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THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL Olympian

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Who's who in the CA governor's race?

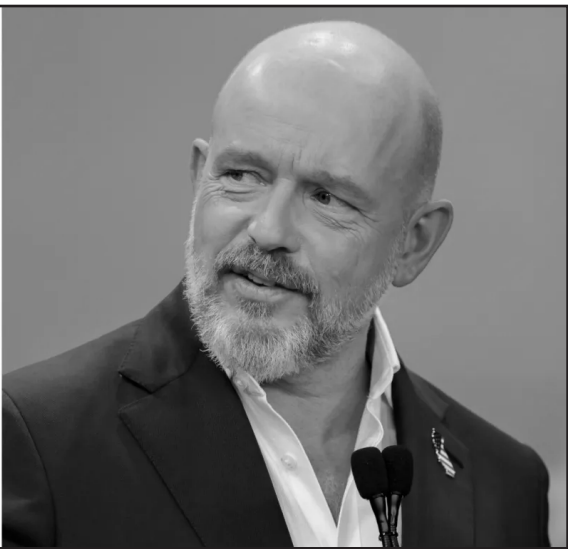
By Sarada Khanal

As of May 1, the candidates for California Governor continue to fight for the coveted spot of power without any one person leading the polls. Swalwell's departure from the governor's race has left space for several other candidates to break through.

"I feel like Swalwell leaving is going to make this a really close race," said senior Cara Kirksey.

Currently, California has 61 candidates on the ballot; only a couple of people are actively campaigning and gaining recognition. Many of the candidates are Democrats, and the two republican candidates who have stood out are Chad Bianco and Steve Hilton.

Bianco was a sheriff and is very outspoken about his support for



MADISON LEE

Democratic candidate Tom Steyer (left) and Republican candidate Steve Hilton (right) are California's two most relevant candidates in the upcoming election.

Donald Trump. Hilton has been endorsed by Trump and is a known conservative.

Now the democratic candidates include several well-known names. Katie Porter is one of the two women running. She is a former congresswoman and has faced some backlash for

treating her staff harshly.

Tom Steyer is a billionaire who has now become a liberal activist. However, he is facing some controversy because he has past investments in prisons that are now used as detention centers for ICE.

Matt Mahan is a

moderate democrat and was frequently a critic of Newsom, and he has garnered a lot of monetary support. Xavier Becerra was President Biden's top health official and oversaw the coronavirus response. On top of that, he was attorney general during President

Trump's first term.

The next two democratic candidates are Antonio Villaraigosa and Tony Thurmond. Villaraigosa unsuccessfully ran back in 2018. Thurmond is supporting efforts to oppose notifying parents about their children changing pronouns.

Currently, there is no frontrunner, and the votes are very split. Democrats seem to be in trouble as there is no clear democratic candidate, and the splitting of votes leaves room for republicans. In a blue state like California, it is most definitely a problem. Right now, a lot of voters are still undecided, and recent debates between the candidates have been very chaotic, with them arguing over everything.

"I think it's so cool that a lot of us seniors can vote now for this upcoming election. It's going to be my first time voting but none of the candidates really stand out to me right now," said Senior Memphis Duncan.

CVHS goose eggs spark controversy

By Valentina Huynh

During their routine return to CVHS, a pair of Canadian geese laid eggs that were added in April by the maintenance department at the district office, according to CVHS administrators.

Goose egg addling is a humane wildlife management technique utilized to manage goose populations by making their eggs unviable. It is alleged that the goose eggs were seen being oiled, a method of addling goose eggs by coating the eggs in food-grade oil.

However, many students have their concerns on the timespan of the eggs being addled.

Canadian Geese are an integral part of America's

wildlife and are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The majority of humanitarian organizations agree that addling eggs beyond the initial 14 days of development is considered inhumane due to advanced development.

When goose eggs are addled, the parents may continue to incubate the eggs or try to re-nest multiple times in the same season leading to increased stress and confusion. This can cause the geese to show increased aggression towards students and exhibit more territorial behavior.

Students view the addling of goose eggs as an overly drastic measure.

"Their actions go against the very morals they promote in our science classes... to be conscious of the environment we live in and to coexist with the other organisms in our ecosystems... It's hypocritical and cruel for



VALENTINA HUYNH

A pair of Canadian geese can be found wandering around campus during the spring.

the school to addle the goose eggs on the sole basis that they were being a nuisance and contaminating the pool water," stated sophomore Jonas Yan.

No studies link Canadian Geese droppings to any infectious disease that is transmittable to humans. Moreover, the geese pair commonly spotted on campus

have peacefully coexisted with the students.

This incident has set a precedent for the addling of the CVHS goose eggs. It is highly likely that the geese will return to CVHS to nest their eggs, prompting the question if their eggs will continue to be addled in the future.

"I'm surprised that they

thought such drastic measures were the best and only option that they could take, and it's incredibly disappointing seeing this," Yan said.

However, there is no question that this controversy reflects a larger point of contention regarding how conflicts between people and wildlife should be appropriately handled.

California budget mandated school funding

By Amaya Rambel

In his final State of the State Address held on Jan 8th, Governor Gavin Newsom proposed to withhold \$5.6 billion from education funding, causing public outcry from teachers and education administrators.

With this new budget in effect, constitutionally allocated funding guaranteed under Proposition 98 would be deferred from public California schools. Proposition 98 was introduced in 1988, mandating that around 40% of the state's funds go to K-2 schools and community colleges.

