

CHILLS ARISE AT CVHS' COSTUME CONTEST



Idara Essien steals first place at the CVHS costume contest.

NATALIE LE



NATALIE LE

Left to right: Japanese teacher Alexis Gould and Quentin Patrick dress up as Sadako and Mad Hatter for second place and third place.



ISAAC HULSE

Luchezar Pirogov dresses up as Jesus.



NATALIE LE



NATALIE LE



NATALIE LE



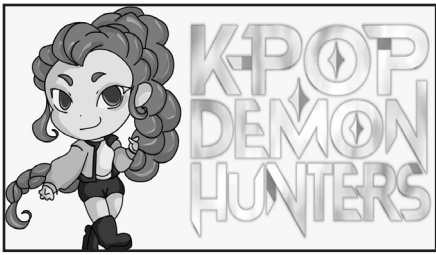
ISAAC HULSE



ISAAC HULSE



Page 6:
Trojans win
girls flag
football title



Page 9:
KPop
Demon
Hunters



Page 12:
Robotics
club bolts
through



THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL Olympian

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Voters pass Prop. 50 to oppose Trump

By Samuel Jarvis

Debates have finished over California's redistricting as Prop. 50 has passed in a California vote. The vote was headlined by Gavin Newsom and Trump, redistricting congressional maps. In Texas, Republicans proposed a new map and stand to gain five new seats. The question for Prop 50 was whether California should do the same and redistribute to add five Democratic seats to its map. "We stood tall and we stood firm in response to Donald Trump's recklessness," said Gov. Gavin Newsom. Trump replied by making a post on Truth Social: "The Unconstitutional Redistricting Vote in California is a GIANT SCAM in that the entire process, in particular the Voting itself, is



Protestors show support for Prop 50 at Peace Corner on the corner of Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road -- some are dressed in inflatable costumes to attract people to their cause.

RIGGED. All "Mail-In" Ballots, where the Republicans in that State are "Shut Out," is under very serious legal and criminal review. STAY TUNED!" On the left, supporters believed

that Prop. 50 is a valid response to the silencing of votes in Texas, and the measure stops Pres. Trump from taking more power. "It's the lesser of two evils. We've got to get behind

it or it may be the last election we can ever vote in," said Olivia Thomas, a protester on Castro Valley Boulevard who supports Prop. 50. "It's too bad we have to do this.

We know that gerrymandering is bad, but this is important, it's the only way we can really stop what's going on," said Jackie Black, another protester. "Californians created the gold standard for fair elections: independent, citizen-led redistricting that ensures voters pick their representatives, not the other way around. Prop. 50 would tear that down, even temporarily, and hand the power back to Sacramento politicians. That's not progress, that's going backwards. Voters are supposed to choose their representatives, not the other way around," said the California Republican Party regarding the bill. Proposition 50 will go into effect for the next midterm and the 2028 election. What this means for the future of the country will be seen in the coming elections.

Arguments arise about Tylenol and autism

By Winnie Shen

More people have been hesitant to use Tylenol as the White House claimed that there is evidence indicating a link between acetaminophen and neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism and ADHD. This has been a controversial topic as it has sparked a heated debate among healthcare professionals about the impact that it may have on pregnant women. The credibility of this statement has also been questioned as there have been conflicting data in studies made by universities, including Harvard, Yale, and Johns Hopkins. "There is currently no conclusive scientific evidence confirming a possible link between autism and the use of acetaminophen during pregnancy," wrote the World Health Organization on its website. Tylenol is a commonly used pain reliever for minor aches and a quick fever reducer. It contains

acetaminophen, a medication that temporarily blocks pain receptors in the brain. Even though it is generally a safe product and has been around for a long time, some concerns have been raised about its potential to cause liver damage and accidental overdoses. "The only negative effects are if people are using too much of it, and that's going to put a little bit of stress on the kidney," said health teacher Erika Ikemoto. This announcement regarding the link between acetaminophen and autism can create fear and concern among women, as this could discourage them from using Tylenol during their pregnancy even if they might be suffering from severe pain. "There is no evidence of acetaminophen leading to autism. Tylenol has been on the market as a mild pain reliever for at least six decades," said Ikemoto. Some people have pointed out that Tylenol advised the public in the past that their products

should not be used during pregnancy. "We actually don't recommend using any of our products while pregnant," said Tylenol in a tweet back in 2017. Tylenol has warning and caution labels on their products, mainly due to the fact that they don't want to be liable for anything if an accident were to happen. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is considering adding another label that warns users of the possible link to autism in children. Although some studies seem to show a correlation between Tylenol and autism, it does not mean that it is the fundamental cause of autism. Researchers need to take genetics and environmental factors into consideration before reaching an answer. Autism is currently on the rise around the world due to a number of factors, but mostly because of more people having access to the resources that can help them get diagnosed and changes in diagnostic criteria.

Trump teams with AI in schools

By Kai Atkinson

President Trump has proposed using more artificial intelligence (AI) in schools, and if his policy takes effect, our school days are about to get a whole lot more "artificial." The idea is to implement AI deep into K-12 education, possibly to help personalize learning or for some, to make everything faster. While adults debate budgets and implementation, students are the ones who have to sit in the classrooms, and many students are side-eyeing the whole plan. The common sentiment isn't excitement; it's dread. The main stress is simple, we're already using AI to coast. Raven York, an 11th grader, didn't hold back. "The thought of AI being integrated into school when students have been using it to cheat just seems so stupid to me," York stated. She's seen it happen across the board from physics to history classes. York believes making AI official gives everyone

a green light to stop learning. Beyond dishonesty, York argues that the focus is misaligned with reality. Most students aren't thinking about the "AI workforce." But rather, they're just focused on "surviving school." She worries the reliance on these tools will actively harm basic skills, stating, "I worry that AI usage in schools will decrease overall student literacy." For York, prompting AI over fundamental learning risks creates a generation that is dependent rather than independent. Alondra Rodriguez-Flores, another junior, is trying to be fair about the whole thing. She admits the technology, "could have a positive effect, but can also have a negative impact on education." Rodriguez-Flores knows some kids will use AI as a great tool to learn, but just as many will use it to "finish assignments faster, while not really learning anything." ▶ See TRUMP: page 3

