

Happy Holidays



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THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

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Advanced classes face gender imbalance

By Melissa Boussaroque

While girls narrowly outnumber boys in CVHS AP or honors classes, by 1,239 to 1,234, some of these specific classes have a very skewed ratio. These classes include Honors ASL, Honors Afrocentric, Honors Physics, AP Biology, AP Computer Science, AP Economics and AP Art.

The class with the largest gender imbalance this year is Honors ASL, which has 20 girls and no boys at all. However, there isn't any observable cause for this occurrence.

"It's just a matter of who continues ASL... there's no way to fix it. It just worked out that way," said ASL teacher Amy Ryken.

With a seven to one ratio, AP Art is also a very female-dominated class. There are only four boys, compared to 28 girls. However, this data may not be completely accurate.

"The arts are a safe space for people who don't subscribe to the gender binary," said teacher Alexis Knudsen. "I want it to feel welcoming to everybody."

Honors Physics has a ratio of 49 boys to 14 girls. This means that there are more than three times as many boys as girls. This ratio, however, is thought to be more systematic.

"It's a historical thing a lot of people work to try and change," said teacher Sean Fottrell.

Physics has classically been a male-dominated field. According to the American Institute of Physics (AIP), "In 2017, women earned 21% of physics bachelors' degrees and 20% of physics doctorates." However, other data from the AIP show that this percentage has been steadily increasing over time. This is partially due to an increase in female mentors.

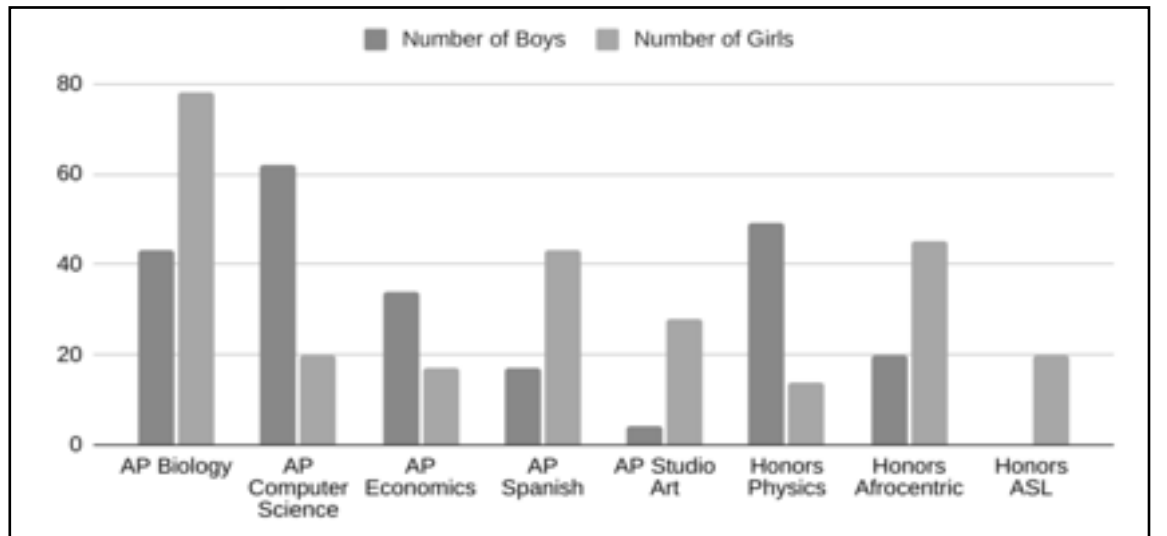
"Having women role models always helps, such as female physics teachers," said Fottrell.

Another class that has been historically skewed is AP Computer Science. Currently, the class has 62 boys and only 20 girls. This is approximately a three to one ratio. Computer science in general also tends to have a female minority. In an article from UC Berkeley, only 21% of computer science degree recipients were female. This is largely due to a systematic push of men towards the field.

"Men are more likely to take computer science because either they want to or it's something that they feel like they should do," said teacher Mander Kraut.

However, this expectation is reflected by how students do in the class. It is evident that the girls taking the class actually want to be there.

"On average more of the women do better in AP Comp Sci because they are more likely to actually have a passion for it," added Kraut.



MELISSA BOUSSAROQUE

These eight classes lean heavily toward boys or girls. CVHS records indicate only boys and girls and do not include statistics about trans or nonbinary students.

While the girls in the class are more likely to want to be there, it isn't always the best environment for them, because of how male-dominated the class is.

"I sometimes feel excluded from the others in the class," said senior Hannah Kinsley, one of the few girls in the class.

AP Economics is another class that reflects a classically male-dominated field. This class has 34 boys and 17 girls, which means it has twice as many boys as girls. While this is in part a result of societal pressure, it may also stem from parental pressures.

"Trends and habits and kinds of social norms take a long time

to change, and so I think we're in that process. But I still think there's probably a lot of parents that push," said teacher David Roth-Rossi.

The Honors Afrocentric History and Literature classes, which are open to all students but specifically catered towards Black students, have a little over twice as many girls than boys, with 45 girls and 20 boys. In this case, some may speculate that this is in part due to the factor of race.

