeland Security. The Sharpie suit was later dropped, but then a second suit was filed which was also about votes in the state being wrongfully rejected. Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs said that the people filing the lawsuits were "grasping at straws."

In Pennsylvania, one of Trump's lawyers claimed that

Republicans weren't allowed to watch the vote counting process. Subsequently, the lawyer also said that Trump had people watching the count, after being sharply-questioned. Judge Paul Diamond responded with, "I'm sorry, then what's your problem?" In Georgia, the Trump campaign said 53 late ballots were counted, but when they called two witnesses to the stand, the witnesses said that they didn't know whether or not the ballots were late, and two people from the local board of elections stated that the ballots were received on time.

The Trump election fraud

lawsuits have been repeatedly rebuked for the emptiness of their arguments. None of the evidence they've presented is going to change the outcome of the election. They're pathetic.

Some Trump allies have even called the lawsuits "pointless" and, as the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) puts it, "The Nov. 3 election was the most secure in American history." Following that announcement, Trump fired the agency's director Chris Krebs.

As Trump's own ex-wife, Ivana, said, "He's not a good loser."

Distance learning poses difficulties for students and staff



By Deleann Block

COVID-19 has had an impact on all of our lives. For teachers and students this involves the switch from learning in a classroom to learning online. I interviewed French teacher Mariya Snaznia and English teacher Jenna Pridmore about

distance learning. Both spoke about technology issues. Snaznia stated one difficulty was “not being able to provide to struggling students” due to the distance environment. Having technology issues can be a big problem in this environment and they aren’t always an easy fix, causing students to fall behind. Pridmore discussed how she has to learn as she goes to figure out what’s best. Just like students, teachers are also still figuring out how to navigate distance learning. It seems that most are in a trial and error phase to find what works best. There are some positives to this new style of learning. Pridmore mentioned how she is getting to learn so much more about technology and other

resources besides a pen and paper. These online skills are also helpful to many students as we are living in a digital age where computer knowledge is critical to many jobs. “Online school gives me more access to helpful resources at any time. When I don’t understand something I can look it up right then and there rather than just sit there not understanding,” said junior Nolan Slader. Having access to the internet at all times has proved beneficial to both students and teachers when it comes to learning. Managing this new style of learning has also been difficult for students, Slader said. “My education is more focused now on passing, studying through this online format is so difficult.

I’m not able to enjoy the class. If it were in person, I would be able to enjoy it more instead of stressing about passing it.” Other students and myself share similar ideas about how school seems nonstop. The constant workload many are facing have blurred the lines between a relaxing home environment and a stressful school environment. It seems that most are given an overwhelming workload and many, myself included, are struggling to focus and keep motivation. “Distance learning has caused a lot of unnecessary stress, not really having any motivation to do anything. It is harder to learn with distance learning. Retaining any actual information is hard as well as there is barely

any teacher learning and that is what is most effective. The piled up homework and deadlines are also a big stress factor,” said junior Kikie Liu. Many students share similar ideas about the stress the constant workload has given them. School now seems to be less about learning and more about getting assignments done. Though distance learning has its perks to both students and teachers it seems that both groups prefer the structure of a hands-on environment. Both teachers and students agreed that it is important for schools to stay closed in order to protect public health. But the new system of online learning has greatly affected students’ ability to learn.

Human rights: morals not politics



By Alex Tam

“Why can’t you be friends with people from a different political party?” is what I heard and saw all over Tik Tok, more often than not coming from Republicans. The real answer is that I can be friends with those from a different party whether they are conservative, Republican, or even in a third party. However, I cannot be friends with someone who decides that human rights aren’t important because human rights aren’t a political view nor something to be debated. In 2020, human rights became a leading hot topic in the US. With the Black Lives Matter movement resurging to the

election and confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett, human rights were the forecenter of politics and split down party lines. But why? Why have human rights turned into something discussed and associated with politics? When did that happen? I don’t know why or when, but I do know that while I can have different political opinions than my friends, I cannot have different morals than them. The founding fathers wrote, “we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.” As a country we have evolved from consisting of cis, straight, white, Christian men to color and diversity. The Declaration of Independence should apply, no questions asked, to everyone; everyone in our society should be treated as equal no matter race, sexuality, gender, class or background. However that is still not the case. LGBTQ+ rights and equality, Black Lives Matter (BLM), equality for women, children locked in cages, families torn apart, native women missing, the right to control your own body, racism being a real problem in

this country, and many more issues, all having nothing to do with politics. These are basic human rights, yet they are being treated as something like views on the economy, a true political opinion. These are things that shouldn’t ever have to be debated. These are things that should have a clear and obvious answer. Anyone who does not support the LGBTQ+ community, who doesn’t believe in equal rights for everyone, who doesn’t care about the families and children at the border, who doesn’t acknowledge racism, who turns a blind eye to missing women, who chooses to ignore the rights of others being stripped away, who attempts to belittle BLM, who supports President Trump, or who believes in controlling other people’s bodies cannot have my respect and cannot be my friend. If you cannot respect the rights of me, my friends and family, those around, even a stranger on the other side of the country, then we can’t get along and you have lost any respect I would’ve had for you. It isn’t a difference of political opinion, it is a difference in morals.

Don’t fall for political ad traps



By Tiffany Ho

It’s only human that we believe what we see isn’t it? We grow, learn, and process everything around us through what we see and hear from others and ourselves. In a world where the digital age has made its mark, everything we could possibly want to know is just a click away. Along with the internet, social media allows people to express themselves, connect with others, and gain new knowledge, but political ads on social media are more problematic than we think. During the recent presidential election, I couldn’t help but begin to notice the many political ads that managed to make their way on my Instagram feed. On Youtube, the giant masthead box on the top of the home page was occupied by “Biden for President” or “Trump for President” (it alternated by the hour). I would’ve scrolled by as I usually do with other ads, but some of these short videos caught me off guard by how falsely exaggerated they were. Political ads have existed in America in many different forms such as billboards, flyers, and newspaper ads. But in 1952, Dwight Eisenhower changed the world of political advertisement by being the first president to run ads on TV. It was highly effective and activated nonvoters and voters alike to vote for him. In the modern day, politicians have taken to social media

because of how largely widespread the platforms are. But the issue that comes with these paid ads, is the false information that they project to make their opponents look bad. Under the First Amendment, political free speech and advertising are protected by law, but I’ve noticed that these political ads influenced some voters negatively. In more severe cases, the ads enforced certain biases that people may already have and cause large political and social divides because of the distorted ads that paint a negative picture of the other side. In a study conducted by Dartmouth University scientist Soroush Vosoughi and his colleagues, they found that false news spread quicker than the truth. Many people who see these political ads or other fake news may not stop and consider whether it is the truth. On social media, it’s very easy to post and repost ads that we see. In 2019, the Biden campaign requested Facebook remove an ad that had edited a video clip making it seem Biden had admitted to committing a crime. In an email response back, Facebook refused to take it down. Katie Harbath, global elections policy chief, admitted that “When a politician speaks or makes an ad, we do not send it to third party fact checkers.” Because these advertisements are paid for, social media platforms such as Facebook and Youtube run them without a care of whether or not they are factually correct. It’s easy for political campaigns to slip in distorted video clips that don’t tell the whole story. Though political advertisements on social media have become a large part of campaigning today, people need to remember that what they see isn’t always what they should believe. Take the time to consider what you see and fact check it with other sources to make sure that you aren’t falling into the traps of misinformation that have been set up.



