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Olympian

THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

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Trojans walk out to protest ICE

By Amaya Rambel

CVHS students participated in a walkout Friday, Jan. 30, to protest the actions of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), joining a broader nationwide day of protest and economic blackout.

The student-organized walkout began at noon and was promoted through Instagram. Three students were at the helm of the account, including juniors Catalina Gonzalez-Palafox, Xochitl Contreras, and Samantha Jauregui. It coincided with an economic blackout organized by the 50101 protest, which called on people across the country to strike from school, work, and avoid spending money for the day.

Some estimated that more than 1,000 students participated. School officials reported around 400 student absences earlier in the day. After the walkout began, the number of absences rose to more than 1,400 by the end of the school day.

Students exited campus through the gate between the 600 and 700 halls and gathered at the “Peace Corner” at Redwood Road and Castro Valley Boulevard. Many carried handmade signs with anti-ICE slogans, while others displayed flags from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Some students brought speakers and played music during the demonstration.

CVHS senior Annice Ma said

her participation was motivated by her family background. “I’m a child of an immigrant and I believe that no individual or family should be torn apart or supported without being given a chance at a better life or better opportunities,” Ma said.

The turnout filled all four corners of the intersection. Middle school students from Canyon and Creekside also joined the protest alongside the high school students. At times, students were seen running across streets or moving through traffic. School faculty members and sheriffs were present to monitor the area.

Hope Hudson, a senior at CVHS, said she hoped the protest would encourage community engagement and political action. She said she wanted “people to connect with each other and realize that it’s not weird to protest,” and to show elected officials that students oppose funding for ICE.

Some demonstrators marched along surrounding streets, including toward the freeway entrance and farther down Castro Valley Boulevard. The protest atmosphere was energetic, with many students expressing enthusiasm about participating and willingness to be interviewed.

Senior Nate Baranda thanked community members for their support. “Even if you’re not out here, it’s still good to know about what’s happening with ICE,” Baranda said.



Adriana Angeles waves a Mexican flag at the protest.

ELVIS CARPENTER

Sacramento politicians react to ICE activity

By Natalie Le

With the outburst of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) activity around America, California legislators have expressed their concern for how this could affect California.

The people in California fear or support the ICE action in other states. Many Sacramento sources voiced their opposition to ICE.

“ICE detention centers are centers of suffering, they are not giving people medical care, they are not letting them talk to lawyers, and not giving them due process... These corporations are profiting from suffering,” said Stephanie Gerstle Esparza, legislative director for Assembly Member Liz Ortega, a Democrat.

According to Gerstle Esparza, California is doing as much as it can to push against the federal action. New bills have and are becoming introduced as a way

to restrict ICE in California.

“If you were an ICE agent during Trump’s second term, you cannot be a teacher or a police officer in the state of California,” said Gerstle Esparza, talking about a new bill under consideration.

“(Senator Timothy Grayson) attended a press conference a few days ago speaking about how this negatively impacts our communities. California, as a whole, has been doing a lot of proactive action to ensure that ICE and any other immigration officers are not in protected spaces, meaning churches, schools, or legal offices,” said Samantha Yturralde, legislative director for Grayson, another Democrat.

Another source described the situation as

“Extremely scary,” said Megan Lee, legislative director for Assembly Member Matt Haney. “We’re living in a state of uncertainty... [Haney] is working on a bill, AB1633,

redirecting funds back to immigrant communities.”

Republican sources expressed more neutral viewpoints.

“As a staffer, we are concerned about California industries and we do our best to make sure that California is a safe place to be in,” said Jourieal Quisin, staff member for Assembly Member Tri Ta, a Republican.

“People don’t really make the separation between federal and state and local law enforcement,” said Assembly Member Tom Lackey, a Republican. “Law enforcement is seen as a monolith of behavior. And so when there’s objectionable circumstances, even if it’s just perceived, it’s still hurtful. It’s hurtful to the whole image of trying to have partnership in law enforcement. In order to have successful law enforcement, you have to have partnership.”



ELVIS CARPENTER

Jack Fry protests in the heart of Castro Valley.

Worries over phone policy draft

Olympian staff expresses concerns over next year's proposed phone policy

Editorial:

We at *The Olympian* believe that the new plans for next year's school phones policy are concerning. While similar to the current device regulations, the draft rules affecting emergency situations raise issues.

In the newly drafted plans for next year's device policy, a move recently mandated for all schools across California, district officials have proposed more robust regulations.

One of these policies includes the prohibition of taking pictures and filming during emergency events, alongside the general prohibition of using devices until students reach designated safety areas.

Based on how previous emergency events were handled this school year, we believe that it's pivotal for students to be allowed to use their phones during these times. The lack of communication from the administration during past incidents led to confusion and misinformation



VALENTINA HUYNH

amongst students. Most students only learned about what was going on through communication with their

parents, who had received some information, and word of mouth.