"Structural institutions in schools in history have told young Black men that school isn't for them so they don't see themselves in honors and AP classes," said history teacher

Kevin Batchelor.

Surprisingly, not all male-dominated fields yield male-dominated classes. Among these classes is AP Biology, which has only 43 boys, yet 78 girls, which is unusual for this subject. While it may be because the teacher is a woman, there is no other actual explanation for why this happened.

While all these classes have significant disparities, it is not always the best way for a class to function.

"It's always better to have a more heterogeneous mix of students because a more diverse class allows for a mix of perspectives," said AP Biology teacher Emily Ledford.



“We seek the truth” and X doesn’t have it!

Editorial:

At *The Olympian* we promise our readers the truth and only the truth, and lately we have not found it on X, formerly known as Twitter. Although some people in our newsroom opposed the idea, our final decision was to disband ourselves from X.

It all started when social media mega company Twitter was bought out by billionaire Musk on April 14, 2022. The site’s many users fought against this buyout, but to their dismay Musk was able to secure the company. His influence swiftly wormed its way into the site. One of the first problematic things to happen was the mass firing of multiple Twitter employees. Then it was the switch to a rather odd name, X. Although these things have been explained by Musk, the changes seem odd, erratic, and downright unnecessary.

With the influence of Musk,



KALAYA WILLIAMS

X as a platform is withering away. Since he bought the company, user rates have noticeably dropped, and the site is becoming less and less useful each passing day. In fact, X has become a breeding ground for toxicity and exceedingly negative behavior. One could

even describe X’s current state as a “Toxic Gossip Train.”

The negative behavior found on X can be greatly attributed to the allowance of hate speech. While Musk believes that he is simply giving the right to free speech, this right is often abused in order to demean others. It has

given way to several kinds of derogatory language, including antisemitism, transphobia, racism, and many others. We at *The Olympian* follow a code of ethics to guide us towards respectfully covering sensitive topics, and we frown upon the chaos of a hateful platform.

In addition to hate speech, Musk’s free speech philosophy allows for several kinds of disinformation regarding Covid, elections, and other political discourse, amongst other things. Our motto is “We are born to seek the truth.” With X’s lack of fact-checking, it makes it difficult for us to do so. With the severe increase of false statements, it is difficult to find a trustworthy source on this platform.

While we may have been one of the only truthful users left, we choose to leave X because of the toxic environment Musk’s wrongdoings have created. The severe decline of users also makes it ineffective for us, as there are close to no students still using the app.

So long, Elon. It’s not us, it’s you. *The Olympian* is officially breaking up with X because we no longer wish to contribute to a highly unethical platform.

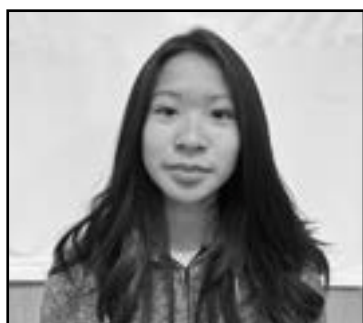
PHOTO

What do you think about Elon Musk and Twitter?



“Elon Musk is incredibly anti-Semitic, and I don’t support the profit he gets from Twitter.”

Dylan Hidayat
Freshman



“Elon Musk takes advantage of his wealth and has proven to be against many LGBTQ+ movements.”

Ella Chin
Sophomore



“From what I’ve heard he’s not a great person. He has a lot of fraud allegations against him, and says pretty questionable things. X is a stupid name.”

Sophia DeMiguel
Junior



“Twitter/X should be regularly monitored as well as taken seriously. The platform has been used to allow the spread of even more hate than before.”

Allison Mitchell
Senior



“You could do whatever you want for Twitter and burn it to the ground for all I care. I just think he burned a lot of bridges.”

Nicholas Tapia
Staff

Five AP classes: a gamble but no regrets



By Melissa Boussaroque

As a senior, I am currently taking five AP classes, including AP Statistics, AP English Literature, AP Calculus BC, AP Art History and AP Economics. While this course load seems difficult and overwhelming,

it’s actually pretty easy to juggle.

One thing that makes it easy is that I don’t get much homework. All my classes either have no homework, or have homework that counts for very little or nothing at all. This allows for more flexibility in deciding when doing homework is worth it and when I need to use my time for something else.

For example, I am able to focus more on studying in a way that works for me. I have noticed in the past that homework doesn’t help me retain information as well as using other study methods. With more time for studying

rather than homework, the classes themselves have begun to feel easier.

While my course load is pretty light, it definitely differs not just based on the class, but based on the teacher. In particular, my calculus class almost never has homework, yet friends in a different teacher’s class have told me that they have nightly homework. I know that if I had that much added work, I would find it more difficult to juggle. Therefore, signing up for some of these classes and hoping for a light workload is a gamble that you should make at your own risk.

While I am finding these classes somewhat simple to juggle I don’t know if I would recommend them all. Since the classes are AP, they are a bit more fast-paced and more focused on individual learning. I find the student-led learning style to be a lot more beneficial for me, but it can be somewhat difficult for others.

