



Page 2:
Staff
advocates for
trans athletes



Page 6:
Trojans
Team with
Warriors



Page 11:
“Trouble! At
the Talent
Show!”

THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL Olympian

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Trojans get a “Close Up” of D.C.

By: Hailey Young

From Jan. 15-22, 32 CVHS students traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in the Close Up Presidential Inauguration Program, aimed at immersing youth in our nation’s capital through seminars, exploration, and participation in pre and post inaugural events.

Independent exploration with CVHS chaperones, teachers Carmelina Frasca, Yvonne Garcia, and Bradley Schoenberger, kicked off the week, allowing Trojans increased access to Washington’s iconic landmarks.

“I really loved the memorials,” said senior Alondra Acevedo. “I feel like it was a place that made me feel a lot of respect and appreciation for what others have done.”

Favorite sights also included a night tour of the Capitol, visiting the National Archives, and walking through Smithsonian museums along the National Mall.

“I loved being able to explore the museums on our own and hanging out with friends as we got to learn about the history of America,” added senior Gavin Peters.

Perhaps most memorable was a tour and Q&A meeting with East Bay Congressman Eric Swalwell, where students discussed the legislative process and new projects coming to the new 119th Congress.

Beginning the Close Up program, students were sorted into workshops, participating



Carmelina Frasca, Bradley Schoenberger, and Yvonne Garcia explore with students. GAVIN PETERS

in lectures and tours centered around values of liberty, justice, and equality to guide their critical thinking.

However, while the trip had opportunities for valuable experiences, many hoped to get more out of their promised once-in-a-lifetime experience.

“It was fun mostly but also very tiring and cold. We didn’t get to see the inauguration, which was a big aspect,” said junior Shawyon

Sharifi.

With everyone left unable to attend President Trump’s inauguration due to a sudden onset of frigid temperatures, students instead saw live, televised coverage. As Trump boldly declared his second term as a “Golden Age” for America, most Trojans decided to focus on the experience of viewing the ceremony remotely.

“I personally disagree with many of his policies, but the inauguration

itself was cool to watch,” shared sophomore Lawson Ren.

To counter the unexpected changes, many looked to the packed schedule, lasting from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. each day, to keep busy.

“I thought we’d have more time exploring and learning instead of being stuck in a guide book,” explained Peters.

In addition, students describe feeling rushed throughout the day by program leaders, dehydrated,

and frustrated as buses constantly broke down midday. These challenges took a toll, with three Trojans rushed to the emergency room by the end of the program, and sicknesses breaking out among 180+ participants and staff.

“While there were a lot of good experiences, it still required a lot of physical and mental effort,” said junior Connor Templeton.

Overall, despite the hurdles, Trojans held onto moments of connection they forged throughout the trip. With most newfound peers hailing from Republican-leaning states, CVHS students were exposed to multiple diverse viewpoints outside of the Bay Area’s left-leaning political bubble.

“I got to see many new perspectives, especially ones I didn’t agree with,” shared Sharifi.

Through activities such as debates on current, nationwide issues, students shared how their personal experiences shaped their beliefs. Looking beyond surface-level political divides, many were able to find common ground, something often overlooked in the current polarized political climate.

“While a lot of my personal political opinions about major subjects have not changed, I do feel like I’m able to communicate and empathize more with people who disagree,” added Templeton.

Despite many hurdles, the Close Up program offered Trojans fresh perspectives and a renewed commitment to fostering respectful, engaging conversations in our divided nation.

Biden’s controversial legacy as he leaves office

By Rachel Zhen

President Joe Biden’s time as president has been marked by many important decisions and events that have shaped the country. From legislative actions to global challenges, his legacy left a lasting impression on both the United States and the world. Leaving office at 82, he claims the title of the oldest president in United States history.

One of Biden’s key achievements as president was ending President Donald Trump’s travel ban on Muslim countries, in which

Trump implemented in early 2017. Additionally, Biden has made significant efforts to support the LGBTQ+ community, allowing trans troops to join the military and signing a same-sex marriage law.

During his presidency, Biden was faced with critical decisions regarding the involvement of the U.S. in foreign wars, including supporting Ukraine against Russia and supporting Israel against Hamas.

By all means, not all of Biden’s decisions have been widely accepted, with some sparking significant debate, such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan,

allowing a Taliban takeover along with his decision to halt the Keystone oil pipeline, which critics claim cost jobs.

“He should’ve called for a ceasefire when this entire genocide started, and he should have actually kept his word and stopped all ‘aid’ to Israel when they invaded Rafah, which he said he would do but instead decided to give Israel more money,” said senior Armann Shezad.

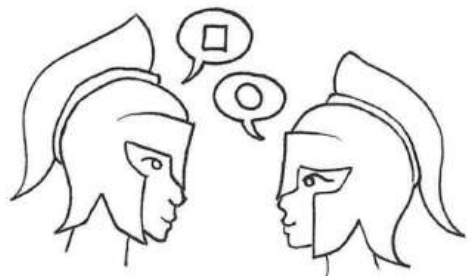
During his last days in office, Biden granted clemency to 4,000 individuals as well as pardoning 39 others convicted of non-violent crimes, allowing 37 prisoners to have their death

sentence commuted to life in prison without parole. Just three convicted mass murderers face the federal death penalty.

On a more domestic note, Biden passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The bill was an investment to modernize U.S. infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and rails, expand access to clean drinking water, and ensure every American had access to high-speed internet. It also aims to create jobs, improve sustainability, and address critical needs like lead pipe replacement, EV infrastructure, and climate.

“I think that was probably one of the most successful parts of his presidency was getting that bill into Congress and providing money to communities from there,” said Social Studies teacher Kathleen Cassidy.

One of Biden’s most personal and controversial decisions was pardoning his son, Hunter Biden, who had been convicted of illegal gun possession and tax crimes although Biden pledged that he would not do so along with pardoning five members of his family not so because they did anything wrong but because he feared the incoming political attacks from Trump.



Olympian staff advocates for trans athletes

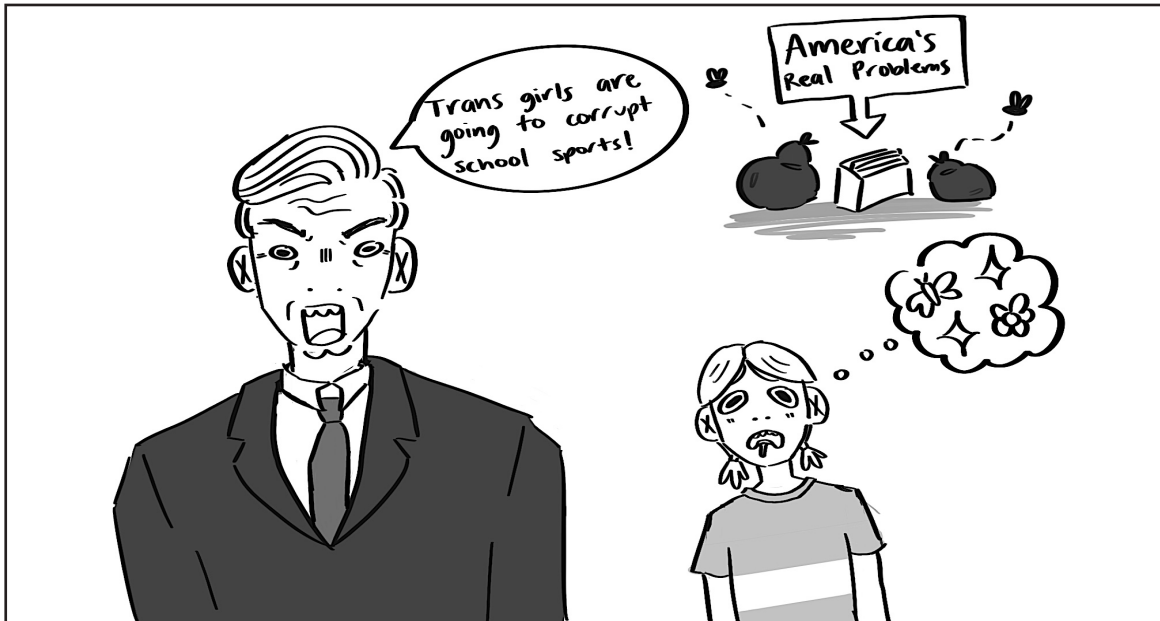
Editorial:

A new California proposal and a federal bill could potentially bar transgender athletes from participating in school sports. If the federal bill passes, any school that allows transgender athletes to compete in collegiate sports risks losing federal funding.

