

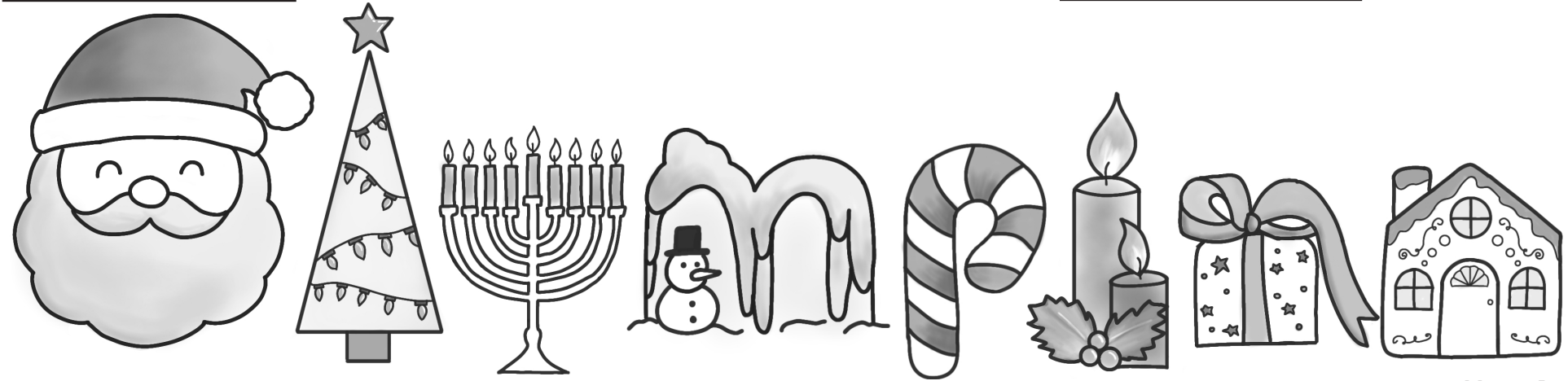
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cinema



MADISON LEE

# “9 to 5” sets the stage



PARI MUNI

Bennett Chambers and Kennedy Quick take their final bows. See more on page 10.

# Trojan test scores beat state average

By Ben Morlan

Test scores in CVHS have gone up higher in 2024-2025 compared to the previous year, with English test scores coming up 2% higher than math scores. Math scores came up as well, meaning more students have met or exceeded the standard for math and English.

Throughout the school, 68.1% of kids met or exceeded their expectation for English in 2024-2025, 2% more than in 2023-2024. The total percentage of students in the state who exceeded their grade level was 22.3% while 33.5% of students in CVHS exceeded their grade level standards.

“All of the English teachers have been working extra hard this year, and I think that’s why English test grades came up this year,” said English teacher Erin Cook.

Additionally, math scores also grew as well, improving 0.35%. There were 49.4% of students who met or exceeded their standards for math.

Overall, 68.1% of CVHS students met or exceeded their expected standards while 48.8% of students in the state did so, meaning CVHS outperformed the state average.

“I’m glad that kids are doing better in math. Hopefully kids will continue to get better at math,” said math teacher Alex Cardoso.

# Students automatically receive CSU admissions

By Sam Truscott-Abraham

A wave of opportunity is sweeping across California high schools as Senate Bill 640 establishes the CSU Direct Admission program beginning with the Fall 2027 admission cycle.

Any high school student who meets the minimum CSU requirements – a 2.5 GPA and on-track completion of all A-G college preparatory courses by the end of 11th grade – will automatically receive a direct admission offer.

By Sept. 1 of their senior year, qualified students will be notified of their guaranteed acceptance, from participating CSU, via a personalized letter, replacing the anxious wait for traditional application results.

The bill’s author, Senator Christopher Cabaldon, encapsulated the program’s goal: “It should be as easy and seamless to go from 12th grade to college as it is to go from 10th

grade to 11th grade. Tens of thousands of California students are fully qualified to go to CSU, but don’t jump the hurdles of the admissions process.”

The legislation is designed to solve two problems simultaneously. First, it addresses the fact that nearly half of the CSU system’s campuses currently have available enrollment capacity. Second, it removes the application fee and complex paperwork that often causes qualified, high-achieving students, particularly those who are first-generation or low-income, to miss out on higher education.

Mattie Peracca-Brown highlighted how transformational this new policy could be. “This is super beneficial for students who don’t know if they have a shot to make it into a four-year institution. This is going to change the culture of CVHS to focus on the CSU system’s academic and economic advantage for students.”

For students in the Castro Valley area, this guarantee

includes regional options like Cal State East Bay and San Francisco State, along with 14 other campuses, such as Cal Poly Humboldt, CSU Northridge, and Sacramento State.

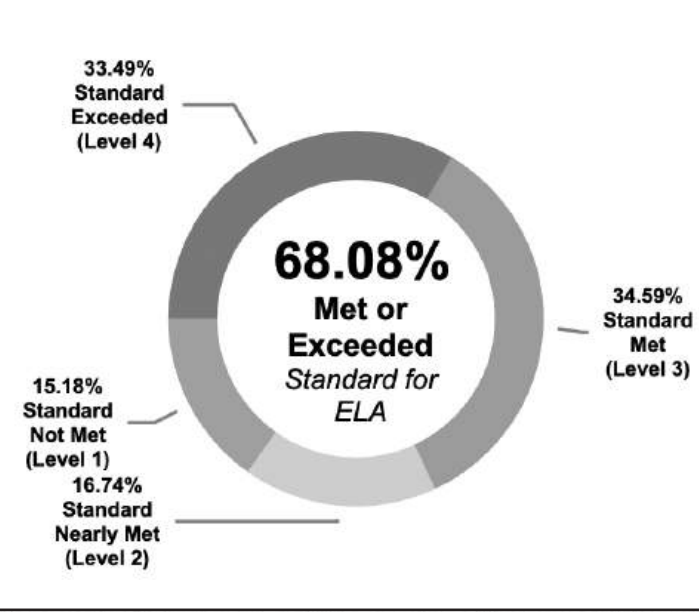
This means that the time spent on CSU applications can now be redirected toward a student’s final year, allowing them to focus on finishing their primary academic journey off strong.

This program builds on a model where this law was tested in Riverside county and it was a large success: yielding increased college access, increased enrollment paperwork completion, simplified admissions, and boosted enrollment.

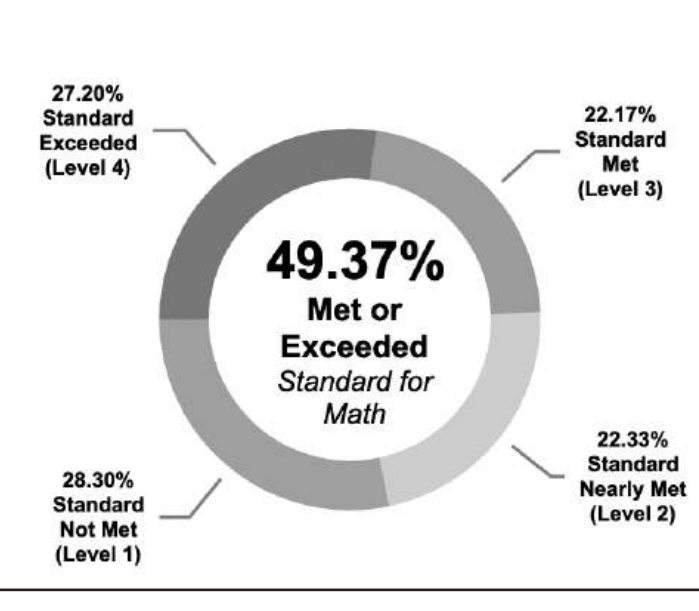
By Sept. 1 of each year, eligible pupils will be identified and officially notified of their direct admission, providing certainty and motivation early in their senior year.

The days of waiting anxiously by the mailbox are over—now, that acceptance letter is guaranteed, changing “I hope to go” into “I’m already in.”

