



Page 5:
The Olympian
flirts with
fashion



Page 6:
CV Spotlight
dazzles
audiences



Page 8:
Respect for
Marriage Act: What
does it mean?



THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL *Olympian*

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California sees record level flooding in drought

By Sam Scott

Since record levels of rain were seen on Dec. 31, 2022, floods have bombarded a vast number of cities and people across California, incurring as much as \$31 billion in damages. Cities like San Mateo, San Jose, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and many more have seen houses submerged in water and people unable to go outside, whereas in places like Lake Tahoe, city storms have caused large accumulations of snow, making it incredibly difficult to drive. Upwards of 20 people have died due to these recent storms and floods.

“I’m super relieved that me and my family were not affected by the storm, but I’m just worried for the future,” stated senior Zean Ylaya.

As bad as flooding has become for many Californians, it is apparently only a glimpse of what is to come. According to the Los Angeles Times, California has a natural cycle of giant floods, similar to those seen in the Central Valley in 1861 and 1862. Although the state has become more and more overdue for such a flood, the intensity of giant floods will be much



greater due to climate change. Rather than collapsing roads and raising the water levels in towns, these intensified giant floods could turn California’s valleys into inland seas. Even now, before these possible mega floods, Castro Valley has seen multiple roads collapse and sinkholes form, both of which have taken lives.

The recent flooding has pushed plans to be made to protect California from more dangerous floods. A recently approved plan has stated that \$30 billion will be invested into our most flood-susceptible valley over the next 30 years. “It’s really bad for what has happened to people, but at the very least the floods are good for

Redwood Road in Castro Valley collapsed due to the rain.

the environment. I’m glad that mother nature is taking things into her own hands,” said senior Daylen Berio. As reported by CalMatters, at one point, “71 percent of California was experiencing ‘severe’ drought... dropping to 46%” due to the floods. Although farmlands

and cities have been flooded, the recent rainfall pulled a significant part of California out of severe drought. As for whether or not these floods can be seen as beneficial to California in face of the damage it has caused, we will have to wait for what is to come.

Lowell vs. CVHS

By Shannan Chan

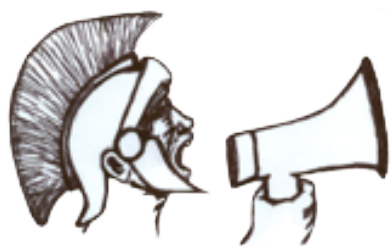
San Francisco Unified School District’s (SFUSD) Lowell High School staged a sickout, in which a majority of its teachers walked out and announced a sick day in protest to the new payroll system on Dec. 7, 2022. Teachers walked out when finals were approaching causing concern among students and parents. With a new payroll system implemented at the beginning of 2022, many students continue to worry about the school’s financial future and how it will affect

them. This includes the recent removal of AP classes as well. “The vast majority of folks have seen their paychecks as some combination of wrong, or so confusing that they have no idea whether it is wrong or not,” said Kathy Melvin, Lowell Teacher and union representative, when interviewed by the San Francisco Chronicle. “I only know of what is happening in San Francisco and that there is the possibility of a strike in Richmond because their contract negotiations have broken down,” said Mark Mladinich, government teacher and president of the Castro Valley Teachers Association (CVTA). CVTA is the union for our credentialed educators in CV. Unlike SFUSD, our school district is fairly small,

working together with 500 members. Similarly to SFUSD, however, teachers work with the school district to ensure that classrooms and working conditions are optimal for student success. “[CVTA] formally negotiates our members’ salary, hours of employment, and working conditions with CVUSD once a year with the hope of retaining the best teachers for our students,” Mladinich continued. Yet, the SFUSD sickout proved that teachers’ concerns were not met. The sickout lasted one day, with 1,000 out of 2,700 students staying at home. This was not the first sickout in SFUSD—other sickouts occurred during early November at varying high schools. Thus, it was not a surprise that a similar event

would occur at Lowell, as a principal’s message was sent out the day before as a warning. Senior Krisabelle Zhao confirmed this. “The day of the sickout I did not attend school, for the solidarity of the teachers for one, but as well as because 90 percent of the teachers were out so we weren’t going to do anything. Overall, half the student body did not attend school,” said Zhao. Those who did attend school were ushered from their classrooms to other parts of the school such as the library and auditorium. Payroll issues would include partial paychecks, missing health benefits, or even no pay at all. As such, a number of around 50 teachers gathered at SFUSD headquarters and had a discussion that lasted three hours, giving insight into the

issues with the payroll system problems. By January 2022, the new payroll system EMPOWER was put out. The SFUSD website states: “As of fall 2022, SFUSD is working on two critical issues. The first is to fix long-standing structural payroll issues related to legacy systems and processes. The second is to address individual payroll issues as they emerge.” However, many are still skeptical and still find problems within this new system. Overall, all school districts have their difficulties and frustration can arise when they are unaddressed. Despite this tension, school districts and teachers’ unions hope to work together to create the best learning environment for their students.



CA must support unhoused people in face of storms

Editorial:

Thunder and rainstorms struck California over the last month. Streets flooded and collapsed, houses leaked and were destroyed by trees, and people died. Much of this could have been solved by policy change in California legislation.

The Olympian sent out a survey (the Storm Form) to CVHS students and has learned about the impacts on 36 CVHS students so far. Of the students that completed the survey, 33 percent reported that they were impacted by the storms.

In the 2020 to 2021 school year, 1 percent of CVHS students were experiencing homelessness – not accounting for housing instability or unsafe housing. That is around 300 students. Throughout the last three years, the homeless population of California has also increased by over 22,500 people to about 172,000, disproportionately impacting Black and Latine people. Housing is a human right, but our society has made the shelter of housing a privilege to be earned.

During some of the harshest days of the storms, San Francisco ran homeless encampment sweeps—as if experiencing homelessness and a storm isn't hard enough already.

In Berkeley, activists set up a warming tent for residents of



FRANCES LEE

People's Park who didn't have other ways of maintaining safety during the storms. The Castro Valley Library also provided shelter for a few days of the storm. Recognizing the humanity and needs of people the systems have cast out is crucial, especially during times of crisis if not all the time. *The Olympian* believes that when the government isn't taking necessary action, mutual aid systems are ways citizens can support each other, while still holding the government accountable.

Mutual aid networks, as described by Santa Fe Mutual Aid, are “a network of community volunteers working to support one another, friends, family, &

neighbors to meet each other's basic survival needs at this critical time. It is a system of community to community support & organization for resource sharing, information dissemination, & resilience-building.”

On Jan. 8, Governor Gavin Newsom got an Emergency Declaration approved by the federal government, and proposed \$202 million of his budget to “ramp up flood protections.” Meanwhile, Congress approved a specific budget for California water storage. *The Olympian* acknowledges the importance of water collection for the long-term as we are still in the midst of a severe drought; however, we believe policies to save water

should have already been in place and that supporting people should have been prioritized to fight the immediate impacts of the storms.

After observing the destruction of Castro Valley and surrounding areas, Representative Eric Swalwell called for a federal Major Disaster Declaration, to provide California with assistance for infrastructure and individuals. *The Olympian* believes we should just have better infrastructure and invest in better infrastructure—not just for our schools, but our roads and drainage systems.

The Storm Form reported that over 10 percent of students' ability to get to school or participate in their education was inhibited. On Tuesday, Jan. 17, Redwood High School had to close for in person classes due to a water main break.

The Olympian suggests having a distance-learning plan in place in case of worse storms or other issues that may arise in case campus is not a viable option for extended periods of time.

California must support the needs of people through stronger public infrastructure and policies to support marginalized and homeless people as the impacts of the climate crisis further intensify.

If you have been impacted by the storms, or have policy ideas, please fill out the Storm Form.



MARGARET WILMOTT

PHOTOpinions What support does California need regarding storms?