While we understand

that the intention could be to stop the spread of misinformation, it does feel like the administration is

instating this policy as a way to control the narrative of how these events play out. The ability to document emergency events, such as the bomb threat and gun scare last fall, can hold higher authorities accountable for missteps.

By including something like this in the phone policy shows that the district is aware of the controversy behind their handling of the situations; however, we do not think it appropriately addresses the problem many students, teachers, and parents all have regarding campus safety.

A separate conversation needs to be held between the district and the community that properly communicates our own concerns with how emergency situations have been handled in the past, and how we can improve both the handling and communication of another incident.

While we find this specific clause concerning, we do believe that the overall policy draft is student friendly.

Proportional grading takes some getting used to



By Alisa Wang

When I first heard that CVHS started implementing standards-based grading, I thought nothing much would change. In a couple of my classes, teachers already used standards-based grading. Besides, we can still see letter grades in Aeries and on report cards. But when I started experiencing standards-based grading more and more, I realized it functioned quite differently in practice.

CVUSD bases standards-based grading on "learning standards and shows what students know and can do,

rather than being influenced by factors such as compliance, participation, or access to resources." This grading system aims to curb teacher biases, improve accuracy, and also motivate students to focus on understanding.

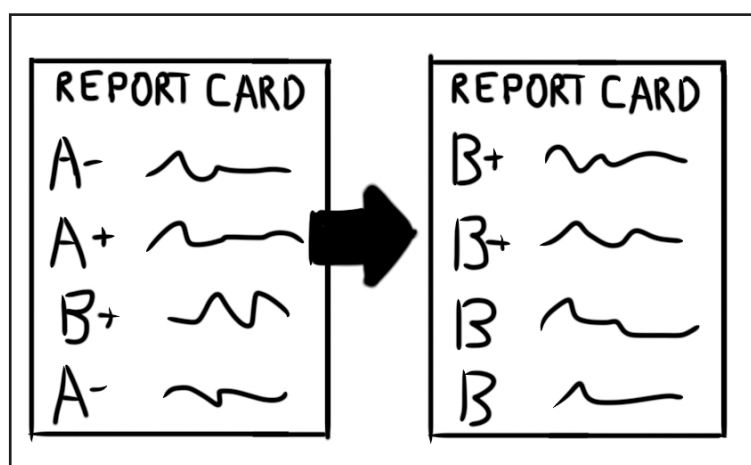
I believe standards-based grading has lots of benefits. For example, a 3.5 or a 3.2 translates to an A under this system. In contrast, traditional grading assigns an A to a 90% or 3.6. This structure boosted grades in the long term as the number of Bs significantly increased, and Cs slightly increased. But, eliminating "grade inflation" from non-academic factors, standards-based grading also reduced the number of A's. This is concerning for many high achieving students.

I also appreciate that standards-based grading emphasizes continuous growth. Teachers often highly recommend reassessments,

which give students opportunities to show their growth and improvement.

On top of that, this system separates any behavioral factors from academic performance. Traditional grading includes behavior factors, such as homework completion, effort, participation, and timeliness, that standards-based grading doesn't have. Removing subjective measures like effort or participation improves fairness as well. Although, I believe schools should still enforce homework completion and timeliness as those expectations can motivate students to complete work efficiently.

However, standards-based grading has fewer levels, so small mistakes can have a larger impact on a score. For example, on a 40-question quiz, missing one question could result in a 3.5 instead of the well deserved 3.9. This



VALENTINA HUYNH

scale frustrates me, as I feel in this situation that a 3.5 doesn't accurately display understanding.

Furthermore, because summative assessments carry significantly more weight than homework, they create stress for students who struggle with test-taking, including me. On top of that, motivation to actually do homework decreases because homework has little impact on overall grades.

Overall, standards-based grading presents meaningful strengths while also introducing some tough challenges. It emphasizes understanding and continuous improvement, reduces bias, and allows students to demonstrate growth.

Overall, while the new system can feel stressful at times, I still appreciate how it encourages learning over aiming for a good grade.

What about the children?

The damaging effects of ICE and anti-immigrant rhetoric



By Madison Lee

In a nation that stands for “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” I have never felt so helpless watching thousands of children going through the unimaginable of being taken from their homes, separated from their families, and losing the life and dream they had of America.