By Austin Coffelt

COVID-19 has hit California the hardest of all states, as it has the most COVID-19 cases and the most deaths. Schools have been closed since March, along with places of business. Many people have lost their job either temporarily or permanently across the state. Because of this, bills have become more of

a struggle for people to pay and many are at risk of being evicted. To prevent even more homelessness, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation that prevents tenants from being evicted for COVID-19 related reasons. The bill also protects landlords from foreclosure. This does not mean that tenants or landlords don’t have to pay their rent or bills, but it just allows them to pay at a later date. I support anti-eviction and anti-foreclosure measures because being homeless makes it much more difficult to fight the virus. I believe these anti-eviction measures don’t go far enough. The law still allows eviction if tenants went to court and lost before COVID-19 and were just waiting to be evicted by the police. In other words, if you were supposed to be evicted

before the pandemic, the police can still come and escort you out. According to an Aug. 11 report by Cal Matters, more than 1,600 people have been evicted since March 4 when Newsom declared a state of emergency. A quarter of those evictions have come since the first anti-eviction legislation was signed on March 27. Homelessness in a time of a pandemic like this is extremely dangerous for the homeless person. Shelters are crowded and unsafe. There are not adequate bathrooms or safe shelter. People are acting even colder towards the homeless than before. If homelessness can be prevented during this pandemic, whether the tenants lost in court in 2019 or they just missed a payment in March, it must be prevented for the safety of the community.

Protect tenants from eviction



Hitchcock streams on small screens

Actors overcome pandemic with virtual play

By Miguel Bernas

Despite the pandemic and social distancing requirements, members of the CVHS advanced drama class performed Alfred Hitchcock's "The 39 Steps."

"We had to create something that hadn't been done before," said advanced drama teacher Tiffany Daily.

For the first time, actors had to perform virtually, and students had to rehearse through Zoom. Individual footage was recorded on cell phones while actors stood in front of pop-up green screens. Students dedicated a lot of time and effort and spent several weeks creating the show



Actors Zachary Furber-Dobson and Emma Trujillo perform in "The 39 Steps."

due to the difficulties of virtual performing.

The play is about a man

named Richard Hannay who attends a performance by "Mr. Memory" who showcases his

talents with his photographic memory. A fight breaks out in the theatre and shots are fired.

As the audience scrambles, Hannay finds himself with a mysterious woman named Annabella Schmidt.

Convinced to take her to his home, Schmidt reveals that she is a spy and the following day she is murdered. Hannay struggles to escape the police while being watched by a mysterious organization Schmidt told him about, called "The 39 Steps."

"My favorite part of the play was the struggles we went through performing in such a different way," said junior Zachary Furber Dobson who played the lead role, Hannay.

Despite the challenges, the advanced drama class worked hard and are pleased with their performance and are excited to present their show to CVHS.

The show aired through a website called "Broadway On Demand" during the last weekend of November and the first weekend of December.

"I knew I wanted to help in some way"

By Hannah Pilgrim

HeARTS FOR YEMEN is a CVHS student-led charity organization focused on creating artwork to sell for donations to Yemen volunteer services.

Yemen is currently facing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. They are in the midst of a civil war that has prevented proper food access and medical care. Eighty percent of its population is in poverty and millions have died due to malnutrition and disease. The U.N. has warned that deaths from COVID-19 could exceed wartime fatalities.

"I remember I was scrolling through my feed mindlessly and saw this child covered in dust and blood. The top of the video said 'The world has failed Yemen' and I knew I wanted to help in some way," said senior Isis Poulouse, HeARTS for Yemen creator.

Poulouse and some fellow artists collaborated to create art in the hopes that their followers would make a direct donation to any organization that helps Yemen. Artwork created by the volunteers has included clay figurines, handmade t-shirts, commissioned sketches and line art, stickers, and much more.

"Just because the rest of the world didn't care didn't mean I



Senior Isis Poulouse leads an effort to sell artwork for the needy in Yemen.

didn't," said Poulouse.

Since the creation of HeARTS for Yemen in July, the dedicated group has raised over \$1,000 for various charities working on the ground in Yemen. The artists are now more than halfway to their \$1,500 goal.

"I feel very proud that I could be part of such an amazing and helpful project especially after we have reached our goal, although I'm a little bit sad that it's lost traction recently. But I'm not ready to give up," said senior Karina Murugesu.

If you are interested in an art piece, donate to one of

the organizations listed on their Instagram. DM them a screenshot of your donation and based on how much donated you will be able to receive an art piece for the same price point.

If you or someone you know has a skill that you would like to use to help Yemen, feel free to DM them at their Instagram @ heartsforyemen or email them at heartsforyemen@gmail.com.

Learn more about their goals, how they operate, and the recent news in Yemen at HeARTS for Yemen's website <https://heartsforyemen.wixsite.com/mysite>.



Amaya Jiao writes, performs and publishes her own songs.

"I hope that my music makes people smile"

By Corinne Davidson

Thanks to quarantine everyone has been stuck in their houses, bored looking for things to do. Like many others, sophomore Amaya Jiao had a lot of free time on her hands due to quarantine. The amount of free time led her to write and release her own music.

For a long time, Jiao played guitar and sang, posting her covers on Instagram and TikTok. After playing and practicing the same songs, she wanted new songs to play leading her to write her own music.

Writing music gave her an outlet to release the stress that quarantine was producing and since there is so much free time.

Music is a way for Jiao to express her emotions and show people that she cares about and loves them. She wants her music to show people that they aren't alone.

"I hope that my music makes people smile," said Jiao.

Her music is impactful with its heartfelt lyrics and thoughtful messages. The indie-pop style gives her music a unique feeling while also showing her thoughts and feelings. Jiao does an amazing job making her songs flow and enjoyable to listen to.

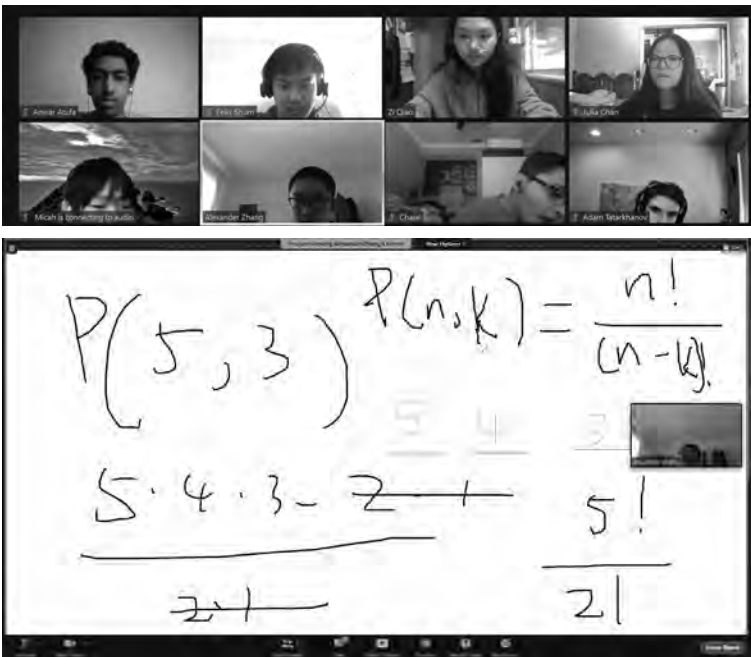
Jiao writes about "whatever is going on in my life." Her songs are relatable in the way that she writes honestly and straight from the heart.

She released her first song on Spotify back in June and since then she has released three other songs.

Jiao said that it was a generally easy process to release her music and the only difficulties she had came from not being a super tech-savvy person.

Her latest release "To the Moon and Back" and all her other music is available on Spotify and Apple Music, as well as many other popular music platforms.

Mu Alpha Theta maximizes middle school math



Junior Alex Zhang teaches permutations. FELIX SHUM

By Felix Shum

Eight CVHS mathematics enthusiasts are working together to help over 60 Canyon and Creekside middle schoolers prepare for the American Mathematics Competition 8 (AMC 8) in November and the Mathcounts competition in February.