Additionally, my experience in these classes is fairly reliant on similar classes I have taken in the past. For example, AP Calculus BC isn’t too difficult because I took AP Calculus AB last year. Similarly, AP English Literature is

pretty manageable because I took Honors Afrocentric Literature last year and I was used to the quick-paced nature of an English class.

Some people don’t understand why I chose to not have an easy senior year. However, past experience in advanced classes has allowed these classes to feel completely reasonable. That, along with the fact that I was lucky enough to have a light workload, has caused me to not regret my decision at all. Moreover, doing well in these classes has rewarded me with the pleasure of being proud of myself for achieving a difficult task.

Relax with the school phone bans



By Luis Ochea

School shouldn't be considered a prison. Let's keep heading in that direction.

Initially, California banned students from using electronics like pagers in 1990 because of their association with drug dealing. However, the state repealed this ban 13 years later after students from James Logan High School raised concerns stemming from the events of Columbine and 9/11.

Recently, however, more and more schools throughout the country have been banning student cell phone use throughout the entire school day, including during lunch due to the rise of social media increasing distraction and bullying. In



LUIS OCHEA

Timber Creek High School, any phone caught in sight would result in the student having to deliver their phone to the office for the rest of the day. Additionally, students would have to go all the way to the office to call their parents.

This can be highly problematic. First, think of how backward this would be. If families need to contact their child for any issue, they would have to force the student out of class, and then have them go all the way to the office to be able to talk to

them. This would cost students much more class time than if the parents could simply send their child a text.

Communication would also become an incredible challenge. Many extracurriculars use platforms such as Remind

or Discord to communicate meetings and events to their members. QR Codes are also a staple for many clubs, being able to serve as an attendance form or a link to sign up for events. With a ban on phones as a whole, clubs would get much harder to run.

There is also potential for a wealth gap to impact students. Assuming laptops are still used in classes, students who have other laptops that aren't school-issued would gain a large advantage, being able to use blocked websites and essentially bypass the bans.

The safety of students should also be in question. Imagine a world where students weren't allowed to bring their phones to school, and an emergency at school happens. This is why phone bans were eased in the first place, and if we were to ban them again, we essentially go straight back two decades, where in the worst-case scenario, students would be unable to even call for help.

With the potential for so many problems spurring up if phones were banned entirely, it would be best for all of us if we were to keep phones around. Phone pockets should be enough.

I'm craving for more hours in a day



By Mario Joseph

I'm sure you've all felt this way before: you're so busy with work, school, extracurricular activities, and social obligations that you feel like you don't have enough time in the day to do everything you need to do. You might feel like you're constantly running around, trying to juggle all of your commitments. And if you're like me, you might start to feel like you're not doing any of your activities well because you're spread so thin.

I've been feeling this way a lot lately. I'm a high school student, I have an internship, and I'm involved in a few clubs. I also like to spend time with my friends and family and get adequate sleep every night. And while I love all of these things, it's starting to feel like there's just not enough time in the day to do everything I want to do.

I've tried to be more efficient with my time, but it's hard. There are only so many hours in a day, and there are always going to be things that come up and take up my time.

I know that's not possible, of course. But I can't help but feel like I would be more productive if I had just a few more hours. I

could get more work done at my internship, I could spend more time studying, and I could even have some time to relax and have fun.

I know that I'm not the only one who feels this way. There are a lot of people who are constantly busy and feel like they don't have enough time to do everything they need to do. There aren't always things you can do to improve the amount of free time that you have, but a lot of the time, you are wasting your time in some specific aspects.

To begin with improving, I started to log everything that I did every day. I was able to see some aspects of my time that could either be moved around or could have been done more efficiently. I personally am not a user of social media or play any video games, but I can see how a lot of that time can be wasted, such as wasting time catching up on videos I had missed.

I have also been more proactive in asking for help and getting support. If I am ever struggling, I would be spending a lot less time if I were to understand the problems, and I have been asking my family and friends for help.

And even if I am not able to reach the amount of work that I wish I could have finished in a day, I still try my best to set realistic goals. If I were to set ambitious goals, it would result in me not feeling satisfied or being frustrated as I head to bed.

And if you have any tips for getting more hours in the day, I'm all ears!

Makeup is key to self expression



By Brenda Huynh

Piercing bright lipstick, ghastly pale eyeshadow and a faint blush to contrast; makeup is an art form for anyone to express themselves using the appliance of cosmetics. Despite this, countless controversies surround makeup, such as accusations that users are deceiving others with too much makeup. This spurs the question: what is too much makeup?

While it is contended that "too much makeup" looks bad and sets unrealistic beauty standards, in technicality, too much makeup is a myth. Typically, it is not even the quantity of the makeup but the quality that provokes the idea that incredulous amounts of makeup look bad. For instance, a low-quality foundation may create a cakey base, and mismatched shades may look cheap. Still, some find that even the slightest amount of lipstick is "too much," even if it is of the highest quality.

So what if someone thinks you look bad with too much makeup? It's impracticable to appeal to everyone and there will always be that person who will find the need to sneak in unwarranted comments about others' appearances. In the end, if someone is a genuine person, any comments on your makeup should have good intentions in

mind.