“We need a water storage system that's more prepared to catch heavy rain rather than one that runs on a drought.”

Sox Riley
freshman



“[We] need [to] have the drains be better because obviously it didn't work with this big storm, and it's going to get worse with global warming.”

Brady Montgomery
sophomore



“California should improve the drainage systems because a lot of the floods that occur could be avoided if a better system is implemented.”

Lucy Ni
junior



“We need to maintain the drainage system because if they're clogged the floods will continue to happen.”

Calvin Gao
senior



“We need to be proactive rather than reactive, [like] looking at possible hazards ahead of time and trying to prevent things in advance.”

Laura O'Brien
science teacher

Art in nature: realism or impressionism



By Wyatt Franklin

Some may say that something that moves and is alive can't be art. I beg to differ. The definition of art by Oxford languages is “producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.” I think that nature is the greatest producer of works that are appreciated for their beauty and

emotional power. So if nature is an artist, what genre of art does it create? Does nature create realism, abstract, or impressionism? Is nature a landscape or a portrait?

Is nature realism? Realism was a movement in the 19th century to portray everyday subjects in a realistic way. But what is more normal and everyday as something that is there everyday? The way that artists painted or drew realism was to make it look as real as possible. But what is more real than actual real life? How can you paint or draw more realistically than real life itself? But what if nature is abstract? Abstract art is a loose arrangement of lines, colors, and

shapes. But what is more random than things that are made, move, and appear randomly? A plain field covered in plain beige grass. But with no thought of humans, bright green bushes with a swirling sky in the background, provide a pop of color on an otherwise lonely canvas. Or wisps of white moving across a bright blue sky, only affected by how the wind blows.

Or is nature impressionist? Impressionism is light loose brush strokes that emphasize how light changes and affects how we look at things. Impressionism subjects are typically outside in nature. Why? Because nature was the first impressionist. And the sun is what provides the changing light for the style. The sun beams down on the forest floor. Light filters down through the leaves, leaving streaks of gold showering down.

But is nature a landscape or a portrait? Some might say that nature has to be a landscape, because of all of the beautiful views that pane out all across the world. Like the tall mountain towering over the plateau, piercing through the clouds. But what about the owl poised to take flight, perched high up in a snowy tree? Or the lion pacing slowly toward the gazelle, the tall grasses masking his form.

But that still begs the question, if nature is art what is it? I believe that art can be whatever you want it to be. Nature can be realistic, abstract, or impressionist. It could be a landscape or a portrait. Nature is ever-changing so it can be whatever you want. That is the great thing about nature, it can be interpreted however you want. That is why it is so important to protect and view nature because

it is the world's largest and most famous art museum.



Vincent van Gogh, Still Life – Vase With Red Gladiolas, 1886

How to tackle insecurity as a teen artist



By Zoe Dorado

As I waited for my suitcase at Miami International Airport’s baggage claim—my first real independent trip outside of California—I was dangerously surviving on a bag of BBQ Frito Twists and the mediocre 30 minutes of scattered naps one manages to snag on a 6-hour plane ride. Despite my delirium, I was exhilarated. Goodbye college-app-filled winter break! I was ready for National YoungArts week.

YoungArts (the National Foundation for the Advancement of Artists) finalists attend National YoungArts week to collaborate with peers and develop their crafts with internationally recognized leaders in their fields through classes and interdisciplinary workshops. Even after the week is technically over, YoungArts provides award winners with “critical, ongoing support to propel them forward at every stage of their artistic careers.” These include grants, creative and emergency microgrants, artist residencies, skills-building workshops, and an intergenerational community of artists. Past award recipients include artists such as designer (and “Euphoria” actress) Hunter Schafer, musician Terence Blanchard, choreographer Camille A. Brown, actors Timothée Chalamet and Viola Davis, and celebrated poet Amanda Gorman. Needless to say, I was intimidated.

To say I was ready for National YoungArts week might have been an overstatement. The truth was that I had no idea what to expect. As a finalist in

Writing (spoken word) I knew that I had admired many writers from the Bay Area who had been previous YoungArts winners (e.g. Anouk Yeh, the 2021 Santa Clara Youth Poet Laureate, and Samuel Getachew, the 2019 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate and 2020 Finalist for National Youth Poet Laureate), but despite “winning,” I knew that there’d still be monetary scholarships that certain artists (selected by our discipline panelists) would be earning as well as a nomination (selected by YoungArts judges) as a candidate for U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts. While eager to become a potential recipient of a scholarship and nomination, something still irked me: Why did art always end up feeling like a competition?

From spitting poetry at a spoken word slam to vying for a publication in some prestigious journal to hoping you’ll get accepted by a college through your art supplement to wanting your classmates to be like “wow your poem was really cool,” artistic validation, the proof that pursuing art in a culture that pushes for more STEM-finance-lawyer, “logical,” career goals might be worth it, feels affirming. You’ve somehow stuck it to The Man. But have you?

If there’s anything I’ve learned from my economics class, it’s that competition drives us to produce, to be better than our competitors. But if you’re making art with the intention of winning something, or impressing someone else, you may not actually be growing as an artist. There’s empty fulfillment in knowing what

kind of art “sells.”

What I learned from YoungArts is that chasing artistic affirmation doesn’t come from competing. It comes from collaborating. It comes from

“

Why did art always end up feeling like a competition?

”

Zoe Dorado

News and Artists’ Abode Editor

building community. From creating a Cobra Kai Broadway production with a hip hop dancer, a filmmaker, a classical pianist, a photographer, and an actor, to the support my spoken word group gave each other—our nervous selves—before the final show, to bus rides where I talked with my writer friends about our shared insecurities and dreams of becoming arts educators, to simply being present when listening and watching a fellow artist perform without judging or comparing myself to them, felt liberating in a way. I was no longer fixated on myself. I was immersed in creating art, in talking about art, in feeling held by someone else’s art. That’s when I felt the most affirmed.

While I still find myself comparing my poems to that of other poets or feeling a pang of jealousy when another writer receives a cool award, I have to remind myself that this will get me nowhere. It’s one thing to feel motivated by competition. But it isn’t worth it if you’ve sunk into a hole, isolating yourself, becoming the “starving artist” up in your attic with your only light being some dingy candle as you write your Pulitzer-worthy piece of woe. Let yourself be sad, but don’t let it consume you. Instead, find a community of artists who don’t care how many awards you’ve won. Find a community of artists who make you feel excited to create art— who make you feel alive.

Breakfast can make or break your day

By Melissa Boussaroque

Breakfast has been known to be called, “the most important meal of the day.” However, many high schoolers are consistently avoiding breakfast. Either they don’t have time, or because they simply can’t be bothered to eat breakfast.

I used to think exactly like that; as a student with zero-period, I have less time than most in the morning. I was always waking up as late as possible, getting ready as fast as I could, then barely leaving the house in time to be on time for school. I would spend all morning starving until break, often trying to satiate myself with gum or the ice cubes in my water. This helped a little bit, but there is no substitute for actual food.

As a little bit of a New Year’s resolution, I decided that I would try waking up a little earlier so that I could eat breakfast. I’ve started waking up earlier, getting ready, then making myself a breakfast at home, or leaving the house a little earlier to stop somewhere and get something to eat. I’ve only been doing this for about a week, but I can already see a difference in the rest of my day.

An obvious difference that I’ve noticed is that I am not hungry at all until break. I was so used to being hungry, that when I started eating breakfast I realized that I was focusing more on class, rather than counting down the minutes

to break and trying to hide the weird noises my stomach would make.

Another big change I’ve observed is that I have a lot more energy throughout the day. As I mentioned before, I take a zero-period, so sleep has always been something I’m often deprived of. I used to be extremely tired throughout the whole day, and I would find myself on the brink of falling asleep in every class. Since I’ve started eating breakfast, I feel more awake throughout the day and I am no longer dozing off in any class. Even after nights where I have to stay up late and finish homework, I’ve noticed that the lack of sleep is not affecting me as much. I don’t think I realized how tired I actually was until I experienced what it was actually like to have energy throughout the entire day.