The *Olympian* staff opposes both bills and have come to the consensus that while we are supportive of transgender athletes, there are far more pressing issues to be addressed.

Banning transgender individuals from sports could have devastating results, especially for navigating youth who don't yet understand what the world will throw at them in their attempt to live authentically. The unfortunate truth persists that many trans people are aware of the reality—threats, violence, objectification—they live in just because of their identity. Despite this fact, a majority of people in America refuse to even care or acknowledge their struggle, essentially turning a blind eye.

We discussed the controversy surrounding testosterone/estrogen use and Hormone Replacement Therapy in sports,



ELLIOT LUCAS

and noticed a juxtaposition in the lack of concern towards trans men and a distinct hyperfixation on trans women. We at The *Olympian* believe that there is a bias in these policies, which target trans women, having a lot to do with society's stark contrast in views on trans men and women.

Additionally, the fight for trans rights regarding equal bathroom policies, marriage legalities, and

individual discretion of gender identity still burns strong. It brings up certain questions about how people in 2025 view gender, whether it be through the lens of transgender identity.

Many are misinformed, uneducated, and biased towards trans people. This reflects on larger issues that can come up in varying discussions such as ones like this. Some people still have implicit biases towards

transgender people.

An alarming number of people form opinions before thoroughly researching the facts. In actuality, it has yet to be proven that trans athletes have a competitive advantage over others. This highlights the difficult reality that even with scientific evidence in favor of trans rights, many refuse to see it and cling to their biases.

The issues that trans people face

are high in number, and sports should not be the primary thing that the government chooses to tackle. Transgender people face threats to their safety and lives daily, and their identities are stripped from them. Meanwhile, hate crimes are normalized. Yet, it appears that the government seems to care much more about an issue that affects a small portion of the trans community, and take much less priority to a right to identity and physical safety. There are so many trans issues that deserve to be talked about in length and given the opportunity to be resolved, but for the foreseeable future, these divisive issues will take precedence so that people don't have to acknowledge more pressing ones. Sports policies shouldn't be taking priority over people's lives, rights, and safety.

Trans people are understandably scared, and can you blame them? We simply ask that you look at the bigger picture and decide what matters most in ensuring that human beings have every civil and human right they deserve, no matter what their gender identity is.

Winning is truly the devil in disguise



By Aleksandra Hurka

I hate Winning. She's the toxic relationship that lives in my head, making me feel like I'm superior to everything else in the best moments and inferior in the worst.

It's her watchful eyes that taunt me on the court now, daring me to hit the tennis ball in that corner where I know my

opponent won't get it. I hate Winning, but I used to be in love with her.

Nine years ago, my shots were effortless and effective. That's when Winning came into my life as the more I played, the more often she appeared.

"Left...crosscourt...winner!" She would whisper in my ear and I swear I could feel her breath on my neck.

Just like that, we were the dream team: she fueled the fire in me that gave me the confidence I needed to beat my opponents and all I wanted to do was make her proud.

I was so close. I had coaches lined up from Europe eager to mold me into a tennis phenomenon. They saw I had

potential but I argued it was because Winning was my best friend.

But I failed to make her proud. She started threatening me when I rejected those coaches' offers, when over time I stopped picking up my racket, so much so that nine years later, on my tennis team, her whispers started disappearing.

I remember the day they did. Out in the sweltering heat, I lunged for the ball, barely making it over the net, winning the match point.

"You did it!" exclaimed Winning. I wanted to embrace that high of victory but my heart only felt empty looking at my opponent slamming her racket to the ground, in defeat.

That's when I realized, what

was the point of Winning? She made some people feel good but destroyed others.

Here's the trouble with Winning: once you start hating her, you end up only wanting her back. So I spent three tennis seasons grasping for her again, only to see her on the opposite side of the court, with my opponent.

Once she slipped from my hands, she left me covered in envy that clouded my purpose on my team. I was at the top of the ladder, yet I had accomplished nothing and Winning knew that.

However, there came a point where the more I forgot what Winning looked like, the more at ease I felt with losing.

I realized there was a

purpose for me playing the game: it wasn't about Winning, it was about the experience of playing the game.

There was power to losing. Without the watchful eyes of Winning judging my every move, I did not give her the chance to fuel my ego, instead, I embraced the freedom of playing without her constant whisper in my ear.

Winning is perhaps the biggest devil in disguise. Everyone always wants her but nobody wants the consequences she brings.

Now if Winning is the devil, then I must be her arch nemesis because after nine years of playing this cruel game of tennis, I can confidently say I beat Winning.

Are frequent breaks helpful for students?



By Victor Bahng

Summer break has been shrinking over the past few years in our district, compensated by additional three-day weekends and an entire week off in February.

I assume the district made these changes thinking

that several more off-days throughout the school year are more helpful than a few lengthy breaks, but are they?

As breaks happen more frequently, the school year has become more tolerable, with more opportunities to pause from school and relax. Alternatively, it can be said that we need to rebound into a learning mindset more often as part of a repetitive cycle.

I've personally found it taxing to bounce back after every break; having to get back into the mood to work made me miss the peace I had on off-days so much more.

Coming back from winter

break, I knew that I was completely capable of handling the incoming workload; I've been in my classes for nearly four months after all. It's just that I don't have the same enthusiasm to do my assignments.

After lockdown, districts nationwide gradually began implementing numerous measures in response to the slump in work ethic. Through more off-days, simpler grading scales, forgiving deadlines, and other methods, they provided the necessary means to help students leaving distance learning gradually adjust to the in-person, on-demand commitment.

I think these lenient changes were supportive for me to build an increasing sense of agency, but it was still difficult because lockdown ingrained an apathy towards work. However, I found that with the increased freedom and autonomy, this relaxed approach also helped me figure out what I actually liked to do, and how I would go on pursuing it.

Frequent breaks contributed to a gradual development of a desire to work towards a goal by helping me relax from school and organize myself.

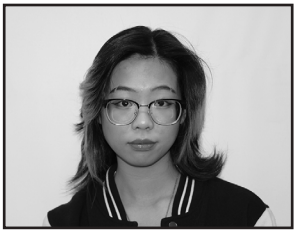
I think I've also grown to depend on off-days, since they've become the makeshift

"check point" I look forward to every week, semester, and holiday season. So they've not only been helpful but almost necessary among these increasingly permanent post-lockdown changes.

Generally, I believe frequent breaks are helpful. As part of the wave of changes we got post-lockdown, they've helped us to slowly grow into school life in person again.

A shorter summer break might also help against completely forgetting what we learned the year before, and off-days sprinkled throughout the year eliminate oppressively long intervals of school.

TikTok ban: invading a different culture



By Angel Ni

If someone entered your house without your permission or asking you about it first, wouldn't you feel annoyed or rather uncomfortable? That sounds a little intrusive doesn't it? This is how most Chinese users on the platform XiaoHongShu feel as millions of Americans switch to this app due to the TikTok ongoing issue of potential ban.

The TikTok ban that was planned to take place on Jan. 19 sparks a controversial debate on Americans' freedom of speech, security, and would impact the future of social media overall.

This ban proposal was created due to rumors of the app stealing data from users, as well as violating the right to free speech guaranteed by the US Constitution.

Overall, the app has 170 million users, but where will they go when the ban comes into effect? Certain people are attempting to use VPN's for different IP addresses.