The argument remains that wearing too much makeup can set unrealistic beauty standards. However, this isn't completely true, as the media can be blamed for these high expectations, be it airbrushing photos to remove texture from human skin or ridding blemishes entirely from a photograph. If all faces were normalized, this issue wouldn't occur. But instead, we are stuck with misrepresented edited faces that are passed as all natural. Therefore, it is not those wearing makeup who contribute to unrealistic beauty standards. In fact, the true victims of these heightening standards

are those trying to conform to an impossible standard through makeup.

But, you can never win! If you wear makeup, some may assume that you're ugly. Why should someone be held accountable for what is supposed to be a form of expression? No matter what you do, someone may always be judging you.

The best thing to do is be aware that not everyone can or will accept you. No amount of makeup is ever too much, and so what if there's one person judging? Live your life freely; society shouldn't deem what amount of makeup is acceptable for you.



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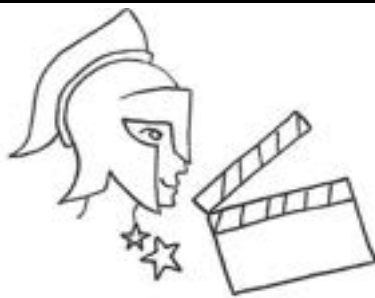
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“FNaF” delights fans but disappoints audiences

By Ethan Dinh

Going into “Five Nights at Freddy’s,” expectations weren’t set too high considering how most video game translations to the silver screen usually fall flat and the six years of development didn’t do it any favors. Yet ever since the trailer had been released, fans of the hit indie video game “FNaF” for short have been trailblazing the digital landscape with excitement as Scott Cawthon’s massive hit also would seem to be a success in the movie theater.

While watching it, the question of whether it would match the internet hype lingered in the back of my mind, only for my worries to be blown away. Although the movie is not without its criticisms, it is incredible the quality this movie could create, especially with a budget of only \$20 million (in comparison, that’s \$5 million less than one episode of Marvel’s objectively worst series “She-Hulk”) and has already made seven times that amount worldwide. It also entirely recreates the environment of the first “FNaF” game even with the animatronics, Freddy, Bonnie, Chica, and Foxy being made physically instead of being CGI, which is a breath of fresh air compared to how more and



RICHARD PASEMAN

more films seem to over rely on green screening.

Josh Hutcherson does a phenomenal job at portraying someone struggling with survivor’s guilt and as someone who is desperate enough to take a job at Freddy’s. I especially enjoyed how the film’s producers chose to take the route of humanizing the animatronics, which although is a choice that seems to be dubious to the audience, helps add to the unease for viewers who aren’t deeply involved in the “FNaF” games. Explaining more would be getting into movie spoilers but the scene that gives personality to the animatronics seems to make the audience

fear them less and changing the vibe from a movie to a more fun campy vibe, which I found to be a good and creepy choice as the previously mentioned animatronics murdered a small group of raiders.

Moreover, the movie is at many times different compared to the original game, ensuring that many die-hard theorists of the confusing games would have plenty of new material to puzzle over and giving a fresh experience to those that have memorized the game’s lore. That is especially true to Matpat (Matthew Patrick) who had a guest appearance on the movie thanks to his years as a internet theorizer, with his Game Theory

videos theorizing about FNaF making him synonymous to the brand, making many fans cheering at his appearance as well as Coryxkenshin (Cory Williams) and other youtubers’ cameo appearances.

There was one negative that I noticed while watching, which was that the movie’s overall plot wasn’t well thought out for non-fans, with characters making certain decisions and saying things that simply would not make sense, a prominent example of a police officer talking to the main character, Mike, before threatening to shoot him seemingly out of nowhere. Moreover, it partially feels like the movie expects you

to know some of the characters’ names, for example the main antagonist William Afton’s name is dropped near the end with very little clues which is a bit strange considering how the main character’s motivation is to find out who kidnapped his brother.

But without a doubt, the “FNaF” movie is making headlines as the third biggest opening of all time and is easily dominating the box office on its opening weekend and is currently beating other horror movies such as “The Nun II” and even Disney’s “The Marvels.” Looking over the movie as a whole, it is undoubtedly excellent and warrants a five star rating for any “FNaF” fan watching the movie, but for those who are not pre-established fans, this rating should be lowered to a three and a half star rating due to film’s long run-time and not overly strong story, making it solid and enjoyable.



“House of Usher” adapts Poe’s classic tale

By Mason Jordan

It always starts with a storm. For horror director Mike Flanagan, a dark, gray storm is the ultimate omen of true horror. As the lightning flashes, two siblings mourn the untimely death of their mother in the darkness of their once warm and welcoming suburban house. Their mother was a stubborn woman who refused treatment for her illness; when she passed, the children were quick to bury her in her own backyard, such that she could stay with her home forever. Lightning

flashes in the dark sky once again over the house, and the dirt above mother’s grave starts to push upwards. The children still sit in the house, but when lightning flashes next, a dark dirt-covered silhouette stands in the doorway...

