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THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL Olympian

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Community protests Marshall teachers’ transfer



MAXIM ZHUZE

Protesters march in support of two Marshall Elementary teachers.



MAXIM ZHUZE

Teacher Aimee Penn, facing an involuntary transfer, hugs a supporter.

By Maxim Zhuze

A passionate group of supporters rallied on April 23 in protest of the school district’s decision to involuntarily transfer teachers Aimee Penn and Henna Bianchini from Marshall Elementary School. Around a hundred demonstrators, made up of parents, students, community members, and colleagues, gathered on the corner of Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road before making their way down the street in a spirited march toward the

Castro Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) offices, chanting loudly in support of the teachers. The crowd, many of whom carried handmade signs and wore custom-made t-shirts with supportive messages, marched with purpose, chanting slogans that reflected their outrage and disappointment at the district’s decision. Cries of “District says Go, we say No!” and “District, do better!” echoed as the group advanced, gaining attention from passersby and drivers who honked in solidarity.

The chants captured the group’s core message: they want Penn and Bianchini to remain at Marshall Elementary, where they have long been considered vital school community members. Both teachers are deeply embedded in the fabric of Marshall, known not only for their dedication to student learning but also for the strong relationships they have built with families over the years. “I’ve been at this site for 25 years, and this year, I know all the families. I even bond with kids that aren’t in my class because I want to make

them feel like they belong at our school,” said Penn. Parents in attendance spoke emotionally about Penn and Bianchini’s impact on their children. Several noted that the teachers had helped their students through academic struggles, emotional challenges, and even difficult family situations. “My child would not be where they are today without Ms. Bianchini,” one parent said. “She makes every student feel seen and cared for.” Another parent described Penn as “a light in the classroom, someone who

brings out the best in every child.” Although the reason for the transfer hasn’t been revealed by the district yet, both teachers believe that their transfer is retaliation for the formal complaints they have written about Marshall’s principal, Mistee Guzman. “I’m outspoken for the students, and if I consider something is wrong, I just don’t go along with it,” Penn said. She didn’t reveal what was in the complaints, but stated that it was “pretty bad.”

► See **TEACHERS:** page 7

Decision Day celebrates senior class

By Amaya Rambel

As the lunch bell rang on Friday, May 2, students entering the quad were greeted by radio music, lively crowds, and a buzz of excitement. The occasion? Senior Decision Day: a time-honored tradition that celebrates the graduating class as they commit to their post high school plans. Seniors proudly donned college gear—sweaters, t-shirts, and hats—representing campuses across the country. But the event wasn’t just for show; it was a chance to reflect on the journey that brought them here, and to inspire those

still on their way. A photo opt, games like cornhole, and a festive atmosphere turned lunchtime into a celebration of achievement, transition, and community. Held annually at the start of May, Senior Decision Day marks the point when most college-bound students have officially chosen their schools and submitted deposits. More than a symbolic milestone, the day also serves as one of the final school-wide events where seniors can engage with their classmates and underclassmen before graduation. It’s a celebration of hard work—and

a reminder that no one goes through the process alone. Annelies Van Druten, who will attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, spoke about the power of going through the college process alongside peers. “I think it’s a celebration of us all moving on to greater things,” she said. “The journey of all of us applying to colleges together brought us closer.” Although she admitted the waiting period was stressful, she felt reassured in hindsight: “Congratulating each other like this really helps.”

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MATTHEW WONG

Matthew Aguas (left) and Christina Huang celebrate their college commitments.