The governor also attempted to defer the same mandated funding to schools in the budget after withholding \$1.9 billion last year.

The new proposed budget would send only \$125 billion to schools as part of a total \$348 billion plan to close a \$3 billion



Governor Gavin Newsom delivering revised budget proposal

deficit, alongside paying back the \$1.9 billion withheld from last year.

Staff from the Department of Finance supported the new budget, citing its necessity “due to persistent uncertainty

in revenue projections.”

As a response to the Address, the California Teachers Association (CTA) cited their vows to secure funding for public schools in light of this new budget.

David B. Goldberg, president of the CTA, said in the statement that, “unless corrected by the Legislature, this shell game will result in larger class sizes, even less mental health support for students and further deepen

the escalating recruitment and retention crisis of public school teachers.”

The California School Boards Association (CSBA) is also suing the state for their lack of compliance with Proposition 98's funding law. “California's electorate passed Proposition 98 to provide a stable and predictable source of funding for public schools and community colleges,” said President Albert Gonzalez. “This lawsuit is an effort to defend the voters' will, the State Constitution, and the resources our students need.”

As education groups and lawmakers for proper funding, there is a growing pressure for Newsom to change the proposed budget to one that complies with Prop 98. Revisions are expected to happen sometime this May, with the final budget being enacted sometime during the summer of this year.

Newsom revises California budget for May

By Amaya Rambel

On May 14, California Governor Gavin Newsom released the revised 2026-2027 state budget proposal, resulting in a \$0 deficit through July 2028 and important changes to the previous budget proposal.

This revised budget, now balancing both the 2026-27 and 2027-28 fiscal years, is said to bring a \$1.8 billion reduction in General Fund spending while maintaining

investments across different departments in the state. Fiscal restraint and “protection against future economic volatility” are cited as priorities for this new budget.

For the education department, multiple new provisions have been introduced in response to the backlash from Newsom's previous proposal. A \$5 billion block grant, which is a fixed amount of money awarded to state and local governments, has been added to the budget for teacher training and support. Additionally, there will be a

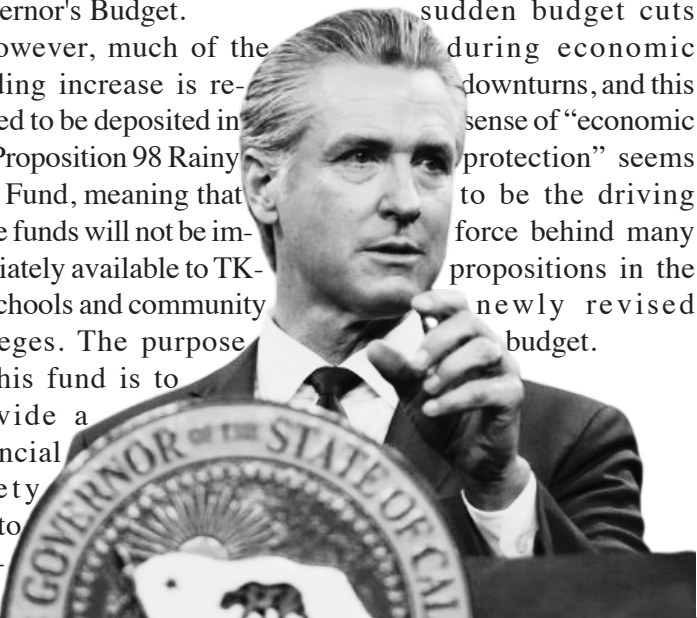
\$2.4 billion ongoing increase in investment towards special education. Another \$500 million will be invested to expand literacy and math support in high-need schools.

The revision estimates of the General Fund revenue also resulted in notable changes to the Proposition 98 funding guarantee, which originally garnered the most backlash during the original proposition. Now, TK-14 schools are calculated to receive \$125.1 billion in 2025-26 and \$127.1 billion in 2026-27. These adjustments show an increase of

around \$6.4 billion from the Governor's Budget.

However, much of the funding increase is required to be deposited in the Proposition 98 Rainy Day Fund, meaning that these funds will not be immediately available to TK-12 schools and community colleges. The purpose of this fund is to provide a financial safety net to protect

California state schools from sudden budget cuts during economic downturns, and this sense of “economic protection” seems to be the driving force behind many propositions in the newly revised budget.



Swalwell's resignation prompts questions

By Kai Atkinson

The atmosphere in Castro Valley has felt heavy since the news that Congressman Eric Swalwell has withdrawn from the gubernatorial race and resigned from his seat in Congress. For a district that has been represented by him for so long, this sudden void in leadership is a lot to process.

It is important to keep the facts clear: while Swalwell is facing serious allegations of sexual misconduct, he has consistently maintained his innocence and has not been charged with or convicted of a crime. In our legal system,

that distinction is vital. Even so, the political fallout has been undeniable.

CVHS student Raven York was shocked by the news. “Initially my reaction was, well, that of skepticism and shock. Swalwell is the representative for Castro Valley. He's what I perceived as one of the few ‘good’ American politicians in our modern era.”

Another student, Alondra Rodriguez-Flores, shared a similar sentiment. “At first I did not recognize the name but after hearing about him I was shocked,” Rodriguez-Flores said. “How could someone that is for women's safety do that type of thing?”

The question remains: Is stepping down was the right

move, even without a formal conviction? Alondra pointed out the complexity of the situation, saying “I believe that these accusations have already left a negative impression on him and his political career, perhaps even unfortunately causing him to resign. It is not fair, however, maybe resigning was the best course of action for him, due to the fact that he'll be out of public attention.”