These middle schoolers are taught by a volunteers from the Mu Alpha Theta club at CVHS. In meetings on Monday afternoons, volunteers plan on what to teach to the middle schoolers in addition to learning or solving a problem.

During the student-run volunteer sessions on Friday afternoons, middle schoolers are taught applications of factorials, permutations, combinations, and other topics that they would otherwise not learn in a middle school math class.

“I get to meet great people and it’s a good opportunity for meaningful community service, and I like doing math stuff,” said junior Alex Zhang, club president. Zhang has participated in Mathcounts for two years and is in his third year of Mu Alpha Theta.

Many of the middle schoolers have lost motivation compared to previous years. However, some remain resilient to the transition to virtual meetings and try their best.

“I did pretty bad in the previous years and I want to get better this year,” said Creekside eighth grader Sean Chen. As this is his last year of eligibility for

the AMC 8, Chen hopes to take advantage of the less chaotic meetings he experienced in previous years.

The volunteers are divided into two groups: worksheets and grading. The worksheets group collaborates on typing word problems in sets of five and then converting them into viewable PDFs. The grading group assigns points based on work and correctness, giving feedback and tips.

One issue volunteers face is lack of engagement with middle schoolers. Despite having many members, Mathcounts only has about 20 students completing the worksheets, and less attending the meetings.

“The main problem is the middle schooler’s lack of response. Alex just speaks into a sea of blank screens. There is not really much to motivate them to do this stuff,” said junior Cedric David, one of Mu Alpha Theta’s newest members.

Volunteers have tried several ways to make Mathcounts more appealing. The worksheets group has tried an incentive by adding participants’ names into word problems. Other ideas include raffles, homework passes, and a points system.

To prepare and motivate the middle schoolers for the time being, Zhang and the other Mu Alpha Theta officers have created a Contest of Wonderful Stuff (COWS). Volunteers hope there will be more participation from the middle schoolers so that they can make their potential skills in math count.

“How real world engineers develop ideas”

By Brooke Kundert

Engineering students are reaching new heights in CVHS’s first ever fourth-year engineering class, which focuses on the application of all of the things that engineering students have learned in previous years and applying them to the real world.

Each student is placed into a team based on their particular sub-interest in the engineering community. These teams include environmental, architectural and structural, transportation, time management, technology, entertainment, security, and parks and recreation.

Every team has a different project that they will be working on year long. For example, the architectural team is working on developing sustainable housing and the environmental team is working on a solution to sorting different types of recycling. There are different checkpoints along the way, and for their final, students will present their ideas in a simulation similar to the “Shark Tank” television program where innovators show their creative inventions to investors.

“I’ll reintroduce one of the topics in the design process, and help them stay organized and up to date on where they should be on the timeline of their project. They’re going to be presenting this in a showcase event at the end of the year,” explained

Jessica Porter, both the fourth-year engineering teacher and the second-year engineering teacher.

As the year goes on, students focus on different aspects of the design process, which begins with brainstorming ideas for problems that haven’t yet been solved. For some, this is the most challenging part because it is hard to find problems that people have not yet found solutions to. For example, the environment team first wanted to focus on eco friendly batteries but soon found that there was already research on the chemical composition of the battery, so it was better to spend their time on a different way to keep our planet clean.

“I’m most excited to create our prototype, because it’s more hands on and we can actually do things, rather than just talking and researching,” described senior Isabel Walth on her recycling sorting prototype that is soon to come.

Porter hopes to find a way to use the machines they already have in order to make their prototypes in the Spring, and despite COVID-19 making things more challenging across the board, both students and Porter are excited to put prototypes into action.

Students are meant to utilize prior engineering knowledge in order to apply it to real-world situations, and in this case, their projects and prototypes.

“A lot of the students are all friends with each other, so we all get along pretty well, and we’re all doing something we like,” Walth stated, showing how teammates that work together can get the job done.

The course is very open ended, and kids come into this class with a basic understanding of the subject and are presented with the question of how it can fit into the real world.

“The class really helps students apply what they know to something that they may want to do with their career or study. Whether or not this project is actually something that’s designed, or goes into something that is worth continuing research over, it is something that sees the application of engineering more so than just learning materials. It could definitely one day really help someone,” Porter described, once again emphasizing the importance of this class and it’s application to the real world upon high school, and hopefully college, graduation.

Engineering students are working hard to make the world a better place, and we can see that by their clear problem solving skills and intentful research.

“The class is more helpful than the other engineering classes because we are getting a sense on how real world engineers develop ideas,” finished senior Nikolas Sawczuk.

Student launches online art business

By David Hernandez

Over 45 percent of businesses fail within the first five years, but sophomore Eryn West, who goes by the online persona of Blue, has been breaking this trend by succeeding and thriving selling her artwork online to customers.

A professional artist and Twitch affiliate, West sells her artwork online by promoting her work on sites such as Twitter, Twitch and Discord. As of now she has over 300 followers on Twitter and that number is only growing.

What separates West from other artists is that she is only 15 and is already taking commissions. Doing all of this with her daunting class schedule while independently studying Art Studies is a path that not many are willing to take.

West makes money by taking commissions from people who ask her to draw art for them, from desktop wallpapers to posters she can create anything and everything that comes her way. “I usually have people pay me around \$95, and it takes me around three hours to make a drawing,” affirmed West.

West usually draws copies of famous video game icons from games such as Overwatch and Mario and puts a unique spin on their character design. Some creative twists that she has brought to life include zombie



Artist Eryn West created this image of a character called Ava.

slayer Mario, cyborg Princess Peach and a goth version of Mercy.

Her specialty is making emoticons for platforms such as Twitch. Streamers pay her to create special and unique badges and they are delighted with the results, with glowing recommendations from customers.

During the pandemic West says that her online business has only grown. “I have a lot more time to draw now, and more people are starting to ask me to make drawings but I don’t like to take too many commissions. I don’t like to overwork myself,” confirmed Blue.

With this new found time West has also started entering more drawing events in the community where she participates in friendly programs such as “art swaps” where she draws other people’s online avatars in her unique

style.

When she is not doing commissions or art West likes to play a video-game called Osu. “It is really fun, It keeps my hands steady and I am really good at it!” said West.

In the future West hopes to be able to grow her freelance work and work her way up to working for other entities such as small indie game companies or maybe even Pixar, she believes that with her skills that she will be able to draw anything that comes her way!

West hopes to one day be someone influential in the drawing community and for good reason too. With her colorful artstyle and vivid imagination, West is someone that you should be looking out for in the drawing scene. With her skills and dedication she may very well be responsible for making this generation’s Mona Lisa!



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Favorite teachers totally featured

‘Frau’ unterrichtet gut Deutsch

By Paulina Peltola

“Frau” took over the CVHS German department by storm 19 years ago.

Barbara Andersen is bilingual and bicultural, making her perfect for the job. She was born in Hamburg, Germany, where she lived until she was nine years old. Then, she moved to Castro Valley, where she has resided ever since.

Andersen is a CVHS alumni as well as a long-time Castro Valley resident. In her high school years, she was part of the track, volleyball, and basketball teams. She studied German, and ended up replacing her old German teacher. She graduated with the class of 1997.

Andersen distinctly remembers the moment when she realized that she wanted to be a teacher.

“My senior year I was sitting in class, and the teacher was a disaster. I remember thinking to myself, ‘I could do this a lot better,’” she recalled.

In college, Andersen majored in European history, later going on to get her teaching credential. During her first years at CVHS, she taught history.

The person who inspired her to teach at CVHS was her former teacher Carmelina Frasca, who is still teaching government and psychology at CVHS. Frasca is someone who Andersen admired as a teacher because of the way she connects with students.

“She called me and said that I would be a perfect fit, and that I should come work here as an intern for a few sections while I got my credential. She really gave me that confidence boost to start,” said Andersen.