Olympian staff expresses appreciation

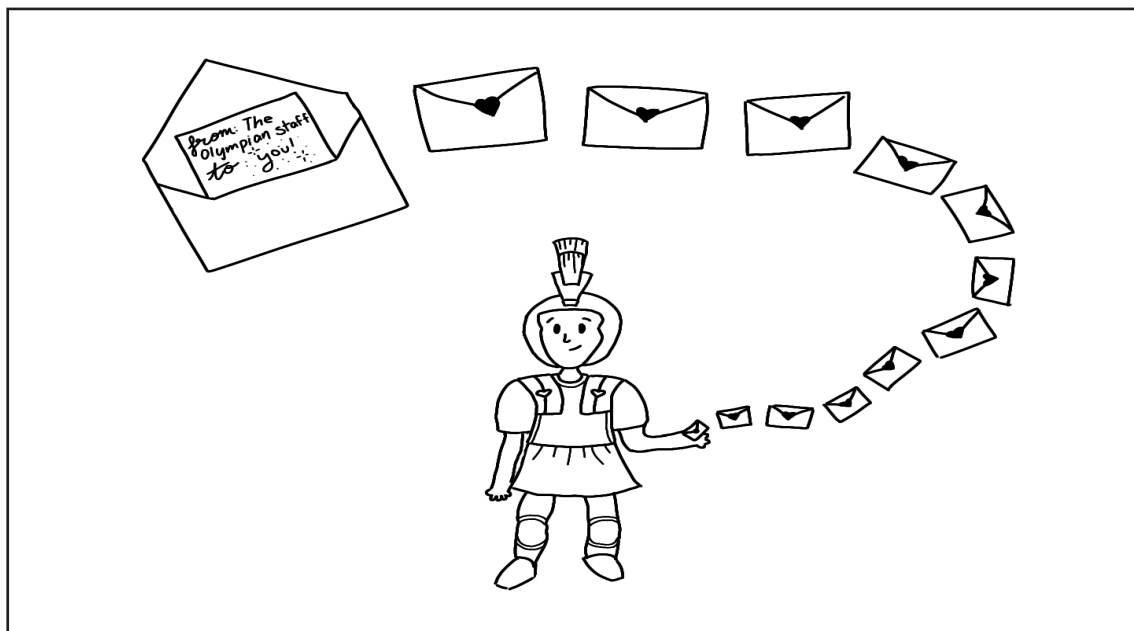
Editorial:

The week of May 5 to May 9 was Teachers Appreciation Week, an opportunity to show our gratitude and admiration for CVHS teachers, which was taken up wholeheartedly by CVHS journalism students.

Our welcoming CVHS teachers play a large role in setting the stage for an inclusive and encouraging learning environment.

“The teacher I’ve undoubtedly strived and looked forward to thriving with is Ms. (Anne) Parris in honors English. Anne Parris has a unique way of encouraging everyone, no matter their bias or background, to share their cultural and personal experiences within their work, making class something to look forward to, not a drag!” recalled Fanoosa Mustamandi.

Similarly, Samuel Jarvis acknowledged German teacher Barbara Andersen “because she was always accepting of everyone in her class while remaining honest



MADISON LEE

with everyone regardless of age or skill level.”

Within the classroom, students appreciate teachers such as Juan Escalante for “how kind and dedicated he is. He makes the material easy to understand with the way he lectures. He is funny and very passionate about the subject,” said Liana Klausmeyer.

Aleksandra Hurka shared the same appreciation, saying “a big thank you to Juan

Escalante for pushing me this year to be able to achieve success in my APUSH class. I appreciate the passion for teaching he has and his ability to allocate time to each of his students for academic support.”

Likewise, Sue Anderson promotes a similar sense of growth within her students. “This year in Med Careers, she has pushed me to be a better person and given me many

opportunities to enhance my future. She cares about her students in a way that is rare in a teacher, and I appreciate her for making high school fulfilling,” said Elliot Lucas.

Yet, beyond just being strong mentors, students appreciate the impact CVHS staff members make on our lives outside of the classroom.

Sophie Lau from the Wellness Center, for example, “has been a pillar for me

during my roughest patches, and I’ve never gotten to express how grateful I am to her for that,” mentioned Brenda Huynh.

Paty Escalera mentioned Jill Tavis in the Wellness Center as “a huge inspiration for me. She may not fully know what a positive impact she has had in my life, but anyone who meets me will because I couldn’t have made it to where I am now without her.”

Leia Kremer appreciated choir teacher Laryssa Sadoway, who “listened to me with no judgment. She let me into her office and as I told her about my problems she gave me great advice and helped me get through it all. During the next few weeks, she made sure I was okay and made me feel like I was myself again. Thank you Laryssa Sadoway.”

Beyond just this week, we should ensure that we continue to show appreciation for all the teachers who make our campus feel like home.