Surprisingly, the app stopped working for TikTok users on the evening of Jan. 18, but was up and running once again the following morning. However Americans had already downloaded an alternative app named XiaoHongShu, which translates to RedNote in English.

Previously, this app was primarily used by people in China, but now all American TikTok users have fled there, creating a problematic situation. Despite the fact that his app was not directed to American users, it is now currently the most downloaded app on Apple's U.S. app store.

Many Chinese users have expressed their frustration, percieving it as an unwelcome intrusion, as the app has a culturally Chinese atmosphere, and is being changed by American users looking for an alternative to TikTok.

Personally, I dislike this change and I don't think the TikTok ban is necessary. The government should, in my opinion, be concerned about pressing issues that are more important for the nation, such as the ongoing fires in Los Angeles.

Since many content creators rely solely on this app for their job, banning it would have very negative outcomes on their profits and businesses. With partnerships, marketing strategies, and collaborations, the numerous companies that use TikTok for advertising would suffer greatly.

There are many alternatives to different apps that are similar to TikTok, such as Lemon8, which is also owned by ByteDance, but the majority believes no app can truly replace it.

Millions of TikTok users are negatively affected by this and it restricts freedom of speech. I believe that Americans moving to XiaoHongShu is not a smart solution as it changes the platform's unique Chinese culture feed and hurts the original content.

TikTok's return is a step backwards



By Brenda Huynh

TikTok is a highly popular social media app that allows users to publish, watch, and interact with short videos. While its entertainment value is undeniable, the app surrounds itself with major controversies. Recently, a ban that was implemented on Jan. 19 was lifted not even 24 hours after.

Although many users rejoiced at its return, I realized that maybe the ban really was for the better.

Several controversies surround the app such as national security concerns that China could have on Tiktok, its political influence/interference, moderation and trends, exploitation of minors, addictive algorithm, and more.

I find that many of my peers spend hours just mindlessly scrolling through TikTok each day. One friend of mine averaging 14 hours of screen time on TikTok every day. While it can be argued all social media is addictive, TikTok has a much more different approach to its algorithm and how it gets its users hooked to just wasting time, scrolling away blankly at a screen.

A study under Brown University states, "Like other social media platforms, the infinite scroll and variable reward pattern of TikTok likely increase the addictive quality of the app as they may induce a flow-like state for users that is characterized by a high degree of focus and productivity at the task at hand."

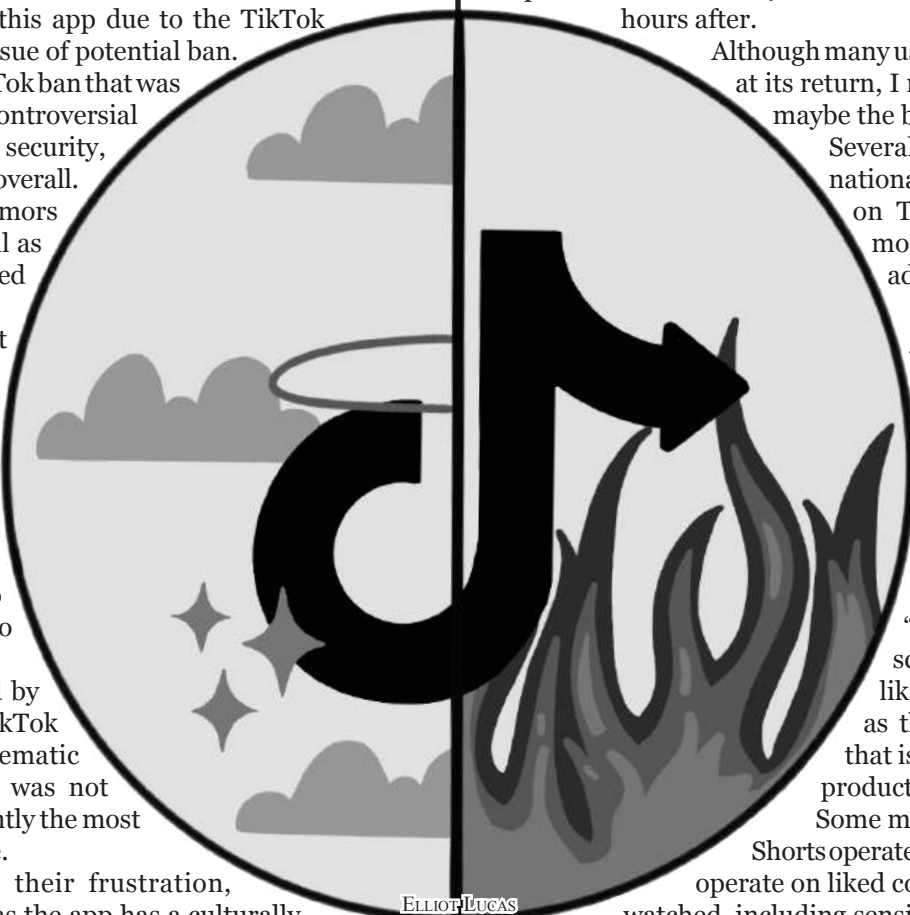
Some may argue that Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts operate the same way. Yet, TikTok's algorithm doesn't operate on liked content, but rather, the amount of time spent watched, including sensitive trends. This easily leads users spiraling down a rabbit hole of damaging mental health content, impacting their psyche. In fact, another study has linked TikTok to anxiety, depression, suicidality, body image issues, etc.

Not to mention, TikTok's moderation issues are horrible as the automated system often misses harmful/inappropriate content and these shorts quickly blow up likely due to the fact they operate on engagement.

As a result, several dangerous trends have arisen over the years and it poses an issue given Tiktok's policies requiring only an age limit of 13 to download/ use the app. When you think about it; it's way worse given how impressionable teenagers, who make up the majority of Tiktok's audience, are.

For example, I have never seen more self-diagnosed people with DID, BPD, tourettes, etc., until these mental illnesses began trending on TikTok. This proves just how impressionable many can be.

While TikTok is definitely a one of a kind app given you its original content you often wouldn't find, the ban should have definitely remained for a greater good.



TROJAN TALK

Re: We cannot stop the fight "These next few years will be scary, but it's nice that there are others who aren't afraid to speak out against the oppression that is being threatened."
- Scott Baldwin

Re: From farmworker to teacher: spotlight on Farjardo "I think this is a very touching story, especially because of how he marched with Cesar Chavez. Chavez was a part of a major movement, and the fact that Mr. Fajardo was able to be a part of that is amazing."
- Nevin Thomas

Re: "Les Miserables" shows resilience of human nature... and CVHS talent "Learning more about the "behind the scenes" of this

show made me really grateful for all the students that devoted efforts into making this show possible."
- Angie Deng

Re: Trojans oppose mandatory PSAT testing "I think skipping the PSAT is a bad idea because it gives you insight on what you'll be tested on for the actual SAT."
- Daniel Cai

Re: Shortn' Sweet takes the beat "I like how your writing drew me into her songs and how you talked about the meaning behind each one."
- Alexis Erickson

Re: How reconnecting with nature changed me "Nature is so amazing and many of us take for granted what we have around us."
- Eden Teclemariam

Re: Girls varsity volleyball crush the Alameda Hornets "Great job girls volleyball team. Amazing job on toughing out that win against Alameda, I know we as a school are very proud. Keep up the hard work and I know you'll go far."
- Dominic Bolender

Re: A fun summer hit: Kendrick Lamar's "Not Like Us" "This is a great analysis Mikey! I just learned many things about the song that I did not know -- top tier music knowledge."
- Alex Mascio



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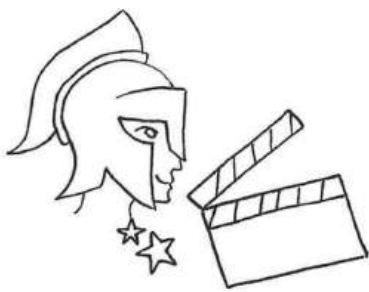
Olympian

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iPhone 16: potentially worth the upgrade



By Leia Kremer

Many people think that buying the new iPhone every time there is an upgrade is useless. They think that it is the same thing and that it's better to just keep the one you have. However, there are many new features on the iPhone 16 that are beneficial and cool.