CVUSD budget balances raises and cuts

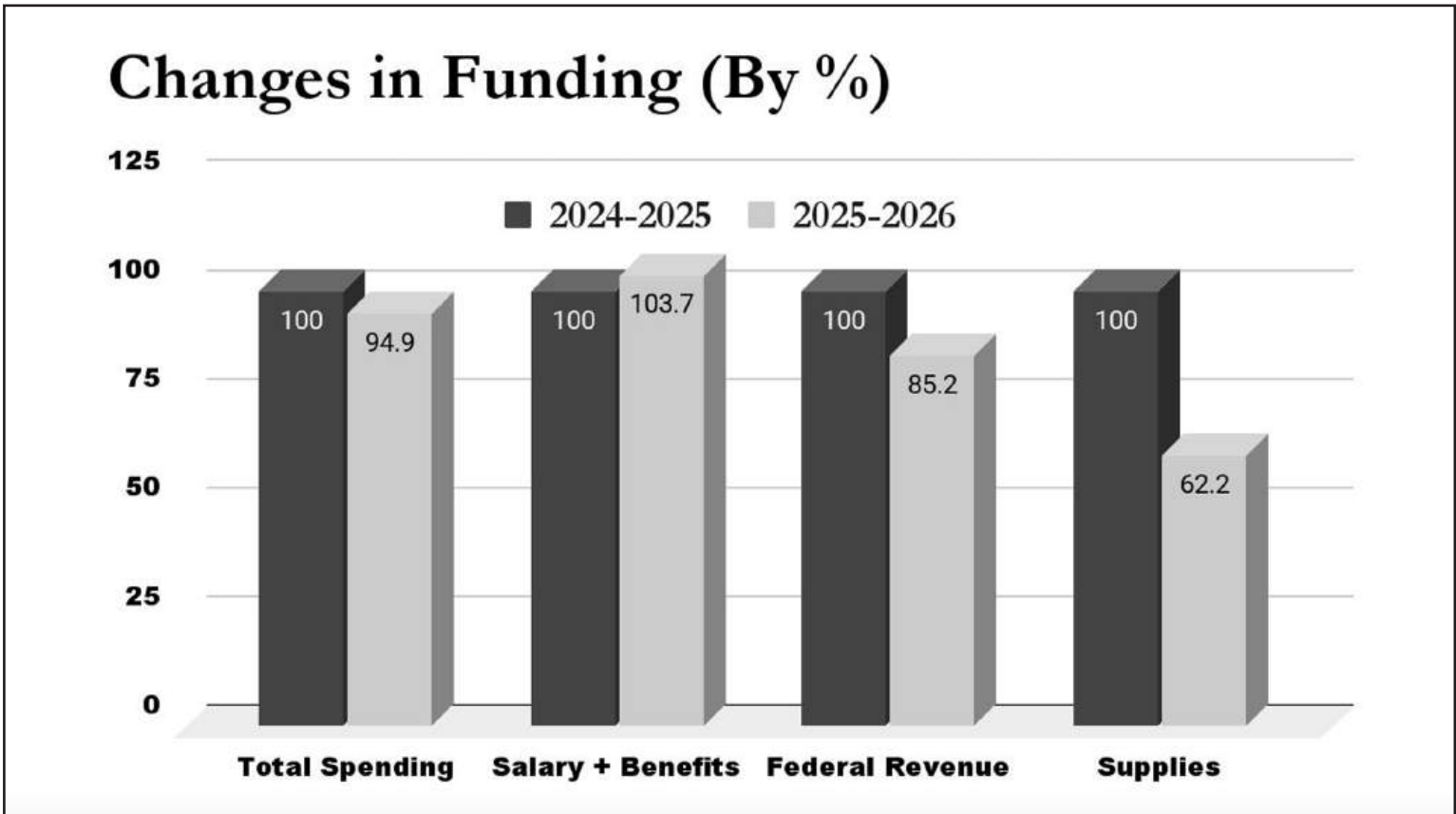
By Isaac Hulse

The Castro Valley Unified School District’s budget for the 2025-2026 school year went down 5.1% to \$159,729,201 this year, but while the overall budget is shrinking, teachers are to be paid more amidst staffing changes as funding for supplies and books decrease by more than a third of last year’s.

One thing to keep in mind when interpreting the budget is that it covers not just CVHS, but all of CVUSD, including schools at the elementary, middle, and adult level. So, CVHS only receives a share of the figures mentioned below.

An important part of student education is the staff behind it. This school year, Castro Valley Unified School District certificated salary expenditure for all credentialed staff rose by \$1,870,282. Classified salary expenditure for all non-credentialed staff rose by \$1,728,023, and benefits by \$1,290,351.

Salary and benefits for teachers generally increase every year due to a step and column system of salary calculation, where step represents time at the job and column represents level of education. So, generally, as the



Staff salaries went up and supplies and books spending went down in CVUSD’s 2025-2026 budget.

ISAAC HULSE

teaching body spends more time at the school, their salary as a whole will increase.

“Because all staff are public employees, we are paid with tax dollars. In general, when times are good and the state gets more tax revenue, more money is budgeted for schools,” said Castro Valley Teachers Association VP Mark Mladinich.

“Our union bargains for health care for our members as well as salary increases...so we can serve our students best. Management does not always share our priorities which can lead to difficult bargaining.”

In a similar vein, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Suzy Chan said that “there can be difficult budget

discussions that typically center on how to balance limited resources with many competing priorities...Even in those moments, our shared commitment to students ensures we move forward with consensus.”

The books and supplies fund is a model example of a lack of resources, as its decrease by \$2,254,411, 37.8% of last year’s \$5,960,530 is mainly attributable to a lack of the related one-time grants CVUSD received for the 2024-2025 school year.

and Performing Arts teachers’ salaries...the rest of the funding...comes almost entirely from community donations and entrance fees,” said Principal Chris Fortenberry.

It is difficult to say by how much the money for these programs will decrease, as said community donations and entrance fees are intentionally not taken into account for the 2025-2026 budget document.

“I am very proud of how our district manages limited resources. Our staff work diligently to seek matching funds and to account for and steward our financial resources responsibly. At the same time, I share the concern of many that California does not invest as fully as it should in public education,” said school board trustee Mike Kusiak.

An issue that hits close to home for a lot of the people at this school is funding for the arts and athletics.

“Both Performing Arts and Athletics, as extra-curricular activities, are minimally funded. The district pays Visual



TRUMP: from page 2

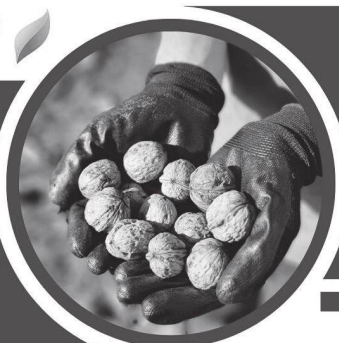
Meanwhile, teachers are figuring out how to manage AI with limited support. Alex Petropoulakis, an English teacher, worries the rush is all wrong.

“My opinion is that teaching AI should wait until an age of further development,” Petropoulakis said. Early use, he believes, “may inhibit imagination and figurative thinking later on.”

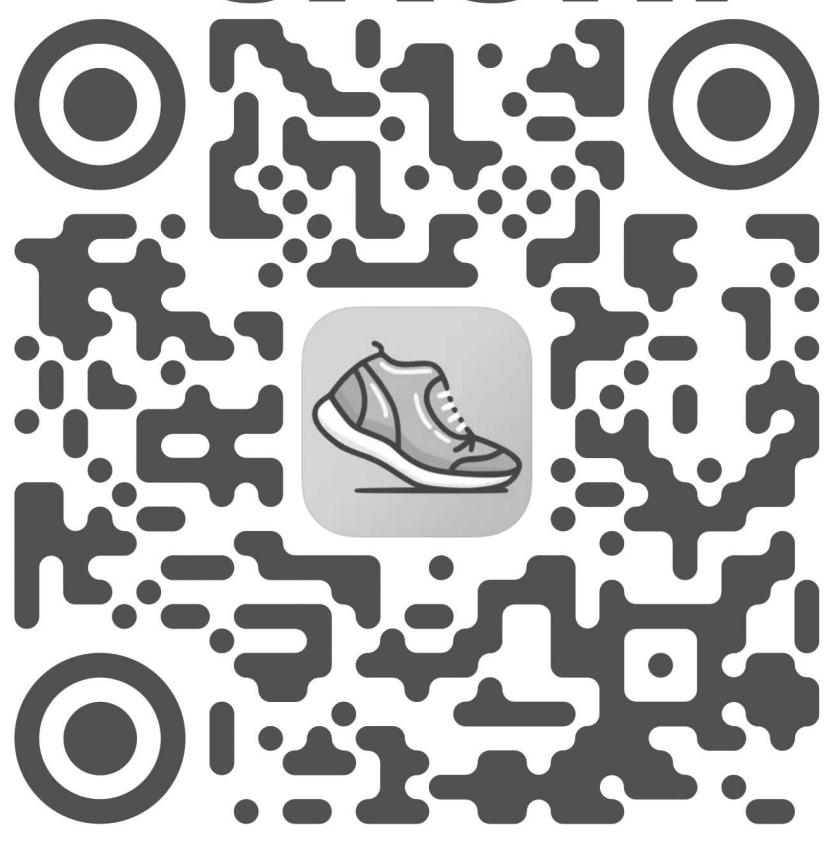
Petropoulakis points out that the policy’s promise of

comprehensive teacher training has not materialized. “Every teacher has a different degree of familiarity with AI, and there has been very little district-wide addressing of its use in the classroom besides an optional professional development.”