To some, breakfast may seem daunting because it can be difficult to make. However, a good breakfast doesn’t have to take a lot of effort; it can be as simple or as complicated as you want. While I have taken the time to make something a little more complicated, such as avocado toast, I noticed that I feel exactly the same when I have something more simple, such as a yogurt and some fruit.

Breakfast may seem like something extremely unattainable and complicated, but all it takes is waking up a little earlier and putting in the effort. While this is not ideal, the benefits are definitely worth it.





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Olympian

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“Wednesday” wrought with weakness

By Olive Dooley

If you have opened the internet at any time in the past month, then you most likely have noticed the buzz about Netflix’s show, “Wednesday.” Inspired by the Addams Family, “Wednesday” follows Wednesday, the Addams family’s sadistic daughter, Wednesday through her escapades in a new school. After being expelled from her high school, her parents decide that she should be sent to Nevermore Academy, their own alma mater. Nevermore Academy is known to be a school for “outcasts,” as the series calls them, and holds many sinister things in its walls. The most prominent in the show is a series of murders that occur in the forests surrounding the school and nearby town, Jericho, as Wednesday Addams turns into a much darker version of Nancy Drew.

The show definitely has its high points—Jenna Ortega has been praised highly for her performance as Wednesday, and that is rightfully deserved, and the styling of the characters and show are superb. However, it is my opinion that the show got “Netflixed;,” the show is enjoyable to watch, but the plot and characters all fall flat in order to gain a big audience (also the CGI sucks but like that’s not that big of a deal).



“Wednesday” is a teen show, and it does its job of appealing to teens quite well. But in the desperate attempt to be appealing, the show often lost the attention to detail in characters and plot in favor of snappy one liners and relatability. Writers and directors of teen shows rely on these methods commonly to draw teens into watching—into creating moments that are easily tweetable or can be made into a TikTok sound—and the overreliance of this technique makes the show forced and unnatural. Sometimes adult’s attempts to write teens is laughable, and “Wednesday” is unfortunately no different.

Furthermore, I think that as the show progresses, the character of Wednesday

gets lost. What makes her recognizable, her cynicism and sinisterness, is pushed into the background as she is made into any other teen drama main character. The love triangle that develops throughout the series feels very unnatural and pointless. Her character in some points makes no sense—her disapproval of the idea of her father as a murderer, her strong sense of justice—these points in the plot, very large parts of the plot, don’t really make sense to Wednesday’s character as they are a complete juxtaposition to what her character is made out to be in the show and source material.

If I’m not wrong, which I don’t think I am, the show is supposed to really be about accepting and

respecting differences, but I felt like the show’s handling of Wednesday sent a counter message. Her loss of character and her morphing into any other main character seem to send a message that there really only is one way to fit in. There are some moments in the show that I think the message of accepting differences rings true, like Enid (Wednesday’s roommate) and Wednesday’s reconciliation and acceptance of each other, but there aren’t many other moments that stuck out to me where the other characters really got that message. Tim Burton’s involvement in the show also contradicts the message of inclusivity in light of his adamant exclusion of people of color in his work.

I mentioned the lack of attention to characters above, and “Wednesday” is a show where I had little sympathy or care for any other character than Wednesday. The show tries hard to make you care about other characters, but it’s hard to. The characters, other than Wednesday, don’t change throughout the show—at the end most people stay the same and their own personal arcs are obscure: they may be mentioned in an episode or two—maybe even have a couple of scenes—but other than that, the problems that these characters have seem to not exist. Wednesday is a good character (despite my own qualms) because she is very fleshed out, but no other character got the same attention and the growth that she did. They were just there.

“Wednesday” is unfortunately just like any other show right now, with the addition of some recognizable characters, but I think that it does have a lot of potential. The writers and directors just need to make more of an effort to make it clear that the show is different from every other show out there right now. They need to rely on Wednesday and her quirkiness as a character, instead of trying to erase her personality from the show in favor of views.

“Chainsaw Man” manga beautifully adapted to hit anime



By Mason Jordan

From the title alone, someone can assume what “Chainsaw Man” is about. Probably a man. Maybe some chainsaws too. Thinking this isn’t necessarily

wrong, but what is left out in this observation is all that comes with this story. The manga “Chainsaw Man” is a deep and meaningful story about love, friendship, betrayal, and revenge—complete with

beautiful art and symbolism by manga artist Tatsuki Fujimoto. It has now been adapted into a visually stunning anime series by production company Mappa, and has an insane audience rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars on

Google.

“Chainsaw Man,” begins with a 16-year-old boy named Denji and his pet: a chainsaw dog. Yes, that’s right: a chainsaw dog named Pochita. Denji is in massive debt to the mafia and barely gets by as a Devil hunter. Devils are creatures created out of human fear, and anything that is feared can have a devil along with it. Later in the story, there are such things as a Doll Devil, A War Devil and even an Angel Devil. Denji is betrayed by his boss and left to die, but his chainsaw dog (who turns out to be the Chainsaw Devil) sacrifices itself to give Denji new life and new chainsaw powers, creating the titular Chainsaw Man. Denji is introduced to his teammates, rambunctious Power and way too serious Aki, who are difficult to get along with. They soon are thrown into all kinds of fights and encounters, which are extremely well-paced and occur at perfect moments throughout the show.

The first season of “Chainsaw Man” is filled with foreshadowing and genuinely creepy moments, but almost outnumbering those moments are the funny family-like dynamic that grows between

Aki, Power, and Denji. The little scenes of them interacting like a family are heartwarming. Power hates vegetables, so Denji and Aki often try to force her to eat them. This always seems to end with a room being trashed and Power crying. The fights are amazing and filled with memorable lines and unique ways to battle with the abilities present in the series. The characters’ new and existing abilities always seem like they are introduced at the perfect time, with bigger characters having slow reveals of their abilities and smaller ones using them for short times, but in impactful ways.

The first season of the anime just finished airing, with 12 episodes and a strong climactic ending fight. The season looked breathtaking, with a mixture of 3D-modeled characters and 4K animation. Both the dub and sub versions have strong voice acting and are thrilling to hear. “Chainsaw Man” was arguably the best anime of 2022, and the world is on the edge of their seats waiting for season two. Until then, the manga is currently publishing new chapters and expanding the story every week. Let’s just say, it only gets better.



Poetry Contest Honorees

WINNER: “You--or rather, me”



“For the longest time I thought of myself in the third person. It was easier to feel what was happening if it was happening to somebody else- and slowly, I started to view myself less of a “me” and more of an ‘us.’ It’s easier to take care of someone else than yourself.”

-Oli Baker (they/them)

I remember those days
We lived like they were nothing
Eating clementines
That I peeled one by one for you.
I remember laughing with you
And seeing your eyes crinkle
I remember living life
Like we would live forever.
Didn't we?
I think about your mouth, the wholly
Pink of you, how
Your essence was so
Bundled up and intertwined
And how you doubled back
Upon yourself
Until you were a ball of yarn
Collected and massed
In a clump.
I remember your
Cheek, bumpy, your
Hands, dry, your
Mother calling you in for dinner.
I remember the call
Of the blankets on your bed
Urging me back into
Warmth, the cat on my lap
That knows me better than I do.
I remember that bubble
Building up in my throat when
I heard you say that joke-
I don't even remember what it is.
I only remember that raw
Laughter scraping my throat.
I remember that day when
We talked for hours and I
Felt your hand on my shoulder
Before I said something stupid.