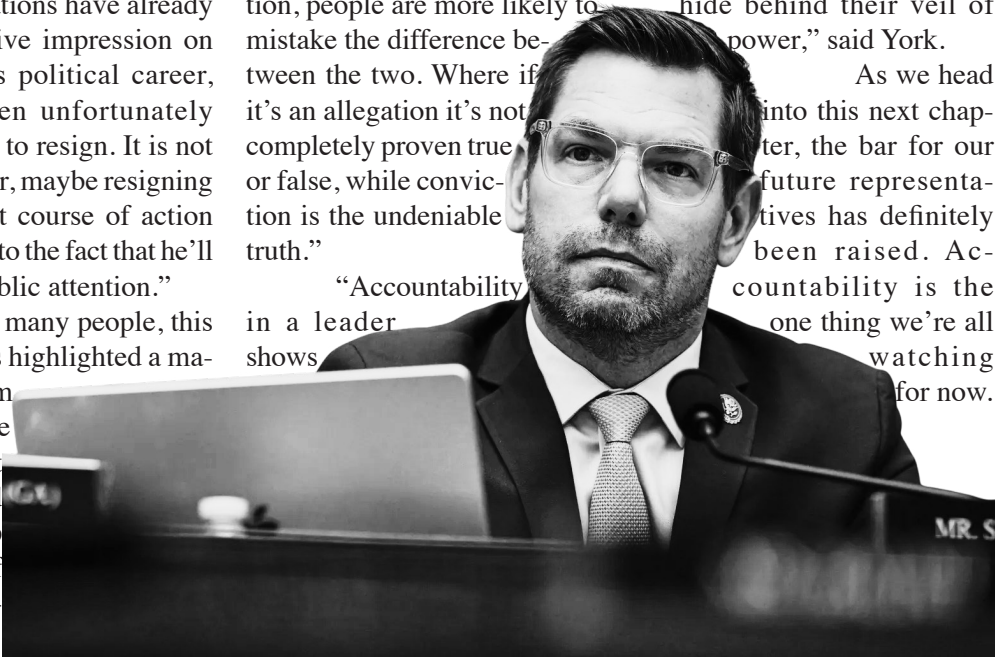
For many people, this situation has highlighted a major problem in how we talk about justice and leadership in the age of social media.

As Alondra noted, “In an era of social media where people have more access to information and misinformation, people are more likely to mistake the difference between the two. Where if it's an allegation it's not completely proven true or false, while conviction is the undeniable truth.”

“Accountability in a leader shows

that they can admit when they are wrong. That they aren't afraid of being wrong and would rather admit to it than hide behind their veil of power,” said York.

As we head into this next chapter, the bar for our future representatives has definitely been raised. Accountability is the one thing we're all watching for now.



Trade school shines in an AI world

By Mason Mattox

“What do you plan on doing after school?” is a question that a lot of students are asked as they reach the end of their high school year, or as they’re growing up. A lot have certain dream jobs or goals they want to accomplish, some try to figure it out as they go, and some opt for a year off to find themselves and what they want to do.

I feel as though an option that should have a broader appreciation and understanding for is trade schools. College itself is often oversold or pushed as the sole way to succeed in life; as of 2023 there were only 1.5 million students enrolled in trade schools.

I think this could be because people tend to push the idea that you need to go to a 4 year college to be successful and that the other pathways are seen as lesser choices. Though as times change, so do people’s perception on these kinds of things.

People are now choosing more of the other options than the traditional 4 year for a



ISAAC HULSE

Students seeking economic security may enjoy trade school.

varying number of reasons. A big reason is the rising cost; the annual average cost has risen about 30% between 2011-2023.

The average cost in the United States is about \$38k. On the other hand, the average cost for trade schools tends to be in the range of \$5k to \$16k depending on the skill you are

trying to learn.

Another thing to think about postsecondary education is what you’re going to be working on after it’s over. Recently the unemployment rate for recent college graduates has continued to rise and is now almost 6%. Instead of being unemployed, people can also

be underemployed. This is when they’re working in a much lower entry job compared to the credentials and education that they have. About 42% of recent college graduates are considered to be underemployed.

Oppositely, trade schools have an unemployment rate of about 2% and underemployment

can still be an issue, but less compared to college as there is a 2.1 million job deficit needing to be filled, and most of the fields they go into are specialized. This means that about 70% of trade school graduates find work in the first 6 months of completing their training.

While this pathway in my opinion is generally better for job security especially with concerns about AI, it doesn’t come without its own caveats too. Even though there is a high demand for these jobs, there are high apprenticeship dropout rates (up to 86% in some programs).

There is also the obvious intense physical demand at times due to the labor that you’ll be doing compared to writing in books and learning on computers. It can also be unpredictable at times with some jobs experiencing a high and low period of activity based on its cycles. The only other major problem is the narrow scope of education, unless you decide to learn more afterwards, it can be hard to find jobs and experiences outside of the bubble you put yourself into.

Teaso, more than boba



By Franci Da Costa

I’ve never felt sad about a restaurant closing until Teaso closed. Teaso was a cafe-like boba spot beloved by the community.

We’ve been going to this boba spot before it was even named Teaso. Before, it was Sweetspot, and we’d go every other week. We stopped drinking boba as much when COVID started, and that’s where Sweetspot closed, and Teaso opened.