Andersen loves her job and the fact that she gets to keep her students



German teacher Barbara Andersen leads trips to Europe.

for up to four years.

“My favorite part about teaching is getting to know my students,” said Andersen.

She makes an effort to stay updated with her teaching methods and materials, so that her curriculum always stays fresh and interesting.

Andersen organizes special events, such as the annual Oktoberfest potluck and Berlin Film Festival field trip.

Perhaps the most well known part of Andersen’s German class is that every other year, students make a trip to Europe. Students experience German culture first-hand, immerse themselves in the language, visit a German high school and meet German students. For those who have experienced it, the Europe

trip is something they will always remember.

“Going to the beach in Rome was amazing, and the Rottenburg castle was incredible,” remembered Beckman Hart, a senior.

Since Andersen started teaching at CVHS, her class has become very popular, with increasing amounts of students signing up each year. Many of her students decided to take the class after hearing good things about it from a friend or a classmate. Students love her style of teaching and the fun of the class.

In 2018 Andersen received the Teacher of the Year award. Andersen’s teaching skills, German heritage and Castro Valley roots all come together to make her a standout.



Teacher Kathleen Veety inspires her students with science.

“Learning chemistry is actually fun”

By Cecilia Lin

Did any teachers cause you to become interested in a subject? Kathleen Veety, a science teacher at CVHS, shared her story about why she chose to teach.

This year she is teaching advanced chemistry and forensic science, and it is the third year that she has taught at CVHS.

When Veety took chemistry as a junior in high school, her teacher Ms. Layou developed her interest in chemistry.

“Ms. Layou was the best, and I just really liked chemistry from her. That’s why I got into chemistry and thought I want to major in it,” she said.

Layou advised her to take physics, which she found helpful.

“Physics in college is hard, and it would’ve been harder if I did not take it in high school,” said Veety.

It is the reason why she gave the same advice to her students that it is important to have a foundation of all branches of

science before going in-depth about a specific one.

Veety earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Susquehanna University.

When Veety was a grad student at Penn State, she was a teaching assistant for a general chemistry class.

“I like doing tutoring sessions, and I like recitations that I had for the students,” she explained.

She also noticed that many of the college students struggled with freshman chemistry, making her determined to help them.

“Ms. Veety always makes the concepts easy to understand, and makes me think that learning chemistry is actually fun,” said junior Ashley Huang.

“Ms. Veety is a teacher that valued learning over grades and I really like that,” said junior Sophia Low.

Even though Veety loves in-person lectures, she is adjusting to distance learning.

“I implemented some of the things I learned from the professional development in the summer, and it worked fantastic on Zoom,” she said.

Jervis delivers artistic joy

By David Hernandez

Many stare in awe while in the presence of the many murals that create the vibrant aura around our campus. You may have seen such artworks around our campus such as the Trojans mosaic outside the office and the stairways covered with little clay pieces. The mastermind behind these is ceramics teacher Jennifer Jervis.

The creative spirit and expression that Jervis displays all started out in her own junior year in a ceramics class. There she had found that she was able to project her views and feelings into the world in a manner that was more powerful than words.

This creative vigor had only been expanded upon during her visit to Mexico in 2011. “In Barcelona they have these beautiful mosaic benches, all around... these artworks have inspired me in a lot of ways,”

Jervis said.

Her visits have not been her only motivation however. Jervis has taken inspiration from other talented artists such as Vincent Van Gogh who she believes invokes powerful emotion and messages in his artwork. That has inspired her to provide meaning in each and every artwork that she creates.

This freedom of expression that Jervis has experienced is something that she could not keep to herself which is one of the main reasons that she has become a teacher, in order to help the creative imaginations of others unfold.

Her latest project honors Castro Valley native Cliff Burton, original bassist of the band Metallica.

One has to wonder how much time and commitment such vibrant ideas take to put into fruition. According to Jervis, each project is methodically planned and takes about two

weeks to complete although she says that the work is worth it to see the motivation that springs to life in the eyes of the children.

Jervis says that it brings her joy when people gain joy from her artwork. Students and staff have thanked her, even when they are no longer a part of the CVHS community.

“It’s becoming generational. Eventually I am going to have the kids of these kids come, it’s almost like a legacy,” Jervis said.

Despite the challenges that come along with hosting an art class in distance learning, Jervis is persevering. Although our future in this pandemic is blurry, one thing is clear to see.

No matter what Jervis ends up doing in her career, it is sure that she will invoke passion and inspiration wherever she leads.

“Who knows, maybe us overcoming this pandemic will lead to another mural about grit and unity,” said Jervis.



Teacher Jennifer Jervis created art that adorns the campus.

Get a whiff of senior’s “Dog Breath” magazine

By Victoria Ceaser

Looking to get into independent publishing? Talk to senior Andrea Mazon about her self-published magazine, “Dog Breath.”

“Dog Breath” is a magazine entirely composed from Mazon’s unique and personal vision along with plenty of artistic contributions. Her first issue “Growing Up On The Internet” is a personal reflection of her experiences with mental health and the psychological effects of consuming social media early in life.

Mazon explained the magazine’s cover image and name. “I was hanging out with a friend and he has a really cool car, a 70s Mustang that was all beat up, and we took his dog out to a walk. On the way back, I was like, ‘Your dog looks so cool sitting in front of your car,’ and I just took a bunch of pictures of him. I was looking at them, and I really liked how it came out when I finished photoshopping them. So, I was like ‘okay, I have two dogs, all my friends have dogs: we can keep this a running theme! Dog Breath, two words, easy to say, that’s the title.’”

Mazon opened up about how the magazine impacted her life. “I decided to think of it as a way to have fun, because it’s whatever I want to put in it, so that’s what I wanted to do—make it purely whatever I wanted to do, and I wanted to do it all myself.”

Even if the subject matter were to change, Mazon wants to

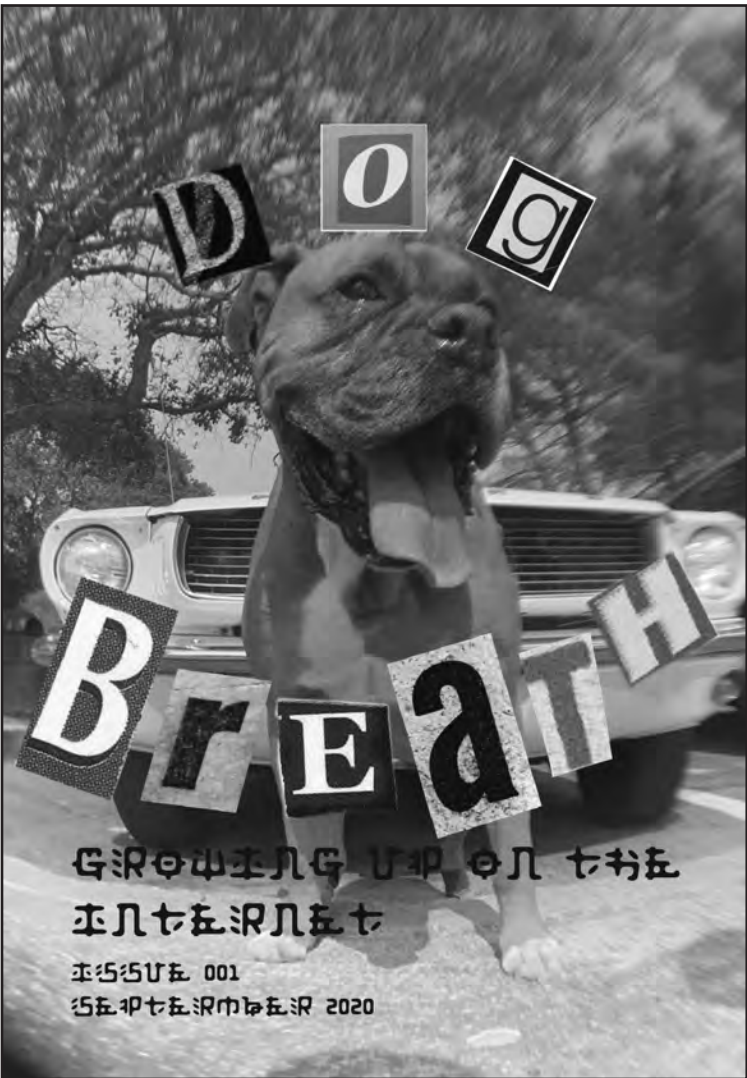
make sure that the magazine is still 100 percent her own work.