Percent of students within each achievement level



Percent of students within each achievement level

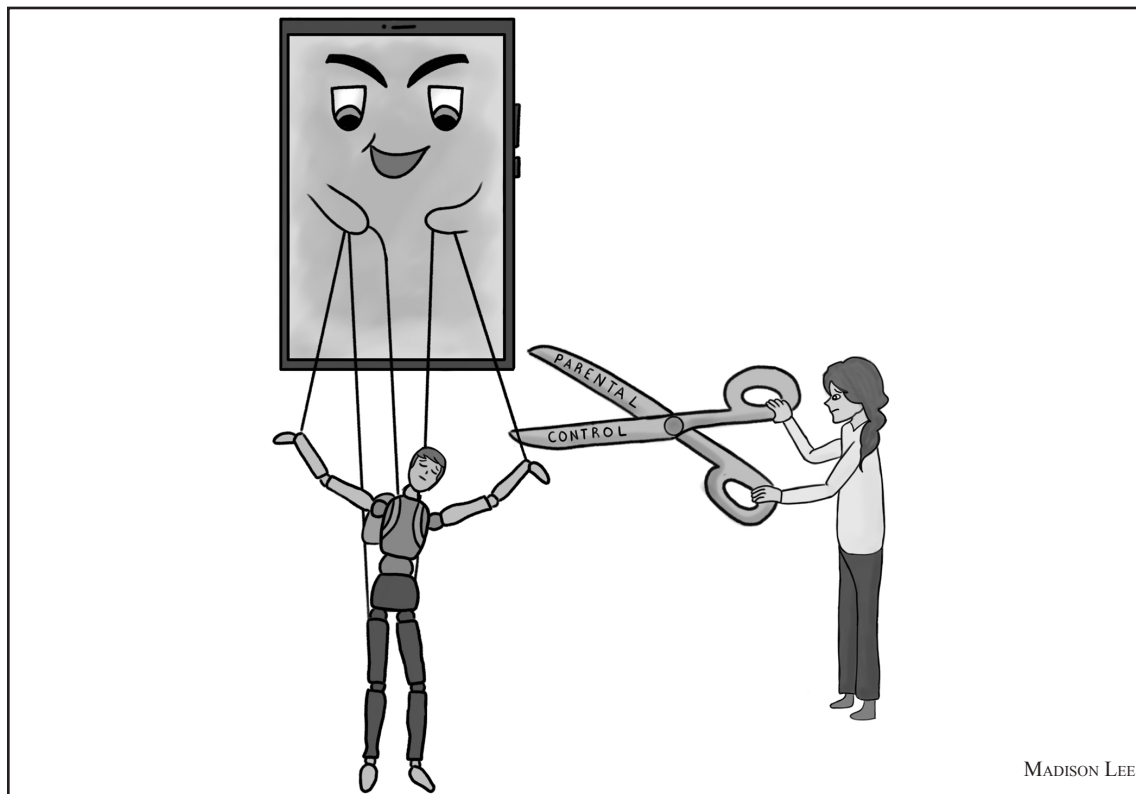


# Olympian agrees on social media curb

## Editorial:

California state lawmakers want to curb the growing problem of teen social media addiction by restricting algorithmic feeds, limiting late-night notifications, and requiring parental consent for minors. We at *The Olympian* believe that, while the Protecting Our Kids from Social Media Addiction Act sounds reasonable on paper, it won't work in practice unless parents step up and take responsibility for the digital lives of their children.

A law that depends on self-reported birthdays fails to address the common occurrence of kids lying about their age online. Even with ID verification, which some apps have tried, it is easy to get around. Teens can borrow an older sibling's ID, a parent's ID, or simply find someone willing to hand theirs over. And even if the system worked, most people are uncomfortable handing their government identification to a social media company



that many believe already collects too much personal information.

But the weaknesses of the law don't erase the problem it's trying to address. Teens today face algorithmic feeds designed to keep them scrolling for hours. Many students in our school spend eight or more

hours on their screens daily, mostly on social media. That comes with real consequences: anxiety, insecurity from constant comparison, parasocial attachment, sleep deprivation, and an overall feeling of losing control. For some kids, that endless scroll is the closest thing our

generation has to addiction.

While lawmakers are trying to help, no policy can substitute for actual parenting. Nearly every student who spoke agreed: rules about screen time, nighttime curfews, and phone access are the responsibility of parental figures. Families differ. Children differ. A one-

size-fits-all law will never meet everyone's needs. Only parents can make decisions based on the maturity, habits, and well-being of their own kids.

Still, we shouldn't dismiss the law entirely. Not all parents enforce boundaries. Some don't monitor their child's screen time at all, even when the child is up all night and functioning on almost no sleep. For families like these, the law creates a baseline, an external nudge to remind them that unlimited social media access is not harmless.

Ultimately, the real solution doesn't come from Sacramento. It comes from home. Parents must be involved by setting limits, modeling healthy habits, and knowing what their kids are doing online. A law can suggest boundaries, but families must reinforce them.

*The Olympian* overall supports the intent of the law. But the truth is simple: no government policy can replace a parent. Until families take the lead, no amount of regulation will keep teens off their phones at 2 a.m.

## Opioid use heavily devastates communities



By Brenda Huynh

Stop. Before you make that life altering decision, think.

Opioids are beyond a fun drug that'll pass by when misused; they are layered and addictive.

Opioids can hijack the brain's reward system, creating a sense of need for the drug even when the user isn't in need of it. Over time, the body will build a tolerance requiring higher dosages to feel the same effects; if this process is stopped, withdrawals will kick in and symptoms such as anxiety, nausea, sweating, and muscle pain will kick in.

As opioids slow down breathing, higher dosages can lead to death. Overdose is extremely dangerous and

common especially when mixed with alcohol or any other form of depressants.

According to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, 130 Americans die everyday from an opioid overdose. Not to mention, the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics states that opioids are a factor in at least 7 out of every 10 overdose deaths.

Statistics such as these serve as a reminder to the harm that misuse of opioids serve to just about anyone around you.

It can be seen as a temporary thing but no one imagines themselves in the position we view our statistics in.

Before you make that decision, think, how could this affect me in the future?

As your hands become cold and slick with sweat, your fingernails have crept to become a deathly blue by then. It's pale skin next, and you'll be clutching your stomach, urging the vomiting to stop as consciousness drifts away.

Your breathing has slowed

as the lungs move towards respiratory failure. Heart problems begin to arise as the heart fails to pump enough blood for the body. Your body becomes overly sensitive to pain, and the pain is sharp — relentless. Constipation becomes much too frequent.

As they drag your body onto that white bed, the sirens will continue to blare, serving as a constant reminder.

It doesn't stop at the trip to the ER; next, is a trip to the grave.

## Securly “protects” us, but at what price?



By Madison Lee

“Looks like this page isn't allowed. This page has been blocked.” That sentence, accompanied by a red gnome chewing on a wire and a yellow gnome on the floor, is something almost every student with a school-issued computer has seen. Each time it appears,

Securly, the safety and device management system, is doing its job to look over its students.

School districts use Securly to filter inappropriate content, monitor for signs of self-harm or bullying, and manage classroom devices. These intentions are valid and student safety is essential for CVUSD, however, the growing limitations the district has created in daily academic work cannot be ignored.

Securly frequently blocks links to websites and articles assigned by teachers, interrupting the student workflow. If multiple websites trigger Securly, a ten minute ban is put on any browser, including Google Classroom, which causes students to be put

behind on schedule.

I don't have a personal computer, meaning the school-issued Chromebook I have is the one and only place I do all my school work, and I often use my Chromebook to do my internships and email sources outside of the district.

With teachers finding Securly an inconvenience oftentimes as well, they should be allowed to override permissions which allow their students to access websites they need to visit.

In addition to Securly, new security measures in our district have banned any external sources from interacting with CVUSD students. As a result, I have been unable to access my personal

emails and do the work I need to do.