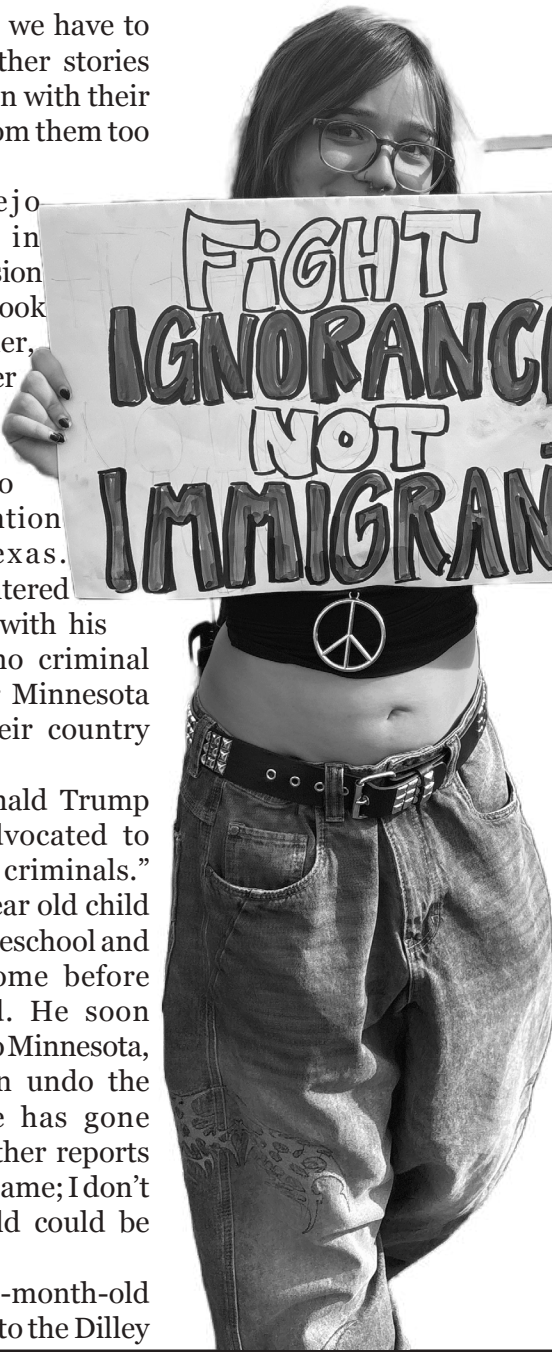
We are supposedly protecting ourselves from dangerous people and criminals. So why are we as a nation witnessing a five-year old being taken after his day at preschool? Or an 18-month old hospitalized and denied treatment? Why is there an 11-year old and a 13-year-old dying after their classmates at school threatened to call the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on her

family? Why do we have to see countless other stories of young children with their futures taken from them too soon?

Liam Conejo Ramos stood in shock and confusion as ICE agents took him and his father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, from their home in Minnesota to a family detention center in Texas. Liam’s family entered the US legally, with his father having no criminal record in either Minnesota or Ecuador, their country of origin.

President Donald Trump has actively advocated to target “violent criminals.” Liam is a five-year old child who attended preschool and was coming home before being detained. He soon returned home to Minnesota, but nothing can undo the experiences he has gone through. His father reports his son isn’t the same; I don’t believe any child could be again.

Amalia, an 18-month-old baby, was taken to the Dilley



Immigration Processing Center, where hundreds of children are held with their parents. Once she was inside, her health declined severely, and after days of sickness, she was taken to a children’s hospital in San Antonio. She was treated and prescribed medication and equipment that were essential to her recovery. However, at the detention center, federal officials reportedly confiscated the equipment and denied her access to the medication, forcing Amalia’s parents to wait in long lines in the cold for medication.

Jocelynn Rojo Carranza and Gabriela Aparicio Ortega tragically died by suicide after being bullied at school as ideals of nativism began to regain strength with Trump’s second term. Carranza, an 11-year-old girl, was told by her classmates that they would call ICE on her family “so they could take her parents away and she would be left alone,” her mother said. Ortega, a 13-year-old

girl, was bullied by her peers in North Carolina. These leave me speechless. No pre-teen should have to worry about this. While this bullying storyline isn’t new for many pre-teens and teens, the anti-immigrant ideals of the nation are growing increasingly concerning, and the consequences are starting to show through.

No child deserves to experience the horrors these children have lived through, no matter their background. I respect different views from my own, but will not stand for the argument that these children “got what they deserved.”

I urge us as people, as human beings, to wake up. I’m not asking you to change your political views. I believe everyone has the right to have their opinion and express it. But, please, let’s put blinding division to the side for just a second and reflect: These are hundreds of children put into life-changing and damaging experiences, losing the people and life they love. Is this what being American is about?

Trump should leave Greenland alone



By Kai Atkinson

Lately, my social media feeds have been blowing up with news about the push to acquire Greenland. While it sounds like a headline from a satire site, it’s actually become a massive deal in 2026. Looking at the latest from the Davos summit, President Donald Trump made it clear this isn’t just some random real estate thought. It’s a huge mess involving global security, natural resources, and some really awkward diplomacy with Trump’s administration.

The administration’s main argument is all about national security. From what I’ve read, the Arctic is basically the high north for military strategies now.