One of the biggest features that most people notice is that the camera has better quality. The iPhone 15 camera can only zoom in five times while the iPhone 16 can zoom in a total of ten times. This is really impressive because as the camera zooms in, the quality of the photo does not weaken.

On the right bottom side of the phone. There is a bar. This bar is very unique and can do many things. This bar makes it easier to zoom in and out when you are taking pictures. Many people like this new feature. Not only

does it zoom in and out but it can also show "Visual Intelligence with Camera Control." This basically means that when you move your camera to a certain place or object, the camera will tell you more information about it.

When I look around the school, a workplace, or at a home, I constantly see people charging their phones because of the low battery life. The iPhone 16 has a longer battery life, making sure you can go around the world without a charger connected to your phone.

As you are studying or doing work, you may need to keep track of the time. When this happens you do not want to be constantly turning your iPhone 15 on and off and on and off to check the time. That is why with the iPhone 16 when you turn off your phone, the screen dims and you can still see the time. This is a very interesting new feature. Many people were not expecting this type of change.

When you look at the iPhone



LEIA KREMER

15 screen, you can see the small black bar at the top. This bar is where your front camera and speaker is. Some people think it is annoying having that bar. With the iPhone 16, the bar can change its length and even show what song you are playing. Many people like this new feature. This makes the iPhone 16 look unique and more superb

than the other iPhone models.

The iPhone 16 has a better security system. This includes the new safety check. Safety check is a system you can use that stops sharing your information to any people or any apps.

While this iPhone has many great new features, I believe that it is worth it to buy this

800 dollar phone. However, I only believe this if you have an old model or a different brand of phone. If you have an iPhone 14 or 15, I do not recommend buying this unless you are looking for a phone to take photos or for the better systems. Otherwise, the iPhone 15 and 16 very similar and don't need changing.

Gracie Abrams reveals herself in "The Secret Of Us"



By Paty Escalera Carrillo

Over the last four years, singer and songwriter Gracie Abrams, a young pop artist who grew up in California, has skyrocketed her way up now recognized as one of the best new top artists. Abrams has been composing and releasing singles for a handful of years now. However,

in more recent years, she has released a couple of albums, her latest release being her album "The Secret Of Us" which was released in summer 2024. This album explores themes of relationships, heartbreaks, and moving on.

Abrams teased this album earlier in the year by releasing "Risk" as a single in early May. As a way to not only get her fans excited for what was soon to come but to also give them a taste of her new songwriting

talent. And it is safe to say that her fans loved it and could not wait to hear the rest of her album.

When the album was finally released "The Secret Of Us" was streamed by many on the night it was released, and in less than 24 hours of the album being out it was already quickly making its way up. The most popular songs on her album include, "Free Now" with immaculate lyrics and the build up of suspense in the song is definitely a crowd

favorite. "Us," which features Taylor Swift. With both Abrams and Swift's incredible song writing, both working together to compose a song is already set up to produce excellent results and Us. did in fact live to fans expectations.

All 13 of the songs on this album have their own personal authentic sound and feel to them which make them all special. However, a couple more of her hit songs on "The Secret Of Us" include "Blowing Smoke," "I Love You," "I Love You, I'm Sorry," and "Close To You."

I personally really enjoyed this album. The lyrics on all 13

of the songs are very mature, especially compared to her first album. In "The Secret Of Us," most of the lyrics are complex and feel like direct excerpts from her diary, or like an unsent letter to an ex.

In a short amount of time one can really see how Abrams has grown and changed through lived experiences and how she truly tries her best to capture that in her song writing. With her excellent song writing while still keeping her music unique, captivating, and emphasizing relatable themes throughout her entire discography to ensure she keeps her main demographic stays interested.

Stray Kids take the crown with "SKZ HOP HIPTAPE (HOP ver.)"



By Angel Chen

Stray Kids debuted their new album, "SKZ HOP HIPTAPE 'HOP,'" which blends experimental musical ideas with hip-hop to create a genre that has not been officially defined. This new genre allows the members to "express [their] individual personalities in music and on stage, creating a liberating atmosphere," said Stray Kids.

This album features 12 unique tracks, "Walkin On Water" as the title track that has two versions, "U" which is a collaboration with Korean Canadian artist Tablo, "Bounce Back," and eight of

which are solo tracks performed by each member: "Railway" by Bangchan, "Unfair" by Felix, "HALLUCINATION" by I.N, "Youth" by Lee Know, "So Good" by Hyujin, "ULTRA" by Changbin, "Hold my hand" by Han, and "As we are" by Seungmin.

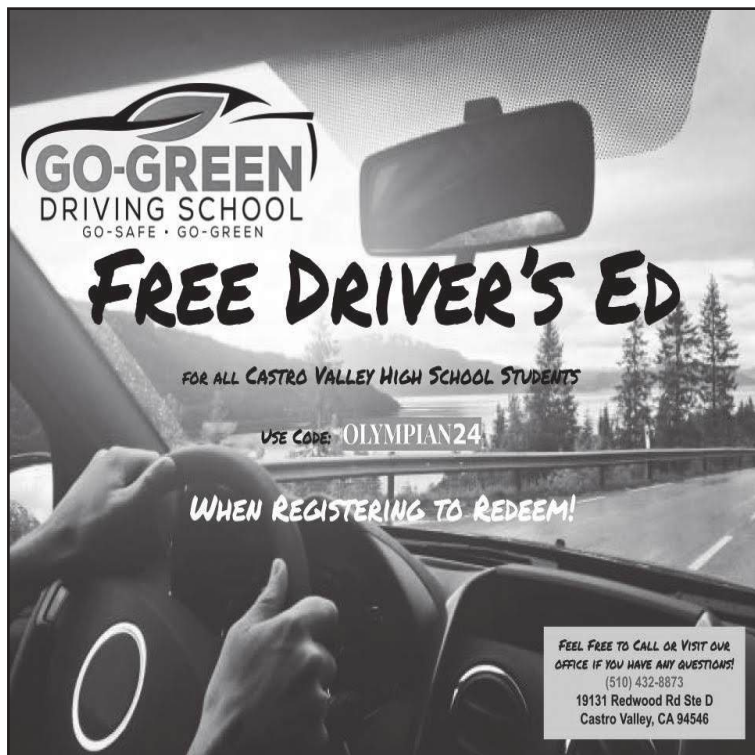
Hop reached No. 1 on Billboard 200, making it the band's sixth consecutive album to reach the top and the only artist in history to achieve this feat. Ending the band's year on a high note.

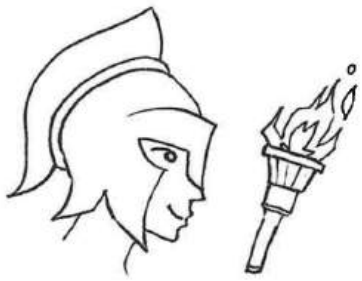
From heartfelt ballads to powerful hip-hop EDM elements, this album features several unique segments and genres, allowing anyone to find a track they enjoy. Each member expresses their personality in

their distinctive musical style with their vocals and dance choreography.

My personal favorites of this album are "ULTRA," "HALLUCINATION," and "Railway," which all have catchy vibes and emphatic lyrics. However, any song from the album is worth listening to as each track eventually grows on you.

"SKZ HOP HIPTAPE 'HOP'" is one of the most unique albums as it features the "Stray Kids" genre and presents different music styles among members, depicting how far they've come in the music industry. This album is definitely worthwhile to listen to and enjoy, making this album five stars out of five.