I am currently doing a paid internship for journalism to educate students about the dangers of opioid use and speaking on the opioid crisis. Because the internship is outside of CVHS, I have to use my personal email, but because of this I can't use my computer to write articles or email my teammates and directors. Additionally, because of a more sensitive topic, Securly blocks my browsers and I can't research the websites I would like to use.

These restrictions can also unintentionally encourage the more frequent usage of phones for students; with no Securly

block and free access to do any work I need, I find that using my phone is often more efficient.

While it is essential to protect the online safety of CVUSD students and staff and the district must comply with safety requirements, these updated restrictions have interfered with students' ability to learn, work, and participate in opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

District safety systems should protect their students, but not hold them back. With small adjustments and changes like allowing teacher overrides or allowing more public websites, the district can continue doing its job while its students are able to continue doing theirs.

# My family finds freedom in glade skiing



By Mairén McNeill

Growing up in Ohio, skiing was always one of my mom’s favorite activities to do with her family. As a kid, she would take our family up to Tahoe a few times a year to learn how to ski. While my sister and I enjoyed it, it certainly wasn’t my favorite thing to do. I would rather be at home reading a good book than risking injury in the bitter cold flying down a mountain at what feels like 100 mph.

As we got older, my sister and I started to become better skiers. We learned how to use poles, how to navigate icy or muddy patches, and eventually, how to ski black diamonds. (My first diamond was somewhat unintentional;



Skiers enjoy this view before descending the slopes at Northstar. MAIREN MCNEILL

we just misread the sign.)

Eventually, my family was comfortable enough on skis that my mom suggested we try skiing in the trees rather than on a slope. Skiing in a glade (or glade skiing, as my family calls it) is difficult not only for the obvious reasons of dodging trees and rocks, but also because the trees cast shadows on the snow for prolonged amounts of time and turn it to ice. Ice is a lot harder to turn on and a lot

more slippery. More slippery is equivalent to more speed, the last thing you want when evading the bark of unforgiving trees. I was hesitant at first, but agreed.

I was definitely very nervous to start out, but I soon relaxed into the skills I had developed over the years. I quickly learned that I enjoy glade skiing because it’s a place where I can challenge myself and still feel relatively safe.

Being away from the trails

makes it feel like it’s just me and my family in the whole world. The snow and trees somehow muffle the sound of other people passing, and you can just connect with nature for a moment. The snow beneath your skis is often untouched and glitters breathtakingly. I always feel tranquil and safe, despite the obvious sense of isolation.

During one of my first ventures, however, I learned that glade skiing can sometimes

be anything but safe when I passed through a shady spot and my skis couldn’t cut through the ice. I began to slide sideways down the mountain. Panicking, I threw myself upwards against the mountain to create more friction and managed to stop my slide. Shaken, I took a moment to collect myself. I stood up partially, carving my ski into the mountain, and began to continue diagonally. I passed through the icy section straight into a slight dip. There were trees to my left and in front of me, but only one to my right. I realized that if I didn’t manage to turn down at the bottom (in another icy patch, no less), I would ram straight into the trees. I turned hard, pushing into my right ski and just managing to avoid becoming a tree sandwich.

I emerged from the cluster of trees victorious, adrenaline and pride pumping through my veins. Even something so small as knowing how to navigate skis on ice made me feel immensely accomplished, and I found myself enjoying skiing more than I ever thought I would.

## Sora AI: the beginning of the end?



By Elvis Carpenter

Over the last few years, AI-generated images and videos have advanced at a pace that has surprised even those who once dismissed the technology as a short-lived novelty. Sora, OpenAI’s newest video model, represents the most dramatic leap yet. Its emergence raises questions and concerns about

labor, intellectual property, and whether we’ll lose the ability to distinguish synthetic content from human-made labor.

Sora is an AI model designed to generate both animated and live-action video from text descriptions. Sora is capable of producing videos that strikingly resemble pre-existing intellectual properties (IPs) such as “Family Guy,” “South Park,” and “Spongebob Squarepants.” Although OpenAI has made attempts to restrict the generation of copyrighted material, users have discovered loopholes through carefully made prompts. By describing a show’s visual style, character appearance, and personality –

without directly stating names or the IP directly – users can still coax the AI into generating copyrighted material.

The implications for creative labor are even more serious. Animation is produced by entire teams of people, artists, animators, editors, sound designers, etc, all have a hand in production, Sora’s ability to automate large chunks of this work pipeline means that these workers could face reduced demand or complete replacement. It may only be a matter of time before many creative jobs become obsolete.

Outside of creative material, Sora AI is also capable of generating highly realistic live-

action footage. On platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, AI-generated videos have already flooded the short-form content space. Granted, some of these clips are intentionally absurd, designed to be obviously fake and consumed with a sense of irony; however, increasingly, AI-generated content is being produced with engagement in mind, crafted to look real and monetized without viewers realizing they’re watching synthetic content.

This problem extends to long-form content as well. Some YouTube channels are made up entirely of synthetic content. Lots transcribe someone else’s

video – usually a video essay made by a real person – feed the script into AI, then generate the visuals, rehashing the entire video with a fresh coat of AI paint. These channels actively siphon attention directly away from the original creators. This shift has raised concerns about the indistinguishability of AI-generated content, whether it be real footage, animation, or anything in between may soon become, and how easily misinformation can spread when realism is no longer a reliable metric. While the threat may not be Sora AI itself, it is a major step in the right direction for AI generated video.

## Trojan Talk

**Re: Staff pay increased as school district budget decreased**

“I think the budget decrease for CVUSD is unfortunate, but I’m glad that the teachers are getting a pay increase so they can continue to give the students of the CVUSD district a proper education.”

- Benicio Huizar

“I like how they are paying teachers more since I believe they deserve it. I still think they don’t get paid enough. It is unfortunate how much funding for supplies decreased, however.”

- Jacob Deguzman

**Re: Varsity flag football makes a comeback at senior night**

“This was a really nice article to read; I love how well you highlighted our girls flag football team. I remember getting to cheer at that game and it was really fun to see how hard they worked and that in the end, they were successful!”

- Alana Thompson

**Re: Finishing strong, Trojans secure back-to-back wins**

“What a great way to put it. I love how our beloved trojans had a rough start but then came back at the end and won back to back. I just hope next season, we can start as strongly as we ended!”

- Ali Jandro El Sheikh

**Re: “What a way to make a livin’”**

“I worked on this show as part of the Technical Theater class and I helped usher during opening weekend. So much love and hard work went into the set design, and the actors/actresses and crew alike worked themselves to death putting this on.”

- Liya Kennedy





THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

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# Families commemorate loved ones at CVHS

By Sharlene Goduco

Puente and Latinos Unidos hosted a Día de los Muertos celebration after school, inviting students and staff to honor loved ones who have passed away and to learn more about the meaning behind the tradition. The event was fulfilled with color, food, and a strong sense of community.

Día de los Muertos, celebrated on Nov. 1 and 2, is a Mexican tradition that focuses on remembering those who have died through joy and remembrance rather than sadness. It's a time when families come together to honor the lives of their loved ones, believing that their spirits return to visit during these two days.

The main highlight of the event were the ofrendas students created. They were decorated with marigolds, candles, papel picado, sugar skulls, and photos of family members, famous people, and loved ones. Each altar had personal touches, and students explained who they were honoring and what the decorations were represented.



Students create colorful ofrendas to connect with people in the other world.

SHARLENE GODUCO

The area around the altars felt calm and welcoming, and people took their time looking at each one and appreciating the thought behind it.

Fernanda Chavez, a student who created an ofrenda, said her inspiration came from both class and family tradition. Her display reflected the deep emotional connection many students brought to their work and showed how Día de los Muertos allows them to

celebrate memory through love rather than grief.

"The person displayed on my ofrenda was my grandma from my dad's side. I chose my grandma because I truly miss her and she was a huge impact on my life. It was my pleasure to honor her," Chavez said.

"I think keeping traditions such as Día de los Muertos alive for future generations is something very important because it represents who we

are and where we come from; it takes part of our legacy," said senior Antonio Aguilar.