This is a scene from the first episode of Mike Flanagan’s “The Fall of the House of Usher,” a Netflix horror/drama series that readapts the classic literature of Edgar Allan Poe. The show keeps his dark, gothic feel while adding new and modern technological themes and elements. The show uses

Flanagan’s signature format, the miniseries—usually six to ten episodes to tell a full story, and, in Flanagan’s case, typically adapted from some kind of horror literature.

In this dark horror tale, the Usher family, comprising Roderick Usher and his six adult children, are picked off one by one (one per episode to be exact) by a mysterious shape-shifting woman. The woman is found at the scene of all crimes, but she cannot be identified as anyone human. As we trace back Roderick’s steps into his childhood and early life,

we slowly unravel the identity of the woman and the reasons that such horrors could be happening. Each death, told in a somewhat anthological format, is loosely based on an Edgar Allan Poe story, with many visual callbacks and quotes that directly relate to the author.

This story is told beautifully, and it unravels like a ball of string, slowly revealing more until nothing is left. As you learn to sympathize with and even hate the characters, and their fates become much more intriguing to you by the end of the series. The series proves

a masterful way to adapt old literature into a new story and it works amazingly to convey the message of the story and keep the classics current. An amazing tale of greed, grief, and gore, “The Fall of the House of Usher” is sure to scare audiences everywhere.



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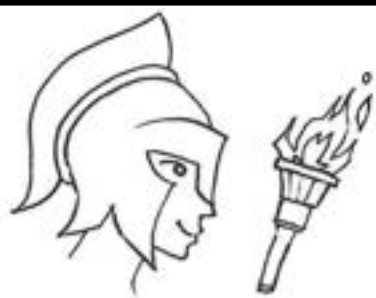
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Cross country runners race to state meet

By Wyatt Franklin

Eight CVHS cross country runners qualified to compete in the CIF State Cross Country Championships on Nov. 25. The varsity girls team qualified together while senior Lucas Chang from the varsity boys team qualified individually.

Chang ran three miles in 16:18 at the NCS Championships at Hayward High School on Nov. 18, finishing seventh.

Led by Alyssa Chen, Maya Dughi and Anna Dughi, the girls team placed second at NCS to finish second with 64 points, behind rival Berkeley.

Chang started running as a freshman to condition for soccer but quickly fell in love with running. "By the end of sophomore year, I was in love with running, so I actually quit soccer to commit to track and field," he said.

Even now Chang still doesn't "regret quitting soccer at all. Sometimes I miss it, but cross country has been super fun."



Lucas Chang (left) and Alyssa Chen (right) race towards the finish line.

VICTOR BAHNG

Since freshman year, Chang has dedicated himself to improving his running and time in cross country. "Practices are five days a week... and I do a lot

more workouts on my own or with some of my friends outside of school," said Chang.

Weekend practices for Chang are, "up to nine or ten miles.

And our favorite place to run is Lake Chabot. Sometimes we'll run the entire lake loop around Lake Chabot."

Chang credits part of

his success to the "super-supportive" coaches and team, calling it "the best sports team I have ever been on... like a family."

All of this work and support has led Chang to improve his time by over two minutes from freshman year to senior year.

As this was his last chance to qualify and go far in NCS and state championships, Chang is very happy with his improvements and performance.

At the state meet in Fresno, Chang ran 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) in 16:06, finishing in the top half of the fast race.

Chang said that it was "super exciting" for all runners to see the girls qualify as a team. Freshman Iliana Nierengarten led the Trojans in 19:39, followed by Chen and the Dughi sisters, Abigail Choy, Hannah Murry and Mika Gomes.

Chang and the girls cross country team achieved major success this year in qualifying for the state meet and hope to continue this momentum during track season next spring.

Trojans beat Tennyson on senior night, 34-24

By Renata Gutierrez

Senior football players along with spirit squad seniors stood at the CVHS track behind the big inflatable Trojan helmet and green and gold balloon arch with their most loved, anxiously waiting for their names to be called. Senior football players and squad members were celebrated during their senior night on Nov. 3.

As 6 p.m. rolled around the corner, all non-senior players and spirit squad

members lined up after the balloon arch. They created a pathway for their teammates, cheering on 15 players and 16 spirit squad members. Knowing football season was almost over, the overall mood was bittersweet. The spirit squad, however, will continue cheering at basketball games.

Only a few minutes into the first quarter, the Trojans scored their first touchdown against Tennyson. This set the mood for the rest of the night, and the Trojans emerged victorious at the end



Junior Connor Cooper runs the ball through the field.

RENATA GUTIERREZ

of the game, 34-24.

Senior night was not only a celebration, "[but a display] of character of this senior class," stated head coach Denny Molzen.

Once halftime began, the parents of most of the celebrated seniors took the field. Following the annual tradition, their parents performed a stadium-rattling dance. The crowd excitedly cheered for them as they swapped places with the senior members of the spirit squad. Everyone's eyes were on them as they

wowed the crowd with their fierce choreography. After a performance from the marching band, the football team returned for an exciting second half.

During the game, quarterback Cooper Matthews threw two touchdown passes and had five carries for 50 yards. Drew Leipold ran 20 yards, with Sevag Hakimian right behind running 16 yards, both catching touchdown passes.

"Once there were only two games left we kinda

stopped worrying about the opponents and started playing for us," said Leipold.