I remember the feeling
Of raw raw desperation
Coloring my cheeks and staining
my nose
Bright Red
I don't even remember what I
wanted
Did I want you to stay?
Did I want my clementine?
Did I want everything to go back
To how it was?
It didn't
Didn't it?
I don't remember
Didn't we live forever?
Some part of you did, maybe.
Some part of me didn't, maybe.
I remember the microphone at
my lips
And the color of the pixels on my
screen
When I stayed up past my bedtime
As long as I could talk to you.
I remember your letter
In my hand and the indent
Of your script and the
Feel of your handwriting on my
fingers.
I remember when you told me
Saudade
And I still haven't forgotten what
it means.
I remember when you said that
We wouldn't find what we were
looking for yet
Maybe we would soon.
Did we?

Runner-up: “CARRION.”



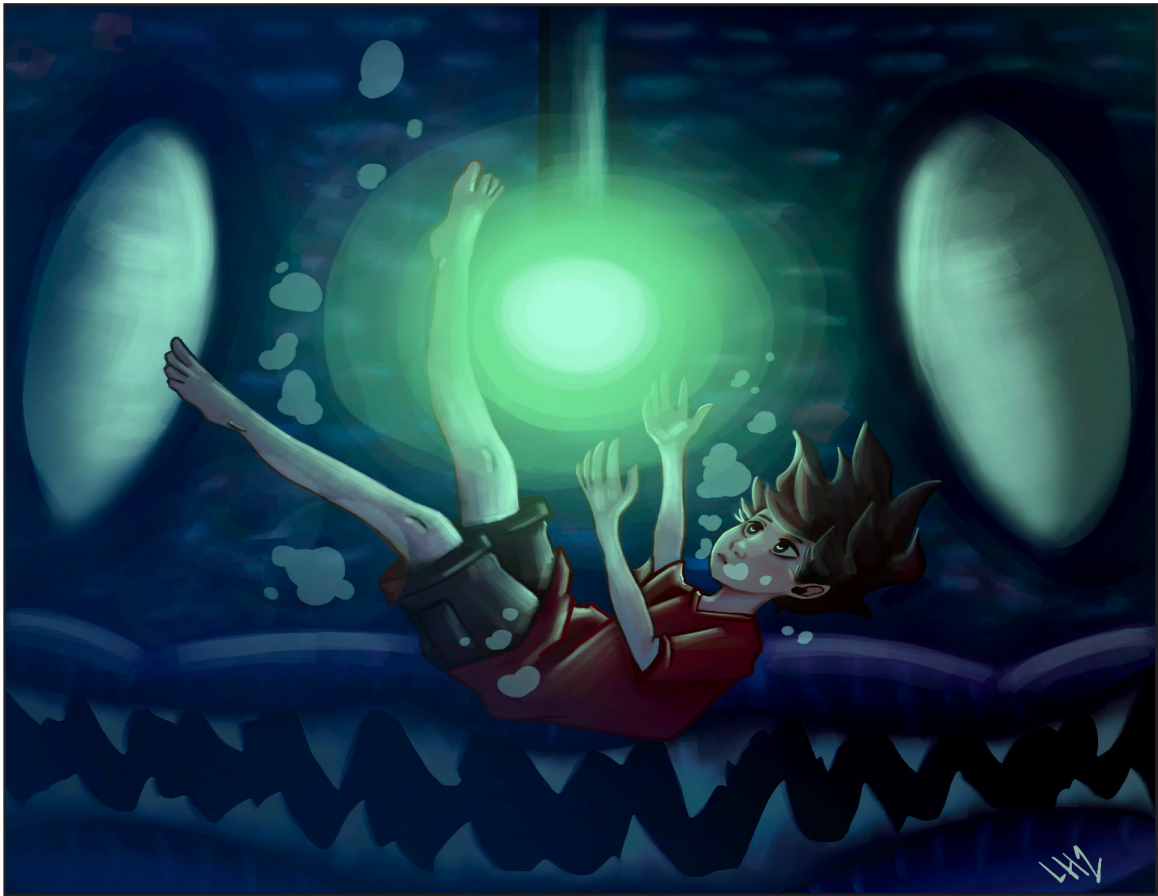
“A whale fall is an ecological phenomena that occurs when the carcass of a whale falls into the abyssal zone of the ocean. This piece takes inspiration from that, but also a conversation I had with a friend in which he conceptualized the term “whale fall” as a whale—falling out of the sky.”

-Amelie Fleur de Jesus

I talk about the world ending in terms
of falling whales
A bloated corpse descends from the
heavens, apocalyptic
Only when happening to you or me.
It's meant to hang over the abyss
A cycle of rebirth.
Those microorganisms organisms
consume corpses over decades
Sacrament, in its own way.
Would that I find such peace in
passing.
That this host be taken in by
scavengers and bottom trawlers
Nothing left to recall my presence but
a patch of black,
Pure in its potential.
When I lie under the stars
I promise not to think of you. There's
the shame to contend with
Bleeding out in front of everyone.
Yes, well. Change. I'm leaving behind
this
Ontological hall of mirrors.
The waver in my voice
When I fail to say I love you—it's done
nothing but cause me pain.
My heart starts to stutter; it's disorder,
darling, and
It's killing me.
Not everything is something else.
Not everything is something else.
Exalt, it's difficult to exist without
definition
The windows split the sunlight into
three, and
It isn't over any time soon
There are no borders to your body.
Praise to this: you are yourself.

Digital Art Contest Honorees

WINNER: Deep Sea Nightmares by Brynne Silva (below)
Runner-up: Blood Fiend by Stephanie Feng (right)



“I was inspired to create this piece to represent the drowning feeling of nightmares. It also represents to me, childhood and the creeping/ scary future getting closer and closer. The light representing goals I would want to achieve in the future and the fish meaning the obstacles I would need to overcome that have not surfaced yet (are not clear yet).”

-Brynne Silva



“The character in the piece is Power from Chainsaw Man. I saw this picture on Pinterest and thought it could work really well with this one scene where Power jumps off a building into a fight.”

-Stephanie Feng

Short Story Contest Honorees

WINNER:
“Footprints” by
Raye Langdon



“This piece is about a woman who woke up in the snow while on a trip. While wandering around looking for help, she comes across someone laying in the snow. When she tries to help the person, she realizes that there’s something a little too familiar about them.”

-Raye Langdon (they/them)

Enola sat up groggily. When she opened her eyes, pure white assaulted her vision, which definitely didn’t help with how dazed she was and how fuzzy her head felt. After sitting still for a few moments, she seemed to regain a sense of where she was, or—more accurately—what she was sitting in.

“Snow.” She said aloud as she picked some of it up and let it sit in the palm of her gloved hand. Glancing around, she didn’t see any other people or structures; probably because of the snowstorm that was happening obscuring her vision. It was miraculous how Enola didn’t feel cold as she sat in the middle of a snowstorm as bad as this—it seems like the clothes and gear she bought were good purchases after all! She hugged herself—and in turn, her large puffy brown jacket—tightly.

Ah right, she’s sitting in the middle of a snowstorm. The smart thing to do in that case would be to get out of it, wouldn’t it? Beating herself up mentally for only a moment, she managed to stand on shaky legs, starting her trek to... somewhere.

How long had she been walking for? She had no grasp on the time; though from how light it still seemed to be despite the onslaught of snow from above, she could only assume it was still daytime. Where even was she, anyway? There didn’t seem to be any civilization nearby; no people, no structures, not even a single landmark of any sort nearby. In fact, she hadn’t even seen a tree or a rock around either, and the snow below her feet didn’t even so much as sink under the weight of each step she took. Her surroundings were the same in every direction, she couldn’t even tell which way was straight or back, left or right.

An uneasy feeling laid heavy on Enola’s chest, but she pushed it down. Though she couldn’t help but wonder how she ended up in this situation; waking up face down in the snow and wandering around a barren winter wasteland. Should she go back to where she had woken up, maybe dug around the snow for any resources she may have dropped? At the moment, she didn’t have so much as a flashlight on her, maybe it would be a good idea to turn around. Considering her luck with the current path she walked, she might have better luck walking in the opposite direction... so she did.