The celebration also included a traditional dance performed by members of Latinos Unidos, which drew a crowd and added energy to the event. Tables were set up with pan de muerto, conchas, galletas, sugar cookies, and Mexican hot chocolate, which students and staff enjoyed while talking and visiting the displays. Some

students even got their faces painted with traditional skull designs, representing the balance between life and death.

The event also included music playing in the background, from traditional Mexican songs to modern Latin music. Guests were taking pictures of the altars and decorations, and many stopped to talk with each other about their own family traditions or memories.

By the end of the afternoon, students and staff stayed near the altars, taking photos, enjoying the provided food, and sharing stories. The glow of the candles and the smell of the food made the space feel inviting and reflective, and many people said it was meaningful to be able to honor their loved ones in this way.

The Día de los Muertos celebration brought the school community together in a thoughtful and respectful way. It allowed students to learn, share and reflect, while celebrating a tradition that is important to many families. This special event is a reminder that culture and memory can connect people across generations, creating a shared space of understanding and appreciation.

# Yosemite's iconic sights captivate tourists

By Rachel Zhen

Last summer, I took a trip to one of the most beloved places in California, Yosemite National Park. My first visit to Yosemite was refreshing. As soon as I got there, I was captivated by the beauty of the iconic landscape I've only seen online. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience, one which engaged all of my senses. I felt such a relief to be able to disconnect.

As soon as I entered the valley, I was immediately met with the hot and heavy summer air, with an echoing white noise created by the rushing water, and the endless waves of the river over rocks coming from the Merced River that flows throughout the valley. The river was both calm and overwhelming at the same time, slowly washing away the noise of normal life.

One of the most breathtaking moments of the trip was the Tunnel View. Just as the sun began to fall below the horizon, casting a shadow over the



Yosemite's landscape lays out for all to see.

RACHEL ZHEN

mountains, it lit the valley with a warm ray of light across El Capitan, Half Dome, Sentinel Rock, Cathedral Rocks, and Bridalveil Fall.

It isn't a Yosemite trip without seeing the most famous landmark of all, Yosemite Falls. The water cascades down the massive cliff, creating mists down below. The

lush green grass of the Cooks & Sentinel Meadow stretched beneath the falls, softly flowing in the summer wind.

Summer brought an

unforgettable number of bugs and insects. But it was a pleasant experience, and I'd love to visit again at different times of the year.

# HL Peninsula draws large crowds

By Valentina Huynh

Peninsula Restaurant, the largest dim sum restaurant in the U.S, with a capacity of 846 guests, has recently opened in Castro Valley. The restaurant serves dim sum in the morning and all items on the menu are there until the restaurant’s closing.

The restaurant is located at 3868 Castro Valley Blvd, next to the Castro Valley Mei Mei. Parking is typically full and it’s hard to find a spot, especially at night where many people come out to eat.

The restaurant is extravagantly decorated with elegant Chinese ornaments.

When you’re walked to your table, you’re seated in a spacious rectangular room with countless tables lined close to one another with chandeliers overhead. There are enormous televisions placed on opposite sides of the room playing from sports channels.

Furthermore, the menu contains a large selection of Chinese dishes, categorized by the type of meat being served.

Each dish was artfully plated with various bright colors and arrangements pleasing to the eye.

The menu included various dishes ranging from full course meals such as oxtail stew with red wine, pork sparerib in balsamic glaze, deep-fried scallops with crispy garlic, and braised duck with dried orange peel and ginger. The menu even extended to desserts such as Osmanthus Goji Berry Pudding and Durian Green Tea Snow Meringue.

Some notable dishes/items include the House Special BBQ pork, which tasted somewhat cold but held bursts of a savory and sweet flavor in each bite. The mango sago was sweet and especially creamy and held a nice sour taste to balance the dessert out from the pomelo, a tart fruit.

The restaurant also offers condiments such as chili sauce and soy sauce if requested to a waiter/waitress.

A yelp review by user Jackie H notes that this restaurant is good for large parties or events. “We had a large group party

here, and it was an amazing experience from start to finish. The restaurant is beautifully decorated—stylish, warm, and perfect for a celebration,” she wrote.

The place is very big and has a large capacity which contributed to some food coming out cold and service being slow. However, its large capacity makes it perfect for large celebrations.

There are few staff compared to the large number of people in the building resulting in slower service. The staff primarily speak Chinese so I was faced with a language barrier.

Overall, the dish’s portions ranged from large to small. The meals were well cooked and flavorful and although service was slow, the waiter offered friendly smiles and tried to be as considerate as possible. Not only that, I was served red bean sweet soup as a complimentary dish.

HL Peninsula is definitely worth visiting if you’re interested in unique, well-plated flavorful dishes and have a large gathering coming up.



This is the interior of HL Peninsula. VALENTINA HUYNH

# Mei Mei Market has much to offer

By Leila Tran

Castro Valley’s new Mei Mei Market offers a variety of Chinese and other Asian groceries. Consisting of fresh produce, snacks, and animal products, this market has enabled our local community to have easier access to these goods. From roasted duck to Kit-Kat to daikon radish to milk tea, the new local market is sure to provide an assortment

of staples for our large Asian population, and to further immerse our culture into the place in which we live.

I personally appreciate the fact that Castro Valley has recently opened a Chinese market that is local and easily accessible to anyone. With an extensive Asian community, the Mei Mei Market is very convenient for those who would prefer not to travel to other cities including Dublin, Pleasanton, or San Leandro to buy groceries from other Asian markets like 99 Ranch

or H-Mart.

In August of 2024, construction began on the new local supermarket. Converting the former Rite Aid building into a grocery store, it took just over a year before their grand opening on Sept 30. It was a long awaited grocery market and the business opened with a strong start, leaving many customers happily satisfied.

“As an Asian person, I really like how many snacks there are that usually would be hard to find in other grocery stores. I’m also a fan of the location because I could just go there after school and not have to drive all the way to San Jose for H-Mart,” said student Sophie Chin.

She expresses her excitement and appreciation for the representation of Asian cuisine

and culture. Chin later adds, “There are so many snacks I can find there that I usually always see in markets when I travel to Asia. They would never be in a Safeway or Trader Joes.”

The Mei Mei Market has left a great impression on many Castro Valley residents for not only their convenient location, but representation of the Asian community.



Mei Mei Market is open during the day from 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. LEILA TRAN



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Castro Valley Library

Visit the Friends Bookstore inside the library, the only bookstore in Castro Valley!

Your purchase of gently used books, CDs, and DVDs supports free programs and services of the library.

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# Freshmen football team finishes a flawless season

By Samuel Jarvis

CVHS freshman football has completed an undefeated season marking a huge achievement for the young players careers and futures as Trojans.

The team averaged 24.2 points offensively and gave up 9.7 points per game. There was a good mix of rush and pass offense with skilled players across the field.

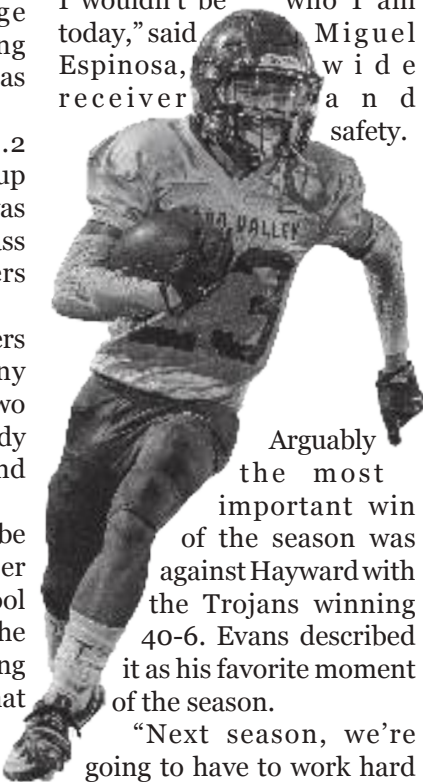
The team had great players all around the field, many players effectively playing two positions. Quarterback Brody Evans also plays safety and loves the game of football.