After a long and difficult season where many star players, like Nico Colmenares, were seriously injured early on, the Trojans worked hard to end on a winning streak against San Leandro and Tennyson.

"We are losing a group of passionate and determined young men," said Molzen, "who I have no doubt will go on to be great leaders in whatever they choose to do after high school."





Día de los Muertos celebrated with food, colors, activities and fun.

GRACE LOPEZ

Day of the Dead at CVHS

By Grace Lopez

Beautiful sugar skulls, face painting and Latin music highlighted the annual CVHS Día de los Muertos celebration held in the cafeteria on Nov. 2. Students and adults alike enjoyed traditional activities, food, and drink.

"Getting my face painted makes me feel so much more connected to Día de los Muertos," said sophomore attendee Joanna Escobedo.

Día de los Muertos gives Latino communities a chance to unify and come together. It originated in Mexico and is Spanish for "Day of the Dead." For centuries, this holiday has been celebrated across Latin America, to commemorate passed loved ones.

Deco Club, Latinos Unidos

and Puente collaborated to make this event enjoyable for school families, with the help of many student volunteers. As people celebrated and listened to lively Latin music, many of the coordinators expressed their pleasure with the turnout of Día de los Muertos.

"It's always a pleasure working with other clubs," said junior Renata Gutierrez, co-president of Deco Club and editor for The Olympian.

The event featured many traditional symbols: papel picado, candles, incense and pictures of loved ones. Ofrendas for family members and friends were set up on the cafeteria stage. Many people were also seen dressed up and taking photos in front of their ofrendas. Additionally, food and drinks were given out, including horchata and tacos as well as cookies and brownies.

"When I walked in, I could smell the food and I got in a line and I saw so many other people starting to gather," said sophomore attendee Emily Roan.

Families walked under the marigold entrance with smiles on their faces that lasted throughout the entire event. These symbols made the event very welcoming and gave an at-home feeling.

"When I walked into the entrance I recognized so many symbols and traditions I grew up with," said sophomore attendee Miah Zielke.

With this year's Día de los Muertos a success, the event's organizers are looking ahead to the future.

"Seeing everyone have fun makes the hard work pay off," reflected Gutierrez. "I can't wait to continue this tradition next year."

ASL visits elementary schools



Students finger spell A-S-L.

ZOE SCHWARTZLE

By Zoe Schwartzle

The American Sign Language program at CVHS led by teacher Amy Ryken teaches students a wide range of vocabulary using sign language. Students also learn about Deaf culture and community.

ASL students are taking what they have learned and teaching elementary school students how to sign. Every other week of this semester ASL 2, ASL 3, and Honors ASL students go to different elementary schools around Castro Valley, including Marshall and Proctor.

"I like teaching them because they seem like they want to

learn and it's cool seeing them sign to each other knowing that I taught them that," said ASL 2 student Elliot Lucas.

During the block days these students will walk as a class over to these elementary schools. When they get there they break off into groups and go to different classrooms spanning different grade levels.

Each time they go they focus on a different set of words and phrases. They start off by teaching them the signs for all the letters of the alphabet. Once the younger students got comfortable with letters, the high school students taught them how to fingerspell their names, and how to introduce themselves with phrases such

as "hello my name is ___" and "nice to meet you."

ASL students have progressed with elementary students throughout the weeks going through colors, foods, and animal signs as well. Although Nov. 8 was the official last day of the students teaching for the semester, they have made a positive impact in all of the classes that they taught in.

"I loved seeing my students inspired to learn a new language," said Audreann Giovanetti, fourth grade teacher at Marshall.

These elementary students also made an impact on the older students from CVHS, teaching them how to apply what they have learned in their own class and teach ASL to a younger generation.

"I liked doing it because it helps me remember what I have learned, and it helps kids learn sign language and become interested in it," said ASL 2 student Hope Hudson.

These CVHS students have proudly taken on the opportunity to teach the younger generation a new language.

CVHS students take on Honor Choir

By Shannan Chan

Students from CVHS choir program were chosen to participate in California Coastal Region Honor Choir from Nov. 16-18. Through the audition, 12 students succeeded in getting in.

Nov. 16-17 were in preparation for the performance on Nov. 18. Ten students were placed into the SSAA group while the remaining two were in the TTBB choir. SSAA sang "To Sit and Dream," "Hoj Hura Hoj," "Schlof Main Kind," "The Answer," "Like a River in My Soul," and "What Happens When a Woman?" Rehearsals ran from 3:15 to 5:00 p.m. the first day, with students returning after dinner and staying until 9:30 p.m. The second day rehearsal lasted all day until 5:30 p.m.

"[Ave Maria] was pretty hard because it was repetitive," said senior Julie Yee, when asked what her least favorite song was. "They were honestly pretty easy, but they were long."

"[Ave Maria] was like being in a cult," added junior Abigail Martin.

Throughout the weekend, students also learned how to sing alongside other people

as well. Yee shared some challenges.

"Trying to hear my part when the people next to me are very off pitch," she said. "They were freshmen, but they were very off pitch." Martin also commented on poor part memorization.

Post-performance brought feedback as well.