Enola turned around, expecting to see a trail of her footprints behind her, only to be met with

Continued next page

“Footprints” continued

seemingly untouched snow. It made sense though, considering snow was still falling just as heavily as it had been before, her tracks were probably covered up fairly quickly.

With a sigh, she trudged her way back in the direction she came from.

Frustration quickly began to boil inside Enola.

She had been walking for what seemed like hours. How could she have thought she’d find the spot she started at so easily? Any disturbed snow would have been covered up ages ago, at this point she was just walking around aimlessly in a storm, which wasn’t a good idea to be doing, and she knew that! How could she be so stupid?

She cursed at herself under her breath, kicking her feet in frustration with every step. As she swung her leg again, it immediately struck something in the snow, causing her to stagger and nearly fall. Taking a moment to process what had just happened, she immediately dropped to her knees and began uncovering the object from the snow. It didn’t take long before Enola could make out a brown jacket.

“Hey! Are you alright?” She asked desperately, grasping the person and pulling them from the snow with a grunt of effort. They had been face down in the snow—not a good sign—so Enola did her best to flip them onto their back. She pulled the mask she had over her nose down, biting onto the edge of one of her gloves and pulling it off of her hand. Adrenaline seemed to be shielding her hand from the cold, harsh gusts of wind, which she was thankful for. She pressed two fingers to the unconscious person’s neck, feeling around for a pulse—nothing. She tried a few more times, repositioning her fingers and trying different areas of the person’s neck—still nothing.

Enola let her hands fall onto her knees. Her mind was swarming, her breath ragged and heart thrumming as she sat there deep in thought, considering what she could do in a situation like this. Absentmindedly, she examined the person’s appearance, and couldn’t help but notice the blatant similarities between both theirs and Enola’s clothing.

This person had good taste, Enola thought to herself.

Though... the fact this person wore everything she was wearing, from the same brown jacket to the black face mask unsettled her. Out of pure curiosity, she slowly reached a hand over to the person’s face with her non-gloved hand, extending a finger to pull the body’s mask down with hesitation. She let her hand hover over the person’s face for a moment, before hooking her finger into it to take it off.

“A chill swept over her, but it wasn’t from the cold.”

A chill swept over her, but it wasn’t from the cold.

The face of the body perfectly matched Enola’s. It was a spitting image—it was her face, no doubt. Maybe she could have convinced herself this was just a doppelganger with impeccable taste in winter clothing, had it not been for the small lip scar the figure bore identical to her own. She instinctively brought a shaky hand up to her own lip and brushed it gingerly.

Enola leaped up to her feet, staggering as she turned on her heel and ran god knows where. She shouted into the air against the howling winds, for somebody, anybody, to come save her. She wanted out of wherever she was, she wanted to erase the image of the person she’d uncovered from her memory, she wanted to go home.

Enola kept shouting, kept walking, kept searching, until the winds had drowned out her cries.

One bark, two barks, then another.

“You found something girl?” Jack rushed to the large dog’s side as she came to a halt beside a mound in the snow. Breathing heavily, he lowered himself onto his knees to inspect it. With the help of his companion’s excellent digging skills, they managed to uncover what had been buried by the storm that had raged for nearly a full week.

Jack’s heart sunk at their find.

It was a girl—fairly young—wearing a thick brown jacket and black pants. Her hair was disheveled, and her face was a mix of bright red and purple, her lips an obvious blue. Jack guessed the girl may have been dead since the start of the storm—by freezing, perhaps? It seemed like a logical conclusion, given the state of her body and the recently departed storm.

“Poor girl,” He murmured, a frown settling on his wrinkled face, “I’d feel bad just leaving her here, what should we do?”

His dog barked, bringing her nose down to the snow to point at the fresh footprints and pawprints they had left on their walk here. Jack hummed to himself in thought, nodding as he stood.

“I suppose you’re right. We can give her a proper burial near the cabin with the others,” He patted the dog on the head, turning back to the deceased girl and reaching down to lift her up, “help me out, won’t you?”

The two began their trek back to their cabin silently. Jack couldn’t help but wonder if there were any others who had fallen victim to the storm buried somewhere in the vastly open fields of snow; his heart twisted at the idea that there may be. Jack sighed, that was a problem for after they properly buried the unfortunate girl in their makeshift graveyard. He hoped silently that the girl’s spirit—wherever it may be—wasn’t opposed to being buried in more snow; it’s not like either of them had a choice anyway.

Runner-up:
“Unknown” by
Dianne Jin



“A little piece I have written in the past. I wrote it for a reason, yet perhaps you can tell me the reason?”
-Dianne Jim

There were no hints. Just sudden realization and understanding.

The rice heats the other food in her mouth, contrasting the temperatures. It lingers, but she can’t taste anything. A rush of adrenaline tries to aid her, stuffing it down to her stomach, but the loud flaps of slippers approach closer. She swallows the food in her mouth. It’s too late.

She watches and waits. The woman enters the kitchen, gets herself a serving of rice, and seats herself to her left. For a while, chopsticks are in motion alongside the mechanical movement of jaws opening and closing.

“Don’t leave so soon. Stay seated.”

She sits back down. “Yes?”

“Do the dishes tonight.”

“... I have homework I need to finish.”

“Your sister washed yesterday.”

“And my brother can’t do it today?”

“He can’t do it.”

“Can Dad do it?”

“You can ask, but he’s busy. He probably wouldn’t do well either.”

“Can you do it?”

“I just got home. It’s your responsibility to do some chores.”

“I have homework. I’m busy.”

“I don’t think so.”

“Ha..!”

“What.”

“Exactly. What. What am I? A robot?”

“What?”

“Am I a robot? Am I supposed to follow everything you say?

Am I supposed to have feelings?” She stares at the woman’s confused face and continues. “Maybe I am a defective robot that wasn’t supposed to have feelings. Is that why you’re gone all the time? Going to a secret lab and recording data that no one would imagine is weird if a woman in a mail carrier outfit would have the information?”

She stares closer at the pale face. She understands everything. She laughs.

The universe loves to watch the show called Earth.



An interview with sophomore, Qaisarah Kamal Fariz, publicist of the CVHS fashion club.

Where do you get your fashion inspiration from?

“I get inspo from a variety of people that pop up on my Pinterest and TikTok feed, but I especially love Kate Brock and Enya Umanzor’s style!”

When and how did you get into fashion?

“I got into fashion in 2020, a few months after quarantine hit and I was stuck at home scrolling through Pinterest a lot. I feel like there was a big wave of fashion in 2020 that caused a lot of people to start paying attention to fashion as well. This new wave was a lot easier for me to follow as a hijabi, since baggy clothes were more popularized, and these new trends also introduced me to thrifting which was much more affordable. These two factors were the main reasons why I fell in love with fashion and why I continue to have a passion for it today.”

How would you characterize your style?

“To be honest I literally dress like an old man but I love it! When I go out I see elderly people who are twinning with

me and I think old people clothes are so cute.”

What is your favorite piece of fashion? What about your favorite piece in your own closet?

“I love sweaters, especially vintage grandpa ones. My favorite piece [in my own closet] is probably my platform Docs (Doctor Martens). I’ve had them for almost a year now and although they’re not the most comfortable shoes, they look so good and I find myself reaching for them a lot more than my other shoes. Docs are timeless and go with every outfit!”

What trends and styles have you been liking recently?

“I think ribbons are really cute, you can incorporate them into your outfit in a lot of different ways and I think they really add something to your outfit. I also have been liking the editorial style and colorful eye makeup.”

What trends have you not liked or don’t see yourself wearing?

“I don’t think I see myself wearing flats or heels with a slit in it that separates your toes. I’ve been seeing them a lot on Pinterest, but I think only

certain really cool people can pull them off.”

Where do you source most of your clothes from?