“It’s definitely going to be a memory that I remember for the rest of my high school career, and just how special the team model was. Everything was great.” said Evans on what the season meant to him.

Lots of props were given

to teammates. The team has a bond with each other that can translate into the rest of their careers

“Without their support, I wouldn’t be who I am today,” said Miguel Espinosa, wide receiver and safety.



Arguably the most important win of the season was against Hayward with the Trojans winning 40-6. Evans described it as his favorite moment of the season.

“Next season, we’re going to have to work hard



Trojans freshman football team celebrates an undefeated 10-0 season.

to maintain what we were doing this year,” said Diego Guzman, running back and linebacker.

A great first season the Trojans can transfer into

sustained success. The players care about winning, teamwork and commitment. They’re willing to learn new positions, take risks and push themselves

for their teammates. uniform It’s a great time to be an underclassman because what the players on this team may do in the future is unlimited.

# Trojans finishes third place in WACC

CVHS girls golf team compete in NCS. Trojans reflect back on game.

By Isaac Hulse

The CVHS girls golf team has wrapped up their season finishing strong in third place at the West Alameda County Conference (WACC) Championship Tournament, but getting 14th place in the



MIKHAELA MACABEO

CVHS girls golf team readily swing their clubs.

North Coast Section (NCS) Tournament.

At WACC, Bishop O’Dowd secured first place out of seven schools with a team score of 422, with Alameda coming in second with 487. CVHS came in just two more strokes from second place with a score of 489.

The Trojans took two of the slots for the top ten individual golfers at the WACC Championship, with junior Mikhaela Macabeo at 83 points taking fourth and senior Kirin Wong with 98 taking tenth.

Unfortunately, the team did not place at NCS, earning 14th place out of 21 schools.

This left some members of the team quite disappointed with their performance during their round.

“Overall, NCS for me personally was my worst round ever,” said Macabeo. “It was a huge learning experience, especially for me who had high hopes seeing how much our team had been practicing, but golf can be ‘weird’ and I guess I was just having one of those days where your mind just isn’t in the game, you’re tired, and your swing feels weird!”

This season also marks the final year for Wong and another senior, Rhain Villarosa. Wong and Villarosa were both long-

time varsity players, playing for three and four varsity seasons respectively. With their time in the golf team allowing them to become integrated members of the team, they will be dearly missed.

On the other hand, freshman Liesel Reyes made her varsity debut this year, and is already showing steady improvement and strength this season.

“I feel pretty alright with how I placed in NCS. I didn’t play as good as I wanted to, but I feel like I improved much throughout the season, and it showed within my score,” Reyes, who had a total of 113 strokes at NCS, said.

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**FORREST**

# Water polo teams play an impressive season



Jena Wong with the ball prepares to throw.

SHARLENE GODUCO



Girls varsity team finished their season 18-8.

SHARLENE GODUCO

## Adam Forrest sets single season goal record with 116

By Sarada Khanal

Boys and girls water polo had an impressive season, with both teams advancing to NCS. Their season was filled with ups and downs, but they showed their grit and resilience, continually working hard toward their goal. They played strong all season and left the competition on their toes.

The girls team finished their season with an overall record of 18-8 and placed third in the WACC. They have had several notable wins throughout the season including their smashing success over Bishop O’Dowd during senior night with a score of 14-6.

Unfortunately, the girls team did suffer a loss at their WACC championship game against Alameda. The final score was 9-3 but the girls didn’t let that deter them as they prepared for the NCS championship game against Redwood.

The final score at their NCS game was 7-2 but the Lady Trojans put up a strong fight. Notable mention to Caroline

Kiely who had three saves. Throughout the season, Kiely has had a total of 137 saves. Other players have also revealed their strength throughout the season. Senior Chloe Gilbert led the team with 97 goals throughout the season, an impressive feat. Stella Chang followed closely behind with 75 goals.

“Building trust within my team, staying consistent with training, and keeping a positive mindset all contributed to our success as a team,” commented junior Natalia Jamal.

The boys team also has plenty to be proud of. Just like the girls, they lost their WACC championship game. But, they still advanced to the NSC tournament. They played their WACC championship game against Alameda High School and lost with a score of 18-9. Some notable players include Adam Forrest. Forrest scored 15 goals in the two games, and broke the CVHS single-season goals scored a record of 116 goals.

“I’m proud of all that we have accomplished. Our motivation and teamwork, especially how we brought each other together. Even when things were tough we worked through it together with the help of our coach,” said Kai Abad.

At the NCS game against Redwood, they lost 21-4. Despite this, their overall season record was 17-11 and they have a lot to be proud of.

# Cross country teams race their hardest

By Nathaniel Johanson

At the ever-intense WACC cross country meet, the CVHS frosh-soph boys won their race.

The WACC meet is a three-mile race, split by gender and sports ranking (frosh-soph, junior varsity, varsity). It is hosted to find the best runners to go onto the NCS. It was held at Hayward High School on Nov. 8.

For the frosh-soph boys, sophomore James Masculine and freshman Dylann Reyes nearly tied at 17:46.12 to 17:46.67, for fourth and fifth place respectively, in pursuit of the Alameda runner just a second ahead. The

Trojans defeated the Bishop O’Dowd Dragons by 43 to 63; lower scores in cross country are better.

Reyes, and Connor Liang achieved PRs (personal records) with their performances.

In the girls varsity race, Iliana Nierengarten got third place at 18:11.44, nearly 20 seconds ahead of the fourth place Berkeley runner as per the coaches hopes and dreams against Berkeley. Masha Kryuchkova got tenth place and a PR at 19:43.37, followed in seconds by Camellia Moler in 12th place, 19:46.23. The Trojans took third place with 70 points.

In the boys varsity race, Isaac Ovalle got fourth place at 16:08.12, a PR and again

nearly 20 seconds ahead of the sixth place Berkeley runner, as per the coaches’ will. Isaac Garcia got 25th place at 17:12 flat (0 milliseconds). Juwan Guillory got 27th at 17:16.37. The Trojans took sixth place.

“We hold our own against the whole league, as we always do. So, I’m really proud of all you guys,” said coach Dino Cardiasmenos. “Overall, I think we did really well. You guys worked hard. We always want to run a little faster, obviously, but overall, you guys did really well. A good body of work, over the course of the year. It’s a long season and a hard season.”

Overall, a strong debut season for the freshman boys, and another great season for CVHS.



Tejal Bajwa and Catherine Murry run.

NATHANIEL JOHANSON



Juwan Gillory races in varsity division.

NATHANIEL JOHANSON

# “Formula 1: The Movie” races right into cinemas



By Heldana Deme

The roads are slick during the final moments of the Italian Grand Prix. F1 veteran Sonny Hayes warns rookie Joshua Pearce to remain on slick racing tires, taking a risk to trade grip for speed and elevating Pearce to pole position two. Despite everything—the terrible weather conditions, the advice from his pit wall team, and his own gut feelings—Pearce ignores Sonny’s explicit instructions to wait for a straight before overtaking Red Bull driver Max Verstappen. As a result, Pearce hydroplanes off the track, his car bursting into flames as he collides with the barriers.

Such high-stakes, adrenaline-boostered scenes are numerous throughout the Apple Studio-produced sports drama film “F1: The Movie,” one of many about the acclaimed car racing sport that has made countless drivers’ careers and broken multiple others.

The movie stars Brad Pitt as Formula 1 driver Sonny Hayes

who returns to save APXGP, his former teammate’s underdog team, from collapse after a 30-year hiatus. Alongside fan-favorite actor Damson Idris, who plays the ambitious and arrogant APXGP driver Joshua Pearce, Pitt thrived and adapted in his role.

Seeing the movie in theatres was an experience like no other—exclusively in IMAX, Apple cut no corners whatsoever and spared nothing when it came to the sophisticated cinematography that made this film; shot completely on custom onboard cameras for the cars by Apple, racing scenes used immersive technology and industry-grade system chips that transcended possibility. For me, it was a beautifully working mechanical body of open frames and smooth camera work that caused this movie to exceed my expectations.