"It was better sounding from the balcony, maybe not where we were standing [on stage], but it was better sounding from up there," said Yee, referring to the balcony where performers sat.

Despite the unfamiliarity, both Yee and Martin agree that Honor Choir was a rewarding experience, and would recommend choir students joining next year.

"I think it was a good experience, you get really close with whoever you're going with, whoever is from your school," said Yee. Martin noted that it was a good experience to do once.

Martin ends on what she learned from the weekend. "Flavors of songs are really interesting," she joked. "We describe things by flavors and colors," added Yee.

In the words of the SSAA choir director Lori Marie Rios, "Right now we're in the honor choir, so we got to be tasteful!"

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Wellness Center brings HEART to CVHS

By Kaitlyn Tchang

The CVHS Wellness Center is now hosting a new weekly program for students in need: the Healing and Empowerment through Art (HEART) group. The group is run by community partners from the Improving Wellness of Asian Youth 2 (IWAY2) project and seeks to offer students a creative outlet to explore their feelings and cultural identity.

“The purpose of this group is for students to learn more about themselves and then express themselves through art, because there’s some emotions that can be hard to express,” explained HEART facilitator Lien Dao. She says that the group is perfect for students who have experienced any form of stress or trauma in the past. “If we look at the bigger picture, it could also be about reducing the stigma around mental health so people can freely talk about it and seek professional help.”

Dao helps prepare the curriculum for HEART’s hour-long sessions, which are held every Wednesday during sixth period and currently has about five student participants. The group officially began meeting at the end of October, but collaboration discussions between IWAY2 and the CVHS Wellness Center started back in 2021. Lead Wellness



KAITLYN TCHANG

HEART facilitators Sally Luu and Lien Dao smile with Wellness Counselor Jeehee Moon after a successful group session.

Center social worker Sam Frank, behavior and health coordinator Marian Meadows, and social worker Sophie Lau had to work out logistics like scheduling and finding a space on campus for the sessions with school administration.

Due in part to planning delays the group, originally meant to be ten sessions long, had to be cut down to six. Still, each week’s unique agenda is packed with various artistic activities focused on culture and healing. For instance, one session included scrapbook-making, breathing exercises,

and a gratitude and self-care reflection activity.

“When you come here, we facilitate the group, but if you don’t feel like following our instructions you can feel free to not [do so],” said Lau. “We facilitate the HEART program... [to let students] be creative and build a support system. This is a safe space for them to share things that otherwise would be hard to share at home.” She added that, like therapy, “they can choose to share something personal or not... everything is confidential.”

Sally Luu, a CVHS alumnus,

also helps Lau facilitate HEART meetings. Both work as health educators at the nonprofit Public Health Institute, which is collaborating with the Korean Cultural Center of the East Bay to run IWAY2.

While it is too late to join this semester’s HEART group, they are excited to host another group next semester; it will be fully ten weeks long and welcome any number of both new and returning students.

In addition, they are planning to expand their program to other school districts in Alameda County, such as Fremont and

Pleasanton, as well as Canyon and Creekside Middle Schools in Castro Valley.

At the end of next semester’s sessions, students will have the option of creating an art project in any form—drawing, music, dance—to show off in a community gallery.

Luu encourages any students interested in joining HEART to reach out: “When I was in high school, we didn’t have a group like this. We didn’t even have the Wellness Center,” she reflected. “Having this group allows us to acknowledge how important it is to take care of ourselves and our mental health.”

Students do not have to be artists or fit any specific demographic to join; if interested, they can contact the Wellness Center. Students will then go through a screening process and be placed on a waiting list for next semester.

The Wellness Center is also looking to start multiple new groups in the spring, including its own therapeutic art group, as well as a mentoring group for boys of color and specific trauma and anxiety groups.

“There’s information on the groups on the [Wellness Center] website,” Frank said. Students looking for support should “visit us during passing period. Share your interest in the group and come by during break sometime.”

CVHS menstrual product drive finds success

By Kelly Xu

The Girls Learn International (GLI) Club at CVHS held and collected from a menstrual products drive from Nov. 6 to Nov. 17. All the donated products went to a hygiene bank in San Francisco called Simply the Basics, which serves low-income and homeless populations in the city.

There were donation bins in Room 501, the girls locker room, and library for all students to access. This was the group’s third year holding this drive, and students are aiming to make this an annual event. They are also planning to organize another menstrual products drive in the spring.



KELLY XU

Club members of Girls Learn International (GLI) pose proudly after a successful drive.

normalizes talk around periods, which has historically been a “shameful” topic to discuss.

“Periods are not something that we choose, so when we need products and we’re not able to have them, that becomes a problem. We become limited as menstruators. Raising these products makes a big impact on people who don’t have access to them or who have a harder time getting them,” GLI Club president Lauren Siopack reflected.

They had posted on their Instagram page and had pink

flyers up around the school. In order to encourage students to donate, they relied heavily on their club members taking action and spreading the word to their friends and classmates.

“Just doing [this donation] as students raises awareness for people. As students, you’re going into a world where you don’t know where you’re going to end up in the future and just knowing that there are places that will provide you with more necessities when you don’t have them, I think that’s great,” Siopack noted.