Ultimately, the White House plan is about U.S. technological leadership. But from the students who just want a shortcut to the teacher who fears technology will kill imagination, the policy’s rollout is proving to be a murky, complicated, and potentially harmful trade-off.



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Taking a stand against unfair deportations

By Ben Morlan

“I have been exposed to a culture of deportation that has been on the rise in the U.S. and have seen how harsh it can be. From living in a state and city with a majority of Hispanic people, it’s not unusual to see deportations happening or seeing Immigration Customs Enforcement agents. Due to deportation cases rising, the soccer club I play for had to shut down practices and games from a fear of the kids or coaches being deported. Practices and games were shut down for a month due to a rising fear of deportation in an attempt to protect not only the adults and coaches but the kids who play there.

President Donald Trump’s recent increased funding to border patrol and deportation is a prime example of America’s discrimination towards immigrants. According to The Independent newspaper, Trump has spent \$170 billion on ICE and immigration in general.

It may seem that immigrants



should get citizenship to protect them from getting deported. However the process for gaining citizenship is a very lengthy process, often taking longer than ten years. Under the laws today, undocumented immigrants can never get legal status. Knowing people who are both adults and kids who came here from another country, they often work multiple jobs to keep their family out of poverty.

“Immigrants, if they are

helped to integrate, are a blessing, a source of enrichment and a new gift that encourages a society to grow,” said Pope Francis. There have been many people, including famous and well known people, who have spoken out against deportation, including Selena Gomez, Kim Kardashian, Mark Ruffalo and Olivia Rodrigo.

ICE raids are often done during night and during surprising times such as when

the person is working or with family. ICE agents have been said to be harsh and cruel with the people they are deporting and infringe upon their rights. ICE agents have been reported being physically harsh with the people they are taking into custody.

In Trump’s first term as president he deported 935,089 illegal immigrants according to data from ICE reports. He is estimated to deport more

immigrants in his current term than before, with studies estimating about 400,000 immigrants a year.

There have been protests across the US against immigration deportation and Trump’s presidential term, like the recent “No kings” protests. It has been estimated that about five million people attended these protests nationwide, meaning it might be a potential record.

Though our soccer practices and games have started up again, the fear of deportations and ICE is still obvious. The managers of the club and the coaches are all worried about the kids that play there and make sure that if any threat of ICE appears, the right precautions are taken into hand to protect them.

With deportation and immigration enforcement on the rise, it’s important as a community to stand up against unfair deportation and corrupt leaders abusing their power. It’s important to look at the pros of immigration and how they help our society grow and prosper.

“The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” was robbed



By Jackson Fabiani

“The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” was recently cancelled and is having its last season right now. It was one of the highest rated talk shows and had an average viewer base of 2.8 million.

“The Late Show” was beloved for its sense of humor and excellent pacing. Each episode starts off with a mock news sequence where they go through humorous headlines relating to the current social or political climate. Then it consists of celebrity interviews, sketch comedy, and musical performances.

It was a very accomplished show, not only in ratings but also with six Emmy awards and enough popularity to interview the likes of Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Along with having the opportunity to

live broadcast political events. It is debated why the show is being canceled. CBS has stated it’s due to a loss of revenue from the show. However, many people believe that Trump got the show canceled. In my opinion, it is probably not because of the loss of revenue.

Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel has stated that the idea that the show was losing \$40 million was “beyond nonsensical” because it only accounted for advertising revenue. Although Kimmel is likely being backed into a corner here, as Trump said, “I

hear Jimmy Kimmel is next. Has even less talent than Colbert!”

Ever since the cancellation of the show, each episode has been more and more critical of Trump, often using crude humor to poke fun at him. This has been praised as Colbert standing up for himself, although I preferred the earlier episodes, as to me, it comes off as quite spiteful.

Overall, I think this is a turn for the worse, and is not going to be the only major cancellation incoming. It is sad to see such a beloved show be cancelled. I remember watching it with my father on weekends. I always loved the initial news segment; it was probably my favorite piece of comedy ever, successive jokes after each other really do a lot.

Trojan Talk

Re: CVHS student drives toward a dream

“I really enjoyed reading about Cam Carraway’s dedication to racing. It’s inspiring to see someone so young stay committed to their dream.”

- Angeli Hidalgo

Re: “Bonnie’s Quest for Courage” helps kids embrace failure

“The message of the book is inspiring, and I wish I had read a book like this as a kid.”

- Elliot Lucas

Re: Slow dynabooks slow down students

“I wish they let us have our old chromebooks. I’ve wasted so much time waiting for my tabs to load and Dynabook to power on.”

- Connor Liang

Re: Social media is tearing you down

“I appreciate how you’ve brought the negative sides to social media to light. Especially since now, it’s so glorified and centers the basis of society.”

- Natalie Chavez

Re: Students start scheduling petition for CVHS

“This is so good; it took one of my friends a month to change one class because the school made a mistake with her schedule.”

- Sophia Allen





THE CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Olympian

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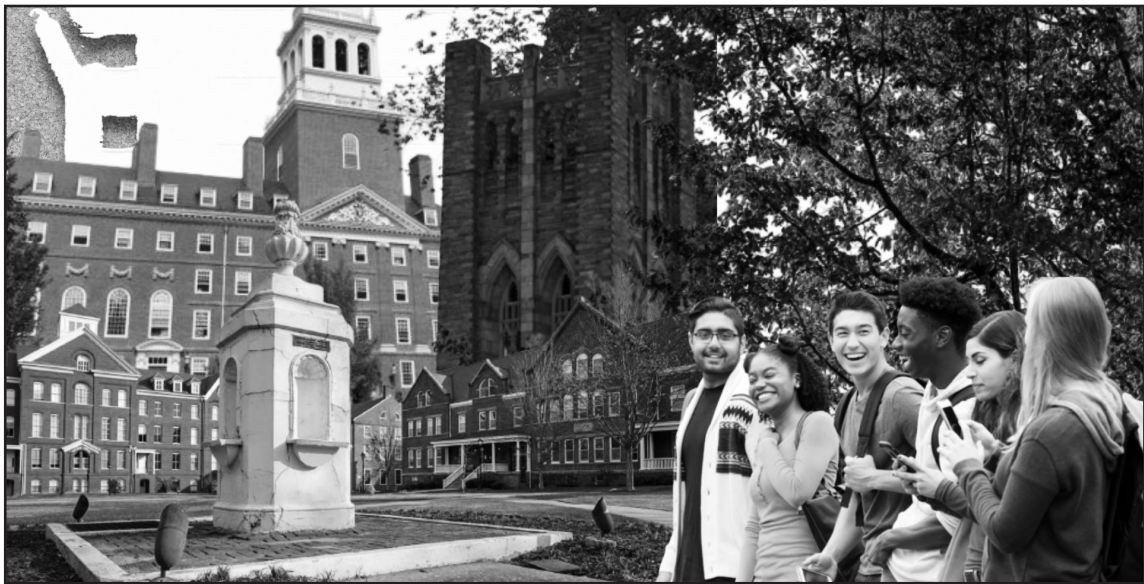
College admissions make students cry

By Franci Da Costa



Getting into a quality college has become ridiculously difficult over the years; it's driving me and, more likely, other students nuts. While college isn't the only way to land a job, a good college is still essential when it comes to getting a high-paying job. There has been a high demand for jobs due to the growing population, making it even more challenging to secure one. I'm sure many students are feeling the weight of competition. Nevertheless, it is good to keep your head forward so you stress less.