“For the past couple years, I have thrifted all of my clothes with the exception of some basics and shoes. I think once you start thrifting, you never go back to shopping at regular stores.”

Lastly, do you have any style tips?

“My biggest tip that I stand by is to never follow trends that you can’t thrift. If you can’t find it secondhand, it’s probably because it’s a new, very specific design that you can only find at one brand. I’ve seen a handful of trends like this in the past, such as the pegasus baby tee from Realisation Par or the Omighty tank top. Because these brands are extremely expensive, these trends are mostly only followed by fashion influencers who make money from posting fit pics. And since this is their job, you won’t see them repeat an outfit, which results in a shorter time span of the trend being displayed online. People who bought a trendy \$65 baby tee will realize the trend is no longer cool after a mere six weeks. In contrast, if the trend is thriftable, it is an already existing design that can be found from a variety of different brands, making it more accessible and widespread. An example of this is argyle print, which has been considered trendy for years. Plus, even if you get sick of the trend, it would’ve only cost you a few dollars anyways.”

wealthy individuals becoming hopeless lunatics, begging to leave? Truly, this film serves to shock.

A clever take on fine dining, “The Menu” critiques the food culture that has permeated our society, which values extravagant presentation and technique over taste and simplicity. Food has turned into an exciting, lavish experience rather than what it’s supposed to be at its core: energy to fill you up and fuel your day. Restaurant goers visit high-end restaurants to examine the food, tasting every hint and noting each ingredient. Instead of simply enjoying what they’re eating, they’ve turned their dishes into specimens to dissect.

At Hawthorn, the guests are all either affluent individuals who visit to display their wealth or foodies who want to flaunt

Del Toro untangles Pinocchio’s story

By Ethan Dinh

Guillermo del Toro’s “Pinocchio” is a work of art. Of the three “Pinocchio” movies to come out in 2022, Guillermo del Toro’s version undoubtedly trumps both other films with a moderate 79 percent positive review from Metacritic with an incredible 97 percent on Rotten Tomatoes which is a testament to del Toro’s masterpiece. So why was the movie so widely acclaimed?

Del Toro’s work took nearly two and a half years to film. To put that into perspective, a long filming schedule is around 94 days for a big movie. Nearly 900 more days were needed to film “Pinocchio,” ten times the amount of time for movies that are considered large already. As so much time was taken, the news that del Toro’s “Pinocchio” created attention for his work that by the time the movie was released, there was already a crowd of fans ready to drive the movie into Netflix’s number one spot.

The true magic of del Toro’s “Pinocchio” is that, unlike the Disney live-action version, it is not only an adult movie, it is a movie that doesn’t copy the script of its predecessor. Instead, del Toro’s Pinocchio has a completely different story that uses aspects of its predecessor, sticking to the idea of the wooden boy but teaching a different and more complex lesson about life and death.

The best way to see its brilliance is to compare del Toro’s version to the Disney live-action remake which, compared to del Toro’s, is immature, lifeless, and forgettable. Disney chose to stick with the script of the 1940 original Pinocchio which did not exactly translate well to the silver screen due to bad CGI with a Geppetto who didn’t care about the work as his ‘accent’ fades in and out. The worst part was the nearly

30-second clip of Pinocchio staring at a pile of feces in the middle of the road, getting far too close and smelling these feces at a close distance which was unfunny and more disgusting than anything. At the same time, it also ruins the original message of ‘children should go to school’ by having Pinocchio go to school and get bullied, compared to the original scene of Pinocchio being swindled by the talking fox that is also in the live-action.

Del Toro’s “Pinocchio” changes the message, using stop-motion animation to address an audience of both children and grown-ups and give them the delightful dilemma of having an existential crisis on the topic of life and death. To make things clear, this is not a movie made just for children but also catered to adults to have everyone enjoy the movie and ask themselves questions about their own life when the movie is over.

The story also emphasizes the idea that war is a horrible tragedy for children, and that the other side has people similar to us. Del Toro’s version takes place during the events of World War II in Italy, where we watch the lives of not only Pinocchio but also the people and military that were in charge at the time.

This story is majorly different from other versions where we start with Geppetto’s life, rather than Pinocchio’s where we see his son die by being crushed by the ceiling of a church after bombs fall on their village. Geppetto mourns for decades after his death, one day choosing to drunkenly chop down a tree and recreate his son. Yet Geppetto’s plight is seen by the blue fairy, which unlike many representations of a woman is instead a strange almost angel-like being with eyes covering her wings, who blesses Pinocchio with life. Throughout the movie, Pinocchio struggles to be the son Geppetto wishes he had back and learns important life lessons of war, school, and living your life for yourself. I won’t spoil the movie, but I highly recommend it, with my rating being a must watch.

“The Menu” ate.

By Maya Wong

A luxurious boat. A scallop served with foam on a seashell. A private island housing only a Michelin-star restaurant. A once-in-a-lifetime fine dining experience.

Sounds like the meal of one’s dreams, doesn’t it? Yet, the longer one stays, the more it becomes a nightmare.

In director Mark Mylod’s satirical dark comedy “The Menu,” Margot (Anya Taylor-Joy) and her food-fanatic partner, Tyler (Nicholas Hoult), board a yacht with other members of high society to share a 10-course meal on a private island at renowned Chef Slowik’s (Ralph Fiennes)

magnificent restaurant, Hawthorn.

Have you ever eaten sea plants served upon ocean rock? A bread plate without bread? Tortillas with your sins printed on them? Well, Hawthorn has it all.

Something about this dinner isn’t quite right. As the night progresses and the guests attempt to enjoy their meal, Chef Slowik’s cult of cooks and carefully curated menu create an ominous feeling on the island, off-putting to those dining. Soon, everyone comes to understand that this, in fact, may be their last meal. Ever.

How could such an extravagant outing turn into such a chaotic disaster, with



their culinary knowledge. They eat Chef Slowik’s food for show. This is why Chef Slowik has lost his love of cooking: his guests don’t truly enjoy his craft for what it is. When Margot requests that he make a hearty cheeseburger instead of an ornate tasting, for one moment, Chef rekindles this love—he’s finally making something to satisfy another’s cravings. The simple cheeseburger stands for the opposite of the restaurant

he’s built: it’s filling, easy to make, and is often poor man’s food. Yet somehow, the greasy dish is all he really needs to feel content again. Food does not need to be fancy to be delicious. Sometimes, fast food trumps the most expensive meal.

“The Menu’s” refreshing take on fine dining offers food for thought. The next time you eat a fancy meal: will you indulge yourself, critique the food, or be utterly disturbed?



Dorado promotes safe sex



By Rebecca Ireland

Safe sex kits are rolling out in the Wellness Center, thanks wholly to CVHS senior Zoe Dorado.

Since September, Dorado has been collaborating with the CVHS Wellness Center to make sure that the school acknowledges and cares about students' sexual health. She has been working every Thursday to pack brown paper bags with two condoms, a packet of lube, a condom information sheet, and a "Don't Panic" guide curated by Dorado. The condom packets, lube, and info sheets were donated by the Alameda County Department of Public Health HIV STI Unit. In December, Dorado got CVHS club She's the First involved, and in one day they made about 100 packs.

"CVHS is one of only four out of 31 Alameda County high schools which doesn't provide reproductive health services at its health center, according to the California School Based Health Alliance," Dorado wrote. She began combating the issue back in May through two articles for The Olympian, "Trojans in search of condoms" and the follow-up, "CVHS discusses its culture around sex: 'A conversation for everybody.'"

Following her groundbreaking articles, Dorado reached out to Dot Theodore, then school board president, who referred her to the Director of Student Services and Title IX Coordinator, Nicholas McMaster, to request the change. On June 22, board policy 5141.25: Availability of Condoms was approved in CVUSD, and Dorado began contacting local pharmacies for information regarding if and where they had emergency contraceptives for her "Don't Panic" guide.