She believes everyone should have an output to pour their feelings into for whatever they love, and to put that love out there. “Finally having something that felt 100 percent mine and that I had complete control of as my own artistic outlet was one thing I do appreciate a lot. I didn’t realize it until after the first issue. Also, I got a lot of money from it.”

Mazon’s writing is honest and captivating while still holding true to her personality, and the illustrations alongside the artsy photos featured in the magazine are emotionally breathtaking and really sets the mood for the entire zine.

If you’re looking forward to the next issue of Dog Breath, Mazon plans to release it early next year.

“I had this idea to do interviews with immigrant girls and talk about how it is to grow up in a country that you weren’t born in,” said Mazon. “I have a very weird perception of my cultural identity, and I thought it would be interesting to interview people who were born from another country and had to grow up white. And so, I had this idea of naming it ‘Growing Up White’ and doing things like photo shoots with all of these different races and girls and nonbinary people that were just dealing with their identity growing up and what they have to say about it. I just thought that these people would have something to say, and they deserve to be heard.”



Senior Andrea Mazon wrote, designed and published “Dog Breath” all by herself.



Tutors teach tots, teens

By Ethan To

Imagine being a kid in elementary school, who hasn’t adapted to distance learning yet. The overwhelming workload and topics are too much to handle. Help is always needed, but parents and older siblings are busy with work. Motivation is lost and technology problems occur. Thankfully, there’s a group of tutors determined to give kids support.

“When I was tutoring my younger siblings, they needed so much help. I thought it would be a good idea to help other kids because I was sure that other kids didn’t have older siblings or parents that had time to help them,” said senior Rachel Lin.

In response to the global pandemic, many schools have converted to distance learning. Although it is effective for the most part, many students, especially younger kids, have had difficulty adjusting to this new learning environment.

“For younger kids especially, distance learning isn’t that

effective. If they could learn from people who could understand them more, they would enjoy what they were learning a little bit more,” said senior Gabrielle Lewis.

Despite hard times many students are facing, five passionate seniors created a program called CV Tutors, providing free tutoring over Zoom for many kids.

Created by CVHS seniors Jolie Tran, Emily Xu, Ashley Fang, Lin and Lewis, CV Tutors are now tutoring 125 kids. The team consists of 45 tutors, including many upperclassmen from CVHS. Over the past six months, this esteemed group has tutored students of multiple grades, from kindergarteners to eighth graders.

CV Tutors provides tutoring for a variety of subjects, including history, math, English and science. They provide support for homework assignments and learning topics while making strong bonds with the students.

Tutors connect with the students’ parents via text or email and use Zoom or other

platforms to engage in learning-based activities.

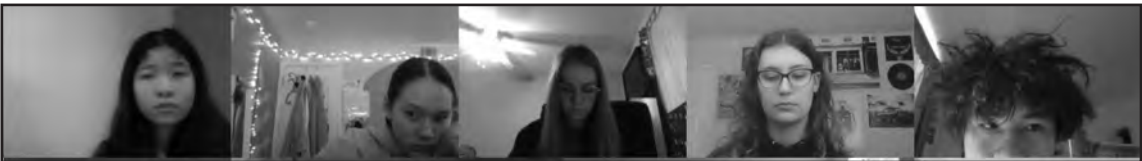
Of course, the tutor and student cannot meet in person and must communicate with each other through a screen. Connection issues and the students’ attitudes play a big role. But these students are determined to do their best to help the kids.

“Connection issues were difficult. Sometimes my wifi cut out and my student’s wifi cut out. We had to find different platforms like Facetime. One time my laptop completely shut down during a lesson, so we had to switch devices,” said Tran.

Since the beginning of the new school year, CV Tutors continue to tutor kids. Does CV Tutors still need more assistance? In fact, they do! However, there is an application process.

“We have a quick application process and a short interview, just to get to know the tutor,” said Fang.

CV Tutors hopes to continue providing tutoring for the rest of the school year, with as much help as they can get.



Journalism students participate in lessons and plan coverage in a distanced class.

“Working hard to cover all the stories”

By Ali Nosseir

Journalism: a profession well known for its social aspects which involve interviewing people, working with peers, and publishing and distributing the newspaper.

However, with distance learning in effect due to the COVID-19 virus, how has the CVHS *Olympian* journalism team adapted to this new form of learning and publishing stories?

“In the past, editors and staff writers had more opportunities to interact and get to know each other during class, which helped them form strong bonds with each other... Unfortunately, the pandemic has affected these routines,” said advanced journalism student Nikita

Thomas.

As a group, *The Olympian* staff has managed to persevere in distance learning, published a newsprint edition with stories from each individual student.

Journalism students plan to publish several more print editions and many more articles at cvhsolympian.com.

“With all of the trending news stories such as COVID, the election, protests, and more, we are working hard to cover all the stories that affect our community,” said first year journalism student David Hernandez.

Editor-in-Chief Tiffany Ho agreed. “With distance learning, we students are becoming more exposed to different software which can prove to be a learning experience for students,” she

said.

Ho also provides reasons for why distance learning journalism wise is not just a negative experience. “Journalism is not solely based on newspapers and such. Getting exposed to technology is a positive in modern society,” she said.

The Olympian team puts a lot of effort into holding interviews with people relating to their stories so readers like you can have the privilege to read such first-hand experiences.

Journalism students have never had to adapt to such a drastic change, but *The Olympian* crew has made the most of the situation. Through hard work and perseverance, the class will further acclimate to distance learning to help produce more stories.

Three win election to school board

By Olivia Dooley

Micheal Kusiak, Lavender Whitaker, and Dolly Adams won election to the CVUSD school board in November. Adams won with 20.45 percent, Whitaker with 20.01 percent, and Kusiak following with 19.12 percent.

They share similar viewpoints on acting on COVID-19, achieving equity in the district, pushing for better attendance and opportunities for the special education children and striving to make Castro Valley schools a place for the community.

"I am honored that there are people out there that saw something in me and my vision, and it is an absolute privilege to be given four years to tackle my goals," Kusiak said.

All elected board members seemed to share the same sense of pride that the Castro Valley community chose them to represent them and their children's needs.

The school board electees wanted to make sure that the voters knew that they are going to work hard to make Castro Valley schools better than when they started, starting with addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.



Dolly Adams, Michael Kusiak and Lavender Whitaker (from left to right) won the Castro Valley school board election.

"Students are scared to go back to school this year. It is important to understand what it means to come back, and look at different ways that students may be able to come back," Kusiak said.

Members of the school board are working hard to address the needs of students, as well as their concerns to make sure

that when students come back to school, it is the right decision for the health and safety of the community.

Many students have apprehensions about returning to school, with the risk of COVID-19 so high, and the school board has been working hard to listen to everyone's concerns and opinions on the matter.

Kusiak and Whitaker both strongly believe in the district's plan, and are confident in the ability of our community to pull it off.

Along with formulating a plan to address the coronavirus, the newly appointed school board members are determined to take steps to push our district towards student equity.

"It is important that we recognize where we need to put our money and support, and adjust it as students' needs change," Whitaker said.

The school board is working hard to focus on addressing the needs of many underprivileged students and pushing our community to realize the hardships that they have had to overcome.