CVHS girls wrestling team wins latest meet

Madilyn Koscinski places first in meet

By Sarada Khanal

The Trojans wrestling team celebrated a victorious triumph at the Dennis Solis Girls Wrestling Classic hosted at CVHS on Dec. 21. The tournament was hugely successful as CVHS reigned supreme over the 58 other teams who participated. In the end, the Trojans racked up 119.5 points fastening their first-place position.

“I was so nervous before my match but I feel like it clicked into place once I got on the mat,” said junior Ray Huang who is a first-year wrestler.

CVHS had multiple girls

who placed. Junior Evie Rhoe placed first place in the girls varsity 135-pound bracket. During one of her matches, Rhoe secured a win despite her headgear falling in front of her face and obstructing her view. She won her first match with a technical fall at four minutes and 37 seconds. Her second match she won on a fall at 1:39. Her final match she was up against Anaïs Hernandez from St. Helena and she emerged victorious with a score of 15-7.

Some other notable victories in the varsity category include freshman Axel Ambrose who placed third in the 140-pound bracket. And senior Gianna Colon who placed third in the 125-pound bracket.

Junior varsity also had some incredible accomplishments. Sophomore Madilyn Koscinski placed first in the JV 140-pound



Evie Rhoe wins her first match.

SARADA KHANAL

bracket. Freshman Jade Sychr placed fourth in the JV 120-pound division.

“I am so proud of our team here at CVHS and how far

we’ve come since the beginning of the season. At our home tournament, I got to see our girls in action and I think everyone did their absolute

best,” said Sychr.

Ultimately the dedication displayed by these wrestlers propelled them to their first place victory.

Connor Jeong finishes CVHS wrestling career

Trojan works to win a state championship

By Brenda Huynh

With rough tussling and sweat dripping on the hard mat, wrestling is an intense physical and mental battle for dominance through grappling one another for control, demanding the strategic utilization of speed, endurance, technique, as well as strength. Senior Connor Jeong, currently ranked 15th in the state for boys wrestling, was the only Trojan champion who won his weight class at the CVHS tournament.

Jeong has been wrestling for seven years, originally finding a passion for wrestling through inspiration from his older brother.

Reflecting on his recent victory, Jeong shared, “It felt really good winning this tournament as I’ve never won this tournament before.”

This wasn’t Jeong’s only win, as he has a strong win-to-loss record of 14-3 this year for his matches.

For Jeong, working on his timing and knowing when and what to do in the moment has been effective as a strategy and technique for him, especially contributing to his victories. Not to mention, while wrestling is a one-on-

one sport, teammates still play a major role in supporting one another.

“At dual meets, everyone is watching you,” Jeong remarked. “When you hear loud cheering or your teammates going crazy, it motivates you to do better.”

Jeong’s teammates support and acknowledge him as he is also the current captain for boys wrestling.

“Connor is a wrestler with a strong mentality as well as a good leader,” said teammate Caleb Gianecchini.

To stay motivated throughout the season, Jeong continues to strive for constant improvement, putting in the effort at daily practice rather than dwelling on his numbers. While rankings may measure a wrestler’s skill in a certain regard, it doesn’t directly contribute to his skill and improvement.

“Honestly, I don’t really look at rankings,” he stated. “I just look at myself and how I can do better.”

As of now, Jeong’s goal is to win a state championship, but he hasn’t yet thought of wrestling beyond high school. Looking back at his career, Jeong would tell his past self to work even harder and to put in the work to do more workouts with additional practice.

“You just gotta love the sport,” Jeong advised young wrestlers. “If it’s something you want to do a lot of and you want to get really good, you gotta learn to love it.”



Connor Jeong begins his stance to start his match.

LUCAS VILLEGAS



Connor Jeong celebrates Senior Night with his family.

LUCAS VILLEGAS



Trojans Team

Kings crush Warriors as Trojans watch

Golden State commits 22 turnovers in loss

By Madison Lee

The Golden State Warriors lost by an extensive 30 points on Jan. 5. The Sacramento Kings took the game by 129-99.

The game was the second of a back-to-back game played over the weekend, with the Warriors winning the first game on Jan. 4 against the Memphis Grizzlies, scoring 121-113.

Starter player Jonathan Kuminga was injured during the first game, spraining his

right ankle. In the second game, the Warriors were optimistic with gaining some momentum. However, with Kuminga out, it negatively impacted the game against the Kings, both defensively and offensively.

"He was playing at a high level before the injury; it's unfortunate. I don't know how long he will be out but we obviously miss his force," teammate Steph Curry said. "He's been really showing that he's been able to see the defense better as of late and make them pay for how they want to guard him

Entering and us."

The Kings were also looking for a momentum switch after a disappointing start to their season.

They replaced head coach Mike Brown with former longtime Sacramento Kings player Doug Christie, and were on a three-game winning streak up to their match-up with the Warriors.

Additionally, Kings star De'Aaron Fox was out with a right glute contusion, leaving other players to step up.

Throughout the game, the Kings stopped any Warriors momentum and Golden State never led in the game.

With 22 turnovers from the Warriors, the Kings earned 34 points, which was especially damaging.

"That was the game to me. Right from the start, we were turning it over; the turnovers didn't feel forced either," Coach Steve Kerr commented. "They felt more decision based and that's what was disappointing."

With such an unfortunate loss, the Warriors are hoping to improve their gameplay and do better in future games.

"Just a sense of purpose to each possession

of each game requires something game plan wise that you have to focus on," Kerr said when asked what needs to be improved. "We lost that tonight and we're going to do a better job."

This season the Warriors have been a .500 winning team, with a win-loss record of 19-19. This season's record asks the questions: How many years does Curry have left? What trades will the Warriors have to make in order to be competitive in Curry's later years?

CVHS Madrigals performed the national anthem before the game, and four Olympian reporters attended to document the event.

Trojans have great time at Warriors game

By Elliot Lucas

"Honestly, no silver linings. I guess the only positive thing is that it's the NBA and you have a game in 48 hours so you don't have much time to dwell on it," said Golden State Warrior Stephen Curry. The Warriors champion Curry had nothing good to say about their tough loss with the Sacramento Kings on Jan. 5.

While it was a night that the Warriors might want to forget, it was an unforgettable one for The Olympian staff.

For us, the night was an introduction to the world of sports journalism, filled with behind-the-scenes insights, media privileges, and encouraging moments.

After navigating our way to the media room we were allowed to take court-side pictures of the Warriors during warm-up. It was an amazing experience being just a few feet away from players I have only seen on TV. Watching Curry up close was incredible seeing all the action in person and the effort the Warriors put into this sport. You could tell that they loved what they were doing, like the small moments of

them laughing with each other and poking fun at each other.

One of the night's highlights was an interview with Marcus Thompson, a sportswriter for The Athletic. Initially, it was nerve-racking to interview such an amazing journalist, but his humor and relaxed demeanor made the interview mellow. His advice was enlightening and inspiring: "This is a passion play, this is a thing that you do because you absolutely love it." By the end, it felt less like an interview and more like a casual conversation

leaving us motivated to keep pursuing journalism.

Adding to the evening's magic, our CVHS Madrigals delivered a stunning national anthem performance. Watching my friends sing in front of the whole arena was so surreal and inspiring. The harmonies from our students were a nice contrast to the intense competition on the court that followed.

During the game, we sat in the media section, where we gained a unique perspective on the demands of professional journalism. Writers worked diligently on their stories in real-time, their eyes shifting between the game and their screens. Some even

kept tabs on other sports events, multitasking under the pressure of tight deadlines.

After the game, we had the rare opportunity to attend the post-game press conference. I even had the chance to ask Curry about the game. His reflection on the game stood out to me: "We got to come out with a lot of aggressiveness and energy and be able to flush this down the toilet as fast as possible so that we can come out and just let it fly on Tuesday." His focus on moving forward rather than agonizing over the loss was interesting and gave a view into his perspective of the game.

"It's our last home game before a road trip so you wanna leave the bay feeling good about yourself," Curry added. While the Warriors may not have left Chase Center feeling good, The Olympian staff did. We walked away not just as basketball fans but as aspiring journalists, ready to tackle our next story with the same determination the Warriors will bring to their next game.