Discovering the meaning of Mexico

By Paty Escalera Carrillo

Mexico: a place I had never been before, yet I was so familiar with. A place filled with memories and stories that I grew up hearing about. I always thought that I would only know it through the stories I heard from family; however, over the last school break, I got the privilege of visiting this place that I had heard so much about, and that was incredibly special to everyone in my family.

Both sides of my family grew up in a small town in the state of Michoacán, Mexico. This was not my first trip to Mexico, however, every other trip I had taken had been to popular vacation spots. This was my first time getting to see a true, authentic small town that was filled with history, which directly impacted many generations in my family. I had low expectations for this trip, mostly because I did not know what to expect. Neither of my parents had been back in more

than 20 years, and my mom always told me that she had always dreamed about bringing me to see the place where she grew up. So I was mostly happy that she finally got to live her dream.

The journey there consisted of a seven-hour airplane ride to the nearest major city, and after that, we took a rental car the rest of the way there which was about a two hour drive. Immediately upon arriving, my dad rolled down the windows of the car, and we could instantly feel the warm weather welcome us. The main reason for this trip was for my dad to get my late grandfather’s house in order.

That was our first stop; my grandfather’s house was located in the center of town, so I got to see a lot of the town on our way there. When we got there and went inside, my mom said that it was almost like time had stopped. The house had been untouched for several years. As we were all looking around, my dad got a phone call, and to me it was like a sign from my grandfather.

Right after he passed away almost a year ago we would often get phone calls from doctors who weren’t yet informed of his passing, so we were used to it.

However after a couple months the frequency of the phone calls decreased significantly. So the fact that this was the first time in a while we had gotten one of those calls and we were standing in one of the only places that

was left his memory is more than just a coincidence to me. This moment will forever be something that I will hold and is by far my favorite memory of that trip.



PATY ESCALERA CARRILLO

The town square in Michoacán, Mexico makes the perfect view.



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CVHS Spring sports teams dominate



Matthew Xiao prepares his serve.

RACHEL ZHEN



SHARLENE GODUCO

Miley Snellgrove majestically contributes to absolute victory.



Wyatt Franklin hurdles to the finish line.

ANGEL CHEN



Softball players meet on the mound.

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Jenna Wong swims to the podium.

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Gilbert Seidel prepares to pitch.

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CVHS Fashion Show shines on self expression

By Rachel Zhen

With live music filling the air, students took the runway under the bright lights in the CVHS annual fashion show, hosted by Fashion Club, in the cafeteria on April 18. With models showcasing designs made from thrifted, recycled, and repurposed material, the show's main focus was to bring awareness to fast fashion and promote sustainable fashion.

From outfits solely made of paper to crocheted shirts, students put a lot of dedication into capturing each model's interests and style into their design. Many proud parents and peers gathered to watch all the hard work put into the show by the students.

"My favorite part was working with the designer to find something that reflected the person, as well as seeing all the creative designs other people came up with," said model Sierra Quinby.

The show consisted of many different styles of clothing ranging from dresses, t-shirts, and pants inspired by music



CVHS students (left to right) Ea Trafton-Hancock , Gia De La Torre, and Natalie Le strike a pose down the runway.

albums and traditional clothing. One model wore a hand-sewn shirt inspired by the song "Take a Bite" by Beabadoobee, while another honored their cultural background by upcycling a qipao.

"My designs were inspired by the cultures of each of my models

(Eritrean, Chinese, Japanese, and Czech). Each piece represented the cultural and personal interests of my models," commented designer Loriannah Shah.

Behind each design, it took lots of trial and error, and for many students, it came with unexpected challenges.

"The hardest part of making my clothes is trying to make them perfectly accurate and properly portraying my models because I want them to feel comfortable and properly represented," said Shah.

As the show came to an end, applause filled the room, not just for the designs, but for the message that fashion can be creative and personal without having to contribute to the growing waste of fast fashion.

CVHS seniors participate in assassins game

By Michael Owen

Want an inside scoop on a game exclusively for seniors? Well, you're in the right place. CVHS seniors recently concluded their annual Senior Assassins game, which they play with water guns.

However, the game is much more meticulous and complex than that. The game has many rules and guidelines the player must follow, including off-limit zones, teammates, and how to "assassinate" someone. You get to pick a partner and work together to eliminate both of your assigned targets.