“Periods are not something that we choose.”
Lauren Siopack
GLI president

The GLI Club is organizing this drive to raise awareness of the shortage of menstrual products that low-income and homeless individuals face. Implementing this drive also

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Caffeine consumption causes concern

By Gavin Peters

Caffeine: the sleep deprivation remedy. The all-powerful stimulant is a cornerstone of the American diet. Its properties make it a powerful remedy for sleep and tiredness, but is it worth the drawbacks? Known side effects of caffeine consumption range from nausea and anxiousness to headaches and even chest pains. So how “worth it” is caffeine?

The Olympian conducted an online survey and Instagram poll to see how caffeine affects students at CVHS. Most students say there are little to no downsides. From 135 respondents, 55.6 percent admitted to drinking caffeine, primarily coffee and tea, for their energizing benefits throughout the school week.

The energy boost that caffeine gives students is a quick way to help students stay up and be ready to get work done. Though pulling all-nighters are not the best on the mental and physical health of a student, it’s still common practice. Of all surveyed students, roughly 51 percent said that they have used caffeine to help their performance in school.

“I drink caffeine because it makes me feel more awake after getting five hours of sleep,” said junior Elise Ledesma.

This level of caffeine usage concerns health and medical careers teacher Sue Anderson.

“Caffeine creates this artificial focus,” explained Anderson. “It creates this kind of dependency... it does not allow a person to have their own agency.”

While there are mental and physical health benefits from caffeine consumption, usage specifically by teenagers, who do not yet have fully developed brains, can become an addiction. Caffeine gives students a power boost to stay awake, work hard or even pull an all-nighter. But overconsumption can also lead to an energy crash, upset stomach and other side effects.

“[Teenagers are] the target audience,” said Anderson. “The brain is more vulnerable under 25 to any addictive substances.”

Like nicotine users, caffeine consumers psychologically crave their “fix.” They then continue to spend money on this pseudo-energy.

According to Anderson, caffeine “hijacks the brain and creates this reward pathway of a loop.”

She also brought up the financial aspect of caffeine overconsumption. Over time, the material cost of caffeine adds up, yet never creates a net increase of energy, as it always leaves you lower than started.

So how much caffeine usage is too much? Anderson stated that it varies from person to person: what they have eaten, or how hydrated they are. She recommends looking out for shakiness, hyper-focus that cannot be controlled, and always wanting more.

What side effects do CVHS students experience? Roughly 70% of surveyed students said there are little to no repercussions for their caffeine usage, and roughly 90% said they don’t feel constantly tired



GAVIN PETERS

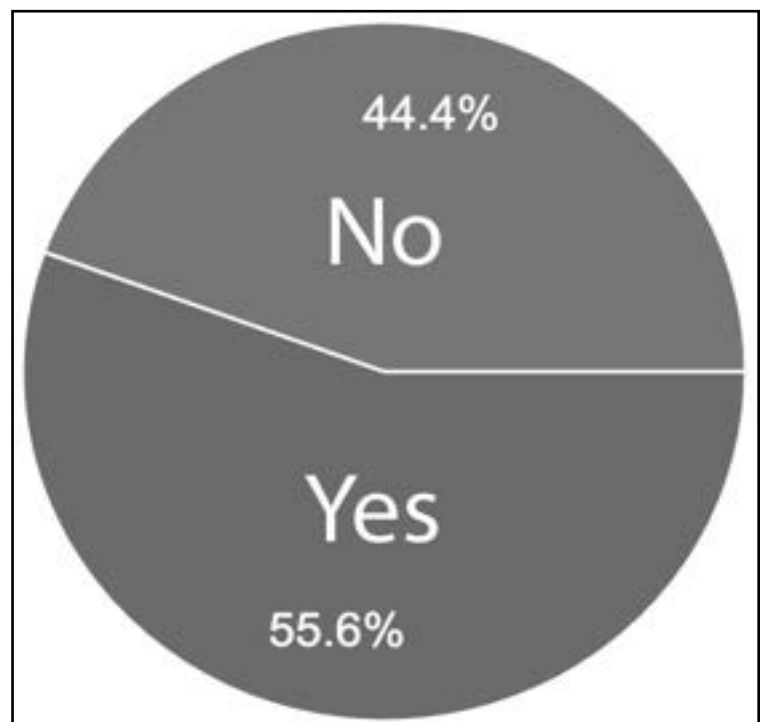
without caffeine.

“I usually just drink caffeine because I like it, it probably does help but I don’t notice it,” said junior Vlas Pagonis.

Still, for those concerned about their caffeine consumption, what alternatives are there?

“Grab a glass of water, add some salads to your diet, get more vitamins in your system and get more hydration,” recommended Anderson. She also suggested eating some more citrus, doing some stretches, and going for walks outside. “[That way] you will feel the payoff, but you won’t feel the crash.”

Remember the cost of caffeine consumption the next time you see a Monster, Red Bull, Starbucks drink or tea in someone’s hand, or consider taking a sip yourself.



GAVIN PETERS

Chart showing results of poll asking people: “Do you drink energy drinks? Or any other form of caffeine?”

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