Madrigals make magical music

By Liana Klausmeyer

The Chase Center, the home of the Warriors, is a behemoth of a building, and on the night of Jan. 5, it was packed with apprehensive spectators. A hush fell over the crowd as the conductor raised her hands. "The Star-Spangled Banner," in perfect harmony, rang out over the speakers. Actual firecrackers went off as the lyrics "bursting in air" were sung. The piece closed out with a high note, and the crowd cheered wildly at the performance. The CVHS Madrigals had done it again. "I have been a Warriors fan since I was little and watched them win so many titles over the years. Before we sang, we were allowed to watch a few players start their warmups on the court while we were watching from Court side seats," said Kayden Shih, a junior in Madrigals. With an 18,000-person capacity in packed stands, this is probably one of the largest audiences the Madrigals had sung for. "The

event felt more real the closer we got to actually performing, so I was definitely both anxious and excited," said Ash Ahmad a senior Madrigal.

"The excitement of what we were about to do was far more overpowering than any fear of messing up," said senior Maizy Dangler.

The Madrigals did



very well and the microphones were balanced properly so none of the parts were too loud.

"I think we did amazing. Out

of all of our national anthems that one was one of the best run-throughs," said senior Allie Otteson.

"There were no complications," said Ahmad, "but we did not practice with the firecrackers during the sound check." The pyrotechnics were a spectacular

"I'll admit, the Warriors did not treat us as nicely as we expected them to," said Dangler. "We were thrown behind a curtain as a makeshift holding

area for two hours, had to hunt down water, and buy our

Most of the Madrigals shared this sentiment. After the national anthem, they went up six flights of stairs to their nosebleed seats.

"The top seats we had to pay \$50 for. I was hanging onto the rail for dear life," said Otteson. The total cost, about \$4,000, was covered by a parent.

The Warriors ended up losing to the Kings, but that didn't stop it from being a great experience.

"It's sad they lost, but I did like seeing everything. I play basketball, myself, so I like seeing what's happening," said Otteson.

"Honestly, the performance itself was the best part of the evening. It was just so amazing!" said Dangler. "We were in a stadium with good acoustics, we were well-mixed, and literal pyro came out of the basketball hoops! It was magical!"

surprise and punctuated the message of the song.

"I think we nailed it," said Shih. Off the court, however, it was a different story.

own snacks at vending machines we found by the bathrooms."

Thompson speaks on sports writing

By Aleksandra Hurka

Within the depths of an anxious crowd, gripping the edge of their seats as they hold their breaths and lean in to capture for themselves a moment in history where Stephen Curry effortlessly secured a three pointer, is a pair of eyes and a racing mind belonging to none other than sportswriter Marcus Thompson. His eyes roamed the court and the years were turning in his mind. Everyone else was looking for the win, but he was looking for a good story. Sportswriter for The Athletic, Thompson writes words that reflect the creativity of his mind. Thompson managed to put this perspective by revealing the inside scoop of journalism—including the unavoidable struggles. "There's various kinds of writer's block... learn yourself

enough to know why you have writer's block," Thompson said, highlighting the difficulties of coming up with ideas for stories.

"We fail a lot... it's not necessarily not getting it in, it's knowing it might turn into something terrible... that's the part you have to get over."

As exciting as it is, journalism has no heart when it comes to distinguishing a journalist's life from his work.

"The thing about news and information is that it has no regard for your life," Thompson explained. "We leave here like 12:30 at night and then you can't go to sleep cause you're kinda wired from watching Steph Curry."

In this profession, sleep becomes just a mere suggestion to Thompson as he is under the constant watchful eyes of thousands of people hungry for information.

"I like the storytelling aspect of it... I like the fact that people are waiting for me to tell them about it." Having access to information is a power for journalists and many people often strive for that power.

"Everybody tells me 'You're insane, we want to do your job'... [but] I've had these bouts in my life where I'm like 'Why am I doing this?'... I'm at a basketball game, I got friends who are in Africa saving

people... people do real stuff."



However, journalism is as real as it gets. The power of harnessing information comes with a price of cutthroat competition in this industry.

"What matters is... everybody's gonna write a story..."

how good is yours?" Thompson highlighted that the real struggle lies in making yourself stand out from the crowd.

"If you suck, you better get another job."

Despite it all, Thompson argued that as loaded as the profession is, it's a one of a kind experience and "there's nothing better, so it's worth it."

While writing quality certainly plays a big role, so does personality. Trying to tailor yourself to each person you talk to is like forcing a situation that doesn't work. Thompson explained that one of his biggest takeaways from this profession was to be unapologetically yourself.

"I'm just gonna be me, which is a little crazy... mixed with some humor and an ability to write—and if it works it works, and if it doesn't it doesn't and I'm okay with that."



Exploring the streets of Jiufen

By Angel Ni

Warm red lanterns fill the streets of Jiufen, such a small beautiful old mountain town east of Taipei in northeastern Taiwan.

Even though it's November, the weather is pleasant, warm, and humid, with a little light drizzle. People from all over the world travel to New Taipei City's bustling Ruifang District, a favorite attraction among foreigners traveling to Taiwan, popular for the area's traditional charm.

In the days of gold mining, the village was estimated to have nine households. The term "Jiufen" comes from the fact that supplies were split up into nine "jiu" portions "fen" when they arrived.

During Thanksgiving break, I went to Jiufen, and although it was raining almost every day, it was a really lovely place that



is well worth visiting. Many people think that the scenery in Jiufen and the Japanese movie *Spirited Away* are fairly similar, even though there is no direct correlation between the two.

The broad views were simply

breathhtaking, with no end to the hazy mountains from the lookout platform. It felt like a natural paradise with the fresh natural smell of the cold mountain air.

Jiufen's food is a highlight that is definitely worth

checking out, beginning with the delicious candied fruit skewers known as tanghulu. As I walked through the wet, busy streets, the sugar-coated strawberries were my favorite sweet treat. I also enjoyed warm, fluffy egg waffles with

cream and strawberries on top, a mouthwatering dessert that was impossible to resist. Trying out new foods such as an assorted variety of fish balls which were interesting.

With many small shops to look around filled with souvenirs, antiques, and lots of food to try, through crowded tiny alleyways and many rocky stairs, it is a true once in a lifetime experience.

Nightfall made Jiufen even more alluring. Warm light from lanterns surrounded the winding streets, adding to the enchanted atmosphere. The town, which had been so lively during the day, now seemed calm and timeless.

The bus ride to Jiufen took an hour, but the trip is definitely worth it. It is a place that lingers in your memory long after you have left because of the amazing scenery, mouthwatering cuisine, and lantern-lit streets.

Yearbook "can. did" it all

By Natalie Le

CVHS students' laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm creates a scene as yearbook students take camera shots from afar, capturing the vibrant atmosphere and energy individuals show.

This year's yearbook theme is "can.did." Students in the yearbook class work hard to get the perfect pictures around campus unknowingly while incorporating the meaning behind the themes' wordplay.

"With this theme of can.did, we play on the idea of growth and reflection. And then candid is cool because we want to focus on getting not just posed photos, but some action moments we want to try to capture this year," said yearbook teacher Jessica Porter.

"Can.did" became the final theme over the summer during yearbook camp. Students had gathered up a number of different theme ideas, but the concept of candid photos really stood out to the staff.

The "can" in "candid" represents every student here at CVHS, incorporating stories of their dreams and what they'd like to accomplish.

The "did" highlights what students were able to accomplish and do by the end of the year.

In previous years, other themes have been design-heavy and hard to execute. As Porter detailed, students would often get carried

away from the main theme and bring more attention to little aspects instead.

As a way to not repeat the mistakes of previous years, yearbook staff decided on a theme that was more simple, both stories and design wise, rather than over the top.

Throughout this current year, yearbook students take candid shots of people at CVHS doing their own thing and write stories along the theme.