The game is moderated by people called "godfathers" who assign targets, set rules, and announce changes to the game. Though there were some concerns with how intense this game would get, some felt the game was too restricting.

"I didn't have any real concerns with the game," said senior Connor Cooper. "If anything, I thought the godfathers were too restricting."

Each player must pay an

entry fee of \$20 to be put into the money pot. The last team standing received 50% of the pot, the runner-ups won 20%, and the godfathers received 20% as well. The game was played through multiple rounds with different teams in each round. Those eliminated in round one could come back in round four or five.

When asked about his best memory of playing, Cooper said, "Getting everybody out was really fun. Overall, it was very fun."

"It's been played at CVHS for years. The kids get really into it. My boys had fun with it," expressed one parent.

Adrian Guzman was this year's champion and won \$700.

Congratulations Jayda!

Your passion, hard work, and grace-both on and off the stage-have inspired us every step of the way. As you head off to college, we know you'll continue to shine. We are so proud of you and can't wait to see all that you achieve! Love, Mom, Dad, and Christian



Congratulations Gia!

Bravo you did it and you did it well! We are so proud of all your accomplishments in dance, spirit squad and theater! Our shining star! I can't wait to see you become all that your heart desires. You deserve the world!

Love Mom, Nan and Fam!



Spotlight shines on dance showcase

By Amaya Rambel

The cafeteria stage lights flicked on, casting a spotlight on a line of student dancers as the crowd fell silent with anticipation. Moments later, the opening beats of Ciara’s “Like a Boy” echoed through the room, and the dancers launched into a sharp, synchronized routine. Cheers erupted from the audience—students and teachers alike—marking the beginning of something special.

On Friday, April 28, the school’s new dance class gave the campus a taste of what was to come by performing teaser routines during second and third periods. These short previews were just the beginning. Later that evening at 6:30 p.m., the group held its first full dance showcase in nearly 24 years, organized by dance teacher Britney Brown. The performance, held in the cafeteria, ran until 7:40 p.m. Tickets were \$5, with snacks provided for attendees.

The showcase was more than just entertainment. It was a celebration of a new era for the school’s performing arts program. It offered a chance for the community to see the dancers’ growth over the year, from their very first steps to full-stage performances. The show featured a blend of contemporary hits and nostalgic classics, with choreography crafted by both the students and their teacher.

For many students, this was their first time performing in front of a crowd as part of the school community. Chloe Kim, a freshman and competitive dancer, reflected on the experience: “It was really fun. It’s a different environment from competition—just a different vibe—but it was really cool.” She especially appreciated the creative freedom students had in building the show. “All the dances we choreographed have a little bit of our personality in them. It’s just fun performing for people.” Her favorite number? “Like a Boy,” the opening routine of the teasers.

Freshman Lyane Mwa shared similar feelings. “The teasers were nerve-wracking, but really fun to do,” she said. Confident in the class’s preparation, she added, “We’ve been practicing for a while, so I think we’ve got the hang of it. If we mess up, we know how to bounce back.” Her favorite dance was also “Like a Boy.”

Junior Lia D’Errico, who joined the class this year, described the experience as both thrilling and rewarding. “I was nervous, but more than that, I was excited—and I’m glad it went pretty well.” For Lia, the dance class has



Student dancers begin a routine to Ciara’s “Like a Boy.”

AMAYA RAMBEL



become a highlight of her day. “I love how it gets me to move my body in the morning and energize me for the rest of the day.” Her favorite routines were “Like a Boy” and “Riptide,” both featured during the second-period teaser.

The showcase was met with enthusiasm not only from the performers but also from

the

audience.

Many who saw the teasers were eager to return that evening to support their classmates in the full show.

For a program returning after a 24-year hiatus, the energy, passion, and talent on display proved that dance is officially—and joyfully—back.



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Amanda Saucedo

Remember that the future is yours to shape, and we have no doubt you'll make the most of it. Always follow your heart and never stop learning. We are so proud of the person you've become, and we are so excited to see what you'll do next.
Love Mom and Dad



Congratulations
Ryan!

We are so proud of you
and all you have
accomplished!
Love, Mom, Dad &
Emma



Congratulations, David Bull!