Adams also showed an interest in putting more effort and resources into special education.

"It is important that we focus more time and energy into our special ed students. They need more technological support, and more services to make school more accessible to them," Adams said.

Kusiak also discussed the need for our school district to allow for free meals for students and make sure that all students had access to hot meals. He also mentioned how important it is that we fight for better funding in our schools, to provide for departments that have been neglected in the past.

"We need to invest in buildings that stand out, that aren't just the basics, there is a huge opportunity to see our schools not just as a place to learn, but as community meeting places," Kusiak said.

Touchy topics test boundaries in school discussions

By Leah Janaway

The 2020 presidential election has been a topic on the forefront of our minds for a long time. The tension was tightly strung between Democrats and Republicans as Nov. 3 came and went, and it still persists. The election has also sparked important discussions, in school and out of it, about personal values and the state of this country. This year, these issues have been explained and debated in CVHS classrooms virtually.

"This is an opportunity for my students to not only figure out what they think, but also why they think it," said history teacher Kathleen Cassidy. "I have a sticker in my classroom that says 'If you can't change your mind, are you sure you still have one?' and I agree with that. If you aren't continuing to learn, to evolve, then what's the point?"

Politics can be a sensitive topic in the classroom, and while teachers support students sharing their views regardless of their opinion, some perspectives are offensive to voice.

"Laying ground rules is really important any time you have a debate in class, like listening to understand instead of just to argue, or making sure when you are arguing that the focus is on the issue and it doesn't get personal."

LAURA O'BRIEN
Science Teacher

Government classes, which debate politics the most, spent time before the presidential election predicting the results of the electoral college for every state. Then after the results were called, the students discussed the steps President-elect Joe Biden has taken, as well as the tweets that

President Donald Trump has been sending out. Of course, the students' views on the topics aren't all unanimous.

"Our school these days is a much more liberal-leaning population, so when we're talking about things that involve President Trump, I make a point before we begin our discussion of reminding them that there are students in every one of the classes that are supporters of President Trump, and that they have the right to have that opinion," said government teacher Carmelina Frasca.

No matter what side they take, most students are engaged and interested in the political debates and discussions. School is not their primary source of news, so they come to class backed with information from articles, some reputable and some questionable.

"It has continually amazed me that in the past five to ten years at CVHS how much more politically aware my students are," said Cassidy. "A shift occurred, I'm not exactly sure when, and now students are much more politically active."

Voters reject taxes, affirmative action, younger voters

Propositions fail to pass in California

By Josie de la Torre

This November, California residents voted no on Prop. 15, 16, and 18 that would all have had major effects on young people in California if they had passed.

Prop. 15 would have increased tax on some commercial properties to fund schools and local governments. About 52 percent of the state's 15.3 million voters voted no.

"Personally, I'm glad 15 got voted no because the people would likely end up being most affected are the small businesses and renters. Ultimately I think that Prop. 15 would've just raised the cost of living in place that is already exorbitant," said senior Kiara Primes.

Prop. 16 would have allowed affirmative action on public

hiring and college admittance based on gender and race. It also failed, as 57 percent of voters voted no.

"Prop. 16 should have been voted yes on affirmative action," said senior Christian Green. "I think what people believe is that affirmative actions creates less opportunities for non-minorities, when in actuality it just allows for minorities to have to same chances at jobs and college admittance as everyone who is either more privileged or more likely to gain these opportunities because they are white and male."

As for Proposition 18, it would have allowed 17-year-olds who would be 18 at the time of the general elections to vote in the primaries and special elections. This measure failed too as 57.8 percent of California voters voted no.

"I think that Prop 18 should've been voted yes because if someone is going to be old enough for the general election, then what difference does a couple months make?" said Primes.

AP exams to be determined

By Alice Tang

The 2021 AP exams will be administered over two weeks from May 3-7 and May 10-14. The usual \$40 cancellation/unused test fee will be waived this year, so students can cancel by March 12, 2021 at 11:59 ET if they change their mind about taking the exam.

As of now the question of whether the exams will be taken online or in-person is still to be determined.

Several students are worried about what the exams will be like as well as worrying about not learning enough in their AP classes.

"I'm taking two AP exams this year and I'm worried about the exams because I haven't tried the original two to three hours exam before, only the abridged 45 minutes one," senior Jolie Tran said. "I think that the AP exams will be close to the same format as last year because there is a lot of uncertainty for in person testing still."

The College Board states that

AP will support in-school testing in 2021 but if social distancing is still necessary, schools will have additional options to ensure all students can test.

"I am waiting to hear more from the College Board and for now it seems they have taken the optimistic approach that everything will be normal by May 2021," said Assistant Principal Kevin Baker.

Some teachers are worried about preparing the students for AP exams this year because there is not enough time per class to teach each course thoroughly.

"We are behind by a couple of chapters compared to previous years, and a lot is being put on the students to master the material on their own," math teacher Anissa Gerdt expressed.

To help students as teachers teach each unit, AP Central is releasing daily videos (called AP Daily) for each unit as soon as possible while following the pacing of each course.

These videos are located at the AP Classroom homepage (<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/>) and are produced by over 300 highly experienced AP teachers from all over the world.

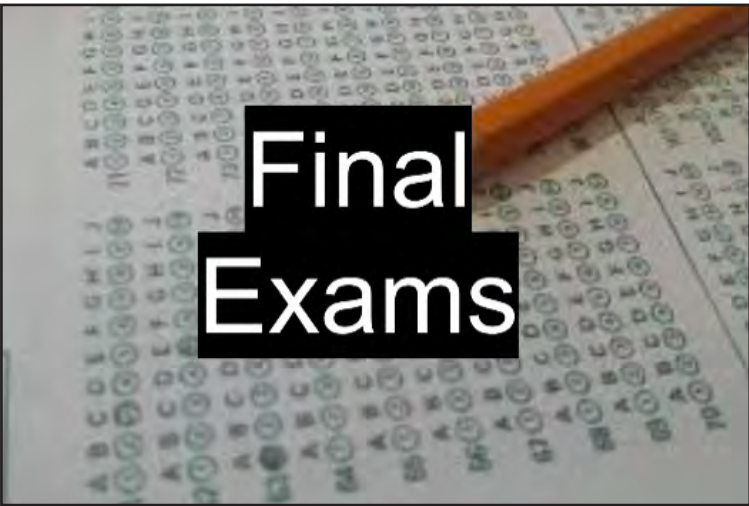
Each video is about ten minutes long -- there are multiple videos per unit-- and teachers can assign progress check multiple choice questions for each unit.

As for how AP students are preparing for the exams, they have a lot of options which includes reviewing notes, studying from textbooks, watching AP Daily videos, asking teachers questions during Trojan Time, and more.

"I'm just trying to do my best in my courses, but will be reviewing the content in closer detail and just doing lots of practice tests as the exam dates get closer," explained Tran.

Although this year might be difficult, there are a lot of resources out there to help students ace their AP exams in the upcoming spring.

"I'm still hopeful, because, in my experience, CVHS students typically rise to any challenge, but there are a lot of challenges to overcome," said Gerdt.



KOMAL KHEHRA

Distance learning leads to changes on final exams

By Komal Khehra

Finals are scheduled to continue through distance learning at CVHS this year. Finals in the midst of distance learning will be much different compared to previous years when they were done in person so some changes had to be made in the way teachers are planning to do finals in their classes.

Fall finals happen during the week of Dec. 14. The faculty has decided on 90-minute periods, longer than the 45-minute sessions of distance learning but shorter than the normal two-hour exams.

Even the way students were taught this year was different from previous years because of shorter class periods and the amount of class periods there are in a week. Teachers can see how this could affect learning and the amount of information a student can take in which would affect the way students do finals in general. There are also teachers hoping to reduce the number of questions on their tests for that reason.