With Russia and China increasing their presence in

the region, Trump insists the U.S. wants Greenland to protect our northernmost territories. A big part of this is building out the golden dome missile shield to stop any attacks from coming our way.

Besides the military stuff, Greenland is basically a gold mine of rare earth materials. These are the materials we need for everything from our phones to the batteries in electric cars.

In a world where Trump is trying to stop relying on other countries like China for tech supplies, having a direct say in those resources would be a massive win. The president even mentioned at Davos that a framework for a mineral deal is in the works.

However, the professional side of this deal is where things get really complicated. Greenland is a self-governing territory under Denmark, and they have been super direct: “Greenland is not for sale.” Trump’s habits of treating a sovereign territory like a piece of commercial property is creating a ton of conflict with our allies. Denmark is

a key NATO partner, and pressuring them with tariff threats feels a bit like 19th-century imperialism.

Even though the president recently said at Davos that military force is off the table, the tension is definitely still there. Not to mention this is an era where international law and self-determination are supposed to be standard, the idea of land sale feels pretty outdated to a lot of people in this generation.

While there are legitimate reasons to be concerned about the Arctic, the approach really matters. We need the resources and the security, but we also need our friends.

Instead of trying to put a price tag on Greenland, maybe we should focus on strengthening our partnership in the North. Right now, the world is watching to see if the U.S. will act like a modern superpower or if Trump is just trying to take the land for his own reasons.

Trump should leave Greenland alone because its people deserve to govern themselves.

Trojan Talk

Re: Social polarization is pulling us apart
“This is very well written article good job. social polarization is frankly tearing the country apart I fully agree. We can’t do anything as a country if nobody agrees on anything and refuses to compromise at all.”
- Sky Johnson

Re: CVHS grad pens fantasy novel about “reforging a new normal”
“This seems like such an interesting book! It’s so cool to see people doing things like writing a book who graduated from CVHS!”
- Caleb L Carroll



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CVHS dance program amazes audience

By Winnie Shen

The CVHS dance department performed a winter dance showcase on Feb. 13 with the theme “Love is in the Air,” displaying the talent of over 50 student choreographers and dancers.

The performance was held in the Castro Valley Center for the Arts and was split into two acts. Teasers were arranged throughout the school day, aiming for an almost sold-out show to have a lively and engaged audience during the performance.

“I’m proud of how the choreographers created their dance, managed their rehearsals and dancers, and how dedicated everyone was to showing up and sharing their love of dance with me, the CVHS community, and the wider Castro Valley community,” said dance teacher Britney Brown.

These performances

incorporated many genres and dancing styles, including contemporary, hip-hop, ballet, k-pop, and more. Some of the songs used throughout the showcase include “Boyfriend,” “Touch,” “XO,” and “Buttons,” all revolving around the theme of love and affection.

“I’m most proud of ‘Buttons,’ since there were so many critiques and details that we had to do, like figuring out where to put people,” said sophomore Abraham Villegas.

Sophomore Reina Proctor also had enjoyable moments from the show. “I’m proud that we danced to our fullest and actually experienced what we did on stage together. It was just a really fun experience and I want to do it again,” she said.

“My favorite memory was going over the finale with everyone. I liked the audience and it was really fun to perform in front of people who are hype and cheer for us,” said freshman Zoe Garrett.

At the end of the show, the finale revealed all of the dancers that took part in this showcase and gave each group a chance to wave goodbye to the audience, reveling in the hard work that they have put into their performances in the past few months.

These dancers put a lot of effort into their choreography and deserve their flowers, so if you couldn’t make it this time be sure to look forward to their next show on April 28.



ALL PHOTOS BY WINNIE SHEN



DECA chapter thrives at competition

By Valentina Huynh

Students stand face to face with those accomplished in the business world—something many hope to find their place in. Their bodies shift knowing it’s time; nerves and tension are high, yet they must perform with excellence in front of this accomplished individual. This is just one of the ways DECA tests students.

CVHS’s DECA chapter had over 65% of students placed in the NorCal competition in January. Furthermore, DECA achieved Thrive Level Chapter Campaigns overall, the highest level of chapter recognition awarded by DECA through its exceptional performance in

community service, hosting community events, and outreach. Our current chapter’s dedication has hosted a safe environment for students with a balance of competitiveness and mutual support.

“It’s my third year in DECA, so seeing the camaraderie our chapter has and seeing them cheer for each other is something really special since not a lot of schools have that, and DECA is pretty competitive,” said DECA President Grace Tan.

In the NorCal conference, students that placed highly are Tan who placed first overall in the event Human Resource Management, junior Paige Pacheco who placed first overall in Principles of Marketing, and seniors Oscar Gao, Jeremy Saade, and Luke Lowe who competed together placing

second in Innovation Plan. To compete, every student does a 100 question MCQ based on the event they’re competing in that is worth one third of their overall score. Then students will be tested in different ways depending on their events.