According to the website, Acceptance Rate, the data shows that the top colleges only accept around ten percent of applicants. Many of those rejected students are hard-working and talented, but there is just an overwhelming amount of competition. What



AMAYA RAMBEL

Students are finding it increasingly difficult to join their dream college.

do you mean that getting a 4.0 or higher, participating in extracurriculars, and leadership roles doesn't always get you into a good college? The competition has grown so exponentially that even a valedictorian with myriad activities and academic achievements can get rejected.

One thing college admissions officers look out for is students who stick out from the crowd. Yet, when students accomplish unique things, it quickly

becomes a fad, and now the officers need to look out for new things to separate the average from the special.

However, college is a conflicting topic for me because education is important, and not everybody is lucky enough to have access to it. Many countries struggle to give their children an education due to poverty, and, for example, the gender inequalities in Afghanistan. There are some

countries with even more rigorous expectations. So shouldn't I be grateful?

While education in the US is better than in some countries, it's not the best; there are many countries that we could learn from, like Finland. In Finland, the teaching profession is taken way more seriously, as you need a master's degree. While the US system has a merit-based system, students in Finland aren't graded numerically;

rather, they get feedback on their performance. This leaves less room for comparison between students.

Finnish students receive more breaks throughout the day, a longer lunch break, and a later start time. Continuing school after the age of 16 is even optional. Yet, even with a more lenient education system, Finland ranks higher in education than the US.

As per my suggestions, more college spaces would be a good starting point, but I don't expect them to do that.

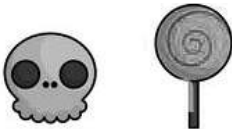
The low acceptance rate is part of the prestige; a low acceptance rate attracts people to apply. It creates this illusion of being a great college, even though there are plenty of good colleges with higher acceptance rates. The root stems from wanting a good job, and if there is a lack of job opportunities, everything becomes harder.

For those whose college applications are around the corner, it's important to smell the roses. So, don't forget to smile!

AI's prevalence threatens people's creativity



By Nathaniel Johanson



AI has become prevalent in practically every digital front, implemented and utilized in every way. But, perhaps, is it

too much?

Aside from the intense environmental impacts AI data centers can have, AI particularly hurts creative fields, such as writing, art, and music, the complaints of its effects easily found in creative communities. I have found it to be far too easy to stumble upon an AI written article these days, which interrupts my schoolwork studying with potentially false content.

However, it is relatively simple to detect AI's "style" if the user didn't clean it up beforehand, as I have found; AI overuses certain phrases, styles, and EM dashes (—).

"It's not just <topic>— it's

<related info>, <related> <related>."

The EM dash is a writer's dash that they use to cut to different sentences like- lorem ipsum -so. It's often used in published books as the 'professional' and formal way. AI determines that as a professional, intelligent tone and thus overuses EM dashes, possibly being 1-2 per few sentences.

I have noticed AI uses sets of threes frequently, especially in comparisons, and often uses the "it's not just" phrase. It additionally frequently uses the 'it's like <topic>' phrase. For more examples and information, review the Wikipedia article about it.

I cannot give proper advice on detecting AI art, as I'm not an artist, but I can direct you to Nightshade, a filter that you can apply to your art to make it harder for AI models to use and even damage some models.

For AI music, try noticing the uncanny lyrics. Good musicians can put a lot of minute detail into their music, and AI music has none of it, being a bland front.

My personal opinion is concerned with how much it's being pushed. If you browse through just a few news articles on the lesser publishers, you will find AI generated articles and often AI generated thumbnails. If they don't care about making their article, why should I care

to read it?

Additionally, as a musician with writing and drawing friends, I despise AI use in the creative industries. No matter what facade an AI user believes themselves in, the only real one is that it screws up creatives... and some AI users believe that.

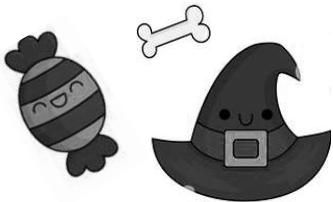
Now, a disclaimer: AI has good and novel uses, but just not in the creative industry. Creativity is what makes us human, and are we supposed to just give it up to a machine?

Those good uses are things like using it to detect cancer and other diseases. You can blindly hate AI as much as you want, but you can't say it saving lives is a bad thing!

Social media continuously tears you down



By Mason Mattox



In a modern society like ours it is easier than ever to have access to technology and in turn access to all kinds of media and news. This also means it is easier

than ever to consume negatively influencing media. What I commonly see it being used as, is an "escape" or a distraction from their work, people will get trapped in a state of "doomscrolling." What people seem to forget is, doomscrolling isn't just mindlessly scrolling through anything, it's the process of scrolling through and consuming that negative media/news.

People can easily get trapped in this harmful feedback loop because it is incredibly easy to open your phone and start finding the negative content. A big problem with this is how people's "For You" pages work. It recognizes the content you watch, share, and like and uses these interactions to push more of this same media to you.

The Cleveland Clinic has dived into this same topic. "When we're depressed, we often look for information that can confirm how we feel," Dr. Susan Albers shared. "Doomscrolling operates with the same mindset: If you're feeling negative, then reading negative news only reconfirms how you feel."

It doesn't always need to be news necessarily either, people can post their own negative content in a relatable format in order to vent their frustrations or look for similar thinking people and try and garner some sympathy. The problem with this is how they're making the negative media and if people do end up relating with it they'll think further about their situations and loop around it in

their mind.

People may find content talking about insecurities they may have in appearance or social aspects, then after consuming so much of that idea they'll reinforce that negative idea in their mind and it'll be harder to get better.

I have seen the same kinds of things happen to people I know. I used to do the same thing. It is so easy for anyone to get stuck in the quicksand and have their brain get fueled by the depressive, anxious, and cortisol induced content.

As I stated earlier, the biggest issue with these loops is how the algorithms work. They don't really care if what media you're feeding yourself is good or bad, all they care about is having another user on their platform

and in turn you'll become another piece of the puzzle possibly furthering that loop.

While it can seem very obvious, I think it is important for people to seek out positive content too. People shouldn't be constantly watching content about how, "I wish I looked like this," or "If only I was like this." It isn't abnormal to have those feelings, but constantly reinforcing them can be detrimental to your health.

As Albers said, "Burying your nose in a phone can actually exacerbate feelings of disconnection and loneliness. Too much time on any media or social media sites, whether the news is bad or not, has been linked with feelings of depression."

Girls flag football makes NCS

By Sarada Khanal

Girls flag football won their first NCS game 19-6, destroying their competition on the field. Despite being a newly formed team, they are now two time NCS qualifiers. The girls have trained hard and stayed strong this season. Despite a string of losses, they picked themselves up and recovered, finishing the season 18-8.

"Everyone contributed so much this season, we have definitely made flag football a real sport at this school!" commented sophomore Gabrielle Rogge. Rogge is also one of the varsity captains and has been a player to watch out for all season.

The girls first solidified their NCS placement with their win in the league championship game against James Logan on Oct. 25. The girls crushed the Colts on the field that day, winning the game 20-0, not letting James Logan score a single point. Some special players include

Erikka Flores. Flores played as quarterback and completed eight out of 17 passes for 90 yards with one touchdown. In the same game, Ella Stahl-Rhodes had four receptions.