"The material that we are delivering during distance learning has to be in some way truncated and condensed, so we are really focusing on what we call essential standards," said math teacher Jeffrey Small.

Every test could possibly be done differently depending on the teacher and/or department but a huge majority of teachers will be holding it synchronously to minimize cheating during the test. Cheating has always been a problem in past years and that passed on to distance learning for some students.

"What we as teachers are mostly relying on is the honesty of students, and cheating is a problem every year, but this year we're aiming to be a bit more expansive."

CHRISTOPHER BING
Chemistry Teacher

With the sudden change from normal in-person school to distance learning, teachers have had to adjust the way they usually do finals since it's obviously such a huge shift from how students would normally do them. Teachers have begun to use multiple testing platforms like Illuminate, Google Forms, and more that they might not have used in the past.

"We've been preparing by talking a lot through meetings and text messages and occasionally Zooms trying to figure out what we think and feel is fair, what doesn't allow for rampant cheating and something that takes into account what the students' situation is and what we think is a fair way of judging you on what you learned and the effort you've put into class," said history teacher Ian Rodriguez.

Yearbook adapts to virtual class

By Ada Chen

In previous years the CVHS yearbook has been filled with colorful pages of wonderful photography, but many of those events were not able to happen this year. The content of the 2020-2021 yearbook is bound to be different than before. As everybody already knows by now, distance learning has had a large effect on the way classes are functioning. If the yearbook crew were to only include pages of the school year, then the book would be full of google meet or zoom screenshots.

Luckily this will not be the case since the yearbook crew has a lot of ideas up their sleeve. One of their many ideas is gathering more attention on their social media account which can be found on Instagram: @yearbookcvhs.

"We added a lot more things which are based on social media preferences. A lot of the topics this year are probably different from what we normally cover because the normal events are not going to happen this year. We are trying to figure out what events will happen instead," said yearbook teacher Jessica Porter.

The overall shift of content in the yearbook has changed to a bigger focus on the students. This includes the interests and living lifestyles of the students while in quarantine. Virtual club page? They got it. Pets page? They still got it. Tik-Tok trends page? Beyond a doubt they got it. These are just a few



Yearbook students found new ways to tell stories in 2020-2021.

examples from the large selection of fun topics the yearbook has in store.

Students can participate by filling out google forms found in the bio of the class's Instagram. Inevitably there are still the struggles of not being able to gather more participation since the only form of advertisement is social media, which some students may not even know about.

"The goal is to include more people, so that part is difficult I think," said yearbook student senior Jacqueline Thibault.

Another yearbook student, senior Kalina Francois, agreed with Thibault and explained how the crew is doing the best they can to attack this problem.

"It's really hard to add as many people as we want, but we have been putting it all over social media platforms to get people to send in more pictures," said Francois.

This new style of yearbook will also have some interesting new features. A sneak peak of

a new feature is that there will be a qr code on some pages that would be able for you to scan on your phone to see beyond what is physically on the page.

Nonetheless there are a few things about the yearbook that have not changed. For instance the length of the yearbook would remain roughly 200 pages, the same number of pages as previous volumes. The price will also stay the same as before because the length has not changed. The price ranges are \$85 from now until January and if students are planning to purchase it in June, it will be \$90. In addition to that, many iconic parts of the yearbook like senior signatures will still be included.

The yearbook lasts beyond the school year filled with laughs and memories. This new yearbook is something to anticipate for. If students want to grab more spots on the pages, then they should not be shy to fill out as many google forms as they can!

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Zoombombers disrupt distance learning

By Andrew Hui

As CVHS transitioned into online learning, “zoom bombers” have taken advantage of the situation to disrupt classes and other school events. Zoom-bombing, which refers to the intrusion of online video meetings by internet trolls, was reported at the virtual Back to School Night and the Senior College Night, in addition to multiple classes.

“[Zoombombers] want to upset people. They know that using racist or sexist terminology and also a lot of sexual terminology can get people upset,” said Assistant Principal Kevin Baker.

The zoom bombing incidents, however, seem to be isolated to just a few classes and events. There have been only 15 zoom bombing incidents reported over the past school year in which thousands of video meetings have been conducted.

Sexual noises, a racial slur and a student’s name were called out at an incident in a band class during the first week of school. Students, who were adjusting to their new online classes, expressed confusion and annoyance.

“I felt aggravated because it was making everyone uncomfortable and it was really disrespectful,” said junior Amaya Davis.



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In a separate incident during a Python class, an attacker who went by the name of “iPhone” made sexual noises and played explicit music. Students tried to figure out who the zoombomber was by using the chat, and unmuted themselves to tell the attacker to stop.

“I let everybody in somewhat trustingly because it was the very first class,” said CTE teacher Louis Stanley.

Some sessions at Back to School night were attacked as

well. Many of the links were public to give parents access to the video meetings. Attackers took advantage of the dial in feature to remain anonymous yet gain access to the meetings.

Senior College Night, an important informational meeting for seniors applying to college, was also disrupted by zoom bombers.

“We had worked so hard to have this event and then we had to deal with this. I also felt embarrassed that this was be-

ing broadcasted for all students and families as well as guest speakers,” said counselor Alison Zuckerbrow.

With her quick thinking, she shut down the zoom meeting and restarted it without the Q&A feature. However, even through the disturbance, many students found College Night extremely helpful.

“Parents and students reported still learning a lot and enjoying the event despite what happened,” said Zuckerbrow.

After these incidents, teachers have increased the security of their meetings. Stanley has since limited his Zoom calls to only a specific list of participants and implemented a waiting room. Zoom also has features that allow teachers to remotely mute and remove zoombombers from a call.

Additionally, the district has been aiding teachers to prevent zoom bombings. Recently, it bought a special Zoom subscription that strengthens the security of the calls by only allowing students logged in with their school Gmail accounts to join. This does not apply to events in which the public is invited to, however it makes day to day classes safer.

Zoombombing has occurred in many school districts nearby and all around the country as well. It has also affected businesses and even a House Oversight Committee meeting.

Regardless of the event, zoombombing is extremely offensive to all involved and disrupts limited class times.

“Our teachers are working really hard to teach and when these things happen it prevents them from doing their work and it prevents our students from learning,” said Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi. “Each of us should be responsible and make sure we are not part of those actions.”

COVID-19 halts holiday plans

By Brinkley Johansen

As everyone well knows, COVID-19 has changed an infinite number of plans over the course of the year. This includes many families’ plans for this holiday season.

Much consideration has been made by families and students on how to stay safe while still enjoying this time of year. Some families have decided to social distance and still gather, while others are not visiting with family or friends at all.

“I feel a little sad and disappointed that I won’t be able to go and visit my grandparents but it’s better so that they won’t get sick,” said senior Jesse Josslin.

A joyous time of year filled with holidays and celebrations has turned disappointing and uncertain for many people as COVID-19 has continued to strike fear into people’s hearts.

Recently California has updated its plans for guidance on private gatherings. These new guidelines require that only three different households can gather at one time. Gatherings must also be held outdoors and there needs to be a sanitiz-



BRINKLEY JOHANSEN

ing station in place for all the attendees. Of course a face mask must be worn as well and physical exertion is extremely discouraged. Gatherings should be less than two hours as well.

“That’s not going to work because it’s really cold,” responded Elizabeth Barajas, the mother of a freshman at CVHS, to the requirement of gathering outdoors.

These new restrictions have posed many problems, but the state of California is just trying to ensure that people are remaining safe. At the same time, there is a large question of whether or not many people will be following these guidelines. This is even an issue in families.

“I know that some of them really aren’t... obeying precautions in any way, so it might

be a little hard to [meet], but I think it will be safe as long as we do our part,” stated freshman Nayeli Barajas.

Different families have different beliefs and precautions that they are taking during COVID-19. Gathering together is a main part of what this holiday season is all about and many families are determined to make it work.