DECA is a nonprofit organization that hosts competitive events to prepare students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. DECA’s competition challenges students, driving them to improve their performance and recognizes students who perform well. Students are encouraged to think like innovators, often winning through creativity and producing new ideas, not perfection alone.

DECA is a place where students can gain confidence



DECA lines up for photo.

through real-world experience. “DECA changed my high school experience. It made me a stronger communicator and inspired me to open my own business,” said Jeremy Saade,

vice president of leadership. Overall, CVHS’s DECA chapter has accomplished many great achievements with guidance and support from DECA advisor Byron Thompson.

CVHS celebrates Lunar New Year with festivities

By Sharlene Goduco

When the moment where guests stepped inside the CFA, it felt like walking into a festival. The room buzzed with excitement. Red and gold lanterns hung from the ceiling, and banners with Chinese characters lined the walls.

CVHS hosted the Lunar New Year celebration in the CFA on Feb. 12, bringing students and families together to celebrate the traditions, and resilience of the Asian community. The night opened with Xi Long playing “Racing Horses” on the erhu. The fast, galloping notes raced across the room, making it feel like the horses were running on stage.

Archer Zheng and



Jeremy Siu followed with a martial arts sparring demonstration. Gasps and cheers resonated throughout the room as the audience watched their impressive performance of skill and focus.

K-Pop Club then took the stage, performing “Blue Valentine” by NMIXX, “Touch” by KATSEYE, and “XO” by Enhypen. The performance itself added a modern, high-energy twist to the celebration, bridging traditional Lunar New Year festivities with contemporary pop culture.

“My friends are performing, so I’m really excited to cheer them on. And, of course — food, fun, and good vibes,” said sophomore Amina Messaoudi. “Events like this are important because people feel heard and represented. It shows how beautiful different cultures are.”

Students then gave presentations about Vietnamese and Chinese culture, explaining traditions and Lunar New Year customs. Their presentations helped the audience better understand the significance behind the celebration.

Then, the Lion Dance club en-



Xi Long performs “Racing Horses” on the erhu.

SHARLENE GODUCO

ergized the crowd next. Two performers worked together inside the bright red and gold lion costume, coordinating their movements to bring the lion to life. The performance symbolized good fortune and prosperity for the new year.

Raynee Lin closed the music segment with “Overture of Spring”. Families and students watched in awe, some closing their eyes, taking in the sense of renewal and hope for the new year.

Fashion Club closed the event with a cultural runway showcase. Students modeled garments representing different Asian cultures, including the Chinese qipao and Vietnamese ao dai. Each outfit reflected distinct traditions and craftsmanship. The showcase allowed students to express pride in their heritage through fashion.

After the performances, games were laid out on tables for families and students to enjoy. Each game was hosted by its respective cul-



Raynee Lin performs “Overture of Spring.”

SHARLENE GODUCO

ture club, including the Chinese Culture Club, Vietnamese Club, Mahjong Club, and Japanese Club. Guests played, laughed, and explored the different cultural games, keeping the energy lively even as the event started winding down.

“We want to see diversity represented in our school community and make sure everyone feels included,” said Kin Kwan, president of Chinese Culture Club.

“It’s a time to celebrate and re-

new,” said Isaac Nguyen, president of Lion Dance Club. “This brings our community together and reminds us that we’ll stick together.”

As the evening came to a close, families lingered to take photos and reflect on the celebration. The Lunar New Year event honored cultural pride, unity, and the strength of the community at CVHS. It was a night that celebrated not only tradition, but the shared hope of a fresh start.



K-pop club perform “Touch” by Katseye.



Fashion club represents many diverse cultures.



Archer Zheng and Jeremy Siu spar.

Wellness Warriors provide stability to students

By Mikhaela Macabeo

The Wellness Center provides many different support services for students, a safe space to get counseling, take a break, and overall to relax. However, that’s not all the Wellness Center provides; lead social worker Samuel Frank coordinates a group called the Wellness Warriors (WEWA).

“We want to take the Wellness Center outside of the building, and in a really busy high school, no one is better doing that than

students, letting them communicate, experience, and promote the things that we are promoting internally,” said Frank.

WEWA’s main goal is to help expose the greater school community to the Wellness Center and help students understand that seeking support is encouraged. This is exactly what they offer through outreach, events, and peer-led group discussions. They also offer weekly meets such as Wellness Wednesdays, where members and students meet at the Wellness Center. WEWAs work to break the stigma about mental health while also guiding students

towards our available resources.

Wellness Warrior Ana Carrillo shared that her favorite part of the program was how deeply community and student-centered the program is.