We had so many points stored up on the kiosk from all the times we’ve been, but we never ended up using them. I believe we got around 3-5 points each time, and we ended with a sum of around 112 points. The staff were nice to us and often gave us extra food as thanks for our loyalty.

My dad and I would often rush after school on Fridays

to try to get to Teaso before everyone else.

It’d be our once-a-month thing, but we would often go more than once; one sunny week, we went two days in a row, which is crazy considering we’re both prediabetic sugar freaks who need to cut down on sugar.

Not only have we been here on guilty occasions, but we’ve been here for many meaningful ones as well as my friend’s birthday and the last day of school. Our visits here have been memorable, with my friends and I talking and sharing food.

The food was good, the staff was nice, and the seating was cozy both inside and out. The feelings this place gave me were immaculate.

After trying most of the menu, we quickly found our favorite drinks and snacks. My dad would order the mango smoothie with boba and young

coconut meat, and I’d often drink the original milk tea or the thai milk tea with boba and lychee jelly. His favorite snacks were the mozzarella sticks and the french fries, and mine were the fried chicken wings and the omusubi.

This was our favorite boba spot, and we seldom went to another. When we did, it would not be the same. Now it is closed, and it’s been a struggle finding a new spot. Teaso was an amazing family-owned business that my dad and I loved supporting.

It will be a while until my heart softens up to a new place. For now, we’ll continue to shake our heads when we find that no boba place could ever replace how special this place was to us.

Letters to the Editor



The *Olympian* encourages letters from our readers. Please note that letters must be signed and no longer than 200 words. E-mail them to cvhsolympian@gmail.com.



THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Olympian

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Thanks, Castro Valley.
 I love being here to help in a community where people are making a difference every day. Thank you for all you do.



Boys volleyball senior night closes the season

By Rachel Zhen

CVHS boys varsity team takes the victory

The gym was louder than usual, filled with a mix of excitement and nostalgia as the boys stepped onto the court for their final home game of the season. The CVHS boys varsity team concluded its season on Apr. 30 by beating Bishop O'Dowd with a score of 3-1. As family and friends gave their well-wishes, the boys' volleyball team took the court for a memorable game.

Before the game, the team held a short senior night ceremony to honor the graduating players. Each player was introduced by family and friends to recognize their contributions to the team over the years.

"Senior night means a lot because it's not just about this one win; it's about everything we've put in over the years. As a team, we've grown a lot, and getting this win together makes it even more special," said senior Kris Lansdowne.

CVHS got off to a rocky start, losing the first set with Bishop O'Dowd holding the lead, but quickly adjusted and secured the remaining two sets with the cheer of the spectators.

"I'm really proud of how our team played, as O'Dowd was one of the toughest teams in our league. We knew we were going to win going into it, but the win in only four sets, plus the senior night ceremonies that I could help with and speeches I could give, made the game my favorite one all season. The student section was also the best we had all year, which really motivated myself and the rest of the team. The ending was a little bittersweet, though, as it reminded me that my time with the volleyball seniors was coming to an end," said junior Alex Winn.

With the win, CVHS advances to the North Coast Section (NCS) playoffs with renewed morale and excitement for the next chapter of the journey.



NATALIE LE

Ethan Lunes jumps to set the ball.



Max Fruin takes a photo with his family and the volleyball team for senior night.



Kristoffer Lansdowne poses with his family on senior night.



Alex Winn leaps, preparing to spike the ball.



Tai Nguyen rises to set the ball.



Tai Nguyen smiles alongside family members and friends.



Cyrus Tang poses for a photo with his family.



Cyrus Tang stands in ready position to receive the ball.

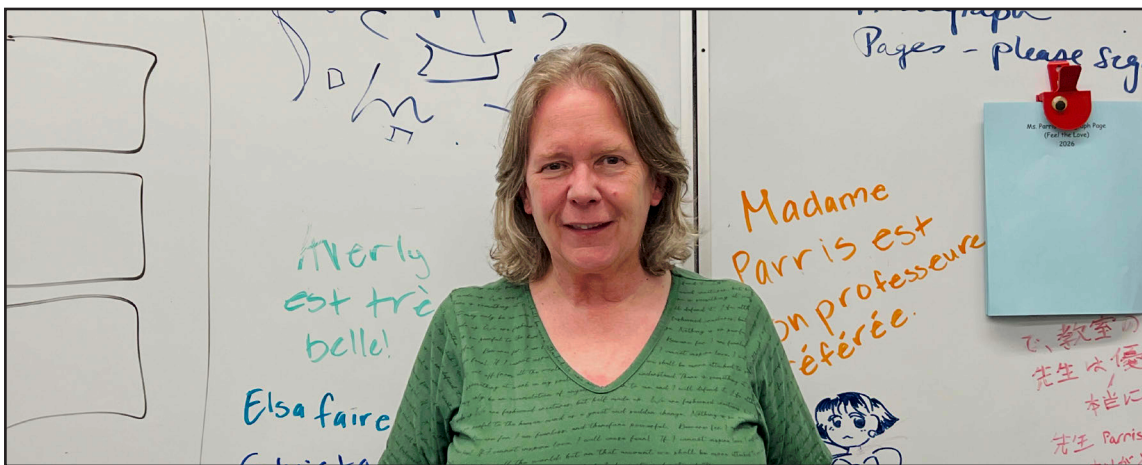
CVHS says farewell to Ms. Parris

By Sharlene Goduco

With years of inspiring young writers and guiding numerous students as the English Department Chair, teacher Anne Parris is now ready to begin her teaching journey toward retirement.