While some families may be trying to follow the standards of social distancing and staying safe, others are avoiding it all together. It can be very difficult to gather with family, especially grandparents who are more at risk. This has led many families to avoid the risk altogether and just not meet in person.

During these holidays many families travel to meet with family in different areas of the United States. But through these trying times, some families will not be making their annual trips to visit.

This is the case with senior Zachary Perry. Usually he and his family travel over the holidays to visit family outside of the state, but due to COVID-19, they are not planning any travel.

“It’s going to be a lot different this year,” said Perry. “Very lowkey, probably not doing anything at all.”

Meeting with family and friends this holiday season will be very different and challenging. It may even be sad and nostalgic at times, but despite these challenges, people are still filled with the hope and joy this season brings and are making the most of these tumultuous times.

Teaching from home, with your own kids around, good luck!

By Nikita Thomas

Social studies teacher Jacqueline Stone, who has been working from home since the start of the pandemic, is a mother to four kids: ages four, seven, nine, and ten.

“There have been so many times my little one comes into the office bathroom and just sits here next to me while potty training. It’s distracting to me, but I just have to laugh,” she said.

With COVID-19 cases on the rise and Alameda County’s return to the purple tier, the plan for the reopening of schools remains uncertain. Many teachers are struggling to effectively teach virtually and many students are struggling to focus and grasp concepts.

Among teachers, there are those who not only have the responsibility of guiding their students, but also the responsibility of managing and caring for their own children at home, simultaneously.

The plight of teachers who are parents to small children seems to be overlooked by many. Prior to the sudden closure of schools, teachers had to deal with one duty at a time, but now with everyone staying at home, it’s no easy task to juggle both teaching and parenting.

“There was a lot of pressure that



Social studies teacher Jacqueline Stone has her hands full with her students and her kids.

I put on myself at the beginning to ‘teach’ my own children in addition to my students. It’s impossible. Sometimes things fall through the cracks, and I have had to become okay with that,” claimed Stone.

Stone is not the only one who has to deal with toddler mishaps while teaching. English teacher Stacy Kania, a mom to a six-year-old and a two-year-old, can

definitely relate. “When distance learning began last year... it was pure chaos. I remember teaching a class, and my daughter ran in screaming, ‘I pooooooped!’ We all just started cracking up. I think we all manage this because we have no choice but to figure it out. When I think about it, it’s pretty amazing to see how we have all adapted.”

Sometimes it’s difficult to

balance teaching and parenting, but even then, it’s crucial to pay attention to one’s own mental health, especially during these unprecedented times.

“Naturally, I have a lot of anxiety when I don’t have control over my life. There were many days where I felt lost trying to create new lesson plans, make sure my students had what they needed, juggle my

kids, and finish my grad work. No matter how much I tried, I couldn’t turn my brain off. My mental health was probably at its worst last year, and I had to find ways to prioritize myself,” Kania described.

Teachers struggle to make time for themselves amongst all this. They have had to make many sacrifices to make sure everything is being done on time.

“In order to get my prep done for the week, I stay up late on Sunday nights. The only quiet time I have is after my children go to sleep at around 8:30. At that time I can focus on planning out my week. I’ve swapped my usual day time prep to late at night. But that allows me to focus on my kids during the day to help them with school work as much as I can,” said Stone.

Although virtual teaching is not ideal, teachers have had to come to terms with it and do their best to be there for their students.

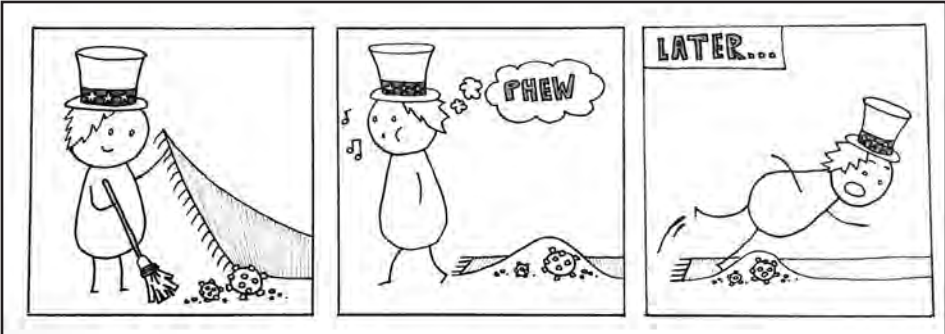
“Teachers don’t want to teach this way and we miss interacting with our students. My favorite part of being a teacher is developing meaningful relationships with students and seeing that academic maturity happen in real time. Zoom is meeting a need, but it’s not a replacement by any means,” said Stone.



ETHAN TO



PAULINA PELTOLA



LEAH JANAWAY



BRINKLEY JOHANSEN



LAUREN FRENCH

COVID-19 postpones sports again

By Megan Baldwin

As coronavirus infections spike across the country, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) has postponed the fall and winter sports seasons until at least Jan. 1, 2021.

The CIF wrote that officials are “confident this decision is a necessary and reasonable action for our member schools, student-athletes, and school communities in light of the current statewide crisis.”

At the beginning of the school year, the CIF created a revised sports calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. The fall and winter seasons were going to begin in December, and the spring season would begin in March.

During the past few months, fall athletes have been training on their own, and were hoping to return to safely practicing with their teammates.

“If we are to have a season, we need to put in place the right protocol such as training in pods, taking temperatures, having extra masks and sanitizers available,” said cross country coach Rachel Lunt.

In November, CVHS began athletic pods so that student athletes could train in small groups. Before coming to the campus, every student has to fill out a COVID screener, and is only allowed in one pod at a time. The pods provide a way for athletes to train with their teammates, and are a way to stay connected during distance learning.

However, most of the state

has returned to the purple tier. With an increasing number of COVID-19 infections, another statewide lockdown could begin soon.

This increase in cases has an effect on when sports will be able to resume, since student safety is the top priority.

The CIF is waiting for more guidance from the California Department of Public Health before coming out with a start date for the fall sports season. In order for athletes to be able to participate in a longer season, the CIF has also cancelled all regional and state championships.

“This delay is frustrating because I know that a lot of my teammates have been training these past few months, and I’m sure the same thing is true of other sports. But I also think that



The coronavirus has postponed sports by six months so far.

it was probably the right decision to make with the spike in cases and everything. When it comes

down to it, our safety and health is what’s most important,” said junior Sierra Kasl-Godley.

► COVID: from page 1

I’m especially concerned for lower income parents who had to quit their jobs or depend on others to teach their kids because they have to go to work. Please give parents more choices. This is not working for every household!”

After listening to several parents, community members, and teachers speak, the board members met in November

to discuss the possibility of reopening and created a tentative reopening plan, assuming everything improves in the spring.

In the meantime, the Alameda County Health Department has allowed CVUSD to create support hubs, which are groups of 14 students and two adults which stay together to help with students struggling with distance learning.

“The hubs are basically there

so that students that have huge challenges accessing distance learning could actually do that in school because we have excellent internet and there are also adults who can support them,” Ahmadi explained. “We want to make sure that students who really need support and can’t do that at home are supported in school.”

When the time does come for schools to reopen, the first to do so will be elementary schools, followed by the middle schools

and CVHS if everything goes smoothly.

“The possibility of younger children versus older children carrying and transmitting is a lot less and that’s why the county health department said we can open elementary school. They have not allowed any other school districts to open even middle or high schools,” explained Ahmadi.

The reopening process won’t be easy but hopefully we will all

be together again soon, once it is safe to do so.

“I know that as a community at large we have resources and it’s been amazing to see lunches available and corner pantries open up, but there are so many families that are still hurting and students that are not having their basic needs met,” said social studies teacher Jacqueline Stone. “I know that I’m a better teacher in a classroom and I want to do my job well.”

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