“Every project gives me the chance to work with incredible people, my peers and the Wellness Center staff, who truly make everything better. It’s such a genuine, supportive community to be part of, and that sense of connection is what makes it so special,” she said.

For students who thrive in organized and collaborative environments, being a part of this



Wellness Center creates a supportive space.

MIKHAELA MACABEO

organization is not only empowering but rewarding as well. It lets students learn how to step out of their comfort zone in a safe and supportive environment, build confidence through communication, and strengthen their leadership skills, all while making a positive impact on students’ lives.

Becoming a WEWA is an ideal opportunity for students inter-

ested in mental health, advocacy, or community outreach. Members develop valuable skills and plan different events. Students interested in joining can find the application on the Wellness Center website or stop by the Wellness Center during lunch or break to ask questions, meet the team, and explore the many resources offered.

Trojan wrestlers take home the trophy

By Leila Tran

The CVHS wrestling teams successfully secured the win at the WACC Duel League Championships on Feb. 7 at Berkeley High School.

Lady Trojans won with 181 points, sweeping San Leandro High in second with 100 points, and Berkeley High in third with 89 points. Boys won with 235.5 points, surpassing Arroyo High in second with 212, and Hayward High in third with 107.

After another successful season, girls team captain Audrey Marquez expressed her deep appreciation for her coaches and the impact they had on her individual performance.

“I love my coaches so much because they’re so helpful. I feel like they really understand what I’m going through, especially Coach Sabrina, since



Mia Weinberger and David Unenbat compete with their opponenents.

she helps me get through a lot. And I also have some coaches outside of school that also support me all the time,” said Marquez.

Although the Trojan wrestling team faced a mentally tough season, they still managed to push through with their best effort to take the victory at the league championships. There wasn’t a specific point at which

Marquez believed her team would be able to make it this far, but with their growing drive and determination throughout the year, they were able to come out triumphant.

“We were a little low on motivation, but I think we’ve put in a lot of hard work in practice every time this season. This year, our motivation kind of built up, and I think that’s why we were so successful,”

she adds.

Boys wrestler Jacob Deguzman expressed his appreciation of his teammates. “We have supported each other through the year by punishing each other at practice and supporting each other during our matches.”

Girls wrestler Sophia Bonilla is grateful for the community she has joined this year. “I think I did pretty well,

especially since it was my first year. They brought me in and they were all happy about me joining.”

Lady Trojans Sofia Chkhartishvili, Audrey Marquez, Madilyn Koscinski, Kenny Monteleone, Hayley Biasbas, Gianna Farrah Florence, Kimberly Gutierrez Estrada, and Sophia Bonilla advanced to NCS individuals. Boys wrestlers Mason Deguzman, Aiden Jeong, Yianni Flevotomos, Elijah Colon, David Unenbat, and Homan Sadiq advanced to NCS championships.

The CVHS boys and girls wrestling teams had another victorious season, and their hard work has shown through their outstanding performances at WACC.

Trojan wrestlers plan on continuing to stay persistent and dedicated throughout the rest of the season, as well as the next, hoping to secure another victory at the 2027 WACC League Championships.