Filming took place during the Grand Prix weekends of the 2023 and 2024 World Championships in collaboration with the FIA, the governing body of F1. According to the official Formula 1 website, racing sequences were adapted from real-life races with F1 teams and drivers making special cameos throughout the movie.

“F1” premiered at Radio



ISAAC HULSE

City Hall in New York City on June 16, and was released in the United States in theatres on June 27. Instantly, the film received positive reviews from critics and grossed \$619 million at the box office worldwide, which was comparable to its \$200-300 million budget, becoming the sixth highest-grossing film of 2025.

Be it controversial or not, I believe this movie to be brilliant and outstanding, and it deserves all the love it

received—but while it tries hard to be as realistic as possible, it just isn’t. The movie’s director, Joseph Kosinski, has left many die-hard Formula 1 fans unimpressed with his interpretation of the sport; despite this, following the early box office success of the film, Variety Magazine reported that a sequel was being discussed and the Financial Times reported the possibility of a franchise in the distant future.

On Rotten Tomatoes, 82% of

351 critics’ reviews are positive. The websites’ consensus reads as follows: “Driven by Brad Pitt’s laidback magnetism and sporting a souped-up engine courtesy of Joseph Kosinski’s kinetic direction, ‘F1: The Movie’ brings vintage cool across the finish line.”

However, it’s important to understand that while it may not be the most accurate exegesis of the motorsport, it’s still a very worthwhile film to watch.

# Welcome to the new hell: “Hazbin Hotel”



By Kai Atkinson

If you haven’t watched “Hazbin Hotel” yet, stop everything you’re doing because you’re missing out on the coolest, funniest, and surprisingly entertaining show currently streaming. But let’s be real, the Season One final wasn’t just good, it was a major success for the whole series, and it left us with cliffhangers that seriously messed up the power balance of hell. The most interesting part? The massive tease about Alastor’s



real deal and the fact that Charlie actually, officially, has a chance now.

Seriously, who else screamed when Charlie, the Princess of Hell who just wants everyone to be nice, actually managed to kick some angelic butt? I

was obsessed with the final confrontation. It truly hit all the right notes, making you feel every single victory and every single heartbreak.

Seeing how much the hotel crew stepped up to defend the Haza-Crew was amazing. The way the show manages to

pair super dark humor with genuinely emotional songs is what makes it so genius. I love how Vaggie finally got her redemption moment, and Husk and Angel Dust’s bond is the relationship everyone is rooting for.

Now going into Season 2,

the stakes are high. The hotel is literally a pile of rubble, but they finally have proof a sinner can be redeemed, thanks to Sir Pentious. Plus, Lucifer is officially involved now, and having the King of Hell as Charlie’s overprotective dad is going to be the best drama. But the part I dislike? That one final shot of Alastor admitting he’s a prisoner, not a master. I hate knowing our radio demon is stuck in some deal.

If Season One was the start, Season Two is definitely the war. Get ready for more angelic carnage, more heart, and probably more questionable life choices for a lot of the characters. This show proves that sometimes, the best place to find hope is at the bottom of the pit. I would definitely rate this a letter grade of A.

# Taylor Swift’s “Life of a Showgirl” shines



By Winnie Shen

The spotlight shone on her as numerous sold-out stadiums cheered for one of the biggest pop stars of the century. Friendship bracelets are handed out, proposals have been made, and her name is well-known to all. This is the life of what it’s like to be a showgirl.

Taylor Swift’s twelfth studio album called “The Life of a Showgirl,” contains twelve

tracks, including notable songs such as “The Fate of Ophelia,” “Opalite,” and “Elizabeth Taylor.” The genre of this album mainly focuses on pop and a mixture of soft rock.

Out of all the songs I listened to, none of them really caught my attention until I listened to them a few more times. I did think that the high note in “Opalite” was fun to sing, and it got stuck in my head after hearing it repeatedly on the radio. It was a light-hearted song that could make people feel a little more cheerful and happier.

In the song titled “The Life of a Showgirl,” Swift collaborated with Sabrina Carpenter, a popular actress

and songwriter. Swift admitted that she initially wrote this song with Carpenter in mind, as she is the perfect example of a showgirl. Both Swift and Carpenter are currently some of the most famous pop singers in the world.

“And, baby, that’s show business for you,” stated Swift, which symbolizes the brutal reality of the entertainment industry and the things she had to sacrifice in order to be the successful singer that she is today.

Swift dedicated many of the lyrics to her relationship with Travis Kelce, a football player from the Kansas City Chiefs. They announced their proposal together shortly before the release of this



album. Many of the songs on “The Life of a Showgirl” give subtle hints to what Swift wants to accomplish in the future and the life she wants to have with her husband, such as starting a family and settling down by steering away from the public.

In the past, many of her songs have been made when she felt saddened by a past relationship. However, this is one of the first times that she felt truly happy while making music, which explains the shift in tone and style from her previous albums.

# “King of the Hill” is amazing sitcom royalty



By Wee Lee

Hank, with his family and friends, steps inside Bobby’s new restaurant to enjoy some

good ol’ fashioned barbecue by his son. But when he steps inside the kitchen to appreciate Bobby’s chosen propane grill, he is horrified to see that it’s actually a charcoal grill!

Other big changes from character appearances to relationships such as this are found with the king’s return in the new season 14/reboot of

“King of the Hill,” released on Hulu on Aug. 4.

After eight years working for a propane company in Saudi Arabia and living in its idyllic American-style community, Hank and Peggy return to Texas to see that the Arlen they knew is completely different from when they left.

As they struggle and find



themselves confused with the new changes around town, such as rideshare apps, gender restrooms, fruity beer, and navigating around the road with “no-left-turn-rules and whatever twig boy had these floppy flex posts installed,” they soon find out that the town isn’t the only thing that’s changed.

Bobby owns a Japanese-German fusion robata joint in Dallas and shares an apartment with Joseph. Boomhauer is married and has a stepson, Bill committed identity theft, Connie has an open relationship with Chane, and Dale was mayor of Arlen?!

For the most part, I really enjoyed the addition of these changes and what they brought to the table.

It was really interesting and just as comedic to see how Hank and Peggy try to adapt to our modern world’s new standards, just as it is interesting to see how both changed during their time in Saudi Arabia, such as Hank now enjoying soccer.

Additionally, the time skip also opened up the opportunity for new character interactions

to take place in new modern scenarios and with new people. My favorite being Hank having to take care of his step-brother, Good Hank, now an adult and a fan of the show’s parody of the Andrew Tate-like character.

My favorite aspect of the new season was that underneath the new character designs and relationships, all of our favorite characters still act like how we would expect them to. We can see how the characters’ experiences in the previous seasons affected their future personalities and actions.



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# Senior skis the slopes of success

By Mason Mattox

Ever since she was just two years old, senior Lucy Bruns has been dominating the mountains. She grew up skiing in Utah, and when she turned ten she started lessons. However, there was a problem — she was way too good and outskied her own instructor. The people who ran the lessons asked her if they could stop doing the lessons because it wasn't fair to the instructor. That was just the beginning of her list of accomplishments when it came to skiing.

What Bruns does specifically is mogul skiing, which is typically a long, steep hill with a lot of (either natural or man-made) bumps or mounds.

Mogul skiing involves navigating these bumps by absorbing them with your legs, making quick turns, and maintaining balance and

rhythm. She started doing moguls at Northstar and was on a team there for about five years. She went there because she was too young to do a race for a team in Kirkwood, which is south of Lake Tahoe.

Due to missing a lot of school, Bruns has to manage her time efficiently. She does a lot of independent work and a lot of communication with teachers, and maybe some "sucking up" to them as well. While away on her trips, Bruns would always make sure to give herself time to do her work. Things can definitely get a little overwhelming for her when she has to manage a lot, especially trying to find time to have fun and hang

out with her friends. Though, a lot of the stress is mediated through the communication she does with her teachers, even despite sometimes coming back to five tests needing to be made up.