Throughout 42 years of teaching, Parris impacted many generations of students through her passion for literature and writing. She taught many classes throughout her teaching career, including AP English Literature (APELL), Honors American Literature (HAMLit), Creative Writing, and freshman and sophomore English.

Through her dedication to teaching, Parris takes pride in the efforts she brings to the classroom. "I'm most proud of keeping my own sense of integrity about the work. It's really hard to do this job well, and it's hard to do it for a long time. And I haven't always succeeded by any stretch of



RACHEL ZHEN

Ms. Parris is retiring after 42 years.

the imagination," Parris said.

The most challenging part of Parris' career is dealing with an excessive paper load. In her lectures, students were required to write and practice enough to increase their attempts to get better, and receiving feedback was also helpful. Towards the end of the semester, the workload frequently involved late nights and long hours.

Another problem Parris has is that the number of her classes continues to expand year after year. Because of her schedule, she thinks she is unable to connect with

each of her students as well as she would like to. While she helps students with their academic work, she feels that teaching ought to involve more than just collecting papers.

Despite the difficulties she had experienced during her teaching career, Parris hoped her students would leave the classroom with a sense that she cared about them as individuals first. She also hoped that students realized that respect, caring, and love should be given to others rather than kept for themselves.

By referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students figure out the rights that Parris confirmed that they have, or rights that they can go out and assert against other individuals. "Creativity isn't optional. Being creative is not something you do after you've completed all of the other work," Parris said.

Parris will certainly miss her students, colleagues, and the crucial moments of discovery that occur almost every day in class. Parris will miss witnessing her students finding something new when

they suddenly realize an idea or begin to explore their creativity.

"It's kind of like when someone gets something, and they didn't get it before, and I can see it pass over their face, almost like a horizontal sunrise. It's just the most gorgeous thing to see on somebody's face," Parris said.

Parris begins her path to retirement by focusing on her recovery from knee surgery. Then she intends to pursue opportunities such as writing a couple of books, participating in volunteer activities, landscaping her garden, binding books, traveling the world with friends, reading books, and going to the theaters to view new exciting films.

Parris gives a bittersweet farewell to CVHS with one more piece of advice: "Find your creativity, find your passion, and work with that. Maybe it's something that you work on as a job. Maybe it's something you do when you're done with your job."

Senior superstars sign for sports

By Natalie Le

Families and friends watched in admiration as they saw their athlete on stage at their chosen college's table at the CVHS Signing Day on May 4.

Five senior athletes attended signing day, which was an event to highlight the outstanding career they had throughout their life.

Each athlete had a special person give a speech, talking about everything the athlete has done and how they wish them nothing but success for their future.

The first athlete was Lillian Cooke, and she had Sally-Ann Cooke speaking to her. Cooke has signed to Wheaton College for soccer.

The second athlete was Mika Gomes, and she had Rachel Lunt as her speaker. Gomes signed off to Whittier College for running. She started track her sophomore year, also doing cross country and dance.

The third athlete was Dominic Bolender, and Greg Bolender as a speaker.



NATALIE LE

Lillian Cooke signs to Wheaton for an exciting college soccer career.

Bolender signed to Dominican University for soccer.

The fourth athlete was Brooklyn Barrios, and Michelle Barrios was her speaker. Barrios has signed to Washington State University to continue pursuing dance there. Barrios has danced

for many years, ever since she was little. She loves the community of what she does and the ability to advise others knowing it will help them out.

The fifth athlete was Ryder Centoni, and his speaker was Mathew Christiansen. Centoni signed to Napa Valley

College for golf. His biggest supporters were everybody in his life, like his family, friends, and coaches.

"Out of every college I visited, each team was different. And Napa Valley had, in my opinion, the most organized

and best program out of all them. They had no doubt the best coaches I met," said Centoni.

All athletes had their own story, all showing their dedication to their sport. Each college is gaining a great Trojan.

Seniors reflect on last year at CVHS

By Sharlene Goduco

As the school year ends, seniors reflect on their academic path. Many seniors reflect on the special memories they made and the obstacles they overcame throughout their time in school. In a recent survey, seniors shared their experiences to inspire and advise other grades as they enter their last year of high school.

Many seniors overcame their obstacles by dealing with the pressure of completing college applications, making sure their grades met their standards, getting enough sleep, and regretting subjects they found difficult to commit to.

“The most challenging part is trying to live up to the ‘fun’ of senior year while still balancing hard classes and college applications,” said senior Adelaide Wilhelm.

Senior year was not a year with students striving for an academic challenge, but opportunities in events held



Leadership stands on field for senior rally. SHARLENE GODUCO

on and off campus.

“My favorite memory was either dancing at homecoming and at prom, also wearing Halloween costumes at school,” said senior Cameron Barahona.

Students also shared personal experiences, such as hanging out with friends, going to sporting events, and visiting concerts.

“My friends and I had our own senior sunrise on a hill by my friend’s house. It was really beautiful and fun to do with just my friends,” said senior Carly Hillen.

Despite the memories created, this year provided students with an open opportunity to move forward in their academic studies. Seniors improved their

time management abilities, particularly in managing studies and extracurricular activities, and learnt to be more mindful.

Many seniors are excited to graduate from CVHS since they have dedicated themselves throughout their high school journey. Seniors are eager to take a step toward adulthood and thrive in a fresh

chapter of their lives in college for their future job. Some are concerned about what career path they want to follow in the future, being unsure of their own career choice, or even thriving in a new environment at their desired college.