Your dedication and character make us proud.

Geese and goslings arrive on campus

By Yusef Scott

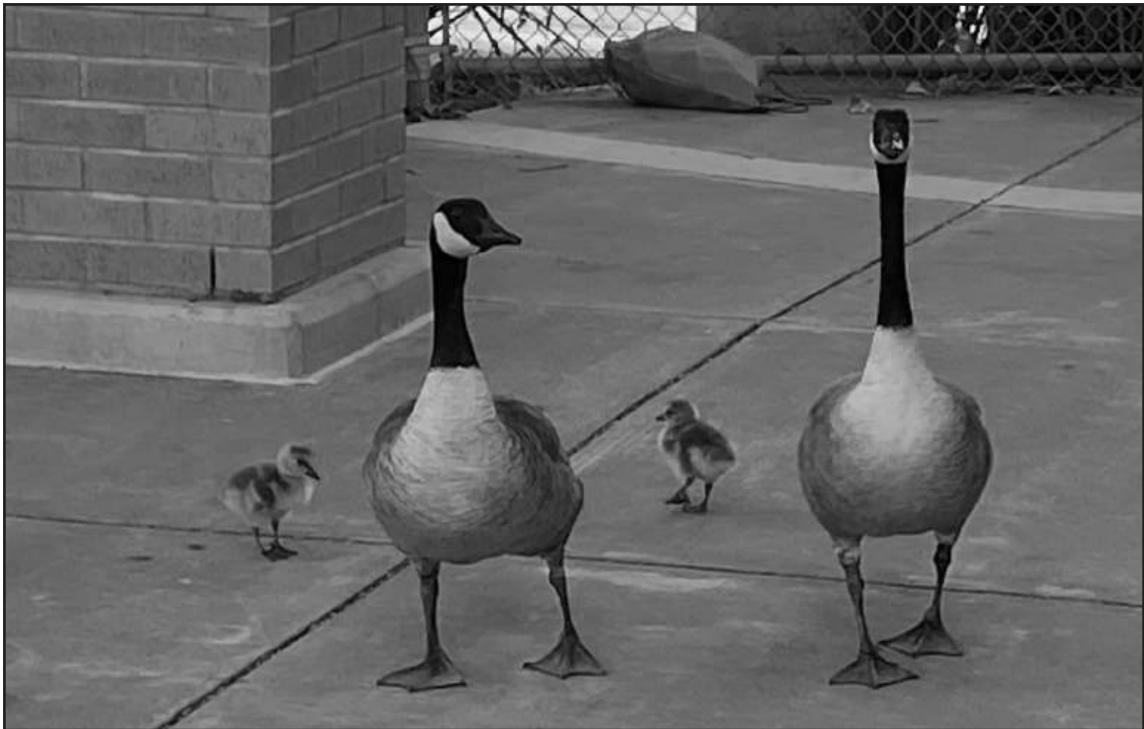
New members of CVHS have joined the community over spring break in the form of goslings. Immediately after spring break, students and teachers alike quickly noticed a goose outside of the 700 hall set up its nest in a pile of mulch. The goose nest has since been fenced off from students and signs have been put up telling students to not disturb it.

In early May, the eggs finally hatched and the baby geese were roaming the campus.

In April, it was common to only see the mother goose on campus, leaving many to believe she was all alone. However, more recently the father has been here as well.

"The whole family was walking between the 400 and 500 halls," explained senior Vesemir Pirogov, who previously had a pet goose in Russia.

By now, the geese have become a normal part of life at



The CVHS geese family are caught skedaddling around campus.

AMAYA RAMBEL

CVHS. Jennifer Clyde has even taken her whole class over to observe the geese and their daily activities. The mother goose was frequently seen perched on top of her eggs or sitting on the

roof greeting nearby students by hissing at them, prior to her eggs hatching.

The students might not always be treating the geese with respect, however.

"There's a bunch of oranges and apples inside of the fencing from people throwing their snacks over," said senior Josh Donaire. It's generally bad to feed geese because it can

negatively impact their health and behavior.

One thing that nobody knows is how long the geese will stay here and why the mother chose CVHS to lay her eggs.