Throughout the summer, she would go to Utah and ski out of the Utah Olympic Park and do training there because they have a water ramp setup. Back in Tahoe, her team has a setup that includes airbags and trampolines. She would also go to

so they'd have regular access to snow. She recently just got back from Austria after spending a week there on a glacier. Two years prior, she was in Idre Fjall, Sweden.

She will do a lot of traveling before the season actually starts, and she and her team can start training in Tahoe and other local places.

A sport like this doesn't come easily; there are some risks. Bruns herself has never had a serious injury, though she can recall others experiencing things like ACL tears, concussions, and other general sprains.

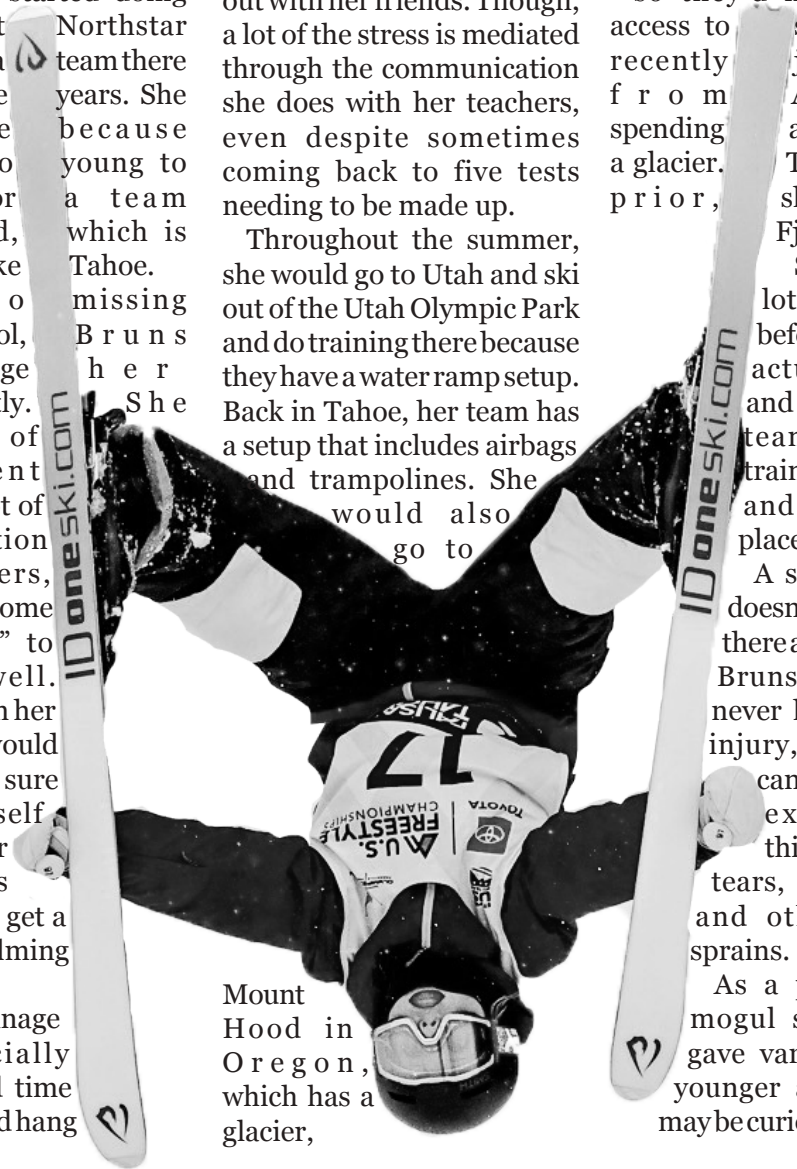
As a professional mogul skier, Bruns gave various tips for younger athletes who may be curious about how

to get into something like this. She has a lot of connections, and they gave her valuable information she may not have been able to get otherwise.

"I definitely think putting yourself out there is a really good way. I have friends who are U.S. World Cup skiers. They've been to the Olympics, and I have been able to talk to them as a peer about the pressures that they faced at the Olympics. They're such a high level of competition, and that really puts into perspective that everything that happens is okay," said Bruns.

"Things happen in competition, and it's important not to let it get to you if you make one minor mistake. If your coach is also a problem, switching teams may seem scary, but you as an athlete shouldn't be afraid to use your freedom to move teams," she said.

It's important to be confident in yourself, and that's something we can all learn from Bruns' story.



Mount Hood in Oregon, which has a glacier,

## "9 to 5" production captivates audiences

By Pari Muni

Tied up and outsmarted, Franklin Hart never saw it coming. While it may not always be the best idea to hold your boss hostage, eventually, enough is enough. Doralee, Judy, and Violet feel power flowing through their veins as they take back control of their lives. They look forward to the end of Hart's tyrannical rule, for all of that stolen happiness to be delivered right back to them. They are ready to "Shine Like the Sun," just as the curtains close and Act 1 concludes.

This year's fall production, "9 to 5," was based on the 1980 film starring the beloved Dolly Parton. The film was later adapted into a musical which premiered in 2009. The plot follows three women — Doralee, Judy, and Violet — who have grown weary of their boss, Hart's constant misconduct. They possess a



Actors Carly Hillen and John Tak embrace the roles of Doralee and Dwayne on stage.

shared desire to seek revenge upon him, although this quickly gives way to chaos as accidents occur and plans are discovered.

The show opened on Friday, Nov. 7. The performances were on Nov. 7, 8, 9, and continued on Nov. 13, 15, and 16. Tickets were \$20 generally and \$18 for students.

CVHS combined intricate sets, beautiful costumes, and astonishingly gifted actors to bring this story to life. The performance had two casts, A and B, with different performers which gave an opportunity to showcase all the widespread talent at our school. To keep everything organized and performance

ready, there were challenges the crew and cast faced together and overcame.

"The hardest thing is just maintaining everything. '9 to 5' is a very prop heavy show. Keeping track and making sure everything doesn't go missing is really important to the success of the show," commented crew member

Elsa Madsen.

Not only did the students collaborate to deliver a marvelous performance, the musical also always provides a welcoming community to meet new people and make everlasting friendships.

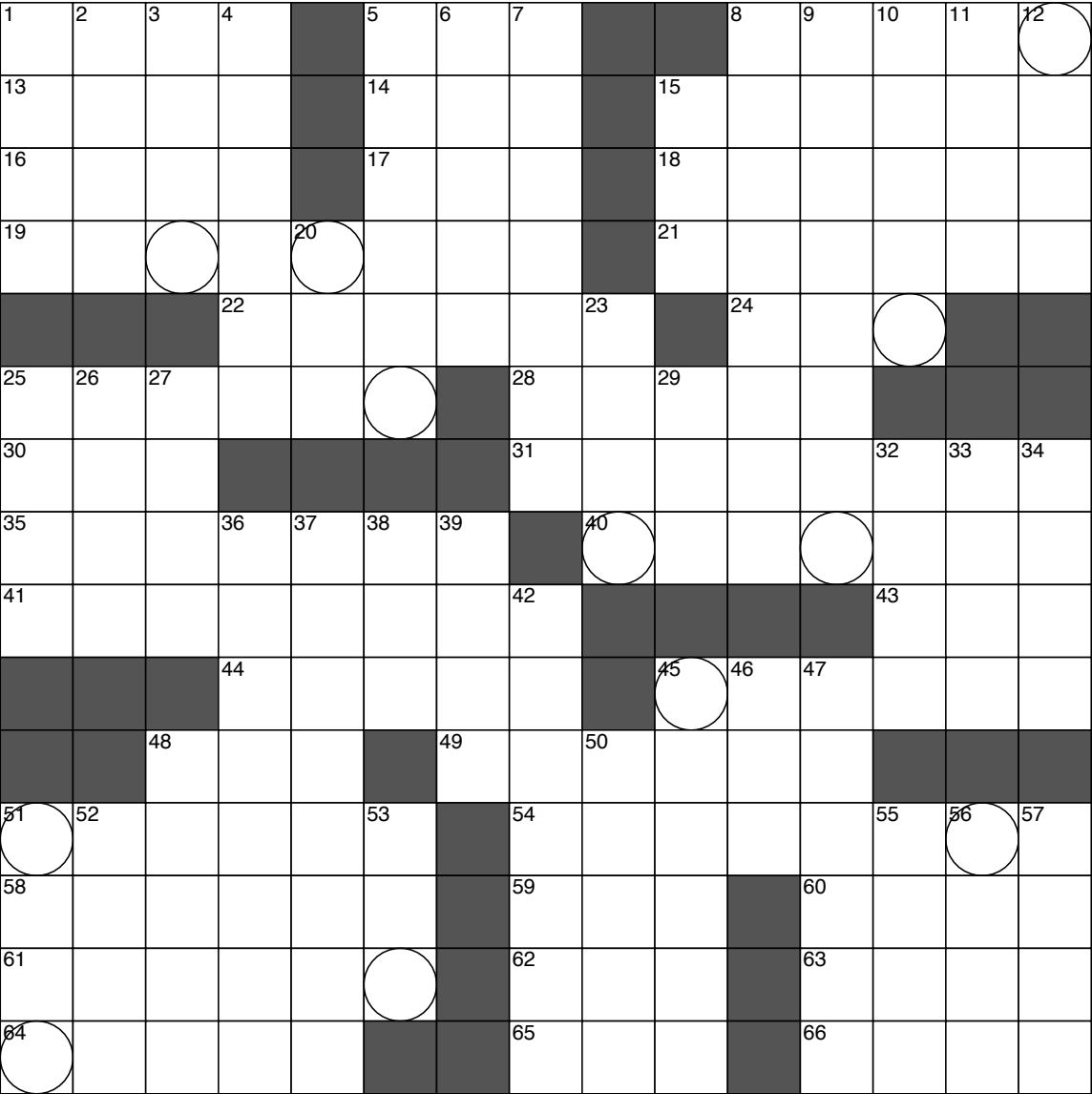
"With the musical, everybody from a whole bunch of different grades come together and work together on a really big project over a long period of time. That has made me friends that I can rely on who I might not have talked to otherwise, which is super cool," reflected cast member Ari Worsley.