“I’m most looking forward to starting fresh and taking on new opportunities that’ll help me truly involve myself in the community at UCD,” said senior Lauren Yee.

Before seniors get ready to graduate and receive their diplomas on stage, they wanted to advise the upcoming seniors through their last year of high school.

“Do not procrastinate, do some work every day, but don’t over work yourself, have fun, make the most of it, make many memories, don’t be shy or afraid,” said senior Ella Choi.

Regardless of the challenges of senior year, many seniors will recall this year as a rewarding experience full of growth, friends, and unforgettable memories.

Surprise guests steal the show at Coachella

By Leila Tran

The annual two-weekend festival of music took place once again this year in the desert of Palm Springs. Occurring in April, Coachella is one of the world’s most popular events, hosting many well-known artists such as Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Ariana Grande, and other prominent voices in past years. Even as the festival is dominated by influencers/celebrities, fans gather from all around the world to support their favorite performers.

This year was no different: the set list of artists performed, and fans cheered them on. However, many attendees and online spectators were astonished by the number of surprise guest artists who made an



appearance for the crowd.

One of the most widely discussed Coachella guest appearances of 2026 was Madonna, who made a cameo at Sabrina Carpenter’s headlining performance. Performing “Vogue,” “Like a Prayer,” and their new collaboration “Bring Your

Love,” the two of them made buzzworthy news that left many fans amazed.

On the following night, Justin Bieber’s headlining performance featured an unexpected artist on the stage, surprising even the guest herself. During “One Less Lonely Girl,” he pulled

Billie Eilish from the crowd, leaving her and many fans in shock. This full-circle moment warmed audiences’ hearts, as Eilish had been a Bieber fan for her entire childhood.

“I started screaming when he took her from the audience because I love

Justin Bieber so much. Then I almost started crying when they revealed it was her. At first I thought it was Haley Bieber but then Billie showed her face and I was so happy for her,” said Sophomore Erika Yu.

Following this surprise, SZA made an appearance on Bieber’s stage to perform their collaboration “Snooze.”

Other prominent surprise guests include Olivia Rodrigo at Addison Rae, Camila Cabello at Young Thug, Becky G at Karol G, Zara Larson at Pink Pantheress, Joe Jonas at Teddy Swims, LISA at Anyma, Billy Idol at Sombre, and countless more.

Fans remain pleasantly surprised, expressing their acclamation as online Coachella buzz continues to dominate the media.

New H Mart open in Dublin, California

By Winnie Shen

The anticipated H Mart supermarket in Dublin, Calif., has finally opened its doors to the public after numerous years of construction.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony, lion dancing, and beautiful flower displays in front of the building all played a part in celebrating this new location.

Although the line into the store almost wrapped around the entire shopping center in the first couple of days, the wait won’t be as long after a few weeks pass. There were fliers handed out throughout the wait line advertising promotional gifts you could receive if

you bought a certain dollar amount of items from the store.

For example, if you buy at least \$30 worth of items, you will get a free reusable grocery bag that depicts H Mart as “America’s Asian Supermarket.” This is a clever way to promote H Mart’s brand while also enticing new customers to shop at their store.

Once walking in, turning

to the right immediately leads to the produce section. Everything was nicely packaged, and there were many options to choose from, including exotic fruit, such as durian, offered at a discounted price.

As the layout of the store continues, it proceeds to the seafood area and the long aisles with shelves stacked from top to bottom with name-brand items. H Mart

even had non-Asian products despite being known as an Asian grocery store.

Even though one could stay in here for hours, it can feel overwhelming due to the crowds of people and the variety of products.

H Mart was founded in New York and eventually expanded to other states all over the country. This location will be the first one in the East Bay Area.

Noah Kahan’s album resonates deeply with listeners



By Madison Lee

Upon pressing play, audiences are greeted with the quiet sounds of crickets and gentle piano playing, with slow, melancholic lyrics like “Ending of August, the bugs are just starting to die/All the neighbors are voting for someone who wins everytime/ And I thought getting older meant knowing it’s too late to try.”

The whole song has a nostalgic feeling, a feeling of faded memories and changing seasons.