"She most likely came over break when it was isolated to lay her eggs here, it's hard to know exactly how long she'll stay," said biology teacher Jeffrey Foster. "There are also multiple geese, I assume the father goes out to look for food, or they take turns with the eggs." Foster also suggested that it's currently the breeding season for geese, explaining why the goose chose CVHS during an isolated period to lay eggs.

Students generally seem to like the goose as it's not uncommon to see small crowds watching her during break or lunch, however, Foster warned students about keeping a distance because geese are known to get very defensive if threatened.

"They need to make it the new mascot already," said sophomore Alan Li.

CVUSD approves LGBTQ+ measure

By Elliot Lucas

CVUSD passed a new resolution reaffirming its dedication to supporting LGBTQ+ students, staff, and community members on Feb. 20. The resolution includes a range of specific actions aimed at protecting the rights and well-being of those who identify as LGBTQ+.

Notably, the resolution mandates that gender identity and expression be fully respected across all school activities, including sports and extracurricular programs.

It explicitly states that students will not be outed by staff to family members without their consent and reinforces the continued availability of gender-neutral restrooms at all CVUSD sites.

Additionally, schools will fly the Progress Pride Flag during the entire month of June and continue to display the flag painted around every CVUSD campus.

CVUSD Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi emphasized the district's commitment to protect students who are historically marginalized:

"LGBTQ+ communities face harassment and discrimination, and we have a moral obligation to stand with them to protect their rights as students, staff, neighbors, and community members."

The district will also implement mandatory cultural competency training for all teachers working with seventh- to twelfth-grade students beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. This annual training will focus on more effectively supporting LGBTQ+ students in the school environment.

When asked about the intended impact of the resolution, Ahmadi said, "Our 'Promise' as outlined in our Strategic Direction is that all students will receive equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities. That includes our LGBTQ+ students feeling safe and supported."

This resolution comes as President Trump's administration imposes new restrictions on LGBTQ+ rights nationwide, including bans on gender-affirming care and limits on LGBTQ+ content in schools.

"I know that our community is a radically accepting one, but the President of the United States is terrorizing our transgender kids. What a frighteningly wasteful and harmful use of power," stated Michael Kusiak, school board representative.

The resolution is part of CVUSD's ongoing efforts to create a safe and inclusive learning environment where every student, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or background, feels seen, respected, and supported.

Decision Day celebrates senior class

► SENIORS: from page 1

felt reassured in hindsight: "Congratulating each other like this really helps."

Classmate Ash Ahmad, also heading to SAIC, emphasized the bigger picture. "School can be frustrating and hard, but it's worth it. And it's just one step in your journey—one step in your career. There will be many others." They also stressed the importance of leaning on the community, "If you don't know what you're doing, go to a community—figure stuff out."

Beyond celebrating those already on their way, the event offered valuable insight for younger students. By interacting with seniors who had just navigated the college admissions process,

underclassmen gained perspective—and maybe a little peace of mind.

Maizy Dangler, committed to Trinity University, had this advice, "You know, it always works out. You're going to find friends no matter where you go. You're going to find what you want to do no matter what you do." For students still figuring things out, she offered simple but grounding words, "What will happen will

happen."

In the end, Senior Decision Day wasn't just about college merch or games—it was about celebrating possibility. It gave seniors a moment to look ahead with pride, while giving the rest of the school a glimpse of what's to come. With music, laughter, and plenty of wisdom to go around, the day offered a powerful reminder: the next chapter is just beginning.

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AP Art show draws in a crowd

By Victor Bahng

Showcasing a variety of artworks created by student artists, the AP Art Show was held from May 1 through May 6 at the Exhibition Hall inside the CFA.

The Art Show displayed a number of artwork series, each around eight to ten pieces in length. With every series centered around a theme or question chosen by their respective artist, some were “personal, some tell stories, [and] some talk about social/political issues,” said AP art teacher Alexis Knudsen.

Next to the students’ series were their artist statements, explaining the ideas, interests, and inspirations behind the pieces. The arrival of a new class of students every year means a new set of contributing ideas and designs are explored. “One flavor of interest

across multiple series this year [was] character design,” said Knudsen.

Senior Carrie Lee is one of the artists whose works were shown at the Art Show. “In AP Art, we make our inquiry, and mine is about my experience as a woman, specifically how we are affected and objectified by others’ opinions, actions, and our internal thoughts,” said Lee.