After this game, the girls had another victory at NCS against Amador Valley on Oct. 28. Quarterback Flores had another

outstanding game, completing 20 of 26 passes for 153 yards and two touchdowns. Arabella Pey had four receptions for 41 yards with a 10.2 average. All these players showed impressive skill on the field, contributing to the final victory.

"I'm really proud of how far we've come, overcoming our

losing streak in the middle of the season and still making it to the playoffs," commented sophomore Rainey Rinaldi. Rinaldi also commented how proud she is with the team sticking together even in tough times.

Unfortunately, the Trojans lost at their second NCS game

against Las Lomas on Oct. 30 with a score of 6-0. Despite the loss, the girls played a tough game and have a lot to be proud of. In this game, Pey rushed an average of 19 yards per carry while Flores rushed an average of 5.9 yards per run. Overall, the girls have a lot to be proud of and have represented CVHS well.



Trojans celebrate a win in varsity flag football.

BRENDA HUYNH

Football team builds a winning streak

By Samuel Jarvis

CVHS has started a two game win streak in varsity football after starting the season winless. The first game on Oct. 17 seemed like an unsuspecting home game against a middling team but ended up being a nail-biting comeback with last-second heroics.

The Trojans began the game with a quick touchdown to go up 7 to 0 before Berkeley scored a touchdown and missed the two-point conversion on a trick play. Single scoring would continue until Berkeley once again went for two to bring the score to 21-21 at halftime.

Berkeley received the ball to begin the second half and took it in for a touchdown to bring Berkeley up 28-2. Ethan Castaneda-Rojas then ran in his second touchdown to bring it back to even for the Trojans.

The Trojans scored a field goal, followed by taking a safety in the next drive, bringing the score to 31-30 Trojans. Berkeley scored and had a two-point conversion to make it 31-38, then Castaneda-Rojas scored a third touchdown to tie it before Berkeley fumbled their next kick off giving the

Trojans the ball back.

The offense returned to the field to score with three minutes left to play. Trojans made it downfield with a few seconds left and sent kicker Matias Villanueva out to kick before Berkeley attempted to ice him by calling all of their time outs before the ball was snapped. Villanueva made the kick to jubilation from the Trojans' faithful.

"First home win since... 12 games.

I mean, actually means something, man. It means something," said Castaneda post game. "Now, we're talking about all these people right here. It's our family right here. What? Tennyson's next."

"I feel like our record doesn't really define you as a team," said defensive back Joshua Lofton.

"If we continue on this winning streak, I feel like it'll give us more to hold onto next season," said junior Isaac Frani.

The Trojans had a great senior night. Trojans took a quick 14-0 lead in the first quarter through a great rushing attack and a poor passing from the Tennyson Lancers.

Tennyson would then score



Isaac Frani runs for a first down.

SARADA KHANAL

followed by another Trojans score bringing it 20-7 after a failed two point conversion attempt.

The Lancers scored twice just before half time making the score 21-20 Lancers up.

Halftime celebrated the seniors by making the parents of the football team and parents of the dance and cheer teams do a dance.

Luckily Trojans returned the scoring and got their own touchdown, bringing them to 34-21.

The game went back and forth again ending 42-35 in a Trojans victory.



Trojans celebrate their winning streak.

SARADA KHANAL

By Elvis Carpenter

The first round started out rough for Ball so Hard University. Prez and Friendz quickly took control, easily wiping out members of Ball so Hard University. Concern showed on the members of Ball so Hard University's faces. Despite this, the players remained composed,

Afterwards, team members of

“That was all Aiden, I can’t lie,” Cooke added.



ELVIS CARPENTER



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I love being here to help in a
community where people are
making a difference every day.
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Trojans bring Murder Mystery to light

By Amaya Rambel

A murder unfolded on the CVHS campus, or so it seemed. In a thrilling twist of theatrical deception, the advanced drama students transformed the school cafeteria into a stage of intrigue and suspense during their annual murder mystery event. From 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sept. 26, guests were treated to a lively production of Don Zolidis' "How to Get Away With a Murder Mystery," a play that blurred the lines between audience and actor.

Upon entering, attendees were ushered through the cafeteria doors into a banquet-style setup, where they were free to mingle with the roaming cast of in-character actors. The evening kicked off with two student narrators taking the stage, setting the tone for a series of mini-plays that explored various murder mystery scenarios. Each scene featured a fresh cast and a new



Drama students act their heart out on stage

AMAYA RAMBEL

setting, from a blackmailed senator's office all the way to a whimsical Cirque Du Soleil-inspired act.

Even during scene transitions, the entertainment didn't stop. Guests enjoyed witty banter between the narrators and the "dead body," played by student Harper Kiely.

"I really enjoyed working

on this show! The premise in itself was entertaining, and my role gave me a unique ability to interact with the audience and laugh together," said Kiely regarding the production. "I had a lot of fun with developing my character outside of the lines on the page. I'm looking forward to the next productions we have lined up!"

The final scene introduced a twist: a second murder had occurred, and the audience themselves were tasked with solving it. The victim? The circus butler. The culprit? That was for the guests to uncover. Attendees were encouraged to scout the cafeteria, searching for clues at various stations and interacting with roaming characters. Sweet treats

like cheesecake slices and assorted confectionaries added a delicious touch to the detective work.

Working in table groups, guests pieced together evidence, ranging from anagrams to deciphering codes in poems, ultimately submitting their verdicts into a raffle box. As the play resumed, suspense built until the shocking reveal: the original "dead body" had committed the second murder all along.

To cap off the evening, raffle participants were rewarded for their sleuthing skills with gift cards, adding a fun incentive to the immersive experience. The event was a resounding success, showcasing the talent and dedication of CVHS's advanced theater students.

With such a "killer" performance, anticipation is already building for the rest of the school year's productions. One thing's for sure, CVHS knows how to put on a show that keeps everyone guessing.

"Weapons" worries audience, wins over thrill seekers



By Mikhaela Macabeo

The movie "Weapons" by Zach Cregger is a horror mystery film about the disappearance of 17 children from one classroom in the suburban town of Maybrook. It explores the different perspectives, from parents to teachers, incorporating mystery and themes of trauma and conspiracy. It explores grief, paranoia, and hidden horror in what appears to be a peaceful and simple town.

The film begins with the time showing 2:17 a.m., as 17 children run out of their houses and vanish into the night. All suspicion falls on the teacher, Justine Gandy, played by Julia Garner. Garner brings a blend of fragility and quiet rage to a character who becomes both

a scapegoat and a survivor. Josh Brolin plays a grieving father whose search for truth pushes him into an emotional rollercoaster. The two end up working together, uncovering the disturbing truth of what was happening in their town.

"Weapons" split into several interwoven storylines that gradually get pieced together. The movie uses an eerie style to keep the viewers on edge. It is a slow-burning mystery with horror elements and fewer jump scares. It is structured using shifting timelines to disorient the viewers, making the setting look clean but unsettling all at the same time, leaving the viewer guessing throughout the whole movie.

Though the movie explores themes of gore and trauma, the real horror elements creep in as the truth is slowly uncovered. It is made to confuse the viewer, but just enough so they are

entertained and left wanting more. There are moments of dark humor, delivered using the increasingly bizarre behaviour of the townspeople, enhancing the sense of surrealism, suggesting that the town is slipping into a shared hallucination or a deeper conspiracy.

If there is a drawback, it is that the film demands patience, which many viewers also felt when walking into the theatre expecting a regular horror movie. But for those willing to wait, it becomes a rewarding and thought-provoking film that truly stays with you even after the end.

Strong performances, attentive storytelling, and an unshakable atmosphere of unease make this a grief and guilt horror film that highlights the terrifying idea that some things aren't meant to be understood, it confirms that Cregger is a great horror film director.