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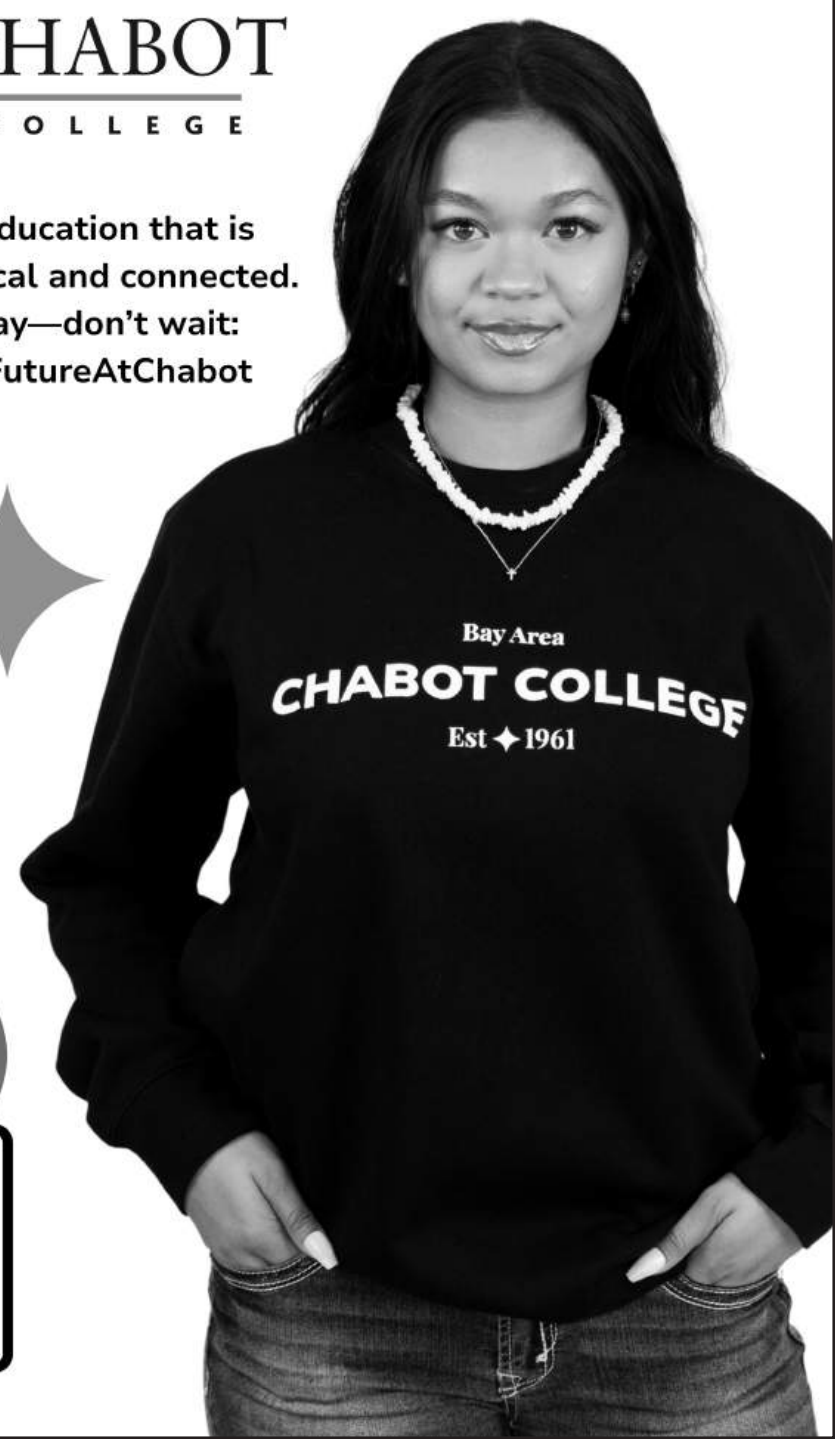
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Cassidy calls the shots on the court

By Pari Muni

Kathleen Cassidy, one of our beloved social studies teachers, leads an astonishing double life. When she is not giving lectures or handing out homework, she officiates NCAA Division 1 basketball. On Jan. 29, she refereed for the University of San Francisco (USF) women's

being an official, especially in games like this. I feel like, as a player, you have to play through the calls even if it's not what you agree with. You know, they try their best out there, you can't get mad at them," stated Megan McIntyre, a guard for the USF team. As the game progressed, energy was high all around the stadium. Despite the criticism that Cassidy faces as a consequence of being an official,

to stay very even-keeled," commented Cassidy. Cassidy has met many fantastic people that she continues to work with throughout her officiating, who have witnessed this diligence and sagaciousness.

"I think Kat's an amazing official. She's extremely professional and knowledgeable. From what I've seen, she's very student-athlete-centered; she prioritizes their welfare on the court. We like having her here," remarked Stephanie Shrieve-Hawkins, the Interim Director of Athletics at USF.

In 25 years of officiating, there are many lessons learned that Cassidy brings into her teaching career and classroom environment.

"I've always been a fairly patient person, but officiating has really taught me to have a lot more patience. I think my communication style and ability to communicate have

really improved. When you're on the court, you have to be clear and

basketball game against Gonzaga University. The game was intense, leading to a score of 62-62 before transitioning into overtime. USF Dons fought valiantly, but ultimately Gonzaga Bulldogs secured their triumph with a score of 74-66. It was not an easy job,

she handles it impressively. "Every time you blow the whistle, half the people are going to be happy, and half the people are going to be upset. But it's the job, you're there to enforce the rules. That doesn't bother me, though. Sometimes, when coaches are yelling, at some point, sure it impacts me, but even if my emotions are really high internally, on the outside I try

concise. Those are both really important skills to bring into learning," she reflected. One thing is for sure: balancing educating with officiating is a truly incredible feat that requires one truly incredible teacher.



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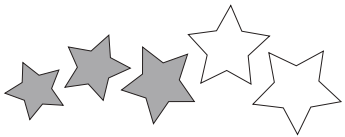
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“Wicked: For Good” fails to deliver



By Nia Alton

Tornadoes are unusual, but they are incredibly common in Kansas when wearing ruby slippers. It might sweep you away and bring you somewhere strange, all to say, “Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road.”

“Wicked: For Good,” the second part of the 2024 movie “Wicked,” continues the back-story of the Wicked Witch of the West, leading to the journey of Elphaba, Glinda, and their many friends as they try to save Oz, once and for all.

However, this seemingly age-appropriate kids’ movie, as its cover suggests, quickly proves uncomfortable for many.