Throughout her series, her pieces revolved around themes such as slang used to describe body parts, the trends and influence of social media, and people’s opinions on a woman’s body and fertility.

“I became inspired by my experiences and feelings as a young woman, so I decided to look into aspects of my life that seem unquestioned that I’ve felt like a majority of girls/women have gone through and can relate to one another,”

said Lee.

Senior Owen Humphrey’s pieces focused on humanity’s impact on the environment and climate change. Humphrey wanted to delve into the issue with a “more fantastical lens.”

“I decided to focus on this subject because climate change is a very important issue to me,” said Humphrey. “It’s difficult to avoid hearing about the damage being done nowadays.”

As AP Exams began the week right after, it was an opportunity to stop by after school to briefly forget about them and admire some art.



Marwa Seckandary admires the art pieces. FANOOSA MUSTAMANDI



Owen Humphrey created “Bird Maintenance.” VICTOR BAHNG

►TEACHERS: from page 1

Community protests Marshall teachers’ transfer

Upon reaching the CVUSD offices, the crowd gathered outside to deliver personal testimonies and demand transparency from the district. Several speakers addressed the school board, calling on board members and district officials to explain the rationale behind the transfers and to consider reversing the decision. They argued that such drastic measures only negatively impact the school and students.

The school board listened to the complaints of the protesters, but didn’t publicly comment on their final decision.

However, Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi stated, “We do not make decisions casually,” and “decisions for transfers are not made by principals.”

Although CVUSD has not publicly commented in detail on the situation, organizers of the protest said they hope their demonstration sends a clear message and the teachers can stay at the place they consider their “second home.”

“We’re here to say enough is enough,” one marcher declared. “Our teachers matter, and our voices will be heard.”



Carrie Lee stands beside her own artwork.

VICTOR BAHNG

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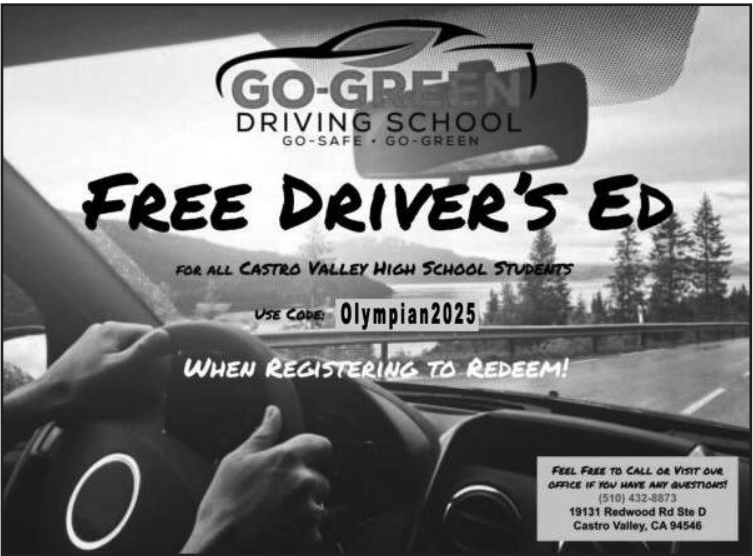
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Blockbuster of the year: “Minecraft”



By Madison Lee

A life-sized portal is found from the depths of a mine. With its shimmering blue colors, it’s inviting. When one goes through, he is teleported into a world created with blocks, where you can break, build, and create with unlimited freedom.

From small pixels on a computer to scenes on a big screen, the beloved video game “Minecraft” has taken over movie theaters. With the promise of imagination and fun, the world of creativity and blocks has become a blockbuster hit.

The movie has become viral across social media platforms, with now iconic sayings like



“chicken jockey” and “I... am Steve” that children now say in everyday conversations.

The story follows a man named Steve, comedically played by Jack Black, who finds an orb that unlocks a portal to the Overworld, a planet with building cubes and a promise of imagination.

After adventuring for some time, Steve finds a portal to the Nether, an evil, hellish-like land. It is ruled by Malgosha, a greedy-for-gold pig-like creature that discourages creativity. Steve is imprisoned for the orb, but he has his dog Dennis run back to the real world and hide it in his home.