"Thunderbolts" tackles relatable themes



By Leila Tran

The team of highly trained assassins and ex-villains are up against the most powerful being to exist: the Void. He's in the midst of turning the citizens of New York City into a black abyss as he transports them into the mental state of their worst fears, and manipulates their minds to re-live their lifetimes' biggest regrets. With the Avengers gone, the Thunderbolts don't know what to do as the emptiness spreads across New York City, engulfing it in nothingness. The Void is too powerful and cannot be stopped, when suddenly in a vulnerable mental state, Yelena Belova willingly steps into the expanding black abyss—no one knowing why.

The "Thunderbolts" movie is full of sensitive scenes just like this one that audiences struggling with the feelings

of loneliness and emptiness can relate to. In the overall picture, one might argue that this Marvel film is just like any other "Avengers" or superhero movie—it has a group of heroes with the goal of fighting off an antagonist.

But the "Thunderbolts" movie has so much more depth and emotion than that. Yelena Belova, Bucky Barnes, John Walker, Ava Starr, and Alexi Shostakov are a group of highly trained assassins who have killed a great amount of people. They are "anti-heroes"—not a team of mighty crime-fighting superheroes who can do no wrong. They are real people who cannot fly, shoot lasers out of their hands, or shapeshift. Like any other human, the Thunderbolts have all done bad things throughout their lifetimes that they deeply regret and will forever live with. They've pushed off the unaddressed emptiness, masking it with their actions of "helping" the world, but eventually, the lonely feeling of being

► See **THUNDER:** page 9

“KPop Demon Hunters” is truly golden

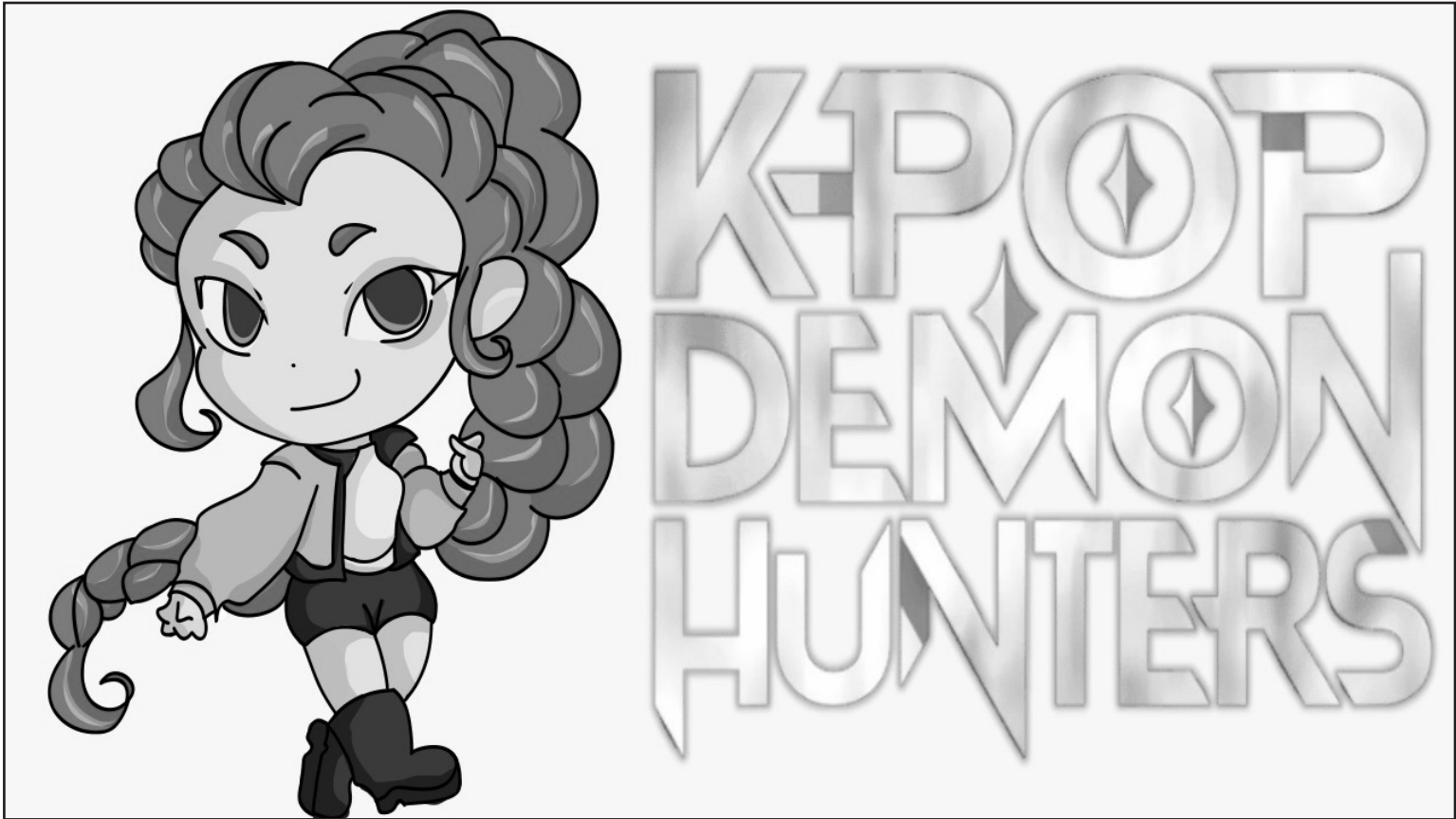


By Alisa Wang

The three hunters jumped from the plane, singing their opening song, “How It’s Done.” Neon blue lights trailing their descent, then the three land on stage, a cloud of smoke billowing in their wake. The hunters emerge from the fog, all bringing down their weapons on the three demons below. The audience roars, 50,000 fans cheering, glowing lightsticks and glowing faces in admiration.

“KPop Demon Hunters” is an animated film about a female k-pop group, called the Huntr/x (Huntrix) that performs in the day and secretly fights demons at night. Demons steal people’s souls to become more powerful, once the soul is gone the body disintegrates completely. The hunters fight demons to ensure the amount of missing persons reports go down and so they can seal the Honmoon. The Honmoon, a portal, prevents Gwi-ma—the demon king—and his army from entering the human world ever again.

The main character is Rumi, a half demon and half human hybrid. Her mother died during her childbirth and her father is kept unknown. Rumi’s identity is kept



AMAYA RAMBEL

secret as Celine, the woman who raised her, convinces her to trust no one with the secret.

“Why couldn’t you love me?” Rumi asks. “I do,” Celine whispers. “All of me,” shouts Rumi. Throughout the film, Rumi struggles to hide her identity, fearing rejection from her friends Mira and Zoey—and their fanbase too.

I was surprised by how much I enjoyed the movie. The

animated style, bright colors, and catchy music could keep anyone entertained. I loved the animation style, the almost choppy, “holding on twos” method which gave the film a unique comic book feel. There was just one thing I didn’t like too much and that would be the rushed plot and underdeveloped characters. The story was very hurried along, different problems flying in from both sides, it felt like the characters never got a moment

to breathe.

Despite this, I still highly recommend this film—even if you aren’t a tween or a k-pop fan. There’s truly something about it for everyone, from romance, to appealing visuals, to music.

“KPop Demon Hunters” the urban-fantasy film has topped the global charts becoming the number one most-watched Netflix film, ten weeks after its release. This was surprising considering

that it was marketed towards an audience of tweens and k-pop fans (I am neither). Still, its themes of self-acceptance and friendship must have resonated with older audiences as well.