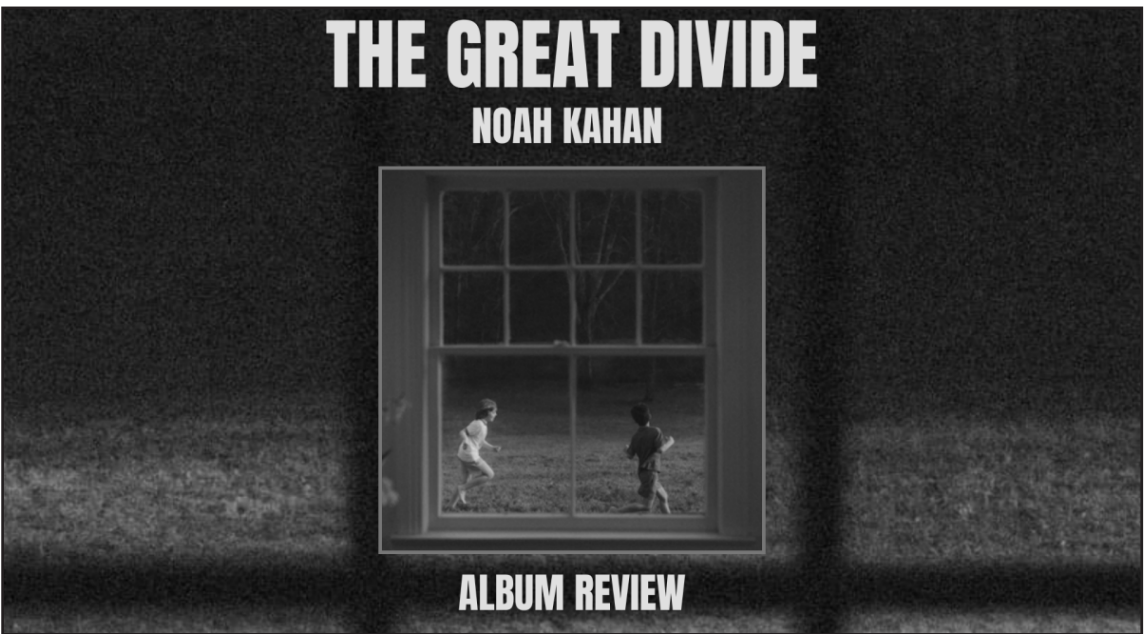
This song, “End of August,” is the first of singer-songwriter Noah Kahan’s new album “The Great Divide,” a collection of 17 new songs, released on April 24, 2026. A

day later, on April 25, Kahan released a surprise deluxe version, “The Great Divide: The Last of the Bugs,” the playlist featuring four bonus songs: “Lighthouse,” “Staying Still,” “Orbiter,” and “A Few of Your Own”.

Upon its release, Kahan secured his first No. 1 on the Billboard 200, earning 389,000 digital or physical purchases within its first week, the largest for a rock album since 2014. It currently holds the title of having the biggest streaming week of any album in 2026.

As of May 4, 2026, Kahan’s title track, “The Great Divide,” has accumulated 123 million streams on Spotify, followed by songs “Porch Light,” and “Doors,” having 69 million and 27 million streams respectively.

“The Great Divide: The Last of the Bugs,” references lines from Kahan’s earlier songs like “The View Between Villages,” where Kahan sang, “Air in my lungs/ Til the road



begins /As the last of the bugs/ Leave their homes again.” Kahan has been known to view ladybugs as good luck, seeing them as positive omens. This largely stems from a personal experience when his childhood bedroom was infested with ladybugs right before he signed his first record deal.

Kahan’s album expresses real, raw feeling

and emotion, speaking a lot about his hometown of Vermont and his finding of fame and mental health. It holds themes of isolation, shifting relationships, and personal stories.

Kahan announced his tour for this album on February 2, and is expected to start in Florida on June 11, accompanied by artist Gigi

Perez.

As a fan of Kahan and his work, this album didn’t fail to impress, and I was left stunned by Kahan’s beautiful messaging, writing, and heart. I did find some of his songs similar to past ones, but as a collection, it’s something I will listen to over and over.

Overall, I would rate this album a 5/5.

Bruno Mars album sparks nostalgia for fans



By Winnie Shen

Nostalgia and childhood memories can be summed up by one man who released the throwback songs we all listen to today. Although never completely stepping away from music, he took a long break since 2016 and mainly released collaborations with other artists.

Almost a decade since his previous album “24K Magic,” Bruno Mars released his fourth solo studio album on Feb. 27 titled “The Romantic.” It features nine tracks, including songs such as “God Was Showing Off,” “Dance With Me,” and “Why You Wanna Fight?” Listening to this album was a fun experience because Mars is a well-known and skilled songwriter, performer, and singer who always exceeds expectations.

This album was groovy and upbeat with great instrumentals, inspiring people to get up and dance to his songs.



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This time around, he incorporates Latin influences into his music, like bolero, mariachi, and salsa. This creates a sound that highlights his musical evolution and Puerto Rican background.

“Risk It All” was a mesmerizing song for the opening track, setting the tone for the rest of the songs in the album that followed.

“For just the chance to win your heart, you could set the bar beyond the stars,” said Mars in the song “Risk It All.” These lyrics led me to believe that he can never make bad music, especially with these words that evoke a sense of