Some time passes, and the movie introduces four misfits: Garrett, a video-game store owner and former game champion, Dawn, a real-estate agent who also runs a mobile zoo, Henry, a young creative boy who doesn’t quite fit in at school, and Natalie, Henry’s older and caring sister.

After the loss of their parents, Natalie and Henry move into Steve’s old home with the help of Dawn. Steve’s belongings, including the orb, are purchased by Garrett at a storage unit auction.

Henry stumbles across the orb at Garrett’s video game shop, and all four characters find their way to the portal and are led to the Overworld. Together, with the help of Steve, they must defeat Malgosha and her army and return back home.

The movie has brought in \$721 million worldwide since its release on April 4, becoming the second-highest grossing film in 2025.

“Minecraft” is full of comedy with its catchy tunes and humorous nature. I would definitely recommend this movie to children of younger ages. Overall, I enjoyed this movie, and I would rate it four out of five stars.

Audiences are devouring “Sinners”

By Maison Jordan

A party for the ages. Dancing, drinks, and music floats through the newly opened juke joint. Many people from the neighboring town come to experience the fun and get their hands on some alcohol. After all, this is 1930s Mississippi, during the Great Depression. For this small, religious Black community, fun doesn’t come often, and when it does, no one will turn it down.

However, something else is showing up to this party, even though it wasn’t invited. A story of culture, class, race, humor, and horror, Ryan Coogler’s “Sinners” is a fabulously written and deliciously horrifying Vampire western that has taken the world by storm.

“Sinners” tells the story of twins Smoke and Stack, two gangsters who return to their small Mississippi town after years of big-city lives and crimes. Both are portrayed brilliantly by Michael B. Jordan. They are committed to opening a juke joint for their small community, a place “for them” and “by them.” They each connect with past lovers, Mary (played by Hailee Steinfeld), and Annie (played by Wunmi Mosaku), who respectively guide each twin’s character arcs hand in hand.

The twins also connect with “Preacher Boy” Sammie, their cousin, who has an almost

supernatural musical ability. The ability proves to be quite supernatural when Sammie’s song attracts a trio of Vampires, led by Remmick, played by Jack O’Connell in a delightfully evil performance. The night of fun quickly turns into a fight for survival, blending action and terror in a way that just works.

The film debuted Easter weekend, which turned out to be perfect for audiences as it provides deep and well-constructed religious commentary and ideals in its plot. While on the surface “Sinners” is the story of vampires and people trying to survive them, at its core it is filled with searing social commentary and symbolism. While the film does discuss good vs. evil, it also peers into what makes “good” good and what makes “evil” evil.

It’s no coincidence that the head vampire is Irish, and Coogler makes that very clear in his film. The juxtaposition of the Black lead’s experiences and those of the Irish vampire is strikingly clear, while their similarities are also highlighted and given a spotlight in the plot. Both are victims of oppression in their own ways, but one keeps taking, stealing, and hurting, and one only wants to survive and thrive. To over-explain the significance of these connections would be a disservice to anyone who plans on watching the film for themselves, which

is highly recommended from almost anyone you may ask.

Director Ryan Coogler is a Bay Area native who held multiple screenings of the film in Oakland’s historic Grand Lake theater. Everyone reading this article surely loves to see a Bay Area local succeeding in the industry, and it gives hope to the hundreds of kids in the Bay who wish for success and a life in the industry telling stories.

Director of photography Autumn Durald Arkapaw made history as the first female DP to work with the 70mm Imax format, paving the way for the next generation of women to work with the equipment they deserve to tell their stories. Her abilities as a DP shine through in this amazingly gorgeous film, where every frame looks like a painting that was beautifully crafted with light and color to make a cinematic experience that audiences have not seen in a long time.

“Sinners” is scary. “Sinners” is fun. “Sinners” is good. It’s a rare occurrence to get such a boldly original film in the theaters, and the people are definitely making it clear that this is a trend we want to follow.

If you’re looking for a delightfully evil and boldly beautiful story, “Sinners” is the place to be. Always take the opportunity to see and support films like this in the theaters, while you still can. It’s a rocking time, and you won’t regret it, even if it is a little sinful.