In this case, it’s not about too much profanity, inappropriate scenes, or graphic violence—it’s the Wizard of Oz, for Pete’s sake. Still, it’s more of what’s going on mentally with the actors that created an uncomfortable viewing for many.

In many cases, an actor’s mental health does not affect the viewers until they inform themselves about it, or they hear about it, but in “Wicked: For Good,” actors like Ariana Grande, who plays Glinda, and Cynthia Erivo, who plays Elphaba, were clearly malnourished. Both of their sternums were shown, and even in some cases, it seemed like the costume department was attempting to show off the fact that you could only see skin and bones.

Their collarbones and shoulders were incredibly disheartening to see, especially given the obvious, bright, shiny gemstone placement on said collarbones, to emphasize the malnourished look.

Of course, other actors in other movies may face similar issues. But in a movie targeted towards a younger audience, it poses serious mental health influences to young, underdeveloped brains.

It is especially difficult to ignore when you remember the first movie, when the actors were physically healthy, so naturally, your thoughts gravitate towards the strategically placed gemstones and excessive face contouring on the main actors.



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It’s important to note that commenting or suggesting someone has an eating disorder can be hurtful to one’s mental health. However, in such a big movie with multiple actors looking this way, it’s doing a disservice to ignore it, because it will then become normalized, popularizing the look of near death for women’s bodies through media.

Other than that, the film was

well produced, and the music was well integrated into the story. If you’re not into musical theatre-related songs, you may not enjoy it.

The storyline was easy to follow and often unpredictable, which made it all the more worth watching compared to a typical movie, where you know exactly what is going to happen next.

Overall, it’s worth watch-

ing as long as you are aware and can ignore the extreme malnourishment of the main characters’ actors, though it is doubtful anyone could. I would not recommend children watch it, as it will most likely set up unrealistic body standards of being deathly skinny to the point of no return, which is very harmful not only to children, but also to teenagers and adults alike.

Bad Bunny steals show as Seahawks win Super Bowl

By Sharlene Goduco

During the Super Bowl on Feb. 8, Bad Bunny’s halftime performance had fans talking worldwide. The Puerto Rican superstar became the first Latino solo artist to headline the Super Bowl halftime almost entirely in Spanish -- a milestone for Latin music on one of the world’s largest stages. His set featured a mix, including “Tití Me Preguntó,” “Yo Perreo Sola,” “EoO,” “Monaco,” and the closing anthem “D+MF,” drawing from his Grammy-winning album “DeBí TiRAR Más FOToS.”

Lady Gaga joined him to perform a salsa-inspired version of “Die With a Smile,” while Ricky Martin took the stage for “Lo Que Le Pasó a Hawaii,” a song that brought a moving nod to Puerto Rican identity and storytelling. Other celebrities, including Karol G, Cardi B, Pedro Pascal, Jessica Alba, and Alix Earle, appeared onstage and in the set’s various scenes, turning the performance into a wide-ranging celebration of music, culture, and community.

More than just a list of songs, the performance itself reso-

nated with many young fans and viewers because it centered on authentic identity and representation. Bad Bunny waved the Puerto Rican flag, referenced Latin American heritage, and closed with a unifying message as he held a football inscribed with “Together, We Are America” — words that spread across social media and news commentary as a symbol of inclusion.

The Seattle Seahawks claimed their second Super Bowl title, defeating the New England Patriots 29-13 at Levi’s Stadium. From the first whistle, Seattle set the tone with a defense that pressured quarterback Drake Maye relentlessly and a ground game led by Kenneth Walker III that refused to let the Patriots dictate the pace.

Walker, the game’s Most Valuable Player (MVP), rushed for 135 yards and added crucial yardage in key situations, showing why the Seahawks relied on him all season. Quarterback Sam Darnold connected on a clutch touchdown pass to AJ Arner, while kicker Jason Myers became a record-setter, nailing five field goals and keeping the Seahawks comfortably ahead throughout the night. On

the defensive side, Devon Witherspoon and Uchenna Nwosu made exceptional, decisive plays, with Nwosu returning a forced fumble 45 yards for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter, effectively sealing the game.

The Patriots made several attempts to rally. Maye led drives that showed promise, and Rhamondre Stevenson scored a touchdown late in the fourth quarter to narrow the gap to 22-13. But Seattle’s ball control and opportunistic defense left New England with no room to mount a full comeback. Analysts noted that Seattle’s ability to dominate time of possession and turn turnovers into points was a critical factor in the win.

Seattle’s victory came from a complete team effort. The offense moved the ball efficiently, the defense created key turnovers, and the special teams scored when it mattered most. By the final whistle, it was clear the Seahawks had outplayed the Patriots from start to finish. The win proves Seattle is a serious contender in the NFL and rewards hard work, smart strategy, and determination.

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