Even though “KPop Demon Hunters” might not have had the most intricate plot, the energy, style, and message make it worth watching.

“I’m done hiding, now I’m shining,” sings the Huntr/x.

“The Conjuring” ends franchise



By Pari Muni

A woman reaches towards a mirror, although she can sense that something evil lies within. In the eerie silence of the room, a whisper of cold air sends chills down her spine. Her finger grazes the mirror, her heartbeat the only sound in the quiet. Suddenly, her body seizes with pain as she is rushed to the hospital in early labor.

The doctors scramble to save both her own and the child’s life while lightning cracks from the thunderstorm outside. Something else is wrong though, she feels it in her bones. Between heavy pants and strained groans, she realizes she is right. In the corner of the hospital room lies a demon with malevolent intentions, hiding in the shadows, watching.

Right from the opening scene, “The Conjuring: Last Rites” starts with a bang. As a self proclaimed horror movie expert, I have consumed and enjoyed countless films of the genre, but none have even come close in competition with the love I have for this supernatural universe.

This specific movie was filled with all the great things of its predecessors—ghostly foreshadowing visions, terrifying

history to explain the hauntings, and action packed surprise scares to get your heart racing.

There were quite a few fundamental differences too, however. “The Conjuring: Last Rites” had jump scares very frequently, with slightly less anticipation. The film also showed the physical form of the entities more so than usual, as these demons generally selectively make their appearance in entirety.

Most importantly, the ending, which I won’t spoil of course, exorcised the demon rather unconventionally; although I’ll let you find out for yourself why I say that.

“The Conjuring: Last Rites” was the fourth and final installment in “The Conjuring” film series. The first movie was released in 2013 and over the course of many years to now, the franchise has built such a strong relationship with its viewers. The story created an intricate plotline with continuous underlying lore and developed incredibly lovable characters that fans just don’t have the courage to say goodbye to yet.

Overall, “The Conjuring: Last Rites” was a great ending to this amazing movie series. I would rate it a four out of five, mainly taking that point one off because I’m bitter that it was the final edition. I absolutely recommend this to be your next watch, as long as you don’t get scared easily.

► **THUNDER:** from page 8 trapped in a void catches up to everyone, and nothing can be done to escape it.

The Thunderbolts are different from the typical superheroes you would see in comics or other movies—they are vulnerable people that many can relate to, which is why this movie is far better than many others. When an audience can relate to a movie, it deepens their empathy for the characters because they know with personal experience how it feels to be in their position. The Thunderbolts can be viewed as humans instead of comic characters due to their emotional connection to the viewers—a connection that a typical superhero cannot make.

Overall, the “Thunderbolts” movie has done an amazing job with creating that personal bond with their target audience. I highly recommend for someone who is a superhero movie fan to give this one a watch as it will open their perspective and teach them that

heroes can also be normal people struggling with their own issues as well.

“Not super. Not heroes. Not giving up.” This authentic film gives people the motivation to keep pushing through, even if they feel like they’re alone and can’t keep going any longer.



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Full CPR (compressions and rescue breaths) is most effective for instances of drowning or for children; however, if a lay responder is unable or unwilling to provide rescue breaths with CPR, compression-only CPR (compressions and no breaths) should be performed.

1 CHECK and CALL

1. **CHECK** the scene for safety, then **CHECK** the person.
2. Shout to get the person's attention. If the person does not respond, tap the person's shoulder and shout again while checking for normal breathing for 5 to 10 seconds.
3. If the person does not respond and is not breathing normally, **CALL 9-1-1** and continue to step 2.



2 GIVE CHEST COMPRESSIONS

1. Place the heel of one hand in the center of the person's chest.
2. Place the heel of the other hand on top of the first hand, lacing your fingers together.
3. Keeping your arms straight, position your shoulders directly over your hands.
4. Push hard and push fast!
 - Compress at least 2 inches.
 - Compress 100–120 times per minute.
 - Let the chest completely rise before pushing down again.



3 DO NOT STOP

Continue chest compressions except in one of these situations:

- You notice an obvious sign of life.
- If other responders arrive and take over (if two responders are available take turns giving compressions switching every two minutes).
- You are alone and too tired to continue.
- An AED is ready to use.
- The scene becomes unsafe.

TIPS

- When possible, use latex-free disposable gloves when giving care.
- Occasional gasps are not normal breathing.
- Use the speaker mode of a mobile phone to alert emergency responders while giving care.

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AED (AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR)

1. Turn on AED and follow the audio prompts.
2. **Remove clothing from chest** and wipe chest dry if needed.
3. Attach the pads as shown on the package or AED.
4. Plug in connector, if necessary.
5. Make sure no one is touching the person then push the "Analyze" button, if necessary.
6. If a shock is advised, push the "Shock" button making sure no one is touching the person.
7. Perform compressions and follow AED prompts.

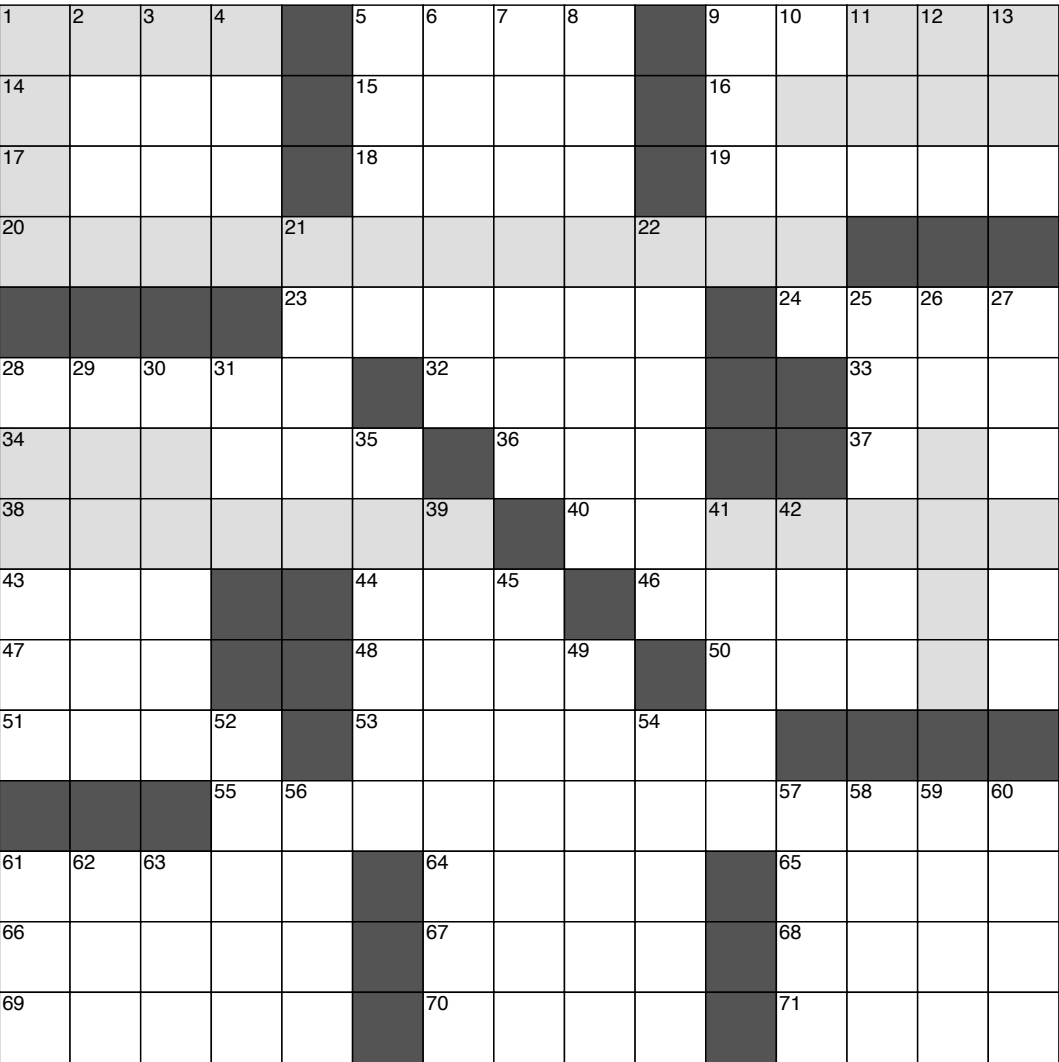


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“Knock, Knock, Knock!”