According to the Wellness Center Behavioral Health Services Coordinator, Marian Meadows, "it was important to know that student health and wellness was a priority of the district and that we had the

backing of the board."

This is in great contrast to what Rachel Maddow proclaimed in her valedictorian speech of 1990: "our parents and leaders cannot even say the word condom in front of one another."

Today "student health and wellness is more easily discussed as a need" and "students also expect more of adults, know more of their rights, and are better advocates," Meadows said.

These kits can be found in the Wellness Center, health office, and Redwood High School. Aside from safe sex kits, Dorado has worked with Meadows to implement a training regarding the social-emotional side of sex—something that is not normally covered in schools—which will be happening soon for Wellness Center staff, so they will be equipped to provide individual sexual health counseling for students. The platform to be utilized will be Sexual Health Education & HIV Prevention Education - Sexual Health Educator (SHE) Training Program.

Meadows also said that Phase Two, after the initial roll-out of safe sex kits, will include dental dams and other types of STI prevention methods, because "also, [we need to] think about queer health, and how to support queer students ... and what their sexual health needs are."

Dorado said she wants to see something similar to Berkeley High's peer-education program implemented here in order to further sex ed and consent education in school with medical career students and "wellness warriors" becoming peer-health educators, not just for freshman, and to initiate collaboration between the Wellness Center, administration, and students—"I want students to build stronger sexual citizenship, empathy, transparency between them and the administration, and ultimately, help create a culture where everyone feels safer, respected, and heard."

Always Yours hopes to always be here

By Samantha Jew

Always Yours Bakery Cafe celebrated its one-year anniversary on Dec. 12, 2022. First opening in late 2021, young female entrepreneur Natalie Wong grew her home business into a fully-fledged bakery of her dreams, with the help of family, friends, and a Kickstarter.

Learning from YouTube, Wong began selling macarons to family and friends at school. Once her business started taking off, she grew her team to include a few employees.

"I've always wanted to open a bakery. Since I was a kid, that's always been my dream," Wong remarked. In mid-2020, with a vision and a thriving home business, she decided it was time to make her childhood dream come true.

Originally from Oakland, Wong chose the Castro Valley Village for the location of her new bakery because she liked the shopping center, and it had a parking lot—



which most places in Oakland lack.

Located close to CVHS, Always Yours offers services such as catering, fundraisers, and events. The bakery is a frequent hosting spot for various K-Pop events, where they collaborate with the fan groups and create limited edition drinks and macarons.

Opening a business during a pandemic is tough, between gathering enough funds and training new employees, as Wong described. On top of that, Wong was constantly worrying about her employees catching COVID, and even had to briefly shut down at the beginning due to a spike in cases. Wong faced many doubts and closed doors, but she never let

it discourage her.

"I felt like people underestimated me. [They'd ask], 'How old are you? Are you old enough to be running a business?' Or like, 'Oh you're a woman you don't know like what you're doing.' I mean, I [didn't] know what [I was] doing, but I did learn," she said.

The bakery has thrived in its first year. As for the future, Wong hopes to open at least five more locations around the Bay Area in the next five to ten years.

"I'm really proud that I made it to one year because I've seen businesses that don't make it to one year... Thanks to everyone for coming by the shop. I hope to see you guys here soon!"

CV Spotlight dazzles

By Maddie Newman

Colorful lights outline a silhouette walking out onto the stage, a crowd roaring with applause. As the audience quiets, the individual on stage gulps, hoping to remember the words. Looking out into a sea of darkened faces and a blinding spotlight, they begin to sing, their voices resonating throughout the theater. This is the experience of a performer at CV Spotlight!

CV Spotlight, a student-run talent show, is a combination of the efforts of clubs Tri-M, DECA, Music Production, and Music Transcends. On Friday, Jan. 20, over 50 student performers wowed the crowd, spanning 16 unique acts showcasing students' unique talents and interests.

Cynthia Pan, part of DECA, was one of two MCs this year. Along with her co-host Annie Moore, she introduced the acts and provided banter during stage transitions. She recalled how CV Spotlight originated last year.

"Last year, between all of the clubs, we were talking about doing a talent show. DECA originally did



a talent show every year before the pandemic. So, second semester, we were thinking of a way to bring it back. DECA and the Tri-M Music Coalition got together and we started planning CV Spotlight. The first one was last year, and we're trying to make it an annual event," Pan remarked.

Ailin Chen, vice president of both DECA and Music Production Club, worked as a primary event coordinator. Along with planners such as Jesse Wu and Austin Chan, a lot of effort was put into organizing the show.

"I'm proud of both the performers and my fellow event coordinators for the time and dedication we've put in. Jesse and I would stay on call for hours until 2 a.m. planning this, so at the very least I think we should be proud of that. Austin was also a huge help. He was always ready to sub whenever someone

was out, or help me as a runner," Chen recalled.

"It was my first time running an event on such a massive level, and it was only the second CV Spotlight. I'm grateful our performers were cooperative and for how the clubs came together, in the end, to pull off the show," she reflected.

Chen gave thanks to Hope Leung, the ASL interpreter. She also acknowledged how thankful she was for Mr. Hasegawa, Music Director; "He always made sure we stayed on schedule and were doing what we needed to."

After its second successful iteration, CV Spotlight has proved to be an excellent opportunity to showcase the student talent at CVHS!

This is a shortened version of the article. You can access the full version on our website.



Girls soccer team narrowly flies past Jets

By Kaitlyn Tchang

The Trojan varsity girls soccer team claimed a close 3-2 win over Encinal High School in their first home league game of the season on Thursday, Dec. 22.

It was a chilly evening on the last day of finals as the Trojans quickly took the lead with a goal 10 minutes into the game. With the loud support of the boys varsity soccer team in the stands, Castro Valley was up 3-0 by halftime.

"I thought our first half was awesome, we were moving the ball, we were connecting, there was lots of communication going on," said coach Vanessa Amaral.

"The first half. . . was really fun to play because we were connecting and creating

opportunities to score," agreed junior Allison Mitchell, who scored the Trojans' first goal of the night. "I think it was really cool to see how we played through and made it work."

Unfortunately, the Trojans' solid lead began to unravel in the second half.

"I think we got a little disorganized," said junior Lauren Mac.

The Encinal Jets scored their first goal 18 minutes into the second half, followed by another goal nine minutes later to bring the score to 3-2. From there, it was a hard-fought battle down to the last second for the Trojans to maintain their lead.

"We made it really, really tight at the end," reflected Amaral. "We made it a lot harder on ourselves than we needed to."

Despite this, Amaral sees the game as a chance for the



KAITLYN TCHANG

Trojans to grow as they continue competing.

"Every game's a learning opportunity. It's just, how do we take learning lessons from this second half and look to continue moving forward into the next game."

Additionally, there were still excellent moments from this game and stand-out players to remember. For instance, the team's center forward, senior Marin Michelle, scored the

Trojans' second goal—followed by a celebratory backflip—and earned an assist just minutes later.

"Marin had a really good game," commented Amaral. "She was able to hold up the ball for us, she just had really good vision in this game, so huge shoutout to Marin."

All in all, both coaches and players are eager to see the team grow and improve throughout the remainder of this season.

"I'm looking forward to growing and connecting with my team, and becoming a better player overall," said Mac.

"As we continue to get games in, the team is starting to understand each other. . . so I'm super excited to see how this season takes us," said Amaral. "As long as they stay consistent [and] focused I think they can do a lot of great things this season."

Brittney Griner comes home

By Renata Gutierrez

After nearly ten months in Russia, Brittney Griner was brought home through a prisoner exchange. In exchange for Griner, Russia wanted Victor Bout, better known as The Merchant of death: one of the world's most infamous arms

“Griner had finally come home”

RENATA GUTIERREZ
Staff Writer

dealers.

Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was detained in Russia on Feb. 17, 2022. Griner was trying to reunite with her professional team, UMMC Ekaterinburg, which she played for during the off-season in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). As her

bag passed through security, a sniffer dog alerted the authorities. As authorities searched her bag, they found a marijuana vape cartridge—which is illegal in Russia. Griner was detained amid the war in Ukraine. She was found guilty and sentenced to nine years of prison in early November.

As Griner was incarcerated in Russia, the U.S. got to

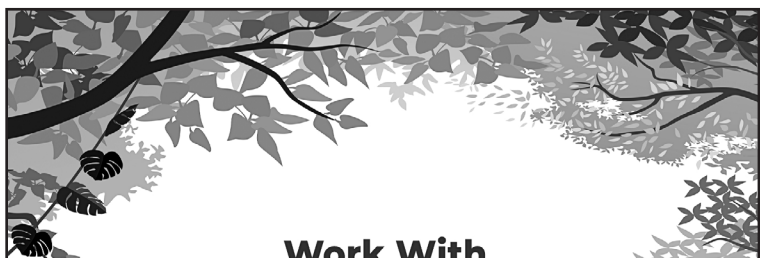
work on a plan, brainstorming and reaching out to Russian authorities to ask what it would take to bring Griner home. While it is unclear why Russia wanted Bout, they requested a prisoner exchange, the only way to get Griner home. Although the U.S. tried to negotiate with Russia in hopes of bringing Paul Whelan—a former U.S. marine, convicted as an American spy in

Russia—back, Russia shut down this request.

Bout was imprisoned in the U.S. for 25 years after being found guilty of conspiracy to kill Americans and U.S. officials, delivering anti-aircraft missiles, and aiding a terrorist organization. Bout claims he was an entrepreneur with a legitimate international transport business, wrongly

accused of trying to arm South American rebels.

On Dec. 8, 2022, a high-profile prisoner exchange took place. Griner had finally come home after nearly ten months since she was first detained in Moscow. In an interview with BBC news, Griner states that this was all just an “honest mistake.”



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Respect for Marriage Act: What does it mean?

By Rebecca Ireland

The Respect for Marriage Act (RMA) was signed into law by President Joe Biden on Dec. 13, after passing both houses of Congress by significant margins. There was also a celebratory event on the White House lawn hosting many celebrities and advocates of the LGBTQ+ community.

This bipartisan law repeals the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), to ensure that all marriages are federally respected. It does not, however, codify gay marriage—which would be where Congress or the state legislature make the Supreme Court decision, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, into law so no individual state could inhibit the right to marriage.

If and, likely, when *Obergefell v. Hodges* and *Loving v. Virginia* become overturned by the Supreme Court, RMA does not maintain that gay or interracial marriages must be issued in each state, but it will maintain the requirement that each state must recognize and respect all marriages that occur in other states, even if they themselves ban it within their state.



The result will be similar to how abortion is currently handled; states will ban it, and then people will have to travel to other states to get it. Heterosexual and intraracial couples are not subject to the same restrictions.

“It is a stop-gap measure,” said social studies teacher Paolo Espiritu; “it is the best

we can do for the moment; Republicans agreed to support [it] because they are losing the social battle. I am happy that people’s marriages can be recognized through the 50 states, but I’m sad that we are not taking the full step and making sure people can get married in all states; [this will also create] financial strain

because there are so many more barriers.”

Espiritu named it a “bill of privilege.”

Another amendment of this law is one encouraged by the Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) to affirm their beliefs about marriage: “The doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints related to

marriage between a man and a woman is well known and will remain unchanged.” There is a segment in the law stating that, “Congress affirms that such people and their diverse beliefs [regarding marriage] are due proper respect” and that “any refusal under this subsection to provide such services, accommodations, advantages, facilities, goods, or privileges shall not create any civil claim or cause of action.” This amendment ensures that religious institutions are not required to perform gay, interracial, or other marriages.

Many believe this is the act that will protect all LGBTQ+ people when, in reality, it is not protecting transgender people, LGBTQ+ youth, and doesn’t guarantee *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

“Today was an excellent step towards progress. At the same time, my LGBTQIA+ community is still very much under attack both abroad and at home. I look forward to the next steps we will take together to ensure continued justice for the entire queer community,” expressed lesbian icon Hayley Kiyoko after the signing event.

Genocide, famine, and war in Ethiopia

By Evan Griffith

Professor Jan Nyssen and a team of researchers at Ghent University estimated “383,000 to 600,000 civilians died in

Tigray between November 2020 and August 2022.” Ethiopia has been fighting a brutal civil war since Nov. 3, 2020 that ended less than three months ago.

Although this issue may seem far away, the consequences hit home for the 20,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians living in the Bay Area. Hundreds of Bay Area ethiopians, eritreans and supporters came to downtown San Francisco to protest the conflict in 2021, about a year into the war. Real people near you are dedicated towards this cause. Such as the Tigray Community San Jose, a non-profit organization that is “committed to serve, support, and advance the interests of the members of the Tigray Community in San Jose and surroundings.”

The conflict began as a struggle for the position of Prime Minister in Ethiopia. For many years, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) held power in a questionable autocracy despite being an ethnic minority in Ethiopia. In 2018, Abiy Ahmed Ali, a non-Tigrayan Ethiopian, became prime minister after being endorsed by international powers as well as many Ethiopians. Many Ethiopians thought he represented a chance for peace, and in 2019 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for ending violence at the Ethiopian-Eritrean border. Abiy promised open elections for Prime Minister of Ethiopia in 2020, but when the time came for those elections he instead extended his term. The Tigrayan people were outraged, wanting a new election so that they could try to elect their own candidate. They began to hold local elections against the federal law and stated that if the government intervened it would be considered a declaration of

war.

Abiy Ahmed Ali, the Nobel Peace Prize Winner, launched an offensive in Tigray with the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) at his service. The Tigray Defense Force (TDF) retaliated and vice-versa and it escalated into a full-out war.

Eritrea, the former enemy of Ethiopia, allied with them, and Tigray became surrounded on all parts of their border by enemies. A resource blockade was set up around Tigray, stopping food, water, and medical supplies from coming in. An astounding number of Tigrayan civilians fell victim to food insecurity, “The United Nations Acting Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia warned that the de facto humanitarian aid blockade of Tigray potentially put an estimated 5.2 million people, or 90 percent of the population across the Tigray region at risk.”

Food insecurity is not the only risk involved in this conflict. Ethiopia had the most ever internally displaced people in 12 months in one country with a devastating 5.1 million refugees.

The United States government has characterized this conflict as an ethnic cleansing against Tigrayans since 2021. Citing the war crimes of violence against children, ethnically targeted killings, and rape as a weapon of war. Because of this, America sanctioned Eritrea, as well as Ethiopia. These sanctions were not devastating to Ethiopia because they were imposed mainly on individuals dedicated to the war effort. The sanctions on Eritrea were more prominent as the US sanctioned the Eritrean

Defense Force as well as Red Sea Trading Corporation, the largest importer in the country.

Nonetheless, Abiy ultimately won the war on Nov. 2, 2022 as the ENDF made rapid advancements on Tigrayan land. Peace talks were held and Tigray was forced to make major concessions, one of which being their disarmament in one month’s time. Although agreed long ago this disarmament is still being carried out very recently. “Armored tanks, rockets and mortars were among the weapons transferred to the federal army on Tuesday, Jan. 3).”

The devastating food blockade was lifted some time after peace talks were held but hunger and malnutrition is still a major problem. Humanitarian aid is now being distributed by countries including the US, but it will take time to reverse the impact of two years of starvation and war endured without medical supplies.

A return to normalcy is almost impossible for Tigrayans. The Ethiopian army is still present in many parts of Tigray. Unjust arrests, drone strikes, and ethnically targeted massacres persist for Tigrayan civilians.

We as Americans need to look outside the limiting scope of mainstream news services, which are incredibly western centric, and stay educated about the world as a whole. No innocent life is more important than another.

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