"[Yearbook's] a student publication. It's more of letting the students figure out what are the stories they want to capture," explained Porter. "And kind of teaching them about ethics, trying to capture all perspectives of different stories too."

Throughout the year, yearbook students improve their special skills in addition to photography, such as building communication, writing, stepping out of comfort zones, and design.

"Yearbook is one of the most fun extracurriculars I've ever done," said sophomore Jessica Kong. "It lets you meet new people who are passionate about the same things as you."

Kong also shared how being part of yearbook allows for students to explore their creative freedom, as the class allows everyone to express themselves through photos and writing.

"Candid is really about trying to emphasize that every single student has a story," said Porter.

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Unseen staff of CVHS: Natalie Plunkett

By Natalie Le

Students at CVHS go through their daily lives here at school, but the campus wouldn't be the same without its campus patrollers. Campus patroller Natalie Plunkett ensures safety for the individuals around the school.

"My position is security for the school. Which means to make sure kids stay in class, keep them safe, monitor the bathroom. And yes, I love it here," said Plunkett.

She has been devoted to her job as a campus patroller at CVHS for ten years. Plunkett has CVHS in a special place in her heart because she graduated from this same school in the year 1993.

Aside from working as a school campus patroller, Plunkett also coaches the boys varsity soccer team.

For all this time, Plunkett has only been interested in working at a school instead of the other kinds of security guards, such as those at de-

partment stores or BART.

When working as a campus patroller at a school, the sense of community is different compared to another career. The enjoyment of working with students, being outside, and being helpful to the teachers is exactly what she likes about her job.

Many people at school can confidently say that she is a nice person to be around and talk to.

Plunkett simply loves interacting with the several students she sees each day because she knows that her work is for them.

Despite the fact that she hasn't faced any significant issues in her years of being part of the campus patrol, she finds it challenging to recall the names and faces of each and every student.

"I like to acknowledge the students, especially if they are saying hello to me and I don't know their names," explained Plunkett.

She tries to make sure the



NATALIE LE

Natalie Plunkett watches over the basketball courts.

campus feels safe for the people at CVHS, and with that, Plunkett takes the time to make the students here feel seen.

From her enthusiasm for

her work and gratitude to making an effort to learn new faces, Plunkett shows how much she values individuals at CVHS.

Every week, all of the cam-

pus patrollers take turns covering places around the campus, so students can catch her in her assigned spot. Don't be afraid to say hello; she'll greatly appreciate it!

Prince Flood: Student businessman

By Michael Owen

The world of business can be difficult to maneuver, but for junior Prince Flood, it poses no such challenge. Flood started his business in late 2023, offering a variety of clothing, including hoodies, shirts, and sweatshirts. For a price of \$50 to \$80, you can get custom designs that range from quotes to animals.

When asked if he had any inspirations and people who helped him, Flood said, "My mom and dad. They helped me figure out how to find manufacturers and brands."

As a student in marketing class, Flood was asked about the influence of the class on his work. "Marketing has been a lot of help. It teaches you a lot about how to get your product out there and different ways to sell to certain target markets," said Flood. The class taught him how to properly sell his product, expand his business through social media, and promote his clothing. Flood credits much of his influence on running his business to marketing class.

Flood spoke about his end goal: "I want to be successful

enough to the point where I don't have to worry about anything financially." He expressed a clear desire and determination for personal and financial success.

When asked for advice for aspiring entrepreneurs, Flood said, "Just do it. Don't let other people get in your head with their ideas. If they say something looks bad, then it's just their opinion. You can't let people get in your head, you have got to do what you want to do."

You can find his business at <https://www.instagram.com/blindeadus>.



Clubs capture extracurricular diversity

By Fanoosa Mustamandi

CVHS recently hosted its Club Day on Jan. 15. While it seems overwhelming at first glance seeing the rows of lines scattered at the thoughtfully creative booths, but after a short period of waiting, all are welcomed with introductions and discover that there were far more selections this year than last year. There's something for everyone at CVHS if you take the initiative to sign up, with the subjects spanning from sustainable fashion and digital innovation to political debate and animal welfare.

Led by Qaisarah Kamal, Fashion Club meets during lunch to discuss style and sus-

tainability. Members prepare for an annual spring fashion show and work with CV Smart Environment to promote eco-friendly fashion practices. The club appeals to students interested in self-expression through design while addressing environmental concerns.

"I am able to meet and make fashionable people during our meetings at lunch," said Kamal.

For more information, visit the club's Instagram page, @cvhs.fashion.

Hacks Club introduces students to practical technology and innovation. Members Sebastian Sandlavolt and Samit Rath organize regular hackathons and program-

ming projects. Rath explained that the club arranges "boba drives" during which boba is brought to the school to foster community spirit and creative collaboration.

"I attended the hackathon last year and won a soldering iron," explained Rath, a tool utilized in the club.

Members have worked on projects related to STEM and artificial intelligence and have earned accolades, including the Sauntering Iron prize. More details are available at @cvhshackathon.

Polisci Club, led by Chloe Rose and Mordecai Araya, examines modern political issues and their historical context. The club hosts discus-

sions on current events and public policy, drawing interest from both upperclassmen and underclassmen. It provides a forum for informed analysis and debate on topics shaping today's political landscape. For updates and membership details, see @cvpolisci.

A newer addition to Club Day: Animal Aid Club attracts students with a passion for animal welfare. Members such as Jacob Deguzman join the club to volunteer at local shelters and nature centers, including Sulphur Creek.

"It's really cool to take the opportunity and help animals in local shelters," explained DeGuzman.

The club focuses on practical

support for animal care and promotes community service through hands-on projects. Interested students can find more information at @cvhs-animalaidclub.

Club Day is more than an opportunity to learn about established interests; it's an open invitation for every student to critique, refine, and assemble their own extracurricular path. If you're drawn to fashion, technology, politics, animal welfare, or exploring a career interest, consider joining one of these clubs or starting your own. CVHS encourages students to engage, experiment, express, and excel through the rich variety of clubs on offer this year.

Slumping school statistics show societal shift

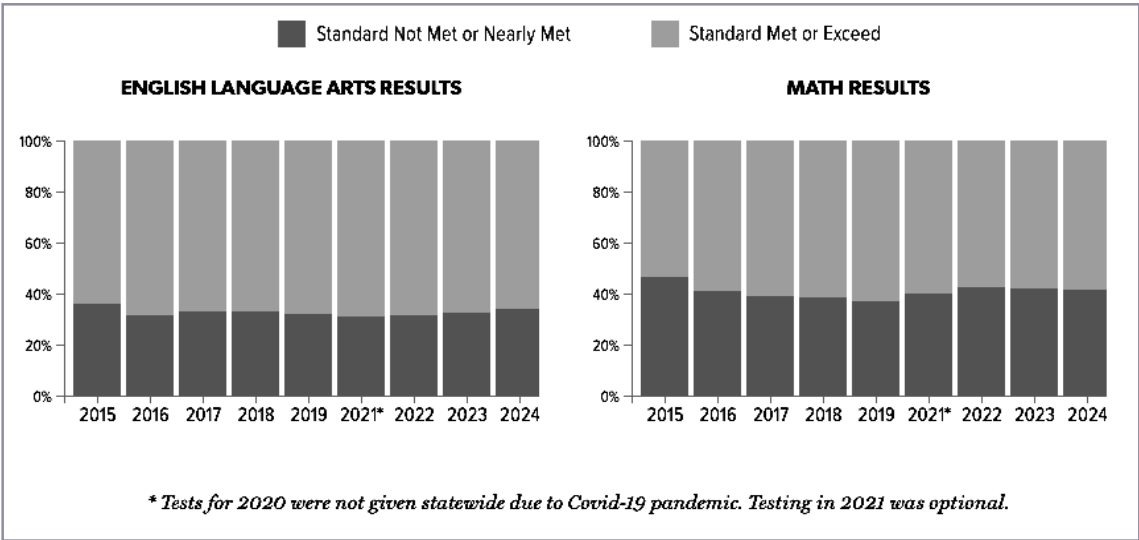
By Matthew Wong

District-wide academic performance and engagement has slumped past pre-pandemic levels. However, there are some metrics that show a slowing decline.