By Isaac Hulse



ACROSS

1. What we have here
5. 4840 square yards
9. Nolan Ryan specialty
14. Pile
15. Sea ____ green
16. It may follow a swing
17. Love, in Lyon
18. Aggressive trap subgenre
19. Graceful
20. Timely phrase a la the shaded squares
23. Hand out
24. Corp. promotion
28. Subscribe again
32. Second to the sultan
33. Ay, bee, see, ____
34. How much of the world is a stage
36. Producer Brian
37. SUV giant, or giant SUV
38. Goose egg
40. “____ a leg!”
43. 20/20, in sports
44. Beer distributor
46. Flying fish roe
47. What makes a simile
48. They famously won a war in Australia
50. Partner of wines
51. Online distributor famous for extra-low prices
53. Pickle condiment
55. What you must do for all the shaded squares
61. Playground retort
64. Rooster on a rooftop
65. Potatoes, in Punjab
66. State to remember
67. Sicilian smoker
68. Tie fabric
69. Helsinki natives
70. Raise
71. Who Kint is

DOWN

1. “Take ____!”
2. Prince William, for one
3. “____ Said,” Neil Diamond hit
4. Blueprint resident
5. Jackson 5 dos
6. Not fine
7. Joplin specialty
8. Coming out
9. Simba’s Ophelia
10. Scrubs
11. One can make you wonder
12. Similar suffix
13. Mao ____ -tung
21. Six-time NBA All Star Leonard
23. Plant deeply
25. Eke
26. The Magnificent Seven, e.g.
27. Creatures famous for licking their own eyeballs
28. Go off on
29. Susan ____ Hinton
30. Mets, Dodgers, or Padres
31. Biblical ending
35. Intestinal prefix
36. “Get a life!”
41. Buddha’s seat
42. Diamond stat
45. Throb
49. Burnt color
52. Sch. near Hartford
54. To take, or not mince, an oath
56. Garden implements
57. Lip
58. 2025 Pixar release
59. Dated internet slang for laughter
60. Cow connector
61. Agcy. concerned with exchange rates
62. Raphael’s tool of choice
63. Precedes can or man



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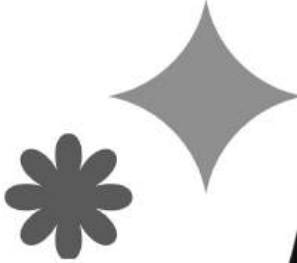
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Lee merges Biology with artistic legacy

By Franci Da Costa

Did you know one of our very own CVHS teachers, Carina Lee, sang in a well-known recording studio where some famous musicians recorded their Grammy-winning works?

Lee started her career in college, where she studied Biology and Human Development. Human Development taught her about how our minds and brains change throughout our lives. She didn't want to go into the medical field, so she thought teaching would be a good alternative. She loves that she gets to apply both her degrees in the classroom.

"Ms. Lee is helpful and understanding," said previous biology student Zaleeya Mitchell.

Lee taught in South Central Los Angeles which was very different from Castro Valley schools. Teaching at CVHS is way calmer for her because



Biology teacher Carina Lee poses with an adorable penguin plush.

FRANCI DA COSTA

the students at her old school were rowdy. She took a 16-year-long break after experiencing the students she taught starting up gangs. During that time, she raised two children aged 17 and 19. Now she's here with us and doesn't plan to stop teaching soon.

Lee's favorite times of the

year are when students create a home for fish. Students put all sorts of vegetation and rocks in the fish's habitat. During this time, she teaches homeostasis, which means balance. Every day, the students would test the pH level with a stick, which would show a certain color if it was right. Unfortunately, some

fish did die, but it was for educational purposes.

"It's not the little things involved in making it, but rather seeing everyone grow towards each other as the year goes by," she said. In other words, Biology is not her favorite part of teaching, but rather seeing everyone find their friends, Lee explained.

Another time of the year Lee enjoys is March Mammal Madness, when students and teachers compete against each other to see which animals will win in an internet-based contest. For example, do you think a red panda or a chimpanzee would win? The answers change every month because it is up to chance. Sometimes, the animals fall off a cliff, and a bear loses to a mouse.

Lee is an avid artist; she has created a variety of crafts. She crocheted little animals, knitted sweaters, sewn costumes, beaded and knotted jewelry, folded paper into birds, and tied string into butterflies. She used to work for a famous jewelry designer who got featured in fashion magazines and even some television shows like "Friends."

This quiet teacher has done so many exciting things, yet not one has heard of them. She has quite an interesting background once you inquire.

A few screws loose: Robotics Club bolts through

By Wee Lee

Two robots adorned with balloons stand on the edges of the battlefield. On one side is XB-70's build, armed with a spear and ready pop while on the other side is the Republic of Bob's newest stride in balloon destruction, equipped with a rotating stick taped with pins. The start is called and the robots race to face each other, determined to best the other in the ring of the balloon battle.

Three weeks of designing, building, and coding for Robotics Club members have all been leading to the Monday of Sep. 30, 2025, where the Robotics Club Balloon Battle would take place after school in Room 407b after school at 4 p.m.

Since the second club meeting on Aug. 25, club members have been hard at work creating the best balloon popping robot they could design using VEX Robotics parts provided in the engineering classroom.

"We think it's something fun that new members of robotics can do just so that they can start getting accustomed to



CVHS Robotics Club members admire their new invention in the works.

WEE LEE

how the club more or less operates and what's expected of them," said Robotics Club Marketing and Outreach lead Enrique Guerrero De Dios.

Throughout the meetings leading up to the competition, members not only demonstrated their ability to construct a weapon of mass popping, but also an understanding of the club's core principles such

as time management, problem solving, and most importantly—communication.

The battle was also designed to be a simplified example of what a FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) would look like as stated by Robotics Club President Jordan Tran. Considering it is currently the pre-competition season, it's best for newbies to get an

idea of what the big ultimate test for the club will look like so they can prepare.

As for the fun aspect, it certainly was a great time with each meeting filled with the organized chaos of robot construction. Freshman and new recruit Desmond Poon commented, "The building of the robots was really fun and every week I look forward to coming back."

The end result was a mechanical fleet that highlights the variety of approaches members have taken to solving the balloon overpopulation crisis, with robots ranging from small four-wheeled rollers with spears to bulky tanks with saws.

But by the end of two intense free-for-all elimination rounds and a brief juggernaut intermission boss fight, amongst the fallen nuts, bolts, and shredded pieces of scraps of rubber only two robots were left standing—XB-70, and Bob.

With nothing else holding them back the two clashing against each other at full speed, facing off head to head. But then one pop, then another, and as XB-70 attempted to rotate itself to face Bob they weren't quick enough. And with a final arching descent from Bob's saw of thumbtacks, XB-70's final balloon was popped.

Amongst the sea of conquered robots and popped dreams, the Republic of Bob stands alone as the sole victor. And for their efforts, a reward fit for champions descends from the president himself—an IOU for a free pizza.