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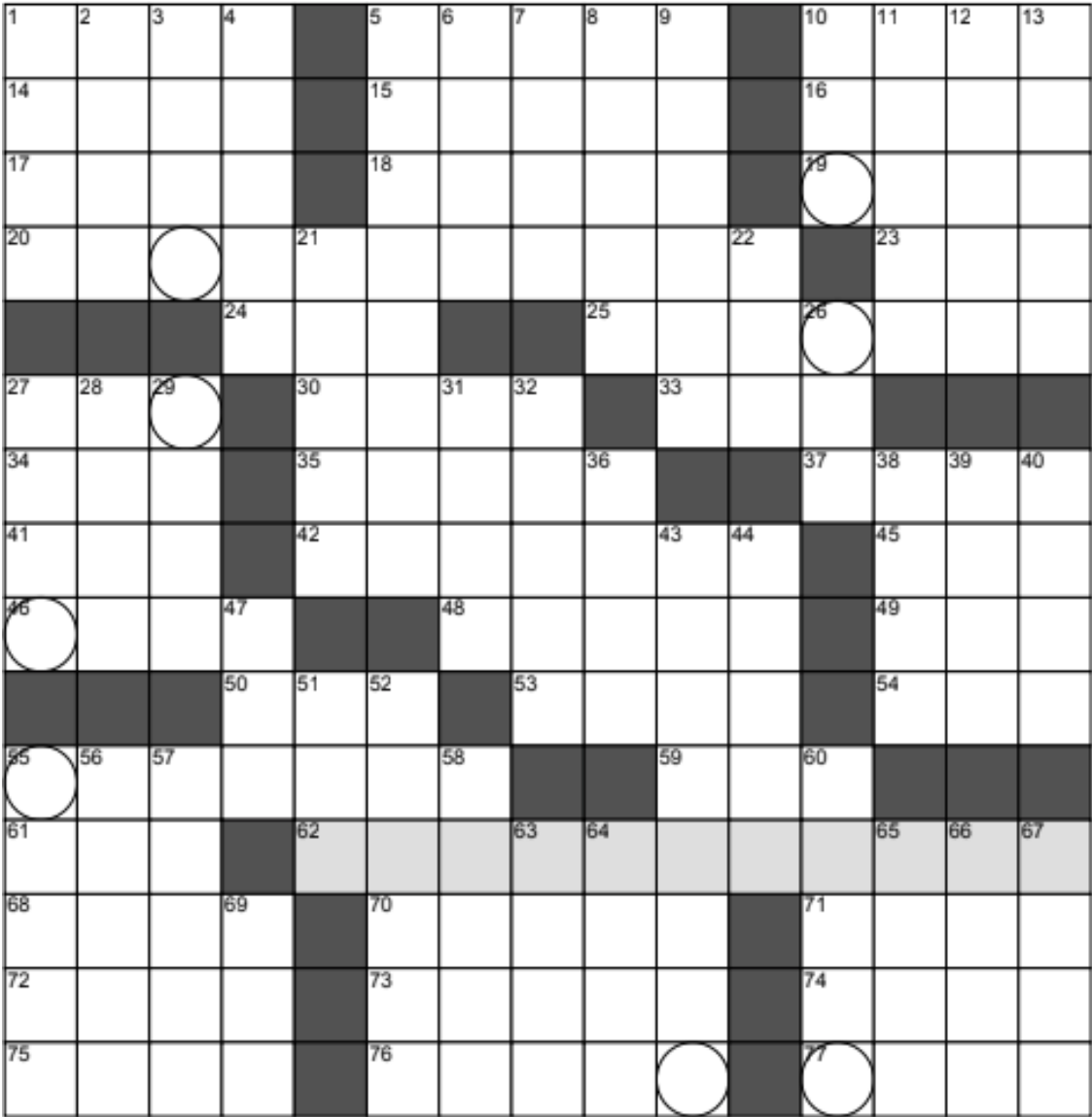
Before the official release of the full album, Mars released the lead single “I Just Might” a couple of days into the new year. It was well-received and quickly garnered over a hundred million streams after its release, clearly showing that fans were eagerly anticipating this album.

Although some people have argued that “The Romantic” wasn’t as successful as his previous works, I hope that it will eventually grow on listeners just like his songs in the past, being deemed as iconic pop hits in the future.



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School's Out!



ISAAC HULSE

- ACROSS
1. Websitewhere “TheShawshank Redemption” is the most popular

5. Firstconspirator tostab Caesar

10. “Insecure” actress Rae

14. A villain’s secret, perhaps

15. Like the wings of a plane

16. Citizens United allowed corporations to donate to them

17. Japanese ink

18. Saucer with

19. Call up

20. What a detective or a nudist may do

23. What comes between a man and a mouse

24. Folk creatures of olde

25. Make a comeback, say

27. Better in Nevada

30. Opera set in Egypt

33. Curtain holder

34. “___ out!”

35. Jones

37. The walls may have them

41. Law enf. term which notably has no legal meaning

42. Part of a rook’s set

45. “I told you so!”

46. Bleeding Charles

48. Chess king vis a vis a chess king

49. Wrestling setting

50. Taft had a special one

53. Ryan for the first three seasons

54. Atlantic or Oceanic

55. Whatone mightsaywhenthey have too little time for Christmas?

59. Alas

61. Mauna ___

62. Senior’s source of relief, or a punny description of the circled squares

68. Simply

70. Bingo alternative

71. Keep running

72. “Modern” art collector

73. Pig fats

74. Gourd filled with a drink of the same name
75. Eldest Rice Krispy elf

76. Deduction by Descartes

77. Tritonin “TheLittleMermaid”
- DOWN
1. Ingrid’s role in Casablanca

2. Speigelman’s art

3. Cantonese bite

4. Laconic

5. Martial art similar to break-dancing

6. Give a hand

7. Son of Adam

8. West Indies native

9. Kendrick Lamar chord

10. “Lorem ___”

11. Coconut-caramel confection

12. Deride

13. It slows you down if you hit it

21. Image Awards screener

22. Baby-talk syllable

26. Napoleon’s number-two

27. Plaster of Paris resident

28. A billion years

29. “___ Melodies”

31. Largely-ineffective drug education program

32. ___-garde

36. Full-body contact sport

38. Frisson-inducing video genre

39. 500. sheets of paper

40. Groups of reps

43. “Shameless” star

44. Laid back personality

47. Video game light simulator

51. Fillers

52. Tchotchke

55. Some reds

56. Actress Saoirse

57. Summit in Crimea

58. What one may do after they dig

60. Shave-and-a-haircut instrument

63. Salt and lime drink, for short

64. Opposite of exo

65. Babybel cheese

66. “___ California,” counterpart to its peninsula

67. Like a peregrine falcon

69. “Indeed”

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