“As teachers and educators, we’ve somewhat enabled some student behaviors to carry over from COVID. I don’t know if we’re expecting as much out of our students as we did before,” said English teacher Eric Unti. “There are some good things that we can learn from COVID too; there are other things that are more important. People want to spend time with family and want to have time to do things.”

SBAC results were only taken from juniors in the district. English scores are 31.5 points above the standard; however, this was a 13.5% decrease from 2023, which was a 10% decrease from 2022.

Math scores have fared better; although it is 12.3 points above the standard, there was only a 6.8% decline from last year.



For CVHS specifically, there was a 5.7% decrease in passing English scores and a 3.2% decrease in passing math scores. District-wide, the decline was felt by almost all racial/ethnic groups, while in CVHS, African American students experienced a sharp increase in scores from 2023.

“These are complicated issues, and there’s no one simple answer. Anyone who points to one test or one answer and says, ‘This is the reason,’ isn’t being honest with the realities and complexities of the situation,” said Unti.

“We’ve driven away from high-stakes, single-attempt tests to multiple attempts to show your learning over time... Our district initiative to enhance student learning isn’t necessarily equating to higher standardized test scores,” said math teacher Shad Emam.

The College/Career Indicator (CCI) measures how prepared high school graduates are for their future. To be categorized as prepared, students must meet criteria such as a score of three or higher on at least two AP exams, meeting the SBAC standards, or meeting

A-G requirements. The CCI for the district has seen a dramatic shift, with 52.8% of graduates now qualifying as not or under prepared, a jump from just 39.7% of graduates in 2023.

“I think more and more students are looking at the option of not going to a four year university... so less and less students are going to push themselves to make sure that they’re eligible, prepared or ready,” said Emam.

Chronic absenteeism (students missing 10% or more of school days) is at 11%. This is down 5% from 2023 but still

not at pre-pandemic levels, which was 4.6% in 2019. The suspension rate is at 2.2%, down 0.4% from 2023.

Despite these declines in test scores and college preparedness, the district graduation rate (which includes students graduating in their fifth year) is higher than pre-pandemic levels at 96%.

“Whatever the test scores say, they say, but are we giving students the tools they need to be successful? Part of those tools are academic knowledge, but part of those tools are also responsibility, accountability, and communication, so there’s a lot that we’re trying to do at school and grades and test scores are just a part of that,” said Unti.

“As college tuition or prices go up, I think there’s less value for more students to be going there,” said Emam. “So is it a good thing that we’re not, according to some of our metrics, preparing students? I’m not gonna agree with that statement, but the question is: is the end goal actually directly always going to college? Or is it focused on somebody’s ability to learn?”



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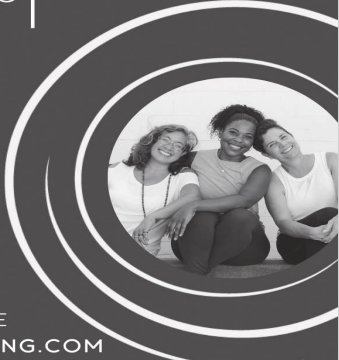


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Castro Valley Creek and Library, Center Street Overpass, Downtown Castro Valley, Dragonfly Park, and Lake Chabot.

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Personal finance class coming to California high schools

By Sharlene Goduco

Starting in the 2027-28 school year, California high school students will be required to take a semester-long personal finance course, with the mandate becoming a graduation requirement for the class of 2030-31. Assembly Bill 2927 aims to teach critical skills like budgeting, saving, and understanding financial markets—skills advocates argue are just as essential as traditional academic subjects.

This decision raises an important question: Should personal finance education become a nationwide standard? With low financial literacy rates among young adults, many experts and educators say yes.

Personal finance is more than just tracking your spending—it's about securing your financial future. Learning to manage finances helps students make smarter decisions with their money, leading to greater stability and independence.

“Personal finance is a crucial subject for high school students,” said Alex Chen, president of the Literacy & Leadership Initiative Club. “It equips them with essential

life skills to navigate financial challenges and opportunities. Early exposure to financial education fosters informed decision-making and helps students build a foundation for economic independence and stability.”

Gov. Gavin Newsom underscored the importance of making personal finance a graduation requirement. “We need to help Californians prepare for their financial futures as early as possible. Saving for the future, making investments, and spending wisely are lifelong skills that young adults need to learn before they start their careers, not after.”

However, some educators, like economics teacher David Roth-Rossi, have raised concerns about the new class requirement and its potential impact on academic flexibility.

“This class should not be a semester-long course,” Roth-Rossi said. “They should have rolled the standards into the existing economics standards. It's going to limit students' ability to pick classes and subjects that they are interested in.”

On the other hand, marketing instructor Byron Thompson



SHARLENE GODUCO

emphasized the value of personal finance education for young adults.

“I think personal finance is an important subject for high school students because it prepares them for adulthood and ultimately provides them with the ability to manage their money effectively,” Thompson said.

As California introduces this significant change to its high school curriculum, the conversation around personal finance education is gaining momentum. Critics raise

concerns about the potential limits on students' course choices, while supporters argue that financial literacy can help students become financially independent.

This initiative positions California at the forefront of educational reform, with the potential to inspire similar changes nationwide. Advocates see this as a crucial step toward making financial literacy a core part of education, ensuring that future generations are better prepared for the challenges of an ever-changing economy.

While concerns about academic flexibility remain, the success of this initiative will ultimately depend on careful implementation and ongoing support for educators and students alike.

The question now is whether California's effort will inspire a national standard—one that ensures all young adults are prepared for the financial challenges of adulthood. For now, California is leading the charge, prioritizing financial literacy as a cornerstone of modern education.

Drama puts on ‘Trouble! At The Talent Show’

By Yusef Scott

The audience rushed around to find clues as to who poisoned the lunch lady. There is screaming and commotion amongst all of the niche crowds and groups as they try to prove their innocence all while the culprit stands amongst them.

“Trouble! At The Talent Show” shocked the crowd with the crazy and entertaining auditions from each group on Jan. 10. While each group put on a performance, somebody had secretly poisoned one of the lunch ladies, leaving the viewers to walk around and interact with the actors to find out clues on who the culprit is.

There was a wide variety of groups to interact with, including the lunch ladies, jocks, the maintenance guys, and the tiffanies.

“This is our second year doing an audience interactive play and it's really fun because everybody

gets a part so it's different from a usual musical or play,” said drama teacher Tiffany Daily.

Alongside the great acting, the costuming and desserts made the interactive murder mystery stand out even more. Each actor had their own costume and items according to their group adding to the experience. And during the clue hunting period, the lunch ladies handed out desserts to the viewers.

“The performance was better than I expected,” explained senior Armaan Sherzad. “I enjoyed being a part of the production even as a watcher.”

The play was put on by Daily's fourth period advanced class as a special project. “We've been working on it for a really long time and it's been very fun to work on. I feel that came out really well. All of the rehearsal time was during class whereas it's usually after class, but since this was a class project it was



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From left to right: Sky Johnson, Logan Yang, Sofia Myers, Ava Marker, Linda Yang, Izzy Perez. Izzy Perez speaks into microphone during the performance.

during class,” said junior Ava Walker who played one of the teachers.

Throughout the play and the clue time, each character kept their individualized personality, so when interacting with them, you would get lots of unique or fun and interesting conversations.

“The day the world stops turning is the day I start trusting liberals,” explained senior Logan Yang.

At the end of the show, the viewers who had correctly guessed the culprit group were entered into a raffle to win different kinds of gift cards. There were three winners each getting to choose a card of their choice.

“Not enough people respect classic literature,” remarked junior Sky Johnson.

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