As wisely put by Ivan Reaves, who played Franklin Hart Jr. in Cast B, "9 to 5" is a super funny comedy. It has a little bit of everything for everyone. It's a really great 'everybody' show."

Aside from all the jokes and romance however, what makes the show truly great is the consistent effort put into the production from cast and crew alike, which was apparent to anyone who went and saw it!

# My True Love Gave to Me...

By Isaac Hulse



- ACROSS
1. Large dwarf

5. Pipe material

8. "\_\_\_ Goes By": Merrily We Roll Along number

13. Early Japanese

14. Follower of Mao

15. Atone

16. Try (at)

17. 19A, for short

18. Credits

19. "You know the rest"

21. Clocked out, perhaps

22. Chopper parts

24. When mathematicians may eat pastries

25. Part of SNL

28. When doubled, English new wave group

30. Cloying cologne

31. Moments of clarity

35. Comes before goes?

40. All the time

41. Where you may get paid to do nothing

43. What comes before a martini or conversation

44. Famously riveting person

45. Engage in risky business

48. Java container

49. Actor Nielsen

51. The olden days

54. Time period of Christmas music, or a literal description of what the circled squares contain

58. Plane signaller?

59. How you may feel after a 58A

60. Each

61. Not very long ago

62. British record giant

63. Choice choices

64. Convertible couches

65. Talk trash to

66. Took a leak
- DOWN
1. Piece of cake

2. Actress Moreno

3. How Rome wasn't built

4. Legacy builder

5. Like Thanksgiving for dieters, perhaps

6. Best

7. Captain Morgan's rival

8. Ferdinand's colony

9. Like Christmas, in a way

10. Latter half of an all-nighter, perhaps

11. Not pro

12. Home of the first flyers

15. Ruler du palais

20. \_\_\_ night (any time)

23. Comes after 25A

25. Lets gravity win

26. Double \_\_\_

27. "\_\_\_ a \_\_\_," conversation in Champagne

29. Tennis elbow or golfer's knee

32. Macy's parade presenter Kotb

33. Reynolds' first name, in a famous SNL sketch

34. Ocular nuisance

36. Having many teeth

37. Organization with the bucks and bills

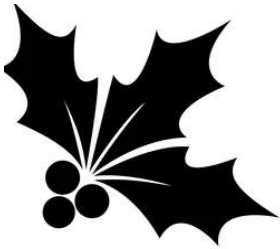
38. Golfer Ernie

39. One of nine on a kind of cat

42. What someone might be when embarrassed

45. Daniel considered to be one of the best actors

46. Poetic contraction



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# Rexelle rocks at teaching music

By Alisa Wang

For Troy Rexelle, music wasn't just a job but a life-long passion that began decades back. Music became Rexelle's haven during his difficult childhood, fueling his desire to share his passion, and provide a similar safe space for others. "Music was a huge part of my life and I wanted to share that with other people," Rexelle explained. At first, Rexelle wanted to play the cello, but at the time his family couldn't afford to pay for the rental. Even though he couldn't choose this instrument, he quickly grew excited about the prospect of learning the alto saxophone.

Forty years later, Rexelle still loves to play the Alto saxophone. Eventually, as a freshman in high school, Rexelle played percussion for the first time and immediately fell in love. Thirty-four years later, percussion is still Rexelle's primary instrument. "Once I tried it I was hooked," Rexelle remarked. During his sixth grade solo ensemble festival, Rexelle remarkably remembers the exact moment he fell in love with music. He had practiced well and the music flowed without thinking. He remembers playing the first chord and in a blur striking the last, with nothing in between. "I had practiced so much that I was on auto pilot and fully immersed in the music. It was

a great experience," Rexelle recalled. The main reason Rexelle wanted to become a teacher came from this deep passion for music. It was a huge part of his life, so what better way to appreciate music than to become a music teacher. Music simply created a place where he could feel accepted and seen. For Rexelle, the greatest reward is seeing the pride on his students' faces after a spectacular performance. Furthermore, on his journey to becoming a music teacher, many people around him discouraged his passion, calling it a waste of time. In fact, he is the only person in his family that is musical. Despite this, he stood resolutely stuck to what he loved and has no regrets.



ALISA WANG

Troy Rexelle conducts the Symphonic Orchestra.

Now, Rexelle has been teaching for 26 years. In this time, he enjoys sharing his passion for music with four high schools: Mountain House, Santa Ana, Modesto, and CVHS as the band and orchestra teacher.

"He's just as hip with the kids as Ms. Heinze," Elizabeth Crowell, a former student of Rexelle's shared. Having shared his musical sanctuary with others, Rexelle continues to conduct a lesson that transcends music.

# Competition Club challenges CVHS students

By Jackson Fabiani

Imagine walking through the halls of the school and you look into a classroom to see students recreating the Taj Mahal with marshmallows and toothpicks. That was just one of many challenges hosted by the Competition Club, a club about, well, competition obviously. Every week the club hosts a fun

short game during Thursday lunch in room 915. "We've got a variety of games every week," said club President WeeLee. "We got trivia, improv, art, cards, and that one challenge where we had to destroy the 21st letter of the alphabet." To give you an idea of how these challenges work, the club's most recent challenge was "Anagram Artists."

First, each member was randomly given a historical painting to draw. But, the twist was that the members will have to put random features into their drawing like a basketball or the horrors of war. These add-ons appeared as scrambled words, where the first person to unscramble it can choose to give the feature to another person's drawing or keep it for

themselves. The challenge was quite a fun dynamic when you had to choose between keeping skateboarding, or hoping you could get something easier later. Someone even drew a very buff Napoleon crossing the Swiss Alps with laser eyes. Challenges are made mainly by officers and normally start by seeing or thinking of a funny

idea and morphing it into a challenge. Challenges take a lot of inspiration from Battle for Dream Island and Doug Doug. Over the year, they have an ongoing leaderboard which tallies up the points earned by challenges. At the end of the year, every kid will get a T-shirt corresponding to their ranking, with a design of increasing intensity the better you did.



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